

REFORMATION  
TODAY

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- ▶ The doctrine of the atonement
- ▶ An exposition of Luke 23:39-47 and the doctrine of penal substitution
- ▶ John Bradford: the Manchester Martyr - part 1

The doctrine of the atonement





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## Editorial

We need to keep the good news of Jesus Christ and what he did in his life, suffering, death and resurrection central to all we do. We cannot read too much about the meaning of it all as we find this in the Scriptures. How was it possible that what one man did approximately 2,000 years ago, affected the course of history in the most profound and deepest sense? How was this all God's eternal plan to save people from their sin and guilt?

This issue offers two articles on the topic of the atonement. This topic is still the subject of debate, often focusing on the view that Jesus Christ deliberately took upon himself our sin and guilt and suffered in our place the punishment that we deserved. God the Father in his love sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). We are convinced that this is the heart of the gospel. This does not mean that there are no other wonderful elements in the work of Christ and what this means for us. The point is that we should not play these elements against each other but embrace them all as part of God's wonderful and gracious provision to reconcile us to himself and bring about his eternal purposes in salvation.

This has been the message of the gospel all along throughout the history of the church, in so far as it was faithful to Scripture.

This was the message proclaimed again in the time of the Reformation and the period that followed it. It is therefore appropriate to read how a man like John Bradford presented this gospel, lived for it, and was even prepared to die for it. He presented this gospel with real conviction, but also not without humility. We are grateful to Oliver Allmand-Smith for the first part of this survey of Bradford's life.

This same gospel message was also preached powerfully by Martyn Lloyd-Jones (see book reviews), and John Palmer shows clearly in his article that we today cannot understand the final stages of Jesus' life and death in any other way.

Finally, it is also important to read about the progress of the gospel in other parts of the world. This time the news section is somewhat longer than usual but well worth our attention in order to encourage us to pray. ■



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# The Doctrine of the

# A T O N E M E N T

## *Penal substitution and Christ's victory*

### **Introduction**

The doctrine of the atonement has been the subject of much debate in recent decades with particular attention given to the doctrine of penal substitution. Expositions of the doctrine of the atonement can be found in *Systematic Theologies* and in an article by Mostyn Roberts published in *Reformation Today* 264 (March-April 2015).

In this article, I want to focus on the specific aspect of penal substitution and its relationship to other aspects of the doctrine of the atonement.

The work of Christ in his life, suffering, death and resurrection and what this means for sinful people is articulated and explained in many ways in the New Testament. It seems as if words are insufficient to express the vast scope and depth of what it means that Christ has done. Sinful people are redeemed, cleansed of their sins, reconciled with God, liberated, acquitted (legally), their freedom bought (with the thought of slaves on the market). In the course of church history different emphases have been placed by different church fathers, theologians, and Reformers. Different theories have been proposed to describe what Christ has done. The two most important ones, which still play a

central role in the discussion, are what is called the *Christus-Victor* theory and the satisfaction theory. The latter is strongly associated with the view of the suffering and death of Christ as penal substitution. I will now briefly summarise these theories.

In the *Christus-Victor* theory the emphasis is on Christ's victory over sin, the devil and death. In his suffering and death, Christ has disarmed these rulers and authorities (Col 2:15) and deprived them of their power. For human beings, who by nature are subject to these powers, this means liberation from these powers and the possibility of living in a harmonious relationship with God again. Christ has conquered these powers, but that victory has yet to take full effect in this world, and Christians are called to cooperate in this by following Christ. In this vision much attention is paid to the kingdom that has been inaugurated and that will come into being and become visible in this way. God is going to restore everything according to his purpose.

The satisfaction theory and the doctrine of penal substitution focuses on atonement or reconciliation with God through satisfaction. In this theory the relationship with God, broken because of our sin, is restored by the vicarious suffering and death of Christ in our place as a punishment for our sin, propitiating the righteous wrath of God.

In current debates, these two main models are often juxtaposed, and it is argued that we should choose between these theories. Some writers are arguing that we should adopt the *Christus-Victor* theory and reject

the doctrine of penal substitution. This latter doctrine is often criticised for being unbiblical. All kinds of objections are raised, such as: Doesn't this theory give an image of God as vengeful? Can Jesus take our punishment? How can God punish his own Son in our place? Is that really righteous? And so on.

That is why I want to take a closer look at this doctrine now.

### Penal substitution

I will discuss this doctrine using two approaches:

- » Biblical-exegetic and biblical-theological arguments.
- » Some systematic-theological considerations.

### Biblical-exegetic arguments for penal substitution

The core idea of penal substitution is related to the use and meaning of the *hilasmos* / *hilaskomai* word group in the New Testament. These words are found in a number of texts (*hilasmos* in 1 John 2:2; 4:10; *hilaskomai* in Luke 18:13 and Hebrews 2:17; *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25).

The meaning of this word includes the idea of reconciliation with God through the removal or quenching of his wrath. This means that it is best translated using the word 'propitiation'. Earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, C H Dodd denied that this was part of the meaning of this word and argued that the meaning should be limited to the removal of sin and should therefore be translated as 'expiation'. A thorough examination of the use of this

word group in Jewish-Greek texts (Josephus, Philo), in the Septuagint and in the New Testament by Leon Morris and Roger Nicole (see bibliography) and others has shown that this is not the case. The word can therefore have this meaning of propitiation, and this is of direct importance for our discussion.

The question of whether the word has this meaning in these texts must be determined by the context. I will summarise this briefly for some of these texts (see more expansive treatments in the literature mentioned in the bibliography).

### Romans 3:23-26

Here it is God himself who has openly appointed Christ as a means of propitiation (*hilasterion*). The context makes clear that this is unmistakably about reconciliation in the sense of appeasing God's wrath. In Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul has argued that all people without exception (Jew and Gentile) are without excuse and are subject to God's wrath. Paul states this immediately in 1:18 and draws this conclusion again in 3:19 and 3:23. The climax is that God himself has given his Son Jesus Christ as a means of propitiation. Christ satisfies the wrath of God for all who believe in him. Thus God is righteous and justifies the one who has faith in Jesus (3:26).<sup>1</sup>

THE CLIMAX IS THAT GOD HIMSELF HAS GIVEN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AS A MEANS OF PROPITIATION.

### 1 John 2:2

We find something similar in 1 John 2:2 where we read that Jesus is the propitiation (*hilasmos*) for our sins. The fact that Jesus is mentioned in verse 1 as our advocate with the Father points to the righteous judgment and anger of God against our sins (see John Stott on this verse<sup>2</sup>). This implies that atonement in verse 2 means that Jesus has taken away this wrath, ie propitiation.

### Other exegetical arguments

There are many other biblical and exegetical arguments, some of which I will mention briefly:

- » The text from Isaiah 53:5 speaks about Christ acting as our substitute, taking the punishment that we deserve and thus bringing us peace. The way the New Testament applies Isaiah 53 to Christ and his work supports this point.
- » The Gospels show that this was also the message of Jesus himself: examples are found in Mark 10:45 (and context) and 15:33-34 (with Isa 13:10), and John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:50-58; 8:51.
- » Galatians 3:13 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us' shows the substitutionary nature of what Christ did together with the point that he suffered the curse of the law.

<sup>1</sup> D A Carson, 'Atonement in Romans 3:21-26', in: Charles E. Hill, Frank A. James III, *The Glory of the Atonement* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> John Stott, *The Epistles of John* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), pp84-88.

- » The well-known text of 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 shows that the atonement is connected with not attributing to us our transgressions because Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him.
- » Hebrews 9:22-28, referring to the Old Testament sacrifices (Lev 1:4; 16:21-22), shows that forgiveness and the bearing and taking away of sins are connected with the blood-sacrifice of Christ.
- » The same point is also supported by Peter in 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18.

All these texts together show that there is indeed a biblical-exegetic basis for the notion of atonement and reconciliation through penal substitution. Several theologians such as J I Packer have argued that the foundation of the concept of penal substitution is based on a systematic formulation of *all* relevant biblical data. It is also about the total storyline of the Bible. Jonathan Griffiths says the following about this:

'Preaching that is biblical in the truest sense must be sensitive to the wider storyline of Scripture and properly contextualized within biblical theology, consciously shaped by certain key biblical-theological truths. Among these is the basic truth that the God of the Bible is rightly angry because of sin and will judge sin. There is little need to spend time here outlining a Biblical Theology of God's justice and his holiness. This basic

truth is so woven into the storyline of Scripture that we would have to wilfully disregard the essential shape of salvation history to avoid it.

'The Bible's storyline is bookended with this reality and saturated with it: Genesis tells us that God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden and judged them (and the world) for sin; Revelation tells us that a day is coming when he will execute his terrible judgment on the world. The fact that human sin incurs the judgment of God is the fundamental crisis of world history as far as the Bible is concerned. Any proclamation of the gospel that does not demonstrably flow from this biblical worldview and that fails to address this crisis is inadequate on a basic theological level.<sup>3</sup>

And Daniel Hames states the following in a recent website article:

'Anyone can point to the "clobber" verses that present Jesus as a substitute for sin's penalty, such as Isaiah 53:5 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. Plenty of people find ways around these to read the cross another way – and with proof texts, that's always possible. Yet as I began to read Scripture more deeply, I came to see these texts in the light of Scripture's great themes and typologies. I could see no other way to interpret them – the animal skins in Genesis 3, the ram in Genesis 22, the Passover lamb and the firstborn sons, the darkness of judgment the night of the exodus from Egypt and the darkness that fell as Jesus died, all the undeniable

language of propitiation and the blood on the mercy seat, and so much more.

'Actually reading the Scriptures in their cohesive entirety, and seeing the Old Testament repeatedly preview the gospel, showed me that Jesus bearing our sin and its penalty is central – not peripheral, and not artificially imposed – to the story's vast sweep.<sup>4</sup>

### **Some systematic-theological considerations**

In addition to these exegetical and biblical-theological evidences, there are a number of highly relevant and important systematic-theological considerations that have been articulated in recent literature. I will summarise the most important points:

The first point concerns the doctrine of God. A crucial point is the simplicity of God. This means that we cannot play God's attributes off against each other. All of God's attributes are in harmony with each other. God is love and shows his mercy not at the expense of, but in accordance with his holiness and righteousness. This also means that God is not a bloodthirsty tyrant, but his righteousness and holiness do mean that he cannot tolerate sin.

God's righteousness is an attribute of God himself. He sets the moral standard in the universe. God does not apply external laws, but he himself has determined those laws, which arise from his righteousness

and holiness. This point has been made recently by Stephen Wellum.<sup>5</sup>

So what matters is what is sin: sin is rebellion against God (Ps 51), and rejection of him and the purpose he has for us; the transgression of his commandments. Sin is not a weakness that needs to be repaired, or needs therapy, but is a transgression on which sanctions are imposed. The Bible clearly states God's righteous wrath upon people because of sin.

The great dilemma is how God can forgive injustice, transgression and sin, while at the same time not holding the guilty person innocent. Both of these truths are expressed in Exodus 34:6-7. The tension between these two is climactically resolved in the work of Jesus Christ in his suffering and death on the cross.

This is how Paul states in Romans 3 that God himself has given the solution: 'But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the Prophets bear witness to it – the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe' (Rom 3:21-22). And as the rest of the text shows, this righteousness is based on the fact that God himself has openly appointed Christ as a means of propitiation (see above).

The unique thing about the gospel is that there is no unbridgeable gap or conflict

God is love and shows his mercy not at the expense of, but in accordance with his holiness and righteousness.

<sup>3</sup> <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/penal-substitution-and-gospel-proclamation/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/3-reasons-changed-mind-penal-substitution/>

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Wellum, [credomag.com/article/getting-the-god-of-the-cross-right-and-very-wrong/](http://credomag.com/article/getting-the-god-of-the-cross-right-and-very-wrong/)

between God's wrath and God's love. Horton points out that God's love and the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son are mentioned in the same breath in Romans 3:25 / 5:8-10 and 1 John 4:10.<sup>6</sup> Paul states in Romans 5:8: 'But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' And John says that the love of God is precisely shown in the fact that God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:8-10). And that love did not begin only after the death of Jesus on the cross but was there before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4).

In order to avoid all kinds of caricatures, it is very important to see that the atonement is the work of the Triune God. God the Father gave his Son out of love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). Jesus willingly submitted to the will of the Father (John 10:11,18). The Holy Spirit is also involved in this (Heb 9:14).

My conclusion is that there is not only strong exegetical and biblical theological evidence, but also a solid systematic-theological basis for the doctrine of penal substitution. But since the Christ-Victor model also undeniably has a biblical basis, the question is how these two aspects of the atonement are connected. I will now discuss this connection.

### **The relationship between the two theories**

This topic has been addressed in an excellent recent article by Sinclair Ferguson.<sup>7</sup> The *Christus-Victor* theory

has indeed been pushed too far into the background, according to Ferguson. He does see exceptions in some of the English Puritans. He also rightly sees both views of the atonement reflected in all kinds of old (and new) hymns. According to Ferguson, the *Christus-Victor* view is a dominant theme in the synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of John.

The question is what the victory of Christ means and how it is that he frees us from the power of Satan. Ferguson refers to texts in the letters of the New Testament. In the first letter of John we read that Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). But shortly before that he had already said that Jesus appeared to take away our sins (3:5). So these two things have everything to do with each other. How do they relate to each other? Ferguson then points to 1 John 4:10 where we read that God the Father loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (*hilasmos!*) for our sins. Ferguson concludes that Christ's atoning guilt offering (in the sense of propitiation) destroyed the devil's work.

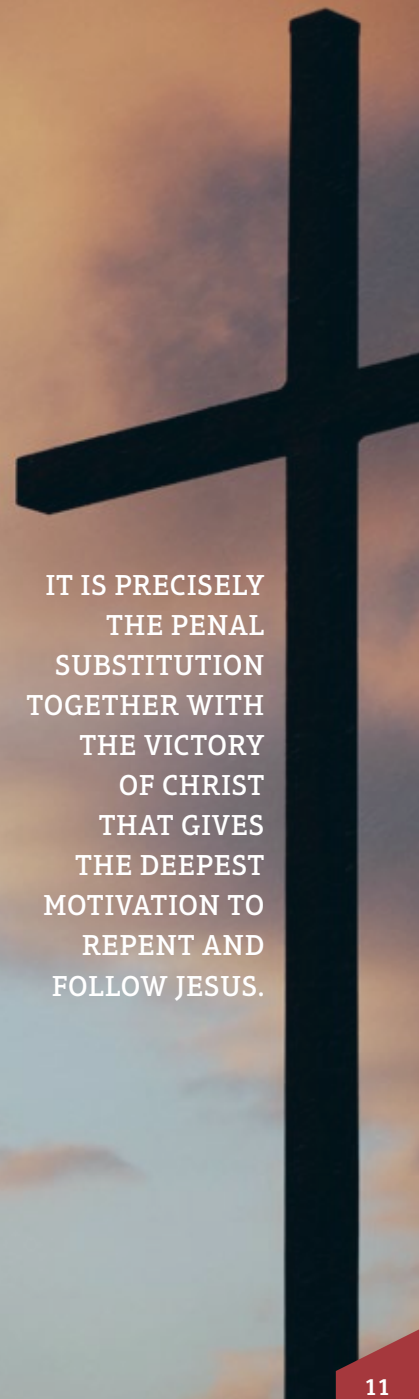
Another connection between Christ's victory and the atonement is found in Hebrews 2:14-17. Jesus, through his death, destroyed the one who had the power over death – that is the devil. How could this be? Ferguson draws attention to all the discussion in this letter regarding Christ's death as a sacrifice for the guilt of sin. Therefore, he had to be a merciful and faithful High Priest (verse 17) in

the service of God, to make propitiation (*hilaskesthai*) for the sins of the people. All of this has tremendous consequences, as the writer shows in the letter: it frees us from the fear of death (2:15); it cleanses our guilty conscience (9:14); it gives us access to God the Father (10:19).

In Colossians 2:13-15 we find another remarkable text where these connections are made. Forgiveness of sins and legal guilt (the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands) go hand in hand with the disarming of the rulers and authorities, which have been put to open shame, and Christ has triumphed over them (see also Col 1:13-14).

We find this same connection very directly in the Revelation of John (12:11): 'And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.' Victory in this cosmic battle is gained by the blood of the Lamb, which refers to the same blood by which we are washed from our sins (according to 1:5; cf Matt. 26:27-28; Rev 5:5-6).

Ferguson therefore rightly concludes that the atonement brings us forgiveness of sins and destroys the devil and his power over the believer. Satisfying God's righteousness, forgiveness of sins and Christ's victory over Satan are not mutually exclusive but complement each other. The devil no longer has any control over me with his accusations. My guilt is gone. That gives both liberation and restoration of the relationship with God. Without all this I would be nowhere and have no hope. We are more than conquerors, as Paul says, through him



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<sup>6</sup> Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p500.

<sup>7</sup> Sinclair B Ferguson, 'Christus Victor et Propitiator: The Death of Christ, Substitute and Conqueror,' in: Sam Storms and Justin Taylor (eds.), *For the Fame of God's Name. Essays in Honor of John Piper* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), pp171-1890.

who loved us (Rom 8:37). Why? Because God has given him up for us all, and now there is no more accusation against us and we are justified. Because Christ died and rose and pleads with God for us.

Where Ferguson rightly relates this to our personal salvation, we can go a step further. For all of this is also the deepest motivation to leave sin and evil behind us and to pursue righteousness in this world. Peter connects both aspects in 1 Peter. 2:24 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness' (see also 1 Peter 3:18). This is essential for the gospel. It is precisely the penal substitution together with the victory of Christ that gives the deepest motivation to repent and follow Jesus. As Tim Keller often says: 'The gospel is that we are accepted by God on the basis of the work of Christ and therefore we obey. The opposite is pagan religion where everything is about making yourself acceptable to God.'

### Conclusions

The work of Christ and its meaning for us has such a vast scope and depth. It is like a very large diamond. It would be foolish to cut off a piece of it and elevate it to the only and total diamond while we throw away the other parts. The atonement includes both penal substitution and the victory of Christ. They are not mutually exclusive, but both are essential to our salvation and reinforce each other.

That is why Horton quite rightly says, 'If there is a danger in reducing Christ's accomplishments to penal substitution, the opposite danger is to see other aspects as alternatives to it.'<sup>8</sup> ■

### Bibliography

In addition to the literature already mentioned in the footnotes above, the following literature addresses this matter in more detail for those who want to pursue further study:

M Barrett, 'In Our Place: The Atonement,' in: John MacArthur (ed.) *High King of Heaven* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), pp119-135.

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D M Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Atonement and Justification. Exposition of chapters 3:20 – 4:25* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987).

Roger Nicole, *Standing Forth. Collected Writings of Roger Nicole* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), see especially chapter 16 'C.H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation', p343.

J I Packer, Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p515.

# An Exposition of Luke 23:39-47 and the Doctrine of Penal Substitution



The great doctrine of Penal Substitution is under attack from many quarters. Men like Steve Chalke (in *The Lost Message of Jesus*) even claim that they believe in Jesus' 'atoning sacrifice' – yet deny penal substitution. As the Old Testament clearly teaches that sacrifices were substitutes, it must be to the 'penal' part of the phrase that they object. They believe in an 'atonement' – a reconciliation between God and man – but not that it has been accomplished because 'Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the tree' (1 Peter 2:24).

The purpose of this article is to show from just one passage of Scripture (Luke 23:39-47) how powerful the testimony of God is to this great truth. There are many other truths which this passage teaches, but here we focus on this one. It underlies all these events. The intention is to show that, if the Lord's death were not an act of penal substitution, the awesome events of that day make no sense. There were six of these events recorded here.

### 1. Jesus' word of immediate salvation (Luke 23:39-43)

Jesus answered the plea of the dying thief, 'Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom,' with the famous words, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise,' from which we learn that Jesus certainly believed that, by his death, the soul of a person can enter the presence of God, where Jesus is, immediately upon that person's death. He died in that belief!

In order to go to heaven and not to hell, however, the sinner must be freed from:

- » The penalty of sin: the deserved eternal punishment by a holy God.
- » The guilt of sin in the sight of this God.
- » The power of sin binding the sinner in physical and spiritual death.

How is this achieved? Through Jesus' death on the cross. Therefore, he must there have suffered that penalty and borne that guilt. This is penal substitution; and Jesus knew that that was the reason for his present sufferings and imminent death. He knew that, as he died, he did indeed bear the sins of his people in his own body.

Jesus knew that he was 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (John 1:29) and the fulfilment of all the Old Testament sacrifices. In these, the offerer symbolically transferred his sins to the animal which would then die in his place. He would then be forgiven his sin by God. These repeated sacrifices repeatedly taught the need for penal substitution; and they also embodied the hope of One who would come and finally provide it, once for all.

The point is this: Jesus believed that this was why he was dying. It is arrogant in the extreme to explain it differently and say that he was mistaken.

This reality of penal substitution is true only of believers. Only those with faith in Christ are saved – see John 3:16, and countless other passages. Some have questioned how much the thief knew in order to exercise this faith. What do we see him believing?

- » That Jesus as God's appointed King will have an eternal kingdom (see Ps 2:7; 110:1).
- » That he as God's appointed Saviour can take into it whom he chooses (Matt 11:27).
- » That he welcomes into it those who, as self-confessed sinners, ask him in faith (Luke 23:41).
- » That such faith must be accompanied by repentance from sins (Luke 23:39-41a), because God is holy.

All such are saved because God accepts Jesus' death in their place.

### 2. God's sign of salvation (vv44-45a)

The sun was darkened from noon until 3.00pm. This was a miracle, for which there were several reasons:

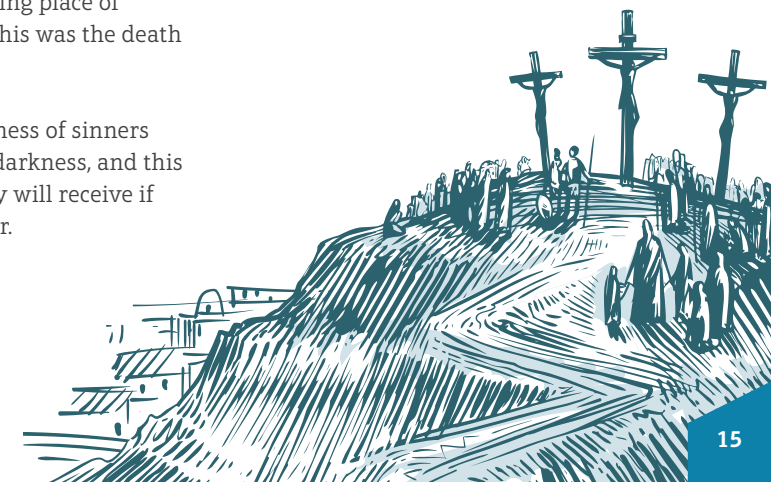
1. To show that Jesus' death had an effect on creation which was cursed because of man's sin. This was God's witness that an event was taking place of cosmic significance. This was the death of no mere man.
2. To show the hopelessness of sinners who deserve eternal darkness, and this is what tragically they will receive if they reject the Saviour.

3. Mainly, there was darkness in the world to testify to the fact that there was darkness in the soul of Jesus, because he was rejected by his Father (Matt 27:46). The Father still loved and upheld the Son. Yet he who from all eternity had known unbroken intimate fellowship with the Father (John 1:1), now for three hours did not experience this! He experienced the agony of knowing the Father's love being completely hidden from him.

Why was this so? The only answer for the Father's rejecting the Son is that he was at that point our penal substitute; that he bore our sin as the Son of Man (Luke 22:22).

In Romans 5:18 we are taught that there are two men. One is Adam, and the other is Christ. Thomas Goodwin wrote: 'In God's sight there are two men – Adam and Christ – and these two men have all other men hanging at their girdle-strings'. That is, all share the destiny of one or the other.

The only answer for the Father's rejecting the Son is that he was at that point our penal substitute; that he bore our sin as the Son of Man.



When we are born, we are each born in Adam. His sin of rebellion against God is imputed to us. His act brought us all into a state of being 'darkness' in God's sight (Eph 5:8). It was this darkness which Jesus bore. 'He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us' (2 Cor 5:21). This means:

- » Our sin was imputed to him – counted as his. God in his Word has no empty repetitions. Repetitions are for emphasis; so consider Isaiah 53:5, 6b, 8b, 10, 11b, 12b. Six times we are told in slightly different language that One was coming who would bear the iniquities of God's people, so that they would be healed.
- » This was, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, in order to do this, God made him a curse, a cursed object (Gal 3:13). We would be such for all eternity, but now he has become such: instead of us, so we shan't be!
- » So as one cursed, he bore the wrath of the holy God (Isa 53:10), instead of our bearing it eternally.
- » So, he bore the punishment of our sins, the suffering of soul which we deserve (Isa 53:11a), instead of us.

If this is not penal substitution, words have no meaning!

### 3. God's sign of gracious salvation (v45b)

The curtain in the temple marked off the Most Holy Place from the rest. On this curtain cherubim were embroidered. This pointed back to Genesis 3:24. When Adam and Eve had sinned, God cast them out

of Eden (Paradise) and put on guard at its entrance cherubim, and a flaming sword, to guard the way to the tree of life. This was so that they might not re-enter the garden and eat of that tree. They had no access to eternal life, because of their sin.

At the instant of Jesus' death, God tore this temple curtain in two from top to bottom! It had said, 'Stay away – you are a sinner – you cannot approach the God who is life.' Only the High Priest could pass the curtain once a year – on the 'Day of Atonement' – literally,

the 'Day of Propitiation'. He had to shed there the blood of the God-appointed sacrifice. Before he did, he had to so fill the room with incense that he could not see the glory of God which dwelt there.

(In this Second Temple, built after the return from Babylon, the Most Holy Place was empty, for the ark had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Pompey the Great conquered Jerusalem in 63BC, went into the Most Holy Place, and came out saying, 'It's an empty room.' It had been rumoured that the Jews had a great treasure there.)

At the time of the death of Jesus, the curtain of the Most Holy Place not only symbolically said, 'Stay away'; it also said, 'No hope.' However, because of Jesus' death, God now says, 'Come in!' This death has succeeded!

At the time of the death of Jesus, the curtain of the Most Holy Place not only symbolically said, 'Stay away'; it also said, 'No hope.' However, because of Jesus' death, God now says, 'Come in!' This death has succeeded! For the penal substitute has been accepted! Jesus can cry, 'It is finished' (John 19:30); he cries, 'mission accomplished!' So we, trusting in Christ, enter for ever the reality of which this Most Holy Place was the symbol – God's holy presence. No longer will it be unapproachable light and glory (1 Tim 6:16): for we shall see his face (Rev 22:4).

### 4. Jesus' word of complete salvation (v46a)

At this point, the Lord Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit'; this is Psalm 31:5. There David is crying out in assurance. He continues, 'You have redeemed me, O God of truth.' We who are in Christ can say: 'You have redeemed me.'

Note that Jesus cried, 'Father.' He has moved – as Psalm 22 does at verse 21b – from being the Sufferer who cries, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' in verse 1, to the Victor who can say, 'It is finished' – as the last phrase of the Psalm says, 'It is accomplished.' Jesus died fully aware that his penal, substitutionary sufferings and death were accepted by the Father on our behalf.

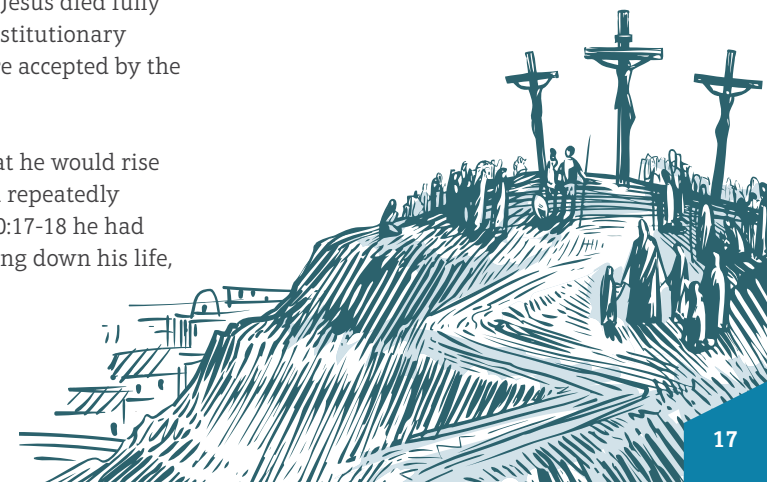
He had full assurance that he would rise from dead, just as he had repeatedly clearly spoken. In John 10:17-18 he had declared that he was laying down his life,

only to take it again. In the next verse, he was emphatic: 'No-one takes it from Me,' neither the Jews, nor the Romans. 'I have authority to lay it down, and to take it again.' Indeed, 'This command I received from my Father.'

It is not going beyond Scripture to think of Jesus' resurrection as he cried these words. He 'cried with a loud voice' – of testimony, of triumph.

At Jesus' return we shall rise with the same spirit in glorified bodies in a perfect new creation, and for all eternity we will see him. This is the culmination of what Scripture is all about: Adam and Eve were cast out of God's presence; into this presence for all eternity we are brought by Jesus' death. So this word of complete salvation encompasses all the promises of everlasting life, because God's eternally planned penal substitution has been accepted.

Therefore, we should die in assurance. It should be true of us as John Wesley said of the early Methodists, 'Our people die well.' We should live and die in full assurance of our salvation. We should, like



Psalm 31:5 states, be able to commit our spirit into our Father's hands, knowing that he has redeemed us by the blood of Christ, for Jesus has died as our penal substitute.

This work was planned from all eternity. In the unapproachable mysteries of the eternal plans of God was included the 'Counsel of Redemption'. The Father gave a people to the Son, and he would come at the appointed time, take their nature, and die for them and rise again. Jesus clearly taught this in John 10. In verses 11 and 15, he declares twice that he will lay down his life for the sheep. This is the doctrine of particular redemption.

In verse 16, he declares that:

- » He has other sheep, not of this fold (Gentiles).
- » That he must bring them to the Father also – this is his purpose in coming, his Father's commission.
- » That they will hear his voice by the Holy Spirit whom he will send. This is irresistible – ie invincible – grace.
- » That there shall be one flock and one shepherd for ever. He will preserve his sheep until they reach the Father. He will not lose a single one out of all that the Father has given him.

These four certainties flow from those of Isaiah 53:10-12. A price had to be paid for a people. On the cross it was paid.

## 5. Jesus' sign of assured salvation (v46b)

We next read that Jesus 'breathed his last' (NIV, ESV), literally, 'He expired'. Mark says the same (15:37). Matthew (27:50) uses the phrase 'released his spirit'; John (19:30) uses a very similar one, 'Yielded up his spirit'.

IN DYING  
LIKE THIS,  
JESUS SHOWS  
US THAT  
HE HAS  
CONQUERED  
DEATH.

Note that none of the evangelists simply say, 'He died' This expression could give the impression of an involuntary death: 'death happened to him'. Rather, we are meant to see that Jesus was in control. He deliberately breathed out, and he deliberately did not breathe in again.

There are misleading teachings concerning Jesus' death. Some believe that he bled out. We know this is not true, for the spear in his side released blood and water (John 19:34) from the upper part of his body some time after his death. Others believe that Jesus died by suffocation, as was common for those crucified. However, if this were the case for Jesus, he could not expire with a 'loud cry'!

Jesus died because he meant to die; it was the Father's appointed moment. He had done everything that was necessary for our salvation, except to die; for the wages of our sin was his death. He died as our penal substitute. All his suffering was over – except the greatest – to suffer death for us.

In dying like this, Jesus shows us that he has conquered death. He is truly, as

William Williams called him, the 'death of death'. John Owen wrote of particular redemption as *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. But on the third day he rose again and is alive for evermore. He is the conqueror of death for his people. We need to know this. We need to be assured that, as believers, he has conquered death for us.

## 6. God's testimony of substitutionary salvation (v47)

We see in the Gospels much testimony to Jesus' inherent righteousness. This testimony comes from those not accepted by the Jews who condemned him. Those rejected by 'the righteous' Jews, saw this, and their testimony is recorded by God in his Word for our benefit. So:

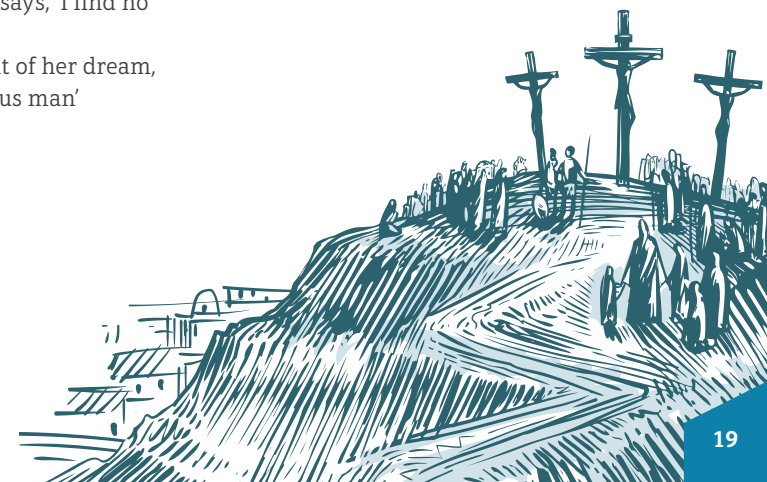
- » In verse 41, the repentant thief rebukes his fellow-thief: 'This man has done nothing wrong.'
- » In verse 47, we have the centurion declaring, 'Truly this man was righteous!'
- » In Matthew 27:54, the centurion and those who were with him declare, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'
- » In Mark 15:14, we read that Pilate asks, 'What evil has he done?'
- » In Luke 23:4, again he says, 'I find no fault in this man.'
- » Pilate's wife, as a result of her dream, calls him 'that righteous man' (Matt 27:19).

Doubtless some of these people spoke better than they knew. Yet this is all unforced testimony of those who saw Jesus, and had no particular reason to think him righteous; indeed, for their own peace of mind, they would have been glad to be convinced that he was guilty of something at least!

The Lamb of God was spotless. Under the Old Covenant, all sacrificial animals had to be outwardly spotless. This was obviously only fitting – they were being offered to a completely holy God. It was also a type. Jesus is the antitype – the One who is morally spotless within.

As such, he was the innocent sin-bearer in his death. Our sins were laid on him as our penal substitute. Hebrews 7:26-27 makes this clear: he is 'holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners'. Unlike the Old Covenant High Priests, he did not have to offer anything for his own sins.

Hebrews 9:14 teaches us that he offered himself to God in our place, without blemish. He willingly allowed the Father to make him the sacrifice for our purification. This is penal substitution



of the innocent for the guilty. Here God in his Word makes it clear that his evaluation of Jesus is: 'spotless', and therefore, that he was accepted as the sacrificial, substitutionary lamb.

We can receive full salvation in him by God's grace, as we are told in Romans 3:24-25: by redemption through propitiation, and reconciliation through faith which leads to justification (Rom 5:1, 11). In Christ, the guilty are justly declared righteous by God (Rom 3:26) because the Righteous One was declared guilty and punished accordingly.

On that great and tremendous day we shall be so declared before all:

*Bold shall I stand on that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through thee I am,  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.*  
(N. von Zinzendorf).

Without him being our penal substitute, there is no meaning, no sense, to Jesus' death. Yet sadly many will deny it, to their own and others' immeasurable hurt. But if you see the Son of God willingly dying in your place by God's appointment, you can 'go on your way rejoicing' (see Acts 8:39); you can draw near to God with full assurance of faith (Heb 10:22); you can live as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2) for him who 'bore your sins in his own body on the tree' (I Peter 2:24). ■



*John Palmer is pastor of Bethany Evangelical Church, Leigh, Lancashire, UK.*



## West Africa

*A large part of the news section this time is focusing on West Africa, an area of the world with particular needs and opportunities for the gospel. For a start, a report on a problematic situation in Cameroon:*



### Cameroon

Older readers may remember reports in *RT* from a number of years ago about brother John Atembe in Cameroon. News has reached us that in an outbreak of violence in the country earlier this year his church building and house were destroyed. He and his family are safe. John had to bury about 35 people in the area who had died in the attack. He is now trying to rebuild the church and is trying to find the means for temporary accommodation for the meetings. We call on our readers to pray for this brother and for the believers in this country. If people are interested to know more and/or are willing to support this brother and his church, please, leave a message at the *Reformation Today* website and we will put you in contact with brothers in the USA who have direct contact with John Atembe.



## French-speaking West-Africa

*Our brother Jean-Claude Souillot has been ministering to various French-speaking countries in West Africa for many years. His ministry is an example of faithful gospel preaching and much-needed instruction to local churches. I am very pleased to include the following extracts from his most recent newsletter for the encouragement of our readers.*

### Togo

The three weeks of this trip were divided between Togo and Benin. Philip Hynes, preacher and leader in Chalon (France) came with me, which was a great asset to the visit, as he is a fine preacher and a help to me.

After a four-hour delay in Paris, we landed in Lomé, Togo, to be met by Julien Naka, our colleague for Benin-Togo, and Paul NGoran who had just flown in from Ivory Coast. Julien is the pastor of the Grace Church in Bohicon, Benin, and a fine preacher. He also travels extensively in Benin and Togo to distribute the Europresse books. Paul is the pastor of the Grace Church in Gagnoa, Ivory Coast, and oversees part of the African work.

We travelled the next day to Atakpamé, 80 miles north of Lomé. One Christian lady, who manages a fairly large business in the region, had invited us to preach. She opened the conference room in her firm, and about 30 people came on the two evenings we preached. We also had time to talk with those who came, many having some searching questions. One morning we went to preach to a



small gathering recently formed on one of the hills. Again, after the message (obviously new to them) we were faced with searching and interesting questions. It was a joy to be able to direct their thoughts to the one who is a victorious Saviour. It is always such a joy in Africa to see how quickly one can engage in a serious discussion about spiritual things.

We had been invited by a Baptist church in one of the neighbourhoods of



*Young people meeting in Lomé*

Lomé to lead a weekend retreat. After a providential contact, many years ago, we have preached there a number of times now and have some old friends. Koffi, the new pastor, has been in charge of this congregation and three small annexes for about a year. He was very welcoming and obviously attentive to the message.



*Pastor Koffi with Jean-Claude Souillot*

We had several teaching sessions throughout the weekend. On Sunday we went to four different places to preach. I had the pleasure of preaching where Mesmin is endeavouring to plant a church. This younger man trained at the Belgian

Bible Institute in Brussels and it was encouraging for him to have a visitor preaching the same truths he seeks to teach his congregation.

While in Lomé, we had a couple of meetings in the home of Florent, a retired man who is blind. Several years ago he heard the gospel through one of our radio programmes broadcast on a local station. Since then his love for the free grace of God in Christ alone is contagious, and he doesn't miss an opportunity to have it preached in his home where he invites friends and neighbours to come. Because of his handicap, he cannot meet with the Grace Church which is located a long way from him.

On the Sunday afternoon I had a long meeting with the young adults from the Baptist church and its annexes. Over 100 of them came and, after looking at some of their questions, we delved into the Word to answer the question: 'What is a Christian, and how does one become a Christian?' This is an important subject for young people who have often been brought up in a religious environment and who live in a very religious culture.

## West Africa Grace Conference

This year the conference was held in a new place, a hotel by the beach near the historic city of Ouidah, in south Benin.

One hundred and fifteen people came this year from Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast and Burkina. Several friends were not able to come at the last minute because of work commitments. There was a wonderful mixing among the attendees and many new contacts were made and strengthened. Both during the conference and most of the visit I felt that there was a 'bristling' of anticipation among the believers with a renewed interest in spiritual truths and an expectation to see the Lord at work. The teaching was also very uplifting and biblical. Several men from Benin preached, as well as Mesmin from Lomé, together with Paul and our colleague Vincent (who had joined us by then). Vincent is a very gifted preacher and distributes the Europresse books in Ivory Coast. Philip gave three outstanding messages ('The law cannot justify the sinner', 'The law cannot sanctify the saint', 'The first hymn in Revelation'). I am hoping to publish these as small booklets in the near future. I gave three messages on 1 John 3:1-3, a passage which was such a delight for me to work on (the status, security and sight of the believer).

## Benin

Paul, Vincent and I went to Porto Novo, where the local Grace Church had planned a small retreat. The brethren there were divided into two factions until last year when the Lord wonderfully worked out a reunion under the oversight of Cyriaque Aholou, a fine preacher and pastor, originally from Bohicon in central Benin. It was a wonderful sight to see the room full to capacity and the formerly divided leaders sitting together with joy to be fed with the Word. We need to continue to pray for this congregation as there are still a few minor points to sort out, and because the enemy will most certainly not give up the fight so easily. On the Tuesday we observed the Lord's Supper, a very moving time as it was the first anniversary of the reunion of the brethren.



*Travelling by boat to preach*

It is interesting to see that what the Lord has accomplished in Porto Novo, bringing men back to following the Saviour. This is now touching others, inspiring them with new hope and vision. It is one thing to know that he can do it, and a totally new thing to see him do it! There is also a new and growing realisation that the ministry of the Word and the leading of God's people are fundamental aspects of the faith and that one needs to get involved, even financially, in this.

My last weekend was spent preaching with Vincent at a retreat organised by the Cotonou Grace Church. This was a wonderful time. Many friends came from

the whole region and there was hardly room for anybody else. Every square inch of the premises was put to good use for the occasion. There again, there seemed to be a sense of excitement at listening to the Word and being challenged by it, to a point I have rarely experienced.

As I made my way to the airport to return home, I had the definite sense of having been blessed to live a special time in the three weeks there, a really great gospel feast. I do not think that I have been blessed to that extent in the twenty years I have been travelling to Africa. May the Lord bring fruit for his glory out of all that was done!

## Ethiopia

*Keith Underhill has written the following about a visit he made to this African country about which we read relatively little.*

The purpose of spending the weekend in Addis Ababa was to introduce the few former members of Trinity Baptist Church, Nairobi to the Addis Baptist Church. A year ago I had encouraged them to start studying the *1689 Confession* with a view to eventually starting a church. Then in December 2018, at a day conference, I heard a report on the Addis Baptist Church by someone who had recently visited.

So on Sunday 10 March I was taken to the appropriately named 'Holy City Mall'. We had to wait in the ground floor coffee shop as people had been delayed by a road race. The church meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in a large recording studio. (see <http://www.addis-baptist.com>).

The TBC Nairobi members were all present and they greatly appreciated the meetings. I was encouraged as it was a little taste of what I was used to in Nairobi, meeting the whole day! It began with a Bible study using the booklet, 'The Doctrines of Grace in the Gospel of John.' Then the worship followed where I preached through translation on the conversion of the Thessalonians from chapter one of the first letter. Then there was lunch together and most of the 40 or so stayed. Then in a number of groups there was discussion about the sermon of last Sunday afternoon and mine of the morning. This was followed by the Lord's



Supper and the second service where I took the same passage to emphasise man's response in conversion, having dealt with God's work in the morning. Throughout the day I understood absolutely nothing. I could not even mouth the words of the hymns as I have no knowledge of the Amharic script. Nonetheless it was a precious time knowing I was with brethren in the Lord.

It is a church largely made up of young people. I think the only two over 40 years are two of the elders. Pray especially for full-time pastor Gedion Agzew, who also runs a theological course. This is a country where the biblical Reformed faith is hardly known. Almost two-thirds of the population of over 100 million profess to be Christians, and the other one-third are Muslims. Of the Christians 7 out of 10 are adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which is hardly evangelical. Many of the rest are Pentecostals and Charismatics, and the largest Protestant Church, the Lutherans, has been deeply affected.

## Burundi

It is wonderful to see how brethren in Kenya are concerned about the spiritual need in other countries in the region. Naphtally Ogallo and his wife have recently made a trip through Uganda and Rwanda to Burundi. He met there with Jean Bosco Ngendakumana from Bujumbura, Burundi, who has been a student at Kisumu Reformed School of Theology (Kenya) since 2017. Bosco's great desire is to see a Reformed Baptist church begin in Bujumbura.



## Indonesia

*We have reported before on the missionary journeys of Pastor Stephen Nowak to Tanzania and Indonesia. Here is Stephen's latest report on his recent trip to Indonesia:*

Dear Reader  
My assistant Scott and I returned on the 21 May from a four-week mission trip to Indonesia. This was my seventh and Scott's first visit to Indonesia. I have been to many of the different islands of Indonesia but this year we focused on West Java, Central Java and Nias. I normally spend time in West Java and then two other locations that we fly to.

We started off teaching in three different colleges in the West Java. There were about 130 students and 20 teachers in total. I taught for three days on how all the repeated words, objects, actions and ideas in Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 21-22 can only be connected, understood and fulfilled at the cross. Biblical Theology is not often taught in Indonesia. All received a copy of the *1689 Baptist Confession* and five books each. The books given to the

students depended on which college year they were in and what subjects they were taught. Although these three colleges are not very far apart geographically they are training young people for very different works of Christian service. Indonesia has about 200 million Muslims and 45 million Christians; the pastoral and evangelistic needs are enormous. There are also students studying to teach Christianity in government schools as religious education is mandatory in Indonesia. Everyone is officially registered as Muslim or Christian and their children receive the appropriate religious education in government schools. Some students will go on to teach in private Christian schools as well.

We then moved on to Central Java which is about an eight-hour train journey and I taught in one Bible college for three days. There were about 60 students and we



Students at Arrabona College, Indonesia

had a great time over-viewing the book of Hebrews, particularly focusing on the uniqueness, sufficiency and supremacy of Christ as great motivations to faithfulness, endurance and perseverance in the face of persecution and discouragement. The Christian life and ministry is a race that has to be run wisely as we fix our eyes on Christ, humbly depending upon his sufficiency and reverently submitting to his supremacy. Central Java is far less tolerant of Christianity than West Java and other more Christian parts of Indonesia. The large mosques are visible all over the place and the very scarce and small churches are a clear sign of the spiritual state of Central Java. The students are preparing to serve and minister in this climate.

After returning to West Java we flew off to Nias, an island at the north-west tip of

Indonesia. The island is predominantly Christian with very few Muslims outside of the capital city. There is freedom to have large Bible colleges and many are trained in Nias before going off to other parts of Indonesia where there may not be many or any Christians. Some tribes in Indonesia are over 15 million with very, very few known believers among them. I taught in two colleges: one with 380 students and the other with 60 students. All were given a copy of the *1689 Confession* and a set of five books each. The church in Nias is really beginning to wake up to the great needs of the other islands and is starting to send missionaries from Nias into the other more needy parts of Indonesia. This means colleges are changing their curriculum and new colleges are springing up with this as their primary purpose. We met many pastors in the month and often had opportunity to go and speak at



Stephen Nowak explaining the importance of reading

pastors' fraternals. We gave about 250 sets of books to pastors in West Java, Central Java and Nias. Another twenty sets of books were sent through an evangelist to be distributed to pastors in a rural part of Kalimantan as well. Most pastors and evangelists who are planting new churches or working underground to bring the gospel to Muslims have had some Bible college training but do not own any or many books at all. These books will be highly valued, diligently read and probably shared. There are a few good book publishers in Jakarta but often their books do not leave the capital city and very few, if any, have a passion to see all the preachers and teachers throughout Indonesia owning their own books. Outside of the five main cities of Indonesia I doubt if there is one pastor who would own anywhere near something that could be called a small personal

library. Please pray for the 920 (approx) sets of books that the students, teachers, pastors and evangelists received, that they will be read, understood and useful in equipping these servants to fulfil the great commission. Please pray for all the lectures and sermons we gave, that there will be lasting fruit. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will continue to thrust forth labours among the 200 million Muslims of Indonesia who have very few evangelists working among them.

If you have any questions, please contact me at: [stephennowak127@gmail.com](mailto:stephennowak127@gmail.com)

With sincere Christian love.  
Pastor Stephen Nowak &  
Scott Pipe-Wolferstan.

*Sola Scriptura, Solo Christo, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Soli Deo Gloria, Romans 11:33-12:2.*



## African Pastors' Conference News

### APC in Senegal

For this issue we offer some extracts from a report by APC manager Nico van Zyl on the first ever series of four conferences in Senegal, which is part of French speaking West Africa (see also News section):

I was joined by Pastor Thomas Winn from Mississippi in America and Pastor Ronald Kalifunga from Lusaka, Zambia. Pastor Oscar Njock was our organiser that helped on the ground in Senegal. Never have we run conferences in a French-speaking country before. Pastor Thomas Winn knew of people who knew people in Senegal, so when we heard of Pastor Oscar who would organise conferences for us, we decided to come to Senegal. Senegal is mainly a Muslim country where about 4% of the population call themselves Christians. There is no overt persecution of Christians, and Christians are allowed to evangelise.

Our first conference was in Dakar. Dakar is a very busy city with lots of traffic and people. We had our conference at an independent church. We had 26 delegates at this conference. Pastor Thomas and I

taught the first day, while Pastor Ronald arrived on the first day of the conference. It was a very good conference where the people listened attentively, and they were glad that we came. The next two conferences were held in Fatick, Ziguinchor.

I was struck also by the general poverty levels of the people in Senegal. Many could not afford the registration fees and therefore we did not make paying the registration fees compulsory to attend the sessions.

Later we travelled to Kolda, one of the larger cities in Senegal and by far the hottest place where we went to in Senegal. When we arrived in Kolda, it was 41 degrees Celsius at 5 o'clock in the afternoon! The hotel where we stayed didn't really have aircon although the fan did work. It was a very skimpy wind that passed the three of us every now and again during the hot night, but we survived and were grateful for the opportunity to visit the interior of



*French literature from Chapel Library for Senegal*

Senegal. My impression of Kolda was that there was a lot of waste and paper scattered all around.

At our last conference we had 32 delegates at Eglise Evangélique des Assemblées de Dieu. Our book sales were by far the best in Kolda. We also sold more than 20 SD cards in Kolda. Pastors, we were told, came from far to the conference. We were grateful that Pastor Oscar sent out so many invitations to the people in his networks. Pastor Oscar, who comes from Cameroon, has been a missionary in Senegal for over 17 years. He is a man who is very passionate about prayer and conducts conferences on prayer regularly. I would say that this conference in Kolda was our best one in Senegal. The speakers

again did a splendid job in teaching and ministering the Word of God faithfully. We are thankful for their labours in the Lord.

One of the comments by the delegates at Kolda was: 'These teachings are very important for the growth for the church.' All in all, from the feedback we received from Pastor Oscar and from the delegates we believe we had a good conference run in Senegal. Afterwards Pastor Oscar spoke to a few that attended the conferences and he said many had asked us to come again. They said it should not be a one-off conference trip! Many were encouraged, and one delegate who has bought a SD card has listened to the sermons and said they really blessed him. He said that these sermons are not for babies. ■

# The Manchester Martyr



**The heroic story of  
John Bradford (1510-1555)**

Part 1

John Bradford, born in Blackley and educated at Manchester Grammar School, was a preacher whose boldness shook the whole area of Lancashire and Cheshire. He was burnt at the stake during Mary Tudor's reign but his influence still lives on.

## Man of the Bible and man of the people

There are two memorials to John Bradford in Manchester.

The first is the statue on the façade of Manchester Town Hall, by Farmer and Brindley, from around 1870. In it Bradford stands upright with an open Bible in his right hand – yet not as a scholar would hold a book for his own perusal and careful study, with it facing towards him, but rather he holds it in the manner of a teacher, with the book facing towards the people. The peculiarity of this is intended to catch our attention, and to demonstrate Bradford's particular concern to share the contents of this book with you, the person who has come to look upon him. As you look up at that statue, you will see his eyes fixed upon you, the onlooker, with purposeful gaze. He is concerned about you!

The representation is wonderfully apt, for John Bradford was a man of the Bible. He believed the Bible to be the Word of God, inspired in its every page, inerrant in its every word, and sufficient in its every teaching to prepare every man, woman and child for life in this world, as well as the world to come. In his farewell to the City of London written shortly before his execution, he wrote these words:

'The Word of God, written by the prophets and apostles, left and contained in the canonical books of the Holy Bible, I do believe to contain plentifully "all things necessary to salvation", so that nothing, as necessary to salvation ought to be added thereto: and therefore the church of Christ, nor none of his congregation, ought to be burdened with any other doctrine than which hereout hath his foundation and ground. In testimony of this faith I render and give my life ...'

Bradford was a man so convinced of the absolute necessity and importance of the Bible, so assured of its completeness, so taken with how unspeakably wonderful it is, that he was prepared to give his life to preserve the freedom to share it with everyone – which he did! He was a man of the Bible.

The other thing implicit from this statue is that he was a man of the people. He loved people; he wanted nothing more than to do others good. John Foxe wrote this of the man:

'Very gentle he was to man and child ... His chief recreation was, in no gaming or other pastime, but only in honest company, and comely talk, wherein he would spend a little leisure after dinner at the board, and so to prayer and the book again. He counted that hour not well spent, wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, study, or in exhorting of others.'

Speaking of his behaviour during his time of imprisonment in the Tower of London, Foxe comments:

'He was no niggard of his purse, but would liberally participate what he had to his fellow prisoners. And commonly once a week he visited the thieves, pick-purses, and such others that were with him in prison where he lay, on the other side; unto whom he would give godly exhortation to learn the amendment of their lives by their troubles, and after that so done, distribute among them some portion of money to their comfort.'

This love of the people was also clearly demonstrated the night before his execution. He did not spend the night alone, but with six friends with whom he prayed and conversed to the point that they 'marvelled at him'. Bradford spent the night before he was to be taken from this world doing what he enjoyed most, conversing and praying with his fellows. Further, the next day, despite measures being taken to limit the spread of the news of Bradford's execution, there was a great crowd lining the streets between Counter and Newgate, many of whom prayed with him tearfully.

Love of the Bible and love of the people! These were the two great loves in John Bradford's life. Therefore, it should be of no great surprise to us that his greatest passion, wonderfully expressed in the statue at Manchester Town Hall, was preaching the Bible to the people. His purpose was not to display his erudition, or be honoured as a great scholar and

orator, but to give his beloved people the most valuable thing he possessed – the Word of God in English.

To have the Bible in English, William Tyndale and others had already given their lives. It was Tyndale's vision that the ploughboy as well as the king might have access to the Word of God; not to have it hidden from them by the barrier of mediaeval Latin, but opened up to them in the English of the ordinary man. Bradford was a man of this persuasion, and he too gave his life to defend the right to preach God's Word to the people.

His passion for preaching the love of Christ to the 'ordinary man' shines through many of his writings. It is particularly evident in the following letter written by Bradford

from prison, wholeheartedly pleading with his native Mancunians to turn to the Lord:

'Therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, I your poorest brother, now departing to the Lord, as my farewell for this present life, pray you, beseech you, and even from the very bottom of my heart, for all the mercies of God in Christ showed unto you, I most earnestly beg and crave of you out of prison as often out of your pulpits I have done, that you will repent you, leave your wicked and evil life, be sorry for your offences, and turn to the Lord, whose arms are wide open to receive and embrace you; whose hand, stretched

His purpose was not to display his erudition, or be honoured as a great scholar and orator, but to give his beloved people the most valuable thing he possessed – the Word of God in English.

out to death, stayeth, that he might show mercy upon you, for he is the Lord of mercy, and God of all comfort. He willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that you should return, convert, and amend ...'

In light of this, the memorial statue on Manchester Town Hall speaks to us most appropriately of John Bradford: the man who loved the Bible, the man who loved the people, and the man who gave his life so that men, women, and children might have the Bible and all its glorious teachings.

### Humility, conviction and compassion

The second memorial can be found in the grounds of Manchester Cathedral. It is a humble and unadorned affair, erected in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beneath the City's coat of arms, on a simple blue plaque in brass lettering with no other adornment are the words:

JOHN BRADFORD  
1510-1555  
EDWARD BARLOW  
1585-1641  
NATIVES OF MANCHESTER  
BOTH MARTYRED FOR THEIR  
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

This is a curious plaque because Edward Barlow, the second man commemorated on it, was a Roman Catholic priest set upon by an angry mob of Protestants and executed for the 'crime' of being a Roman Catholic priest. At first, it seems that to have a Protestant martyr and a Romanist martyr on the same plaque is more than a little inappropriate. However, I believe

that this inevitable first impression is a great mistake: the plaque is, rather, most appropriate for the commemoration of John Bradford. There are three outstanding reasons for this:

#### 1. Bradford's humility

John Bradford was renowned, even legendary, for his humility. His invariable practice before criticising others for their sins and failings was first to lay himself in the dust. Thomas Sampson, who was one of the translators of the Geneva Bible, spoke thus of his friend and colleague:

'If he did hear or see any plague or misery, he noted it as a thing procured by his own sins, and still added, "*Domine miserere mei*," "Lord, have mercy upon me." He used in the same book to note such evil thoughts as did rise in him; as of envying the good of other men, thoughts of unthankfulness, of not considering God in his works, of hardness and unsensibleness of heart when he did see others moved and affected. And thus he made to himself and of himself a book of daily practices of repentance.

'In consideration of this, being commemorated beside a fellow sinner would be of no offence to him. Furthermore, it was his usual practice, not only to think lowly of himself, but to think more highly of others.'

In the same piece, Sampson writes: 'He used to make unto himself an ephemeris or a journal, in which he used to write all such notable things as either he did see or hear each day that passed ... For if he did see or hear any good in any



*John Bradford and Edward Barlow plaque displayed at Manchester Cathedral*

man, by that sight he found and noted the want thereof in himself, and added a short prayer, craving mercy and grace to amend.'

This commitment to self-examination before ever speaking a word of conviction

to others is explained by Richard Hone:

'Maintaining the strictest watchfulness over himself, he was kept in the deepest humility, for whatever view he might have of the faults of others, he had a much clearer perception of his own; and

every error into which he was betrayed, even the slightest deviation from the path which he has prescribed for himself to walk in, was the occasion of most bitter self-reproach, even to the extent of his charging himself with being a very hypocrite.'

How often is it that when we see others doing good, we just want to pull them down? Not with Bradford; he sets the example by noting down the good in others and realising the lack of that good in himself. This heart of humility is enshrined in a phrase that we use today as an expression of humility when we see others failing – 'There but for the grace of God go I.' The phrase is taken from Bradford's own lips. Aubrey Townsend says this:

*The humility of this man is striking! Even when he sees men justly condemned for their sins, he is reminded, 'But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford.'*

'The familiar story that, on seeing evildoers taken to the place of execution, he was wont to exclaim, "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford," is a universal tradition, which has overcome the lapse of time. And Venning, writing in 1653, desirous to show that "by the sight of others" sins, men may learn to bewail their own sinfulness and heart of corruption', instances the case of Bradford, who, 'when he saw any drunk or heard of any swear, would railingly complain, "Lord, I have a drunken head; Lord, I have a swearing heart."''

The humility of this man is striking! Even when he sees men justly condemned for

their sins, he is reminded, 'But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford.'

Thus, a plain blue plaque with some simple lettering upon it is wonderfully fitting to commemorate this humble man.

## 2. Bradford's conviction

Secondly, this plaque is appropriate because of Bradford's conviction. While it is true to say that Bradford's beliefs were radically different from those of the Roman Catholic priest Edward Barlow, it is equally true that Bradford believed in an individual conscience. Moreover, he himself refused to recant under pressure: he believed that a man ought not to be forced to change his convictions, rather that he must be free to follow the Word of God wherever that word leads him.

The first examination of Bradford by the Queen's Council is an excellent example of this unwavering conviction. This is Foxe's account of the event (author's paraphrase):

'Bradford kneeled but was told to rise, which he did. Bradford looked upon the Lord Chancellor with such compassion that the Lord Chancellor was clearly troubled and amazed. The Lord Chancellor started by stating that Bradford had been imprisoned justly for his seditious behaviour, false preaching and arrogance in taking it upon himself to preach without authority at St Paul's

Cross since 13th August 1553. The Lord Chancellor then goes on to offer the Queen's mercy if Bradford will recant and return to the Catholic religion. Bradford first made reverent obeisance, and then replied that he had been long imprisoned and unjustly so; for he had done nothing seditiously, falsely or arrogantly in word or fact, by preaching or otherwise, but had rather sought truth, peace and godly quietness, as an obedient and faithful subject in everything that he had done. He was interrupted and told he was lying as the Lord of London would testify. Bonner then declared that Bradford had indeed sought to lead the people in a destructive manner and was the author of the sedition. Bradford simply said that he had spoken the truth and that one day his Lord and God would testify to it: but "because I cannot be believed of you, I must and am ready to suffer ... whatsoever God shall license you to do unto me." Again he was accused of lying and of the hurt he had caused by his behaviour and talk. Then he asks what he had said that was amiss. He is told in reply that if he will "return again" (ie recant his convictions) he will receive the Queen's mercy. Bradford replies that he desires God's mercy not his wrath, and that his conscience is free regarding what he has spoken; being in agreement with both God's laws and the laws of the realm. The Lord Chancellor replies, "Well, if thou make this babbling rolling in thy eloquent tongue, and yet being altogether ignorant and vain-glorious, and wilt not receive mercy offered to thee, know for truth, that the Queen is minded to make a purgation of all such as thou art." Bradford responds that he desires God's mercy, though he would be glad of the Queen's favour also,

that he might live as "a subject without a clog of conscience. But otherwise the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. And I know to whom I have committed my life, even into his hands which will keep it, so that no man may take it away before it be his pleasure ... Therefore his good will be done; life in his displeasure is worse than death, and death with his true favour, is true life." He is then accused of preaching devilish doctrine; for which Bradford asks for proof. At this point he is questioned regarding his views of Communion. He responds that he has sworn six times to the effect that he will never consent to the practising of any Jurisdiction, or any Authority of the Bishop of Rome within England. So he asks whether or not the question is asked by his authority. If so, he refused to answer as he believed this would be in violation of his oath. He had so sworn when admitted Master of Arts, when admitted Fellow of Pembroke Hall, then before Visitors, then on entering the Ministry, when a Prebend was given him and, lastly, when he swore to serve the king a little before his death. On being accused that these are, "Herod's Oaths", he states that their own writings affirm his claims. Mr. Rochester (another of the Council) then declares that it is good and right that Bradford is imprisoned.'

It is interesting that the Catholic authorities who imprisoned Bradford and eventually ordered his execution tried harder than usual to get him to recant his convictions. Three times he was due to be executed, and three times it was deferred as they tried yet again to cajole him into a change of mind. Despite desperate efforts, they failed - Bradford's conscience could not be manipulated. He was sure of where



*Bradford in prison with bishops*

he stood and was content to give his life, if that be necessary.

Edward Barlow, although a Catholic, similarly refused to recant and step down: he also followed his convictions, even to death. It is therefore fitting that these two men should be remembered beside each other, both being men of unswerving conviction and unwavering conscience!

### *3. Bradford's compassion*

Finally, the plaque is appropriate because of John Bradford's compassion. As we have already seen, he loved people, even people who were violently opposed to

him, even those who were determined to see him recant or die!

But isn't this all a little far-fetched? Isn't it just impossible for any man to love his enemies and seek the good of those who hate him? Humanly speaking, that is certainly true. Yet John Bradford was a man in Christ, and such a man is able to manifest an impossible compassion even towards his enemies. Let one shining example suffice:

Soon after the accession to the throne of Romanist Queen Mary in July 1553, Gilbert Bourne, one of Mary's close

confidantes, was preaching at St Paul's Cross in London. He condemned the recently deceased King Edward and his Protestant policies, spoke energetically in favour of the new Queen, and praised her commitment to the Pope and Roman Catholic Church. The crowd, who were largely Protestant, became agitated and began to throw missiles at the preacher. At first, it would have been rotten fruit and stones, but soon the bombardment became dangerous, and one man even threw a dagger at Bourne, only narrowly missing him.

John Bradford, who was at the front of the crowd at the time, quickly ascended the steps to the pulpit and stood in front of his enemy, forming a human shield against the missiles. He pleaded with the crowd to desist and succeeded in calming them a little. In the lull thus created, he assisted Bourne from the pulpit, always ensuring that his body stood between the preacher and the crowd. As he was doing so, one man shouted out in anger and astonishment, 'Thou savest him that will help burn thee! I give thee his life: if it were not for thee, I would, I assure thee, run him through with my sword.' Undeterred, Bradford stayed with Bourne until his safety was secured.

The next Sunday afternoon, John Bradford preached at Bow Church condemning the attack and calling upon the people to show the spirit of Christ. Only three days later, he was arrested and committed to the Tower on a charge of seditious conduct on that very day! Never was a man so falsely accused – unless it be his own Lord and Saviour.

Yet it is this compassion that makes that plain blue plaque, shared with a Catholic martyr, so appropriate!

What a man was John Bradford? A man whose memorials commemorate him most appropriately; a man of the Bible and a man of the people; a man of humility, of conviction and of compassion; a man after his Saviour's own heart.

Having seen what a great man Bradford was, it would be folly not to ask: how did he become such a man? What were the influences in his life that formed him into such a remarkable character?

There were three stages that led to this mature man of such attractive attributes: his education, his conversion and his ministry. These prepared him for his Christ-like sufferings and his martyrdom.

### Education

John Bradford was born in Manchester in 1510. Very little is known of his family background, but we do know that he was educated at Manchester Grammar School, or rather at the Free Grammar School in Manchester, as it was then known.

The school was founded in 1515 by Bishop Hugh Oldham. Oldham was a Renaissance man, which means that he was committed to the 'new learning' – this is the learning of the biblical texts in the original languages, the Greek and Hebrew; he was committed to a new approach to the Bible and to scholarly pursuit in general, turning away from the scholasticism of the Middle Ages.

The original charter for the school required that the boys, who attended from the ages of 7 to 14 when they would hopefully go to university, be taught 'according to the system used in Banbury'. This meant that they were to be taught classical Latin from their first day, with the emphasis upon grammar – hence the 'Grammar' School.

The school was to be completely free for all the boys, and teachers were forbidden from taking any money from the scholars over and above their stipend paid by Oldham himself. Furthermore, no male child from any part of the country was to be excluded, provided he suffered from no contagious disease or infection such as pox, leprosy, or any other pestilence. For each scholar who could afford it, a penny was to be donated. This money was then given to two poor scholars who would earn it by cleaning the building. Radically, all favouritism was banned. More specifically, there was to be no favouritism for those from a wealthy background. With this in mind, the charter required that no boy be allowed to carry a dagger, hanger [a short sword], or any other weapon upon his belt. This rule was not put in place out of a fear of these weapons being used – unlike today, discipline was far too severe for misbehaviour of that sort – but that such items marked the wealthy out from the poor, which was not to be permitted. The only item the 7-year old new boys were to carry upon their person were the hornbooks. These fascinating items are described thus:

The hornbook was the most important tool used in the Grammar Schools.

Reading and writing skills were learnt from the alphabet detailed on a 'horn-book'. A hornbook was a piece of parchment usually pasted on to a small wooden board with a handle, and covered with a thin plate of transparent horn (from where the name of hornbook was derived). This made the hornbook durable and inexpensive and an important item during the education of children. The hornbook displayed the alphabet in both small letters and capital letters. The Lord's Prayer in English was also included on the hornbook together with the mark of the cross, hence the alphabet detailed on the hornbook was known as 'Christcross-row' or 'chrisscross'.

There were many differences between the schooling received by boys like John Bradford, and the schooling many children are receiving today. Between the ages of 7 and 10 boys would have spent their early childhood being taught by Ushers – a junior master or senior pupil at the Grammar School. The first thing the boys learnt was the rudiments of Latin with the assistance of the hornbook. During the first year, aged 7, the curriculum would have consisted of learning the conjugations of verbs and how to put sentences together. The second year, aged 8, the boys would be taught the rules of grammar and sentence construction. The third year, aged 9, would have concentrated on English-Latin and Latin-English translations.

Between the ages of 10 and 14, boys leave the Ushers to be taught by the Masters in the following lessons:

- » Latin to English translations
- » Literature including the works of the great classical authors and dramatists such as Ovid, Plautus, Horace, Virgil, Cicero and Seneca
- » Occasionally the study of Greek
- » Religious education
- » Arithmetic

Life at school was quite strict. During summer, the school day started at six o'clock in the morning and finished at five o'clock in the evening, with a two-hour break at midday. Because of the dark nights, the hours changed during the winter, and school started at seven and finished earlier at four o'clock. The school week consisted of five full days and a half-day, on Thursday, which continued for between 40 to 44 weeks of the year. This meant that the schoolboys spent at least 2,000 hours in school – more than double the current school hours. The older schoolboys were expected to converse in Latin at all times in order to improve their spoken fluency in the language, and any boy caught speaking English at school was punished. The punishments were fierce, and fifty strokes of the cane was not an uncommon occurrence.

Education was based on repetition and constant examinations. A typical school week at a Grammar School like MGS would cover:

- » Monday: an examination based on the previous Sunday's sermon
- » Tuesday to Thursday: the basic curriculum
- » Friday: examinations and punishments
- » Saturday: study of the catechism and some arithmetic

We know that John Bradford did well at school, particularly in Latin and Maths. He also seems to have very much appreciated the education he received at home and school; when he was in prison and meditating on the commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother', he wrote highly of his education and childhood:

'I cannot but say that I have most cause to thank thee for my parents, schoolmasters, and others, under whose tuition thou hast put me. No pen is able to write the particular benefits, which I have already received in my infancy, childhood, youth, middle age, and always hitherto ... I could reckon innumerable behind me, and but few before me, so much made of and cared for as I have been hitherto.'

This schooling laid the foundation for the formation of his convictions and character later in life. If he was a man of the Bible, it was at school that he had learnt how to read, analyse, understand, and dissect the text. He had been given the tools, through the discipline and teaching he had experienced, which would be essential for later life. Is the anaemic, atheistic, superficial, materialistic, hedonistic, individualistic, undisciplined education which many children receive today one of the foundational causes of our long-term spiritual decline? ■

*To be continued in the next issue with the story of his conversion, ministry and sufferings.*

*Oliver Allmand-Smith is Pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Ramsbottom, UK, and is one of the trustees of the Reformation Today Trust.*

## New Books

*The following books have been published recently and are recommended for your attention:*

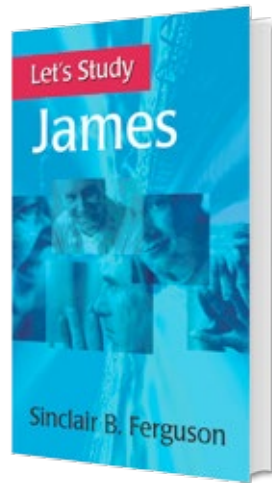
- Kevin DeYoung, *Grace Defined and Defended. What a 400-Year-Old Confession Teaches Us about Sin, Salvation, and the Sovereignty of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 144 pages, ISBN 978-1-4335-6439-0.
- Peter J Williams, *Can We Trust the Gospels?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 160 pages, ISBN 978-1-43355-295-3.
- Joel R Beeke, Paul M Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology, Vol. 1. Revelation and God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 1120 pages, ISBN 978-1-43355-983-9.
- J Stephen Yuille, *The Path of Life. Blessedness in Seasons of Lament* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 224 pages, ISBN 978-1-60178-689-0.
- Brian G Najapfour (ed.), *The Collected Prayers of John Knox* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 208 pages, ISBN 978-1-60178-666-1.
- Jonathan Edwards, *Altogether Lovely: The Glory and Excellency of Jesus Christ* (Soli Deo Gloria Publications via Reformation Heritage Books), 238 pages (no ISBN).
- Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Piety. A Puritan Devotional Manual* (Soli Deo Gloria Publications via Reformation Heritage Books), 343 pages (no ISBN).
- Paul Helm, *Just Words? Special Revelation and the Bible* (EP Books, 2019), 114 pages, ISBN 978-1-78397-197-8.
- Jeffery Smith, *The Rich Man and Lazarus. The plain truth about life after death* (EP Books, 2019), 112 pages, ISBN 978-1-78397-245-6.
- Jeremy Walker, *A Face Like A Flint. Learning from the Righteous Determination of the Saviour* (EP Books, 2019), 96 pages, ISBN 978-1-78397-205-1.
- Derek W H Thomas, *Heaven on Earth. What the Bible Teaches About Life to Come* (Christian Focus Publications), 112 pages, ISBN 978-1-52710-145-6.
- Sinclair B Ferguson, *Maturity. Growing Up and Going on in the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2019), 244 pages, ISBN 978-1-84871-685-4.

*Please note that we are unable to supply these books; please contact your local bookshop.*



# Book Reviews

## Let's Study James



**Author:** Sinclair B Ferguson  
**Publisher:** Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2018 (141 pages)  
**ISBN:** 978-1-84871-846-3

This book is a new addition to the Banner of Truth 'Let's Study' commentary series addressing the letter of James. This letter is often regarded as a practical letter full of advice to help us in our Christian life. It would be a mistake, however, if this would give the impression that this letter is relatively superficial, dealing with practical matters. Instead the letter often has some profoundly challenging messages to its readers. The author brings this out very well in this short but insightful commentary.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters of approximately equal length

followed by a study guide for use in groups including discussion questions. The division used by the author ensures that all the topics in this letter are addressed, explained and applied.

The author has packed a remarkable amount of explanatory material in this short commentary. He often refers to many other parts of the Bible to show that the message of James is consistent with the rest of Scripture, especially the Old Testament wisdom literature, the Gospels and the letters of Paul. The latter is especially relevant as the passage of 2:14-26 is often regarded as contradicting

the teaching of Paul in the letter to the Romans (especially Rom. 4:1-25). The author gives a convincing explanation that such a contradiction does not exist upon closer examination of the texts.

In this way, Ferguson shows how the practical teaching of James has much stronger doctrinal roots than may be inferred from a superficial reading of this letter. At the same time, his insightful explanation and application of the text shows how James' letter addresses and searches the hidden motives of our hearts for the way we lead our lives. The penetrating

application is humbling, but drives us always to the great brother of James, the Lord Jesus Christ, for giving us the grace and wisdom we need to live the Christian life.

Let me give one quote from the commentary on 3:1-12, the role of the tongue, to indicate the rich scriptural language of Ferguson's treatment. 'Only the mouth that has been "stopped" – as Isaiah's was – and then has felt the burning coal of forgiveness that comes from the curse-laden altar of the cross of Calvary – is fit to speak because it has been cleansed to speak well.' ■

## Saved by Grace Alone

### Sermons on Ezekiel 36:16-36

**Author:** D Martyn Lloyd-Jones  
**Publisher:** Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2018 (240 pages)  
**ISBN:** 978-1-84871-828-9

This is another collection of sermons by this well-known preacher which were preached in Westminster Chapel, London, in the period April-July 1956. As the back page of the book says, these sermons are a

fine example of preaching evangelistically from a consecutive passage of the Old Testament. In this case, the passage is a well-known part of the book of Ezekiel. Lloyd-Jones used this to explain and apply





the message of the gospel. This use of the passage in this way is based on the use of this passage in the New Testament to refer to the time of the new covenant. The author in most cases moves rather directly from the text to the exposition of the text in gospel terms. This implies that these sermons do not go into much detail of exegesis or into an explanation of what the text meant in the context of the first recipients of Ezekiel's message and the message of the book as a whole. Given this choice, we are offered indeed fine examples of a powerful and penetrating presentation of the gospel.

An example will illustrate this approach. Ezekiel 36:24 states: 'For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.' According to Lloyd-Jones, here we come to see what the gospel actually does for us, which the prophet tells us in this verse. He states: 'In this verse, he puts it as a whole. He states it, as it were, with a broad perspective. He shows us the beginning and the end. After that, in verse 25 and following, he will come back and pick it up in detail; he will show the various steps and stages, and all the things that are essential to us in order that we might receive the fullness of this blessing.' He proceeds to summarise the gospel in the terms of verse 24 and follows this in the next three sermons with an exposition of each of the three well-known verses 25-27. The three main steps in these verses are the cleansing from sin, the gift of a new heart, and the Spirit which is put in the heart. And this is all in line with the gospel and the use of this text in the New Testament.

The gospel is presented in these sermons in no uncertain terms. The gospel addresses the deepest human need of our sin and guilt, and we cannot avoid this step by glossing over the real issue. As he states: 'Therefore anything that offers itself as the gospel and offers to give you help, assistance or guidance but does not first of all hold you face to face with your guilt and need to be washed is not the Christian message' (p 84). This brings him to the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to deal with this problem on behalf of us and for us. He clearly explains this in terms of the penal substitution theory of the atonement (see elsewhere in this issue). He argues that the guilt of our sin could not be dealt with except by way of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. He goes on to explain that Jesus rendered first of all a perfect obedience to God's law and satisfied its every demand. But then Jesus also took upon himself our sins in his body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). Lloyd-Jones brings the message home to us as follows: 'This is what we must realise and believe. Having laid our sins upon Christ and having punished them there, God has finished with them. He has cast them into this sea of forgiveness. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps 103:12). They are gone in Christ.'

These sermons offer a profound exposition of the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ and are an excellent example of gospel preaching that is still needed today. ■



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# PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN FRENCH SPEAKING WEST AFRICA

PLEASE SEE 'NEWS',  
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