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AFTER THIS MANNER...PRAY YE
(A Study in the Lord's Prayer)
PART 9

We continue to examine the fifth petition: "AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS." (Matt.6:12).

In the previous article it was clearly set out from the Scriptures that the one and only basis for forgiveness is BLOOD ATONEMENT - that redemption which is in Christ Jesus, which was an ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE of ALL the sins of EVERY elect soul of ALL ages. Every sin which such an one would ever commit from the cradle to the grave was known to God, and He, through abounding grace imputed them ALL to Christ, charging Him with the full amount.

When the sinner, under the Holy Spirit's invincible power, is regenerated and brought to repentance and faith, that sinner will know in full assurance that his sins are ALL forgiven, they are BLOTTED OUT (Isa. 44:22), they will be REMEMBERED NO MORE (Heb.8:12), and that he is JUSTIFIED (Rom. 5:1).

At this point there arises a difficulty with some people. These are they who teach that having been forgiven ALL OUR SINS to the degree that we are-now JUSTIFIED before a holy GOD, it is wrong to keep coming back asking for pardon, because God has already forgiven EVERYTHING. Some pursue this line, by saying that to pray after this manner undermines the work of Christ, and that it is a failure to appreciate the FINALITY of the atonement. This is one of the points brought forward by some Dispensationalists as to why this prayer is not for the Church. What are we to say to this? Is such interpretation correct?

It is perfectly true, that at regeneration a holy God judicially declares the believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable before Him because of the work of Christ who has been made unto the sinner RIGHTEOUSNESS (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30). None can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, none can condemn (cf. Rom. 8:33-34). However, that is the truth of justification, it pertains to the law, and to the JUDICIAL aspect of salvation. In this every true believer shares. Justification is the portion of ALL the redeemed. ALL are equally

justified. It is not possible for one to be more justified than another: justification is perfect to every one.

There is however another aspect to the work of grace and that is SANCTIFICATION. This is not the same as justification, although the two cannot be separated. No person can talk of sanctification if they know not the reality of justification; and let none claim justification if there be no evidence of sanctification. The two cannot be divorced, yet are they separate doctrines.

Thomas Watson the Puritan writes: "Sanctification differs from justification in that it is not immediate, it is gradual."

This is true but it needs to be clarified. There are two aspects to sanctification. **FIRST**, it is POSITIONAL. In this there is an equality; for every elect soul is SET APART from all eternity; such were chosen in Christ and seen in Him. This is termed theologically - MYSTICAL UNION.

It is an undeniable fact revealed to us in Holy Writ that a glorious relationship was established between Christ and His Church in eternity past, which neither sin, Satan, nor death can sever. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:3-4).

Every member of the Body of Christ is "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."(Jude.1). By the one offering of Christ those thus sanctified are perfected for ever (cf Heb. 10:14).

This positional aspect applies to the strongest and to the weakest - the babe in Christ as well as the soldier. But there is more to it than this; if it were not so, how would sanctification differ from justification? There is a **SECOND** aspect which is EXPERIMENTAL. It is to this aspect which Watson refers when he writes that, "sanctification is gradual."

The "old man" and the corruption of nature remains in the believer; in consequence none can live without sin. There is a constant warfare with the flesh, (cf. Rom. 7:21), which through the power given by the indwelling Spirit is to be mortified.

The Westminster Confession puts it well - "Having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces put into their hearts,

and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life."

This is a PROGRESSIVE and ON-GOING work in the heart and life. In this respect there is no such thing as ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, or SINLESS PERFECTION on earth.

Having made these observations concerning sanctification, we return to the fifth petition of the prayer, and to the argument that forgiven and justified sinners should not pray again for that which has already been granted.

That which concerns us in this petition is NOT justification, rather it is sanctification in its EXPERIMENTAL aspect; the day to day strivings of the heart; the ongoing perfecting of holiness in the fear of God (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1).

In our constant failures, and oftentimes known sin, are we to press blandly on as if nothing has happened? Because we are justified, and in consequence cannot be condemned, are we to treat our sin and shortcomings as if, now, they do not matter, and that God is no longer concerned? This is Antinomianism in one of its worst guises. What saith the Scripture? "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And IF any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1). These words are addressed to God's children, those who through grace ARE justified. Let the question be asked, why does the child of God need an Advocate if there is no sin with which to deal? An Advocate is one who pleads and handles a case, but according to the teaching of some, there is no case to handle. Let the Holy Spirit inspired Apostle continue: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10).

This is strong language. Those who talk of sinless perfection and entire sanctification, have not the Truth. "His word is not in them." Every believer sins; are we not sadly aware of it? If anyone thinks that his sin has not to be confessed, and forgiveness sought, he is making Christ a liar, for He Himself has taught us so to pray.

The writer to the Hebrews states that He (that is Christ) "EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US." (Heb. 7:25). Why is Christ for ever on duty to Intercede if there are none for whom he intercedes? He is there on behalf of the children of God, every one of whom is prone to sin.

In the work of Atonement there are a number of facets. There is the judicial, the prisoner - judge aspect; to all God's elect this is settled once, and for ever. But there is also the paternal aspect; the Father - child relationship.

When we as Christians sin, we dare not go on as if nothing has happened. To say that all our sins have been dealt with judicially, therefore it does not matter, is a most erroneous belief. Sin is still sin, be it that of a believer or an unbeliever, and it ever comes before a holy God in all its hideous character.

Through sovereign grace the Eternal God is now our HEAVENLY FATHER, and when we sin, that failure comes as a barrier, hindering communion. Our Father is offended and grieved. But if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive. Christ ever liveth above to intercede. We have an Advocate with the Father. He is in charge of all our affairs, but we have to confess; in other words, He requires us to furnish Him with the facts. Not because He does not know already, but it is a DIVINE PRINCIPLE that man shall acknowledge his sins, and in absolute sincerity apologise, and show his sorrow of heart. When he does this, asking for pardon through the merits of Christ's redemptive work, our God will abundantly pardon.

This is to be a DAILY EXERCISE. As pointed out in a previous article, the fourth and fifth petitions are joined by the word 'AND'. "Give us this day our daily bread AND forgive us our debts." By this we are to learn that we need DAILY FORGIVENESS as much as we need DAILY BREAD. Every believer should pray AFTER THIS MANNER every day of their lives; for not until we have passed into the realms of eternal glory are we saved to SIN NO MORE.

Why is it that the Church of Jesus Christ on earth is so imperfect? It always has been, still is, and always will be whilst here. The reason is obvious, for the members are not perfect. There are blemishes in EVERY ONE which mar the whole. It will not be until that last great day

that the Church in her entirety will be seen to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (cf. Eph. 5:27).

The Church Militant, (that is the section still upon earth at any one time), will ALWAYS be marred- because of FAILURE in her members, but when the last elect soul is called of the Holy Spirit, then cometh the end. The great day of the Lord. Yes! and of His people. THEN will sanctification be complete in its fullest sense. Glorification, and an ABSOLUTE conformity to Christ of the whole Body. "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom.8:30).

Ultimate glory and likeness unto Christ is the goal of predestination It is for this reason that the Church prays, "Come Lord Jesus." To pray for the ultimate Kingdom of Glory is what is in view when our Lord says, pray after this manner, "THY KINGDOM COME." However, in the meanwhile we live by faith; praying DAILY for material needs, AND for the forgiveness of our sins, because until we are in glory we most certainly are in need of DAILY CLEANSING AND PARDON.

We come now to the concluding part of this fifth petition: "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. This section will probably touch us all at our WEAKEST POINT. The writer of this article approaches this subject with humility of heart, realising his own weakness. It is doubtful if any one can set themselves up as a paragon of virtue as far as this truth is concerned.

"Forgive us our trespasses AS we forgive them that trespass against us," is the paraphrase which is so familiar to us.

This section needs careful explanation. If by this we understand that God's forgiveness will be according to the measure in which we forgive others, then we might well be troubled, for our forgiveness of our fellows so often leaves much to be desired. Therefore, the forgiveness which we should receive from above of necessity must be incomplete. But we know that this is not so, for our God forgiveth ALL our iniquities and blots out ALL our sins. How then is this statement to be understood?

Forgive AS we forgive. The word 'as' in this instance is not to be taken as that of equality, rather it is similitude. We cannot equal God, but we can imitate Him.

It comes natural to us to forget kindnesses, but remember injuries. Good passes so readily from our memories, yet any injustice tends to remain.

In this final part of the fifth petition we are to learn that we have a solemn duty to BREAK DOWN that which is natural to the flesh, and to act in the spirit. We are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, (cf.Eph.4:23). This means to cultivate, or to nurture - to put on the new man (cf.Eph.4:24). In the measure in which this is a reality in us, so there will be a readiness for us to show forgiveness to our fellows.

There are some who say that because all sin is basically against God, therefore if we confess to Him and He has forgiven us, then it is dealt with at the highest level, therefore all is well, and we need not concern ourselves any further, for, after all, only God can forgive sin. This may sound plausible, and may contain a mite of truth, but it is very far from the whole truth of God's Word.

There are many sins we commit, whilst primarily they are all against God, yet are they also against our fellow man. David's sin of adultery was a definite example of this. In Psalm 51:4 he confesses that he has grievously sinned against God. But was that all? Did he not sin against the woman? What about Uriah, Bathsheba's true husband? Were not they wronged in any way?

As far as the offence against God is concerned, HE ONLY can forgive, but as far as it is a trespass against man, then man is to forgive his fellow. If this is not the case then WHY has Christ instructed us to pray after this manner? Did ever an idle word escape His lips? Why also did the Holy Spirit inspire the Apostle Paul to write: "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another."(Col.3:13)? To see THIS in a Christian is one of the marks of grace. The flesh will NEVER forgive, but grace puts another spirit within. Christ says: "LEARN OF ME." (Matt. 11:29). It is CHRIST LIKE to forgive, and as aforesaid we cannot equal Him, but we can imitate Him.

Many are the examples given to us in the Scriptures of those who were possessed of such a spirit. Think of Joseph - sold into Egypt by his brethren; later unjustly cast into prison by Potiphar. Was he not constantly heard to say that the Lord's hand was in it all? In later years as he confronts those same brethren who had sold him, he says: "Fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."(Gen.50:21). King Saul, in malice and rage, hunted David as a partridge upon the mountain. On more than one occasion David could have slain him. Finding the king one day in a cave asleep, how easy it would have been to have killed his enemy. But no: all he did was to cut off a piece of Saul's garment to prove how close he had come to him.

When those ruthless Jews hurled the stones against Stephen, the last words he was heard to utter as they literally smashed his body to pieces, were: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. " (Acts 7:60).

Coming into later history, Martin Luther could be much of a bulldog on times. He and John Calvin did not always agree, and Luther's language to Calvin was not always what one would expect. But, says John Cavin, "though he call me a devil a thousand times, yet will I love him and honour him as a precious servant of Christ."

These men, like Caleb of old, had another spirit in them. In consequence that which came naturally to the flesh was BROKEN DOWN by that OTHER SPIRIT within.

Consider for a moment our blessed Lord. "When he was reviled, He reviled not again."(1 Pet.2:23). Throughout His life men rejected Him, ever were they seeking to ensnare Him. Yet He viewed them as sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mark 6:34). At length they arrested Him, He who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners was condemned to the death of a criminal. They scourged Him, mocked Him, spat in His face and later led Him out to Golgotha. There they crucified Him, nailing His hands and feet to a rugged tree with coarse iron spikes; and the first words He was heard to utter on Calvary's hill, were: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). "LEARN OF ME" says Christ. Pray AFTER THIS MANNER. As one has said earlier in this series of articles, can unregenerate men and women be called upon to say THIS prayer? Is it not a mockery so to do?

Does it not profane that which is profoundly holy? It is only the person who has known the grace of God in forgiveness, who has something of that same grace in their heart, who can pray AFTER THIS MANNER.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph.4:32).

Cranmer said: "Has God been so good to me to forgive my sins, and shall I not imitate Him?"

David says: "The Lord is ready to forgive." (Psa.86:5). "Ready" means, PREPARED, WILLING, PROMPT, IMMEDIATE ACTION. When we are injured, are we prepared to forgive? Are we ready for immediate action, willing to settle the matter on the spot, without letting it fester and develop into a larger sore? Our God is READY to forgive, and our forgiving one another is to be EVEN AS GOD for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

In concluding this article on the fifth petition one other point must be raised which puts a completely different slant upon the whole question of personal injury or annoyance. The basis of this is to be found in the life of David.

There was a revolt in Israel, Absalom had stolen the love of the people, and David the king had to flee. In fear of his life he was walking up that ravine at Bahurim and a man named Shimei was on the top of the cliff throwing dust and stones down upon the rejected king and cursing as he went. Abishai one of David's loyal followers wanted to step in and destroy this man. But David said: "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day" (2 Sam. 16:11-12). Shimei certainly was a menace, even to endangering David's life, yet the king was looking higher. God was in control. David's attitude was that no action should be taken for God had a purpose in it all. Strange as it may appear, even in circumstances such as these, Romans 8:28 still holds good: "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Let him alone," says David.

Augustine said: "He that injures me shall add to my reward; he that clips my name to make it weigh lighter, shall but make my crown weigh heavier."

Does not this put yet another dimension to our subject? Viewing it from this angle, forgiving those who trespass against us should be no problem.

May God grant us grace to suffer reproach joyfully, forgiving readily, even as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us.

To be continued.

W. H. Molland.

"Genuine sanctification (that is as to its progressive aspect) will show itself in HABITUAL RESPECT TO GOD'S LAW, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments because he cannot be justified by keeping them. The same Holy Ghost who convinces the believer of sin by the law, and leads him to Christ for justification, will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law, as a friendly guide, in the pursuit of sanctification.

Our Lord Jesus Christ never made light of the Ten Commandments on the contrary, in His first public discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, He expounded them, and showed the searching nature of their requirements. Paul never made light of the law; on the contrary, he says: "The law is good if a man use it lawfully," - "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (1 Tim.1:8; Rom.7:22). He that pretends to be a saint, while he sneers at the Ten Commandments... is under a fearful delusion."

J. C. Ryle D.D.

The Moral Law is central to ALL the purposes of God. The Second Person in the Trinity descended from highest glory to MAGNIFY this Law, and make it HONOURABLE. He said: "I DELIGHT to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." A vital condition of salvation was that Christ should OBEY this SUPREME standard of holiness and love, PERFECTLY: His disciples are to IMITATE Him.

MODERN CHURCH MUSIC

O. Talmadge Spence

In the eighth decade of the twentieth century, I know of no two dangers in the Church greater than an unbiblical pulpit and an unseparated musical ministry. These two ministries are giving way to the contemporary pressures of apostasy and pragmatism. The battle for the pulpit has been with us for a long time; the battle of our music, choirs, and singing groups has come upon us suddenly in recent years, carrying with it a staggering blow to scriptural separation. Being a realist rather than an alarmist, I believe the music of the Church is presently in greater danger than the pulpit has been heretofore. One of the problems is that there is appearing a great neglect of preaching to the people directly, concerning the DANGERS AND SINS OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND MUSICAL GROUPS. I am actually meeting ministers who are saying that they cannot find anything in the Bible to indicate what our position should be, as the contemporary music makes inroads into the Church. On the other hand, others are stating that since they do not know music, formally or technically, they cannot take a position on contemporary music. These two positions negate therefore, any way at all in coming to grips in the matter - whatever ways could be suggested. I do not believe that either one of these positions is tenable for us if we believe the Lord has called us to preach His Word in our generation. Contemporary music has become the clearing house for slob culture, rock music, and for many other contemporary problems.

There have been times in Church history when the preacher of the Word of God has had to deal with certain scientific data and certain scientific presuppositions whenever they were set forth contrary to the Bible. This has been true of many other subjects in history whenever they became the centre of controversy against the Holy Scriptures. We have been in a similar battle for a score or more years with modern psychology.

But presently all guns are trained upon the pulpit, from the choir, the organ, the piano, the soloist, the quartet, etc. It has been a cliché for many years that when Satan fell out of heaven, he fell into the choir.

However, that was intended by the fact that the "choir" was often the centre of gossip, immodesty, jealousy, and division. But the problem has been compounded by a shift to include the text of the song, along with the character of the performing artists and the singing audience. Both the texts and the singers - both the composition and the musicians - have suddenly desired to become "relevant" to the time, or give "an alternative to television" by granting a contemporary gospel lilt to melody and rhythm.

When the twentieth century new Bible translators came and flooded the market, crying that a translation in "modern English" would make the Word of God more "relevant to the common man", we as Fundamentalists did respond with a clear, biblical separation. We did our homework and addressed these contemporary apostates with a spirit of militancy and honour, but now among many Fundamentalists, there is a shying away from the "relevancy of contemporary Church music with the world." Why are they doing this? I do not know who is saved; I do not know the motive of the individual; but I can see the "fruit of their doings." It is obvious as a morning without a cloud that the present trend in many of the Fundamentalist's churches is not being found to the honour and glory of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In all things He must have the pre-eminence - even in song.

I would invite you to take a historical journey with me back to the early centuries of the Church after the completion of the New Testament. We shall divide our studies of music around seven movements and men of sacred worth and example that have endeared themselves to our hymnbooks.

In the early days before the development of musical notation and musical compositions according to the modern method, which commenced in the sixteenth century, the road of sacred music was more simple.

Bishop Ambrose (339 - 397), Father of the Ambrosian plainsong hymns, gave us four scales with which to work. Many of our loveliest hymns came from his pen. ARIAN FOLLOWERS HAD ALREADY FILLED THE STREETS WITH THEIR MARCHING, SINGING WITH A POPULAR

SONG OF THEIR HERESIES. But Ambrose persisted with his compositions for the Western Church.

Gregory the Great (540 – 604), Father of the Gregorian Chant, gave us four more scales and revised the liturgy for worship. He introduced and instituted the plain chant with great embellishment. He is considered to be the true "Father of hymnody in the Western Church." Responsorial music brought choirs. Eventually, this brought a separation of the choir from the congregational singing. We are familiar with his hymn, "Father We Praise Thee."

The turn of musical history comes later, after Theodulph of Orleans (750-821), and his, "All Glory, Laud, and Honour.", Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), and, "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee" as well as "O Sacred Head, Once Wounded," and other anonymous hymns such as the twelfth century, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." These were the trends and subjects as the congregational singing gave way to the professional choirs.

The critical point in this development came at the Council of Constance (1415), which ordered the martyrdom (burning at the stake) of John Huss, thus making it illegal for a layman to preach the Word of God, and also prohibited the congregation from participation in the song of public worship.

The Moravians (Bohemian Brethren) kept the fires of John Huss burning as they brought out their first hymnbook of 80 songs in 1501. This was enlarged to 400 hymns in another hymnal in 1505. In 1522, they contacted Martin Luther, who received them and their hymnal warmly.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), used many of their hymns in his own hymnbook. In fact, we are indebted to Luther for so very much in the area of composition and music. He restored congregational singing to its rightful place. He has been credited with a large variety of hymns, one of his most famous being, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Among the writings of Luther, we are able to glean three primary rules which guided his own compositions as well as his selections of music.

They were: (1) The melody is to be plain; (2) The harmony is to be strong; (3) The rhythm is to be stately.

John Calvin (1509-1564) initiated definitive action in Christian music by prohibiting musical instruments in public worship services and requesting all songs to be sung in unison voice only. His hymnbook, which he personally arranged, was the implementation of the Psalms.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) reacted to the cold and lifeless use of the Psalms of Calvin, as they were sung in the dead orthodoxy of the days after Calvin. Watts gave us 600 hymns as the pattern of a fresh principle and approach in viewing the Old Testament Psalms. He interpreted the Old Testament meaning into a presentation of the New Testament Incarnate Christ. This was indeed a refreshing update of benefits from Biblical Theology. This was Watts' reaction against the limited use of psalm singing. He also felt the Psalms were not always in the spirit of the New Testament Gospel. He wrote: "It is necessary to divest David and Asaph, etc. of every other character but that of the Psalmist and a Saint, and to make them always speak the common sense of a Christian. When the Psalmist describes Religion by the Fear of God, I have often joined Faith and Love to it. Where he talks to sacrificing Goats and Bulls, I rather choose to mention the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God. When he attends the Ark with shouting in Zion, I sing the Ascension of my Saviour into heaven, of His presence in His Church on earth."

John Wesley (1703-1791) and **Charles Wesley (1707-1788)**, both extended Church music into other spheres of the Christian emphasis and doctrine. Charles penned over **6,000** pieces, and it should be remembered that John, on a number of occasions, corrected Charles for his extended emphasis upon the doctrine of perfection as being too complete in this life. Of course, Adam Clarke would in the next generation take his "second definite work of Grace" into the dreaded doctrine of Entire Eradication.

As we look back upon these seven periods and personalities, a number of observations must be made.

First, no one period becomes the model and master for all that Church music could be on a Biblical base.

Second, there is definite progress of purpose and thought as we view these periods.

Third, we are watching a movement from the simple (Plain Song, Chant) to the more complex use of harmony.

Fourth, we note the trend of going away from congregational singer to the professional singer.

Fifth, there is a return to congregational singing as the message returns to the Reformers and away from the Romanists.

Sixth, there is seen a greater need for regulations to be placed upon Church music in view of each contemporary influence of the world.

Seventh, these regulations are set up in order to guard Church music against the evils of each particular generation.

Eighth, there is also an obvious progression of Biblical truth in the lyrics seen in the later proliferation of Church music.

Ninth, the Moravians brought a fresh emphasis upon the Word of God for the ordinary congregation of their brethren.

Tenth, Luther saw this advantage and furthered it as an apologetic against the apostasy of Romanism in his day.

Eleventh, Luther saw it necessary to establish the TEACHING of music for all the people so that the music of the world and apostasy would not influence them away from God.

Twelfth, Calvin's Psalms brought the Christian Church to deal with the trends of the time of excess ornament that the world was giving to music in his day.

Thirteenth, there is an evident pattern that: Church music must be MONITORED in each generation in which its testimony is presented.

Fourteenth, whenever there are definite trends in any generation that would become identified with the world which is against God, the Church must be that counteracting force and influential salt to this art form.

Fifteenth, as we have seen in Church history before, there is a great danger of "professional" musicians becoming the larger influence upon the Church and its worship before God and His people.

The days of music are definitely upon us: WE MUST BRING OUR CHURCH MUSIC TO THE BAR OF RECKONING WITH THE PURE WORD OF GOD. We need to learn from Church history both by her **mistakes**

and her **models** what is right for us in our own generation through the principles of the Bible. IN EVERY GENERATION, WHENEVER THE CHURCH ENDEAVOURED TO EMULATE THE MUSIC OF THE WORLD IT LED GOD'S PEOPLE TO THE WORLD. There are no half-way houses which we may use for the music of God's people. Just as the Blood of Christ delivers us from our sin, so that Blood must deliver us from our age and its damnable influences of contemporary and rock music. Next to the Bible is the hymnbook we use. There must be a solidarity between the orthodoxy of the former with the orthopraxy of the latter. To the degree we divide the testimony of these two books, to that degree we lose the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ in bur pulpits, our hearts, our songs and our generation.

Taken from the Revivalist.

The question of music in the Church is a timely one. Degeneration in Church music over the past 100-150 years has been rapid. Sankey, Alexander, and the songs of the Salvation Army in very large measure set the stage for this.

Then it was that men of evangelistic fervour (in order to appeal to the unregenerate) set many of the old hymns, plus their new so-called Gospel songs to the jazz of the day, saying that, "the world must not have all the good tunes." This was a most retrograde step, and the contemporary scene in the Church shows its mammoth escalation from the music of the world, to the music of the pit; for it has developed from JAZZ to BEAT, to ROCK, to HEAVY METAL. Noise and rhythm are the order of the day.

It is a tragedy, nevertheless it is true to say, that in varying degrees this type of music finds a place in by far the majority of so-called Evangelical Churches in our generation.

There can be no doubt but that down through history Satan has chosen the arena of Church music as a favourite battleground; but never more so than in the days in which we live: it is an area to be guarded with walls and bulwarks.

Editor.

THE STATE OF THE BELIEVER'S SOUL AT DEATH,
PRIOR TO THE RESURRECTION

There seems to linger in the secret thoughts of some of the Lord's people, a slight shadow of doubt, or at least, rather hazy thoughts as to the state, and place of the believer, during the interval which divides death from the resurrection.

Now it is perfectly true that in the main, Scripture looks on to the goal, and focuses the mind and the heart upon the return of Christ; not death, but upon resurrection and transformation. Indeed, redemption's work will not be fully completed in us until this has taken place, for no part of His redeemed ones can be allowed to remain in death; the ultimate is the redemption OF the body - not FROM the body. Only so will death be swallowed up in victory.

Having said this, it nevertheless remains a fact that the vast majority of the Lord's dear children have passed over by way of the grave. We ourselves know not whether we shall be among the company who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, or be numbered with those who sleep in Jesus (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18). So what of this intervening period? Is there something mysterious here, some little measure of uncertainty? Indeed not, for whilst the Scriptures are mainly taken up with the glorious morning of resurrection yet they leave us in no doubt with regard to this waiting time which is the portion of those who have gone before.

Let us refresh our minds with the Word of God, and may the Holy Spirit remove from us for ever any lurking doubts or feelings of anxiety. Let us call to mind the amazing words of the Saviour Himself to the dying thief upon the cross:

"Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43). The emphatic expression in this verse is TO DAY. In the preceding verse we have the prayer of this criminal as he prayed that the Lord would remember him in His coming kingdom; but Christ assured him that before that self-same day had passed, - when

he breathed his final breath, then, - YES THEN, he would be [in glory]. Again, the thief simply asked to be remembered, but the Saviour declared: "Thou shalt be with ME." To make this even more definite and emphatic, Christ prefaced His blessed promise with the assuring words: "VERILY (truly) I SAY UNTO YOU." ... It was this same prospect of going to Christ AT DEATH which cheered the martyr Stephen in his last hour: "Lord Jesus," he cried, "receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59). The same blessed expectation moved Paul to say: "Having a desire to depart, and to be WITH CHRIST; which is far better." (Phil. 1:23). Again, the apostle wrote: "Absent from the body" - freed from care and suffering? NO. "Absent from the body" - translated to glory? NO. "Absent from the body" - "PRESENT WITH THE LORD." (2 Cor. 5:8). Not unconsciousness in the grave, but WITH CHRIST in paradise, is what awaits every believer at death. The devil has gone to great lengths in order to rob the saints of God of this blessed prospect: the doleful dogma of soul-sleep, teaching that believers are in a state of unconsciousness between death and resurrection; or, far more terrifying, the blasphemous teaching of purgatory, the frightening thought of passing into fire in order to be purified and fitted for heaven. The word of the Saviour to the thief on Calvary for ever disposes with these God dishonouring delusions. The thief went straight from the cross to paradise...

The moment a sinner believes, that moment he or she is "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. 1:12). "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:14). Our title as well as our fitness for Christ's presence rest upon His shed blood, and that alone. When our Lord was upon earth, He spoke continually of a people which had been given to Him, and at the hour of His arrest, He said: "Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none." (John 18:9). ...

The Father's hands are the place of eternal security: into those hands the Saviour committed us. Here beloved we are forever safe. Christ said concerning His own: "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." (John 10:29). Here is the ground of the believer's great confidence, nothing can touch the spirit of the saint which is grasped by the Hand of Omnipotence. "Kept by the power of God," writes Peter (1 Pet. 1:5) ...

With such a sure word as this, should we dread the hour of passing? If David in the Old Testament could say: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for THOU ART WITH ME," (Psa. 23:4), why should we fear, who live after the victory of Calvary? Death may be, indeed is, the King of Terrors to the unsaved, but to the Christian it is THE DOOR into the very presence of the Lord; conscious, and in a state which is far better than anything which we have known as yet (cf. Phil. 1:23).

The motions of the Christian's soul in death, as in life, will turn instinctively to God. "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit," will be our cry in that hour. How often have we cast a longing look heavenward! So when the soul of the saved reaches the brink, it will instinctively throw itself into the arms of everlasting love. Just as a river after its many turnings and twistings pours itself into the ocean, so at death we shall quit a life of many windings and corners. We shall leave a world which can never really satisfy our spirits, and flow out into a fuller life and experience of eternal satisfaction, to dwell before the very face of our Redeemer. The body for a while will rest in the dust, from whence it was taken awaiting the shout of the resurrection, when it will be glorified. At that moment, our unclothed spirits which have been so much AT HOME with the Lord during the interval, will immediately be "Clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," then indeed will mortality be swallowed up of life.

The child of God may be beset with many fears as death approaches, for it is the LAST enemy. We might ask, how should we prepare for death? We can be certain that when the time comes, the Lord WILL prepare us. He is not taken unawares; He has appointed it; He will be with us. He has PROMISED: "When thou passest through the waters, I WILL BE WITH THEE; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." (Isa. 43:2).

Beloved believer, consider our Lord Jesus Christ as OUR Representative in the garden of Gethsemane. There, HE prepared for death. A fathomless horror descended upon His holy Soul. Why? Dear child of God, He was bearing the weight of your sins and mine in anticipation of the sword of Divine Wrath and Justice, in the hands of a thrice Holy God, falling upon Him. He HAS borne our griefs; He HAS carried our sorrows;

He WAS wounded for our transgressions; with His stripes WE ARE HEALED; He WAS oppressed and afflicted for OUR SINS (cf. Isa. 53). All done as A SUBSTITUTE FOR US: it is a FINISHED WORK.

From whence then arises this fear of death? Is not sin the sting of death? (1 Cor. 15:56). But your sins, beloved, HAVE BEEN BLOTTED OUT; the penalty has been paid. The filthy garments of your own righteousness HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY; you ARE clothed in the spotless righteousness of the incarnate, eternal Son of God. Who shall lay ANYTHING to the charge of God's elect? God has justified you (cf. Rom. 8:33). These truths silence: Satan, devils, men and our own wicked unbelieving hearts. The demands of the Holy Law of God have been kept, the penalty has been paid by One who rose again from the dead for our justification (cf. Rom.4:25).

David, anticipating HIS passing through the valley of the shadow of death, with full assurance said: "I will fear no evil: for THOU ART WITH ME." (Psa. 23:4). These are the words of one who lived by faith, and died in faith (cf. Heb. 10:38; 11:13). His trust was not in his feelings, his trust was not in the vicissitudes of his emotions, no, his trust was in the unchanging, inerrant Word of the Eternal God.

May God grant that all anxious thoughts be dispelled, and these truths be not remote mystical ideas, but deep realities to the soul.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace IN BELIEVING, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15:13).

W. H. Molland

EDITORIAL

C.H.Spurgeon once said: "A MAGAZINE WHICH IS NOT OUTSPOKEN, AND IS DESTITUTE OF PRINCIPLE, IS A LITERARY NUISANCE." There is much truth in this, and it has to be stated that much of what is said and written today seems to be a deliberate by-passing of Truth in order to avoid offence. There are pressing issues both in the World, and in the Church, where clear Biblical guidance is needed.

There is an ever-increasing practice of PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD. This was commenced by the Romanists around the year 300 A.D.; later adopted by many High Anglicans, and more recently followed by numerous others including not a few Nonconformists. One is saddened in the attendance of funerals to discover how prevalent this is. Also, it has now become almost standard practice in the popular religion of our day, that whenever there is a major disaster and loss of life, prayers are said in Churches of various denominations for those who have died tragically. It appears gracious and charitable to do this, and ministers of religion find this much easier to do than to abide by the inerrant word of Holy Scripture, which says: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb.9:27).

Prayers for the dead are totally unscriptural. "Where the tree falleth, there shall it be." (Eccl. 11:3). What the person is at death, that person remains for all eternity.

Elsewhere in this magazine there is an article which deals with the state of the believer immediately at death; they are instantly in a perfect environment of holiness and glory.

They certainly have not the slightest need of any petitions from us. Their felicity can never be enhanced or augmented.

As for the unbeliever, that is, the man or woman who dies without faith in Jesus Christ, having no assurance of the forgiveness of sins, the state of that person is also fixed, and it can never be altered. To pray for them implies that their existence has not yet been finally decided, and that it

can be improved at our request. This is the lie of the Great Deceiver. It may sound comforting, but is there any true comfort in a lie? When the truth is finally revealed at that last great day, what consolation will there be in discovering that we have been deceived?

Prayers for the dead are unscriptural, deceitful, misleading, and heretical.

The dead in Christ have NO NEED of our prayers, and for the dead out of Christ, prayers can avail nothing. It is the living for whom we must pray. In this life only can the sinner repent of his sins and turn to God for salvation; when once he breathes his last his eternal destiny is forever settled.

The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689, states: "The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and under darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

At the last day, the bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to His own glorious body."