

Christ: Prophet, Priest and King

Since the time of the Reformation, it has been commonplace to speak of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. For instance, John Newton's well known hymn, 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds' has this verse:

Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Admittedly, Newton recognised that there was far more than only those three titles or functions, more precisely, 'offices' applying to Jesus. Still, Prophet, Priest and King remain prominent when the work of Christ is being discussed. These offices appeared as early as Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-339 AD) in his *History of the Church*:

And not only those who were honored with the high priesthood, and who for the sake of the symbol were anointed with especially prepared oil, were adorned with the name of Christ among the Hebrews, but also the kings whom the prophets anointed under the influence of the divine Spirit, and thus constituted, as it were, typical Christs. For they also bore in their own persons types of the royal and sovereign power of the true and only Christ, the divine Word who ruleth over all. And we have been told also that certain of the prophets themselves became, by the act of anointing, Christs in type, so that all these have reference to the true Christ, the divinely inspired and heavenly Word, who is the only high priest of all, and the only King of every creature, and the Father's only supreme prophet of prophets. And a proof of this is that no one of those who were of old symbolically anointed, whether priests, or kings, or prophets, possessed so great a power of inspired virtue as was exhibited by our Savior and Lord Jesus, the true and only Christ.¹

Eusebius was working from the use of the word 'Christ' or 'anointed' and arguing that, since Moses was to do nothing other than represent the pattern he was shown on the mountain, his consequent anointing of Aaron as high priest was evidence that there was an anointed high priest above all. Further, his commissioning of Joshua (Gk. *Jesus*) as leader carried similar implications, as did the *anointing* of certain Old Testament prophets.

It was not until Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) that this approach appeared again. He wrote:

Since Christ thus is called an Anointed One and only the prophets, kings, and high priests were anointed, one notes well that all three of these offices rightly belong to him: the prophetic office, since he alone is our teacher and master, Matt. 23:8 ff.; the authority of the king, since he reigns forever in the house of Jacob, Luke 1:32 ff.; and the priestly office, since he is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, Ps. 110:4. Thus it is his office that he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, as Paul testifies in I Cor. ch. 1.²

It was John Calvin (1509-1564) who gave the most definitive exposition of the threefold office of Christ in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.³ Calvin's approach begins with the fact that it would be the Messiah who would bring 'the full

¹ *The Church History of Eusebius*, Book 1, ch. 3 (this translation from 'The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series', Sage Digital Library). See W. Pannenberg, *Jesus God and Man* (SCM, London, 1968) p. 213, n. 6 for further examples.

² Quoted in Pannenberg, *Jesus God and Man*, p. 213.

³ Book II, Chapter XV.

light of understanding⁴ concerning the salvation promised by the Old Testament prophets, and that there are three who were anointed with holy oil under the law, prophets, priests and kings.⁵ However, he sees that it is the kingship which is primary when seeing Jesus as Messiah.

Old Testament Anticipations

The Old Testament anticipations of one yet to come generally point in this direction. We begin by seeing that the great promise of Genesis 3:15, ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel’ introduces us to the hope of triumph (not just a wish for it) over the serpent who has now brought death to the primal couple. The promise of ‘seed’ to Abram (Gen. 12:7), using the same word ‘seed’/’offspring’ as in Genesis 3:15, comes in the context of the planned restoration of the nations and the families to lost covenant blessing (Gen. 12:1-3). ‘To your offspring I will give this land’ (12:7) does not merely imply ‘owning a small plot of ground as we might understand that today. Genesis 22:17-18 spells this out:

I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies,¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.

To possess the land is to stand as triumphant over all who would lay an alternate claim to it. Then the well known blessing given to Judah crowns this early expectation:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and the obedience of the peoples is his. (Gen. 49:10)

The nations, cursed since the Fall and scattered since Babel, will again come in submission to this seed of Abraham.

Isaiah prophesied in the context of the judgment of ungodly Judah. The promises involving the blessing of the nations through Abraham and his descendants evidently meant little to those descendants. Yet God had not forsaken his purposes and Isaiah highlights that and restates the purpose:

In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.³ Many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:2-4)

This great blessing for the nations, essentially a return to Eden, involves the judgment and subsequent restoration of Judah:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its

⁴ Inst. II, XV, 1.

⁵ Inst. II, XV, 2.

joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:2-7)

The renewal of the creation depends on the establishment of a king, understood in terms of King David and his reign.

Such passages as 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Psalms 2, 89, 110 demand out attention, since so much depends on them.

Now therefore thus you [Nathan] shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. ¹⁵But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam. 7:8-16)

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? ²The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, ³'Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.' ⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. ⁵Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

⁷I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you. ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' ¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling ¹²kiss his feet, or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Happy are all who take refuge in him. (Psalms 2:1-12)

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. ²I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. ³You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: ⁴'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" *Selah*

¹⁹Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: 'I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. ²⁰I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; ²¹my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. ²²The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. ²³I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. ²⁴My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. ²⁵I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. ²⁶He shall cry to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!" ²⁷I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. ²⁸Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him, and my covenant with him will stand

firm. ²⁹I will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure. ³⁰If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances, ³¹if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, ³²then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with scourges; ³³but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness. ³⁴I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips. ³⁵Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. ³⁶His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun. ³⁷It shall be established forever like the moon, an enduring witness in the skies.’ Selah (Ps. 89:1-4, 19-37)

The LORD says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ²The LORD sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes. ³Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you. ⁴The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’

⁵The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. ⁶He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth. ⁷He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head. (Ps. 110:1-7)

These passages are significant because, whether attributed to David or written long after his death, they were still seen as important by believing people, hence their inclusion in the Hebrew canon.⁶ How else could a believer in Judah understand history, if not in terms of the LORD setting his king on Zion his holy hill. As Psalms 2:2 and 89:20 show, David’s kingship and his being anointed (i.e. *Messiah* or *Christ*) are both of a one. Yet these declarations of intent were retained long after David’s demise (cf. Acts 2:29-31) and the evident failure of the promises made to David through the failure, first of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-13) and then of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:1-19).

The mutual hatred of Israel and Judah continued till the destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians in 721 BC and on in to the New Testament period when all that remained of Israel was embodied in the Samaritans (so, John 4:7-9, 19-22⁷). But the purpose of God was still operative, by means of his promises. So Ezekiel 34:23-24:

I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.⁸ ²⁴And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

and, after the vision of the transformation of the dry bones, ‘the *whole* house of Israel’ (Ezek. 37:11), there was the promise of a complete Israel once more.

The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶Mortal, take a stick and write on it, ‘For Judah, and the Israelites associated with it’; then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it’; ¹⁷and join them together into one stick, so that they may become one in your hand. ¹⁸And when your people say to you, ‘Will

⁶ The Old Testament ‘canon’ is the list of authoritative books recognised by the Jewish people. Surprising, perhaps, is the fact that no such list of New Testament books has ever been officially compiled.

⁷ This does not imply that Jesus shared the hostility; his references and attitude to Samaritans elsewhere demonstrates that: Lu. 10:33; 17:16; John 4:39-40; Acts 1:8; 8:14.

⁸ The title ‘shepherd’, when used in the Old Testament is ambiguous, meaning both one who cares for sheep and, significantly, also one who has oversight of a people. Thus the many reference such as this which are another way of saying ‘king’. See Num. 27:16-17; Jer. 12:10, which the *KJV* translated as ‘pastors’; Ps. 23:1ff. etc. The title ‘shepherd’ was also commonly used this way in many ancient near eastern texts. The use of the self description ‘good shepherd’ by Jesus in John 9:39 – 10:16(ff.) is based on Ezekiel 34 and Ezekiel’s conflict with the false shepherds of Judah. The implications were obvious to Jesus’ opponents; see John 10:31-33.

you not show us what you mean by these?' ¹⁹say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with it; and I will put the stick of Judah upon it, and make them one stick, in order that they may be one in my hand. ²⁰When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, ²¹then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. ²²I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. ²³They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their GOD.

²⁴My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. ²⁵They shall live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. (Ezekiel 37:15-25)

That the king to come would be quite unlike contemporary kings is made plain later by Zechariah, after the return from the exile in Babylon when there was no longer any king in Israel.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:9)

Christ the King

Matthew has no account of the birth of Jesus; he instead describes the encounter of Joseph with 'the angel of the Lord' (Matt. 1:18-25) and then the visit of the *magi*, possibly anything up to two years after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12). It should be recalled that 'Jesus' is a form of the name 'Joshua', which means 'the LORD saves' (Num. 13:16). Joshua was chosen as Moses successor 'so that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd' (Num. 27:17). *Effectively*, Joshua was king.⁹ As 'the LORD saves', Jesus was, however, not to save his people from human enemies but from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

The *magi* 'were non-Jewish religious astrologers who, from astronomical observations, inferred the birth of a great Jewish king'.¹⁰ It seems possible that their inference was based on the popular prophecy of Balaam in Num. 24:17-18, which foretold that 'a star shall come out of Jacob, and sceptre shall rise out of Israel' with the result that 'one out of Jacob shall rule'. The appearance of the new star in the sky led them to the conclusion that there would be one born to be 'king of the Jews' (Matt. 2:2). The prophesy which answered the question about where the child would be born was Micah 5:2.

⁹ Possibly that is implied in the book of Judges which commences with the death of Joshua, then chronicles the chaos of the ensuing period and concludes with the observation that 'In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes' (Judg. 21:25).

¹⁰ E. E. Ellis, 'Magi' in *The New Bible Dictionary*, The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, London, 1962, p. 765. See also Tacitus, *The Histories*, v, 13 and Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, 'Vespasian', 4, where evidently the prophecy was seen to refer to Vespasian.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

The version given by Matthew uses the word ‘shepherd’ (ποιμανεῖ *poimanei*) while the LXX uses ‘rule’ (ἄρχοντα, *archonta*).¹¹

If Jesus is born king of the Jews, and if he is to save his people from their sins, then we must understand all that he is subsequently to do to be moving towards this goal. He is the one who will not merely restore political greatness, or even just political independence to Judea, the Jews, but he is the one who in removing their guilt and their sin will set them up once more to be the light to the nations they were intended to be. Only then will they ‘make disciples of all nations’ (Matt. 28:19).

The gospel concerns the Kingdom of God. The gospel is far more than a simple proclamation, a basic statement of the deepest issues confronting the hearers (the κήρυγμα, *kerugma*), it is a solemn and serious proclamation of the great matters of God’s purposes and actions within history (εὐαγγέλιον, *euangelion*), often translated as ‘good news’. Jesus’ ministry began with him proclaiming, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near’ and then he went about teaching in the synagogues the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23). His gospel was teaching with far more than words, though never less than words, for ‘he was curing every disease and every sickness among the people’ (Matt. 4:17). But all the time the moral imperative was there. Even his forerunner, John the Baptist, was focussed on this matter, with his urgent call to repent in the light of the coming kingdom, which is close enough to touch (Matt. 3:2). God is coming in kingly power and when he does it will be to purify his people. Sin cannot be permitted to exist in the holy kingdom. Hence the demand by John and Jesus for repentance with a view to (εἰς, *eis*) the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3).

Luke records the commencement of Jesus’ ministry in Luke 4:16-21:

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read,¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

The promise is now in the action of being fulfilled! What is not made clear, yet, is what this release for the captives implies. However, it is made plain in the final words of Jesus to the disciples in chapter 24:

he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’ (Luke 24:46-47)

The words ‘release’, ‘free’ (4:18) and ‘forgiveness’ (24:47) are the same word in the Greek (ἄφεσις, *aphesis*). So if we ask what sort of release he is to proclaim, and what freedom means, the reply comes that it is the freedom from sin, which comes through

¹¹ For examination of Matthew’s citations see Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1977, pp. 184-187. The suggestion is made that the difference between Matthew and Micah on this point is explained by the inclusion (merging) of 2 Sam. 5:2 into the quotation; see also John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* NIGNT, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 29. It may be, too, that Matthew understood and relied on the significance of ‘shepherd’.

the proclamation 'of repentance and the forgiveness of sins'. The anointing which set Jesus to proclaim that, will come upon the disciples and they will do it.

How can this happen? It will take a triumphant work, a work which will go to the heart of the bondage from which people need to be freed. Again the ancient prophets foretold what would happen, even if the meaning of much of their prophecies was hidden to them and to others (see I Pet. 1:10; Acts 8:30-31). The description of the work of the Servant of the LORD in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 is quite overwhelming in the light of the Cross of Christ:

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. ¹⁴Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— ¹⁵so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

¹Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The verses that follow, in chapter 54, show the result of the liberation from guilt, as Israel is described as once more being fruitful, as God had said they would be (Gen. 17:6; cf. Gen. 1:28) and as ruling where once they were the ruled, as they once more possess the land and its nations, a repeat of the entry into Canaan under Joshua.

Sing, O barren one who did not bear; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate woman will be more than the children of her that is married, says the LORD. ²Enlarge the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. ³For you will spread out to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will settle the desolate towns. (Isa. 54:1-3)

What is more, the action of dealing with guilt and its sorrows is more than external reality but has deep transforming effects, as Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-27 promise:

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt — a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the LORD’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. (Jer. 31:31-34)

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

With these promises providing a background, it is easy to see why Jesus, when healing the man let down through the roof, told him: ‘Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven’ (Matt. 9:2), and when dealing with the woman who washed Jesus feet with her tears, said, ‘her sins, which were many have been forgiven ... Your sins are forgiven’ and identified her love for him as evidence of the internal work which had been done (Luke 7:47-48). We must not reduce her ‘love’ to this single action, even if it was the immediate occasion for it. Her love was nothing less than the fulfilment of the law of God (see Lev. 19:18, 34; Rom. 13:8-10). That could only come through forgiveness, as Jeremiah had promised.

Even prior to the Cross, the work of liberation of the captives was taking place. It was not that it could happen without the Cross but that, had Jesus not been set on the complete fulfilment of the plan of God, these things could never have taken place. Healings and exorcisms there may have been, but they would not have been evidence and expression of the great victory of the kingdom.

After the Cross had taken place, Pentecost internalised it in the lives of the believers. Just as, had there been no Cross there could be deliverance so, had there been no Pentecost the work of the Cross would not have transforming effects in the lives of men and women. Perhaps the tendency to domesticate the work of the kingdom has robbed us of the awareness of the amazing dimensions of the deliverance won by Christ the king.

Jesus the Man

If we again examine the early church, we will discover that they had many battles concerning how they should understand the person of Jesus Christ. The most prominent of the disputes took place in the 300’s and is associated with the names of Arius and Athanasius. Basically, the concern of Athanasius was to defend (or, initially, to establish, since his great work, *The Incarnation of the Word*, appeared before the conflict with the teaching of Arius¹²) the deity of Jesus Christ.

A written result of the dispute is what is known as the Nicene Creed, a well known and used document in many churches even today. The main paragraph of that creed is as follows:

¹² See Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Historical Theology: An Introduction*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1978, p. 69. A modern example of the teachings of Arius is found in the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who assert that Jesus was not God in the flesh. For details, see A. A. Hoekema, *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Paternoster, Exeter, 1973, pp. 60-67.)

And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

This creed, with this paragraph as its major focus, was intended to define the deity of Jesus Christ, especially over against the teachings of Arius. And the issues were not unimportant; the concern of Athanasius was to insist that ‘the divine humanity of Christ belongs essentially to the gospel of reconciliation’.¹³ The battle for the full deity of Christ has continued throughout the history of the church. In the words of G. C. Berkouwer:

It was not only the ancient church which conducted, with deeply religious earnestness, a battle for the phrase “co-essential with the Father”, but later centuries too saw a resumption of the high points of this conflict, as is clear in the controversy with the Socinians in the sixteenth and in that with Modernism in the nineteenth and twentieth century (*sic*).¹⁴

There are generations for whom the deity of Christ has been a touchstone of orthodoxy.

But the question sometimes submerged under these debates has been, what is the priority of the New Testament? The debates grew out of people attempting to work out the implications of the preaching of the New Testament, e.g. ‘Jesus is Lord’, with all that that involves. The title ‘Lord’ for Jesus means far more than ruler, especially when we consider the Old Testament background for it. It does mean ruler, and also can be understood to mean simply ‘Sir’, as in John 4:15 (‘Sir/Lord, give me this water...’), but there was also the fact that, for the Jews, Lord (κύριος, *kurios*) was used to translate the divine name, nowadays represented in English by *YHWH* or *Yahweh*. *Kurios* was also used to translate the Hebrew title *adonai*, which Jews said rather than say *Yahweh*. To distinguish the two words in the original Hebrew, the English Old Testament uses ‘LORD’ for *Yahweh* and ‘Lord’ for *adonai*. See Psalm 110:1 as an example.

The New Testament declaration is that ‘Jesus is Lord’ (there being no difference since the New Testament was written in Greek, not Hebrew). So a statement such as Acts 2:36 needs to be read carefully in its context.

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Peter’s conclusion to his address will lead to the promise in verse 38:

Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

¹³ Bromiley, *Historical Theology*, p. 69.

¹⁴ G. C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: The Person of Christ*, John Vriend (trans), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1954, p. 155f. It is noteworthy that Berkouwer was writing this at what was generally regarded as a low point in Conservative Evangelical scholarship, when ‘Liberalism’, ‘Modernism’ is an older description, seemed to hold sway.

In other words, ‘If you call on the name of the Lord you will be saved’, the point he made when he quoted the prophet Joel, in Acts 2:21, the passage with which he commenced the Pentecost address. Reference to Joel 2:32 will show that the ‘Lord’ to whom Joel is referring is the LORD, *Yahweh*, the only God of heaven and earth. The implication is strong: Jesus is *Yahweh*!

Strangely, however, The New Testament makes almost no definitive statements that Jesus is God. John 1:1, ‘The Word was God’ and Thomas’ exclamation to Jesus in John 20:28, ‘My Lord and my God’ are a fitting inclusio to the whole Gospel of John; they are also rare instances of such a declaration. Of course there are other statements, (John 1:18; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8-9; 2 Peter 1:1 and 1 John 5:20) but honesty compels us to recognise that they are not without certain difficulties, such as they way they are punctuated etc. Far stronger are the passing comments, such as this in Acts 2:36 and elsewhere, where language that is used of God in the Old Testament is used of Jesus in the New Testament. Another instance of this is in Philippians 2:10-11,

at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It would seem hard for Paul not to have had in mind Isaiah 45:22-23,

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.²³ By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: “To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

Isaiah wrote that every knee would bow to God, whereas Paul says they will bow to Jesus.¹⁵ It is obvious why people began to ask how this could be explained simply (it probably can’t, although a personal encounter with God doubtless makes the questions far less significant) and why the doctrine of the Trinity eventually was formulated.

If I may summarise the issue somewhat simplistically, the New Testament assumes the deity of Jesus, whereas it seems to stress his humanity. While we must search for the allusions to deity, over and over again we are faced with strong statements concerning the humanity of Jesus. Consider the descriptions of his birth. While the means of his conception was unique, his birth was like any normal human birth (Luke 2:6-7). His childhood is only described briefly, but the account does indicate that, like other children, Jesus indeed grew and matured (Luke 2:52).

Naturally, that has provoked all sorts of questions, for example concerning Jesus’ self-awareness, but the evidence forces us to see that Jesus’ humanity, while real, is also unlike our own, to the extent that ours is afflicted with the effects of sin. So while we read the story of Jesus as a child in the temple, we need to enquire what hearing the scriptures read and seeing the elements of God given atonement enacted would mean to a child who was a child of faith. The simplicity of hearing that way, while not unknown to us as redeemed men and women, would have been *natural* and richly stimulating. Likewise, encountering the faults of unbelieving Israel, while being stirred to *righteous* anger (Mark 3:5), would have meant that it was ‘zeal for *your* house’ which would consume him (John 2:17) and not the anger of fallen man which does not work the righteousness of God (James 1:20). Jesus was described as being

¹⁵ Cf. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (First ed.) Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.279. A far more comprehensive treatment of the topic is Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in reference to Jesus*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1992.

hungry (Luke 24:41-43), tired and thirsty (John 4:6-7), enjoying social gatherings at which there was feasting and drinking (Luke 7:34) and after his resurrection he firmly insisted that he was as fully human as he had been prior to his death (Luke 24:38-39).

Although praying to Jesus is somewhat common in much of Christian life today, it was not so in the New Testament. There, prayer was directed to God, the Father and that is how Jesus directed the disciples to pray (Matt. 6:9). What is more, he himself prayed to the Father (Matt. 11:25). But had someone actually prayed to 'Jesus' in a public setting the result might have been humorous, since the name Jesus was so common. Many in the audience could have been led to think they were the ones being addressed. In fact the index to the works of Josephus lists twenty one people with the name Jesus.¹⁶ Within the community of faith, far from the name 'Jesus' having a religious connotation in its own right, use of the name Jesus would always have related to the man who had been with them and whom they had known so intimately. Thus John wrote:

We declare to you what was from the beginning, *what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands*, concerning the word of life – ²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – ³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:1-4)

Also, the title 'Messiah' (*Christ*) was not used to imply a divine being. From the anointed high priest (Lev. 4:3) through Saul (1 Sam. 12:3) and David (1 Sam. 16:13; Ps. 2:2) onwards, the title referred to a human being anointed by God for a particular task. That even included the Medo-Persian monarch Cyrus who was also called God's 'shepherd' (Isa. 44:28 – 45:1). In later, inter-testamental times, the expectation of 'Messiah' developed but without a change in focus.¹⁷ 'Jesus Christ' refers to the man Jesus who was the Jewish Messiah.

This is presented in Acts 2, where Peter argues that Jesus was raised from the dead (a particularly human feature?) and that since this was so, 'God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified' (Acts 2:36). The point, among others being made, is that a dead man cannot be the Messiah, as countless claimants before (and later) demonstrate (see Acts 5:35-39).

The Son of Man

When anticipating the appearance of false messiahs and false prophets, Matthew records Jesus as saying:

¹⁶ *Josephus*, Loeb Classical Library, Volume X, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1965, p. 279f.

¹⁷ See Marinus de Jonge, 'Messiah' in David Noel Freedman (Ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4, Doubleday, New York, 1992, p. 777-784. In the light of Christian clichés, the following statement by de Jonge is valuable:

'Because a central tenet of Christianity has always been the conviction that Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah expected by Israel) much attention has been paid to the study of Jewish expectations of the Messiah. The Christian focus upon the person of Jesus has led to an undue concentration on the person of the Messiah in Jewish thought, even in the works of recent scholars. One should realize that in the OT the term "anointed" is never used of a future savior/redeemer and that in later Jewish writings of the period between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100 the term is used only infrequently in connection with agents of divine deliverance expected in the future.' (p. 777)

Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’ or ‘There he is!’ – do not believe it.²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.²⁵ Take note, I have told you beforehand.²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look! He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Matt. 24:23-27)

The issue is ‘the coming of the Son of Man’. But who is this person and what does the title mean? I think it can be argued that ‘the coming of the Son of Man’ relates to the complete renewal of creation, so the mere presence of a person in the wilderness (the place identified in Israel with redemption) or in the inner room¹⁸ fails to see how extraordinary by contrast will be the coming to which Jesus refers.

‘Son of Man’ translates the Hebrew אָדָם בֶּן (ben adam), a phrase which occurs on one hundred and seven occasions in the Old Testament.¹⁹ Of those, ninety three are in Ezekiel, and two in Daniel, with the remainder always occurring ‘in poetic couplets, always in the second line, and almost always parallel to either *adam* or *enosh*, both of which mean “man” or “human being”’.²⁰ An example of this is Psalm 8:4:

what is man [*enosh*] that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man [*ben adam*] that thou dost care for him? (RSV)

The uses in Ezekiel and in Daniel 8:17 are simply references to the humanity of the prophet, no doubt over against the majesty of God. The NRSV of Psalm 8:4 has:

what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

while the more recent TNIV reads:

what are mere mortals that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

Both are accurate as far as the intention of the original is concerned. But while we may say that, the determining question is, how did the New Testament authors and speakers use the phrase?

To begin an answer to that, we should note the use of Psalm 8 within the New Testament. The most striking instance is in Hebrews 2:6-9:

But someone has testified somewhere, “What [is man] that you are mindful of [him], or [the son of man, that you care for [him]]? ⁷You have made [him] for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned [him] with glory and honor, ⁸subjecting all things under [his] feet.” Now in subjecting all things to [him], God left nothing outside [his] control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to [him], ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.²¹

There Jesus is set as the contrast to fallen, deprived humanity (cf. Heb. 4:15, ‘without sin’) and as, for now, the fulfilment of the creation of Man. Jesus is that son of man. We should see that his place as the son of man is with a view to the restoration of

¹⁸ See Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew, A Commentary: Volume 2: The Churchbook*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2004, p. 506.

¹⁹ For details, D. E. Aune, ‘Son of Man’ in Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Ed.) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume 4: Q-Z, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1988, pp. 574-581.

²⁰ Aune, ‘Son of Man’ p. 574.

²¹ This is the NRSV modified, demonstrating that the interests of clearly representing the biblical argument are sacrificed at times by the concern for gender equality. I have also used a capital M for Man when the suggestion is of the Man as the human individual, Adam or Jesus, representing the whole race. The omission of the capital letter would suggest a male person.

‘many sons to glory’ (Heb. 2:10) and that will necessitate him tasting death for everyone (Heb. 2:9). That means that there is a strong eschatological aspect to this.

Another use is in 1 Corinthians 15:24-27.

Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him.

The eschatological element is strong here, too. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of the full harvest of resurrection of those in him (1 Cor. 15:20-23). But it is the use of Psalm 8:6, ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet’ which is significant. The reference is to ‘the son of man’ (Ps. 8:4) and so the reign of Christ is the reign of the *Man* Jesus. It is the *Man* Jesus who was raised from the dead and it is risen humanity which is the guarantee of our resurrection. What is more the triumph is the triumph of the *Man* Jesus, in fulfilment of the command given to but disobeyed by Adam and those in him. That is the reason why Paul continued, in 1 Corinthians 15:42ff., to look at the resurrection body in terms of ‘the last Adam’, ‘the second man’ (vv. 45, 47).

A similar point is made in Ephesians 1:15-23, where Paul prays that the readers will be given to know the full dimensions of their hope (already spoken of in Ephesians 1:9-14):

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The power which is at work in us to bring us to the predestined goal (cf. Eph. 1:4-5) is the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God (v. 20). Verse 22 says that God has put all things under Christ’s feet and made him head over all things for the church. Once again, the reference to Psalm 8 reminds us that the headship of Christ, *for* the church and not merely *of* the church, is the headship of the *Man* Jesus. ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool’ (Psalm 110:1), reflected in this passage and in 1 Corinthians 15:25, is a declaration of the exaltation of *Man*, in the person of Jesus Christ. The day will come, when all those in him will ‘exercise dominion in life’ through [that] one man, Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 5:17; cf. Rev. 5:10, both future tenses). The *Man* Jesus has defeated the enemy, who is now under his feet, albeit his heel was bruised in the process, but one day, soon, Satan will be crushed under our feet (Rom. 16:20)!

There is one statement in the Gospels which needs our attention in this matter, namely Mark 2:10 (and parallels): ‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has

authority on earth to forgive sins'.²² Too often, this has been taken to imply that Jesus must be God (and of course, that is not being questioned in the overall scheme of things) because the scribes present at the healing of the man let down through the roof insisted, 'Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' (Mark 2:7) and Jesus had declared the man forgiven. However, there is a principle within the Gospels that has often been observed that, even in face of the Father's revelation of Jesus as the Messiah (Matt. 16:16), Jesus' preferred title was 'Son of Man' (see Luke 9:20-21). And so it was here: when Jesus responded to the scribes' criticism he did so by claiming that '*the Son of Man* has power on earth to forgive sins'.

The background for this is probably Daniel 7:13-14. The context is that of fierce attacks by four beasts. One of the beasts looks like a man (vs. 4 - *enosh*) and the others like a bear and a leopard with the wings of a bird and they have a vicious destructive dominion. Then another beast appears, even more terrifying and dreadful than the others, and this had horns, of which one horn was especially notable for having eyes and a mouth like a human being (vs. 8 - *enosh*). The point being made by this vision was to highlight the fact that 'the holy ones of the Most High' were being savagely attacked and defeated, the attackers looking often like human beings but in reality being far more than human.

As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

¹¹I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹²As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. ¹⁴To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed. ¹⁵As for me, Daniel, my spirit was troubled within me, and the visions of my head terrified me. ¹⁶I approached one of the attendants to ask him the truth concerning all this. So he said that he would disclose to me the interpretation of the matter: ¹⁷"As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever—forever and ever."

¹⁹Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped what was left with its feet; ²⁰and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and concerning the other horn, which came up and to make room for which three of them fell out—the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, and that seemed greater than the others. ²¹As I looked, this horn made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them, ²²until the Ancient One came; then judgment was given for the holy ones of the Most High, and the time arrived when the holy ones gained possession of the kingdom. (Daniel 7:9-22)

While these beasts, and especially the last beast with the horn with eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, seemed so powerful and the holy ones seemed so helpless, when the Ancient One took his throne all is seen so clearly (verses 9-10). The beasts are rendered utterly powerless by the Ancient One and the last beast put to death.

²² See William J. Dumbrell, *The New Covenant: The Synoptics in Context: Matthew, Mark and Luke*, The Bible Society of Singapore, Singapore, 1999, pp. 103-106.

Then one 'like a Son of Man' is seen coming with the clouds of heaven (cf. Mark 14:61-62) and to him is 'given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed' (vs. 14). The holy ones may be under attack but there is one to whom is given all dominion (cf. Matt. 28:18!). But there is more, for when this Son of Man receives the kingdom, then it is also truly restored to the holy ones of the Most High: 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12:32). Thus verses 18 and 22 of Daniel 7.²³ When the Son of man has authority, then so do the holy ones of the Most High. This is the restoration of humanity (though the primary reference is to Israel, at that point) through the exaltation of the Son of Man.

Kenosis

The word 'kenosis' is used to describe the 'self-emptying' of Jesus. It comes from the verb κενόω (*kenoō*), to empty, and is based on Philippians 2:7, the only occasion when the verb is used of Jesus. We start with such statements as those in John 17:5 and 17:24.

So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed...²⁴Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Both verses demand we admit what is called a 'pre-existence' of Jesus Christ. P. T. Forsyth says of this:

If there was a personal pre-existence in the case of Christ it does not seem possible to adjust this to the historic Jesus without some doctrine of Kenosis. We face in Christ a Godhead self-reduced but real, whose infinite power took effect in self-humiliation, whose strength was perfected in weakness, who consented to know with an ignorance divinely wise, and who empties himself in virtue of his divine fullness.²⁴

Just how that self-emptying by the whole Godhead in the person of the eternal Son took place is a mystery. Forsyth concludes:

If we ask how Eternal Godhead could make the actual condition of human nature His own, we must answer, as I have already said, that we do not know. We cannot follow the steps of the process, or make a psychological sketch. There is something presumptuous in certain kenotic efforts to body forth just what the Son must have gone through in such an experience. God has done things for his own which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. It is the miracle behind all miracle. All detailed miracle was but its expression. It is the miracle of grace. And it can be realised (little as it can be conceived) only by the faith that grace creates, that answers grace, and works by love. Let us not be impatient of the secret. Love would not remain love if it had no impenetrable reserves. Love alone has any key to those renunciations which do not mean the suicide but the finding of the Soul.²⁵

Likewise, what it meant to Jesus, the man, to be God in the flesh (John 1:14) we also do not know. While we may ask questions concerning what Forsyth called the

²³ Also Dan. 7:27 probably is directed to the holy ones of the Most high having an everlasting kingdom (NRSV), though it is also possible that the reference is to the Most High himself (NIV).

²⁴ P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, Independent Press, London, 1909, p. 293f.

²⁵ *Person and Place*, p. 320.

‘theological science’ of it all,²⁶ in the long run the only response for faith is that of worship. And that is what we see in some of the hymns of the Christian Church. For instance, in ‘Hark the herald angels sing’ there is the line, ‘Mild he lays his glory by’, and in the hymn ‘And can it be’ there is the declaration that the Savior ‘emptied himself of all but love’. Both these come from Charles Wesley, as does the lesser known hymn, ‘Let earth and heaven combine’:²⁷

Let earth and heaven combine,
Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs Divine
The incarnate Deity,
Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man.

He laid His glory by,
He wrapped Him in our clay,
Unmarked by human eye
The latent Godhead lay;
Infant of days He here became,
And bore the mild Immanuel's name.

Unsearchable the love
That hath the Saviour brought,
The grace is far above
Or man or angel's thought;
Suffice for us, that God we know,
Our God is manifest below.

Without contesting the poet’s rights, I would, however, question if there is any evidence that Christ did, indeed, lay his glory by, or if he did ‘empty himself of all but love’, which Wesley linked with ‘He left his Father’s throne above’.

These questions arise because the Scriptures also declare that:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John 1:14 RSV)

and:

Jesus did this [the changing of water to wine], the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:11).

The glory was not laid aside, even if it was not recognised by unbelieving eyes.

We should examine Philippians 2:6-11. Paul writes of ‘Christ Jesus’,

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The main question to be asked is, to what does verses 6 and 7 refer? Are they statements concerning the eternal Son, pre-existent with the Father, who chose not to use his equality with God for his own ends but rather chose to empty himself of his

²⁶ *Person and Place*, p. 294.

²⁷ *Hymns of Eternal Truth*, Sherbourne Road Church Trust, 1971, N° 60, verses 1-3.

divine prerogatives and to take the form of a slave and to be born in the likeness of a man. The alternative would be that Paul is contrasting the attitude of Jesus with the self seeking attitude of Adam.²⁸

The answer to these questions is not simple. The language of verses 6-7 demands hard work on our part and any final certainty will probably elude us.²⁹ The alternate suggestion, that the whole passage is intended to contrast Christ with Adam, is usually examined from within verses 6-11, but I would like to begin with verse 5, 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus'.³⁰ My attention is drawn to the use of the title 'Christ Jesus'. If the whole passage is an exhortation to humility, then the example of Christ is given as the paradigm. But the title, Christ Jesus, as we have seen, carries its primary reference to Jesus the Man. If this is so then that would, to my mind, add weight to the second of the alternatives, namely that Paul is contrasting Jesus with Adam.

Admittedly, the order of the words of verse 7 is puzzling on this interpretation, with 'being born in human likeness' following 'emptied himself'. But the meaning could still be that unlike Adam, who was in the image of God but wanted to exploit that to a point far beyond what was legitimate, Jesus accepted his position and willingly and freely did what true humanity should do. He made *himself* nothing and took the form of a slave. After all, he was in human likeness and form. The 'likeness' here may be similar to Rom. 8:3, where the same word is used. The 'man' in whose likeness he appeared in Philippians 2:7 would then be Adam, though his was not truly *sinful* flesh as mentioned in Romans. That could go some way to account for the next phrase in Philippians 2:7, 'and being found in human form' (the form of a man), which would then be a reference to Jesus' true humanity and his consequent obedience (Phil. 2:8). The point of this then, would be that the self-emptying of Jesus is that of the Man Jesus.

Among the translations I have examined, the *NASB*, *NRSV* and *RSV* have, in Philippians 2:6 inserted the word 'though' or 'although' before 'he was in the form of God'. In contrast, the *NIV* has the more literal, 'Who, *being* in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped...'. There is no word corresponding with 'though' in the Greek and its insertion makes it appear that there is some sort of concession involved. A simple reading of the Greek (cf. *NIV*, *AV* etc.), on the other hand, makes it plain that his obedience and his refusal to count equality with God as something to be grasped was of the essence of his being. There was no reluctant acceptance of his destiny, rather the self-emptying was the way things really are in true humanity. Humanity is created for total submission to God. Obedience, at any level, is not a source of merit and disobedience and resistance to the authority of God is a complete denial of what it is to be a human being in the image of God. Hence Adam's sin was not taking forbidden fruit *per se*, but wanting to be 'as God knowing good and evil'. Good and evil are at the heart of the creation; creation is morally structured (see Ps.19:1, 7-10; cf. Ps. 97:6). The heavens declare *God's*

²⁸ See James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making An Enquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, SCM, London, 1989, pp. 114-121.

²⁹ I have found Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991, pp. 203-268 especially helpful, though I lean towards Dunn's conclusion.

³⁰ O'Brien, *Philippians*, pp. 253-262.

righteousness and it is the law of *God* which is written on the heart of Man at creation (Rom. 2:15).³¹

In the light of the de-glorifying of Man in Adam's sin (Rom. 3:23), Jesus stands as the glorious Man, the last Adam. His self-emptying did not imply that he lost anything. It was that he quite naturally took the place where God is all in all.³² How could he, conceivably, do anything else?

The problem is that human beings are always on the lookout for merit, even if that means finding it in self-denial. This is the thrust of Philippians 2:1-11. Self-interest at whatever level is not for the Christian, or indeed, legitimately, for any human being, and this is so clearly seen in the truth of humanity in the one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

In Christ

Paul wrote: 'as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ' (1 Cor. 15:22). Here are two Men, each the representative head of *all* those 'in him'. The Puritan, Walter Marshall, summarised the issues this way:

'For God has made man upright, but they sought out many inventions' (Eccles. 7:29). Observe well the words of this text, and you will find that all they who have sought out many inventions, rather than upright walking, are comprehended in man that was at first made upright. And 'man' in the text signifies all mankind. The first Adam was all mankind, as Jacob and Esau were two nations in the womb of Rebecca (Gen. 25:23). God made us all in our first parent, according to His own image, able and inclined to do His law and, in that pure nature, our obligation to obedience was first laid on us, and the first wilful transgression, by which our first parent bereaved himself of the image of God, and brought on himself the sentence of death, was our sin as well as his, for, 'In one man, Adam, all have sinned, and so death is passed on all' (Rom. 5:12); because *all mankind were in Adam's loins, when the first sin was committed*, even as Levi may be said to have paid tithes in Abraham before he was born because, when his father Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he was yet in his loins (Heb. 7:9, 10).³³

All that Adam did, he did as representative of humanity. Although some object to the notion of Adam's guilt being our guilt, it is plain that all humanity reproduces Adam's guilt in deeds of unrighteousness in spite of the protestations. But we must still recall that the biblical writers were fully aware of the implications of what they wrote. The Hebrew word 'Adam', although used of the individual in Genesis 5:1ff, is still principally a word with a universal meaning, that is, it refers to all humanity.³⁴

When we speak of being 'in Christ' then, we are saying that Christ was the representative Man of the restored and renewed creation. But we also need to go back

³¹ It is this which explains the work of the new covenant whereby the removal of guilt brings restoration of the knowledge of God and the re-writing of the law on the heart (Jer. 31:31-34); cf. Rom. 7:14 – 8:4 where the question is, what has happened to this man that he should now *want* to obey the law and that he should so grieve over his failures?

³² The other uses of the verb κενόω (*kenōō*) in the New Testament show that at no point must the 'emptying' imply that something was lost. See Rom. 4:14; 1 Cor. 1:17 (though the *NRSV* and *RSV* have added the words 'of it's power' to the translation); 9:15; 2 Cor. 9:3. Given this consistency, there is no reason why Phil. 2:7 should be the exception in Paul's writings.

³³ Walter Marshall, *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, Evangelical Press, Welwyn, (1692) 1981, p. 66, emphasis mine.

³⁴ Fritz Maas, 'ādḥām' in G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume I, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974, pp. 79-87.

to the word 'Christ'. It is not a mere title nor a surname but is descriptive of the function of the one described that way.³⁵ While the concept of a Messiah may have developed late in Israel's life, the pattern for that concept was already well established, and that was in the person of King David. David's significance has already been noted above.

In 1 Samuel 16, David was anointed by Samuel and that meant that he was the one anointed by the LORD.

The LORD said [to Samuel], "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah. (1 Sam. 16:12-13)

David was the man upon whom the spirit³⁶ of God came mightily, for the task of kingship. We should, however, note that this description is followed, first, by the account of David being the one to soothe Saul's deep disquiet, and then by the account of David's encounter with Goliath.³⁷ The story in 1 Samuel 17 must be seen in this context.

The fight with Goliath was not the usual form of battle. It was not the weapons used but the fact that the fighting was between 'champions' that was conspicuous. (A similar battle took place between the champions of David and Ishbaal, described in 2 Samuel 2:12-17, though the outcome was less decisive and a full battle evidently resulted). The anointing of David was followed by the story of him acting *on behalf of all Israel*. His victory was not merely an illustration of what can be done by faith; it was a representative, substitutionary victory. For Israel, the victory was vicarious. When David was victorious, all Israel participated in his victory:

Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.⁵² The troops of Israel and Judah rose up with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. ⁵³ The Israelites came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. (1 Sam. 17:51-53)

Put another way, all Israel was 'in David', in their messiah, in their anointed one. This may go towards explaining why the apostle Paul never speaks of us being 'in Jesus' or 'in Jesus Christ'. The primary issue is the Messiahship of Jesus and hence Paul's phrase is 'in Christ'. Although there are other possible elements to be considered,³⁸ the phrase could, I suggest, have this simple meaning, drawn from reference to the role of David. But of course there is the Pauline understanding that, if we are indeed 'in Christ', and that through the victory he had won, then it is because we were once 'in Adam', and through that Man's disobedience, we were dead.

Some passages from Paul are significant here. The first is Ephesians 2:1-10:

³⁵ See footnote 17.

³⁶ I incline to the position that 'Spirit' with the capital 'S' should be reserved for the New Testament documents. Until the incarnation of the word and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there was no indication that the Holy Spirit was a discrete person. Of course we can say that it was the Holy Spirit who came on David but we can only say that with apostolic hindsight. Within the Old Testament it could be said that the 'wind' or 'breath', or even the 'presence' of God was understood.

³⁷ For a different theological evaluation of the encounter, see Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, Tyndale Press, London, 1962, pp. 82-84.

³⁸ For a summary, see M. A. Seifrid, 'In Christ' in Gerald F. Hawthorne *et al* (Eds), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1993, pp. 433-436.

You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

In verses 1 and 5, the word ‘through’ (also in *RV* and *ASV*) represents the Greek dative, which is translated here as ‘in’ by the *NIV*, *ESV* etc. Whether ‘through’ or ‘in’ (an ‘instrumental’ or ‘locative’ dative?), and we can see why both are finally true, though what was in Paul’s mind when he wrote we cannot say dogmatically, the point is that we are no longer dead because we were made alive with Christ. To coin a phrase, were ‘co-made-alive’ with Christ, just as Galatians 2:19 says we were ‘co-crucified with Christ’.³⁹ Verse 6 continues by saying, using the same verbal forms,⁴⁰ that we were co-raised and co-seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Verse 7 says that God’s kindness towards us took place in the person and work of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus and in the ages to come this will be shown. The point is that all of this is that we were created in Christ Jesus for good works and not for those trespasses and sins in which we once walked (verse 10).

Let me make an observation here: verse 10 does not say ‘re-creation’ or ‘new creation’ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), although that is the way the verse is usually understood. So why ‘created’ here? I would suggest the possibility that Paul has in mind something far bigger than just the work of regeneration. It is that the whole of creation was with Christ in view. That is, even Adam, the Man in the garden of Eden, was with Christ in view. As an example of this, Paul says that the unity of the man and the woman in Genesis 2:24 is actually speaking of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31-32). Likewise, he says that we were chosen ‘in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love’ (Eph. 1:4). This holiness and blamelessness, which is in clear contrast to the nature and life of fallen humanity, was the nature of created humanity. That is how Adam was created. The good works to which Paul refers are those works which are ‘natural’ for all humanity. Any behaviour which is not of that essence should be rejected. This was expanded further in Ephesians 4:17-24:

Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰That is not the way you learned Christ! ²¹For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. ²²You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old [man], corrupt and deluded by its lusts, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to clothe yourselves with the new [man], created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

I have replaced the word ‘self’ (*NRSV*, *NIV*), with the word Paul used, ‘man’ (ἄνθρωπος *anthrōpos*). This makes perfectly good sense when it is realised that the

³⁹ συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ (*sunezōpoiēsen tō Christō*); Χριστῷ συνεσταυρωμαί (*Christō sunestaurōmai*).

⁴⁰ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν (*sunēgeiren kai sunekathisen*).

'man' referred to is either Adam or Jesus. The truth of humanity is in [the Man] Jesus (v. 21).

Then there is Romans 5:12-21:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned — ¹³sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here the contrast between Adam and Jesus, the two 'Men', is plain. One 'Man' brought death by his act of disobedience, the other 'Man' brought justification and life. If we ask what his 'act of righteousness' which accomplished justification and life was, the answer is in the following chapter. Romans 6:1-11 shows us how we benefit from this act of righteousness:

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old [man] was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The act of righteousness was the execution of 'our old Man' (v. 6). The benefit of that came through our being joined to Christ in that action by means of our baptism. I have elsewhere argued that the heart of baptism is submission to the one into whose name we are baptised.⁴¹ That means that baptism is an act of faith. By faith we are participants in the death and resurrection of Christ, our representative Man. What is true of him is, therefore true of us (vv. 9-11).

What, I think, should be stressed is the use of the word 'Christ'. It is not a surname, it is a function. Our 'Christ' is our representative and substitute. To say that we are 'in Christ' should add to our understanding of such famous expressions as 'substitutionary atonement' and so on. Of course there are other expressions in the New Testament, but this one at least is clear.

⁴¹ See Ian D. Pennicook, *The Baptism of John and its Significance for Christian Baptism*, NCPI, Blackwood, 1987.

JESUS OUR KING

As we have seen, the statements of Romans 5:17 and Revelation 5:10 are both promises of what lies ahead. Both contain future tenses: they ‘will reign in life’ and ‘they will reign on earth’.⁴² There is no place for boasting in anything we may accomplish; even our best will still carry with it the taint of ‘remaining sin’. If we boast, it will only be of our sufferings (Rom. 5:3) and our weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:9). That is not because we are proud of these things but because through them the great triumph of our King is demonstrated. If we see the sinfulness of our body of death, it is only because, in the crucifixion of our Adam, the body of sin was rendered powerless to hold us in slavery (Rom. 6:6). If we see our weakness, it does not cause us distress because we see that Christ was crucified in weakness and he lives by the power of God and therefore we are weak in him but we will live with him by the same power (2 Cor. 13:4). The power at work within us to see us to that goal is the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). And we boast in his cross because his work meant that we were crucified to the world and the world to us. We contributed nothing to that action, even our receiving it was the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

Our current weakness, our failure to reign in the present is the matter addressed in Romans 7:14, ‘For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh,⁴³ sold into slavery under sin.’ The word translated by ‘of the flesh’ is σάρκινος (*sarkinos*) and does not refer to the deliberately rebellious choices we make but to the fact of us being men and women who are weak. There is another word used to denote the choice to give ‘the flesh’ a place which it ought not have, σαρκικός (*sarkikos*), and the distinction between them can be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. Verse 1 uses σάρκιμος whereas verse 3 uses σαρκικός twice.

The situation of our being less than that for which we were created is treated in Hebrews 2:5-10:

Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

‘What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸subjecting all things under his feet.’

Now in subjecting all things to him, God left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.⁴⁴

It is the coming world which will be subject, not to angels, but to God’s ‘many sons’ (vv. 5, 10). In the meantime, the one with all authority, in heaven and on earth’ is Jesus, the Man. He is the one who fits the description of Psalm 8, even if we do not yet. He is the one made perfect, that is, he has reached the goal, as Man, of being exalted, which we understand to be the real issue in what we know as the ascension

⁴² The word used is the future tense, βασιλεύσουσιν (*basileuousin*), in both places, though there are variant readings in some manuscripts of Revelation 5:10, some of which have the present tense βασιλεύουσιν (*basileuousin*).

⁴³ The *NIV* has ‘unspiritual’ (where other translations have ‘of the flesh’, ‘of flesh’, ‘carnal’ etc.). This is a pity since Paul makes a contradictory point in Rom. 8:9ff.

⁴⁴ *NRSV* modified.

(so Acts 2:32-33). He is the pioneer of our salvation. What is more, as the pioneer, he is the guarantee of our own perfection. Thus there is the careful wording of Hebrews 6:19-20:

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain,²⁰ where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Because he has triumphed, we now have a certain hope that we will reign in life, *through the one Man, Jesus Christ* (Rom. 5:17).

Christ's victory over sin and death, while not our victory in the sense that we, of ourselves, can accomplish anything, *is* nonetheless our victory because God goes on giving it to us *through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. 15:57). Our frailty is no hindrance, though our deliberate acts which encourage the flesh to be 'as God' even if, as we might assume, only for brief times, certainly will. But our confidence is in the full overflowing of grace (Rom. 5:20), received by faith alone, as God goes on giving us Christ's victory and goes on supplying the Spirit (Gal. 3:5⁴⁵) by whom that victory is effective in us (see Romans 5:5-8).

Christ is our Prophet, Priest and King. His reign as king, which has occupied our attention here, is not just for our 'observation' but for our 'participation'. To maintain the assonance, his reign is not for our 'appropriation' either. To merely observe his victory would be to deny its whole purpose. To suggest that we need to appropriate it, *to make it our own*, would be to deny its completeness. The following hymn makes the point so clearly:

We reign in life by one, Christ Jesus, Lord;
We are the conquerors, truly sons of God.
Let us then live in Christ's great victory,
Submitting to the leading of the Lord.

2. There is no power greater than the Lord's,
Christ's Cross has conquered through His precious blood;
Satan and all his hosts are vanquished now,
O, lift your hearts and praise the glorious Lord!

3. We lift our hearts in praise, O Lord, to You;
You brought to life, by Your most holy breath,
Those who were wholly dead and lost in sin—
Gone is the terror, gone the sting of death.

4. See now the Spirit poured forth by the Son!
Look! there an army stands in new-found life.
Watch too, the wave on wave of God's true sons,
Equipped with power, engaging in the strife.

5. Christ's hosts shall labour till men know His love,
God's sons shall toil until the end has come;
Then—wave on wave—His sons shall be unveiled
And meet the Father in that glorious home.

6. Lift then the feet that falter in the way,
Rise! stand erect, before the Father-God;
Be filled with Him who maketh all things new,
And walk within the victory of the Lord!⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Gal. 3:5 does not specify who goes on supplying the Spirit. In the light of Acts 2:33, it might equally be a reference to the risen Jesus 'who lives in me' (Gal, 2:20). Note that the present tense implies continuity.

⁴⁶ © 1973 Geoffrey Bingham, *New Creation Hymn Book*, N° 203. Used by permission.