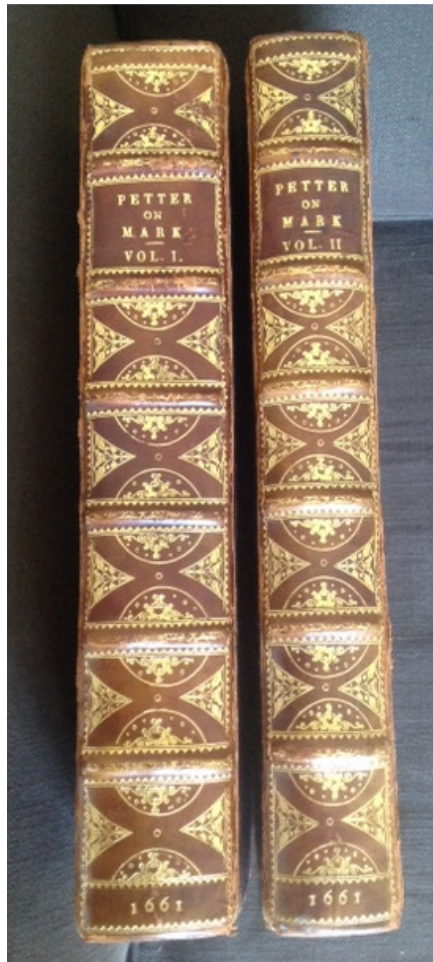


A Gem for Ascensiontide and Trinity – Rev George Petter on Mark 12 verse 36

May 20th Ascension Day 1632



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**‘The Lord said unto my Lord, “Sit thou on my right hand,
till I make thy enemies thy footstool.”’**



St George's Church,

Brede

Observ.

Now followeth the third thing in the words. The ground or cause of Christ's advancement unto this glory here foretold by David, viz. the eternal purpose and decree of God the Father, ordaining and appointing him unto it; implied in these words, *The Lord said*: (as we have showed before, in opening the meaning). By which words also, is withal intimated the future manifestation and execution of that decree of God in the actual glorification of Christ, which was to be fulfilled in the due time appointed; viz. immediately after his Resurrection and Ascension into heaven.

Observ. Here again we are put in mind of that which was before observed, viz. That Christ our Saviour did not advance himself to the glory of his Kingdom, but he was called and appointed thereunto by God the Father; and that in his eternal purpose and decree. He did not exalt himself to the right hand of God: but the Lord said unto him, *Sit on my right hand, etc. Joh. 17. 24. I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, etc, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.* Whereby is implied, that as God the Father loved Christ before the foundation of the world: so he gave him glory before the foundation of the world; viz. in his eternal purpose and decree. But of this, before.

Rev George Petter was Vicar of Brede, Sussex from 1610-1654. From June 7th 1618 to May 28th 1643 (with small gaps) he gave weekly expositions on Thursdays on the Gospel of Mark, each one of which is dated. Clearly intended for publication, this took place posthumously in 1661 as a Commentary of Mark in two volumes. Bishop J.C. Ryle, who refers to it as his chief source in writing his own "*Expository Thoughts on Mark*" (1857), writes of Petter's work in his own Preface "*It is a work which from its scarcity, price and size, is much less known than it deserves ... for laborious investigation of the meaning of every word, for patient discussion of every question bearing on the text, for fullness of matter, there is no work on St. Mark which, in my opinion, bears comparison with Petter's*". Ryle's Preface also gives the reason for the "scarcity" in that "*the greater part of the impression is said to have perished in the Great Fire of London*", and this is supported by a comparison of the location of the bookseller on Ludgate Hill with a map of the extent of the Great Fire (1666).

Before introducing the extracts I want to mention a topical link and pay tribute to a bell ringer from St George's Church, Brede who has recently led a successful campaign to raise awareness of blood cancer through a bell peal campaign – the Julie McDonnell Doubles, which by January 2017 had raised £7 million, with peals being played all over the world (see "Strike Back Against Blood Cancer" - SBABC). According to the church handbook three of the church bells (5th, 4th & 2nd) at St George's are dated to 1628, which falls within the period when Rev George Petter was Vicar! What a hard worker he must have been, and what a rounded country Church of England ministry when you think that others who shared his Puritan sympathies would soon be melting church bells down!

By Thursday 20th May 1632 Rev George Petter had arrived at a particularly appropriate text, Mark 12:36 when Jesus cites Psalm 110 v.1: "*The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool*". The following is the full text of this and the previous week's exposition which belong together, and the wording ("*as we do now*") shows that the second talk was (unusually) given in the context of a Holy Communion service, presumably because Ascension Day fell that Thursday. He movingly urges: "*... labour by a particular faith to apprehend and apply to ourselves Christ as our Lord and Saviour, especially when we come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; in which God doth offer Christ with all the benefits of his death to us in particular.*" That Ascension Day would be 375 years ago this year (2017). In all, Petter would devote 8 weeks to expounding this and the following verse!

Wording is unchanged but spelling is modernised, and the original marginal notes (as used throughout the Commentary) are given. I have retained just a few of Petter's capitals.

Bob Capper, St Mark's Church, Cardiff May 2017

May. 13
1632

Mark 12.36 The Lord said to my Lord, etc.

Now follow the words themselves, which David spake by the Holy Ghost; *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, etc.*

These words of David do contain in them a prophetic prediction of the exaltation or advancement of Christ the true Messiah unto the glory of his Kingdom. The prophecy is uttered by *David* in the person of God himself, calling and appointing his Son Jesus Christ to be thus advanced to the glory and majesty of his kingdom.

First to open the meaning of the words.

The Lord] That is, God the Father, the first person of the Trinity.

Said to my Lord] That is, to the Son of God, Christ Jesus, the true Messiah; whom *David* calleth his Lord in two respects.

1. In respect of the Godhead of Christ, and to show that he was true God, as well as man. And so he was *David's* Lord, by right of creation, as he also was and is the Lord of all other men, and of all creatures.

2. In respect of his whole person, as he was Mediator, and God and man in one person. And so he was *David's* Lord by right of Redemption, *David* being a member of the true church, which is the company of those that are redeemed by Christ.

The Lord said] This is not so to be taken as if God the Father did so speak unto Christ, as men use to speak one to another, by an audible voice; but it is spoken of God after the manner of men, for our capacity. And by this speaking of God unto Christ his Son, is meant nothing else but God's eternal decree and appointment, together with the manifestation and execution of the same in the due time appointed, concerning the advancement of Christ to his Kingdom and glory: *q.d.* God the Father did in his eternal purpose decree and appoint this concerning his Son Christ, the Messiah, and he will in due time declare and manifest his decree, by executing the same.

Sit thou on my right hand] This also is spoken of God and of Christ after the manner of men; for we are not to imagine that there is any right or left hand in God properly, nor that he would have Christ so to sit at his right hand as men are said to sit, etc but it is to be understood of the exaltation of Christ the Messiah, unto the highest degree of heavenly glory in his Kingdom, next unto God the Father. It is a speech borrowed from the custom of earthly kings and princes, whose custom hath been to place such persons at their right hands, whom they intended to advance to the highest honour next themselves. So *1 King.2.19. Solomon* purposing highly to honour his mother *Bathsheba*, caused her to be set at his right hand. And *Psal. 45.9. Upon thy right hand stand the Queen*, etc. And *Mark 10.* the sons of *Zebedee* made suit

Observ. 4.

Observ. 4. In that *David* here speaking of Christ the Messiah his Redeemer and Saviour, calleth him his *Lord*; *The Lord said to my Lord*; see the nature of true faith: which is, to make particular application of Christ unto the believer; persuading him, that Christ is not only a Lord and Saviour in general, but to him in particular. These words of *David* [*my Lord*] are words of faith; shewing plainly, that *David* by a particular faith did apprehend Christ, though as yet to come: believing him to be his Lord by right of Redemption as well as of Creation; that is, to be his Saviour and Redeemer in particular. So *Thomas, Joh. 20. 28. My Lord and my God*: and *Paul, Gal 2.20.* So must we labour to do. Rest not in a general belief, that Christ is a Redeemer and Saviour of all believers: but labour by a particular faith to apprehend and apply to ourselves; Christ as our Lord and Saviour: especially when we come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; in which God doth offer Christ with all the benefits of his death to us in particular. Which shows, that it is his will we should make particular application of Christ and his benefits to ourselves, etc. This is to eat and drink Christ spiritually, etc. *Joh. 6.*

Observ. 5.

Observ. 5. Lastly, in that *David* calleth Christ, his *Lord*, both by right of Creation and Redemption; thereby acknowledging him to have absolute power and authority over him, to rule and govern him, and himself to be his servant, bound to obey and serve him: hence we may learn, how we ought to receive and embrace Christ; *viz.* not only as our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from our sins; and from God's wrath, to deliver us from hell, etc. but also as our Lord and Master; to rule and govern us in our life, submitting ourselves to him as loyal servants, to obey and serve him in all duties which he requireth of us. Many there be, who are willing and desirous that Christ should be their Jesus; that is their Saviour, to save them from their sins, and from hell: but are not willing to have him as their Lord, to rule and govern them in life and practice: but Satan and their own wicked lusts must be their lords, to command and rule them: their covetousness, pride, uncleanness, etc. these they desire to obey and serve, and not Christ; and yet would have him to be their Saviour. This cannot be. Therefore if thou lookest for Christ to be thy Saviour; see that thou withal embrace him as thy Lord and Master to rule and govern thee in all thy life and actions, etc. Therefore is he so often called, *Our Lord Jesus Christ*. This we vowed in our Baptism, and to this also we tie and bind ourselves so often as we come to the Lord's Supper (as we do now): for in coming to this sacrament, we renew our covenant with God: one condition of which covenant is, that we give up ourselves in obedience to God and unto Christ, as to our absolute Lord, by right of Creation and Redemption, who hath power to command us as his servants, etc. Thus then we are to receive Christ in this sacrament: not only as our Redeemer and Saviour: but also as our Lord to rule and govern us in our life, etc. But think it not enough to call him *Lord*, (as every hypocrite can do) but see thou do obey and serve him as a loyal servant. Remember, *Matth. 7. 21. Not everyone that saith, Lord, Lord, etc.*

divine nature, that he is true God as well as man; even the natural Son of God: and equal with God in divine nature, essence, and in all the eternal properties of the Godhead. *Phil. 2. 6. Being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Joh. 1. 1. In the beginning was the Word – and that Word was God, etc.* This is the very thing for which our Saviour here allegeth these words of *David*; viz. To prove against the Scribes, that he must be more than a mere man, even the Son of God.

Use.

Use. Christ being true God, as well as man, hence gather, that he is a most powerful and all-sufficient Saviour; able perfectly to save all that truly believe in him. *Heb. 7. 25. Able to save to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, etc.* Being God, he is able not only to begin, but also perfectly to accomplish and finish our salvation, and all the parts of it. Being God, he is able to overcome and vanquish death, hell, Satan, and all the enemies of our salvation: able also not only to merit forgiveness of sins, and God's favour, and eternal life for us; but also to give us eternal life, etc. *Joh. 10. 28. --- I give unto (my sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish, etc.* This is matter of great and unspeakable comfort to us, being true believers, etc. But of this point, often before.

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Observ. 3.

Observ 3 In that, *David* speaking of the advancement of Christ the Messiah, unto the glory of his Kingdom, doth call him *Lord*; which is to be understood in respect of the Godhead of Christ (as we have heard) hence gather, that the exaltation of Christ unto the glory of his Kingdom, at God's right hand, is to be understood not only of the manhood of Christ, but also of his Godhead: that he was to be exalted to the right hand of God after his Ascension, not only as he was man, but also as he was God: even according to his whole Person. Not only Christ as man, but Christ as Lord and God, was to be advanced to God's right hand, etc.

Quest.

Quest. How can this be so, seeing Christ was always, and from everlasting, partaker of this divine glory and majesty in heaven; as being equal with God the Father, etc?

Answ.

Answ. Though he was always partaker of his heavenly glory as he was God; yet this glory of his Godhead was never so clearly manifested in his human nature, till after his Resurrection and Ascension in heaven: for before, it lay hid under the veil of his flesh. So then this exaltation of the Godhead of Christ, was not by receiving any glory which it had not before: but only by a more clear and full manifestation of that glory of his Godhead in his human nature after his Ascension into heaven. So understand that, *Act. 2. 36. God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ; i.e.* manifested him to be Lord of heaven and earth, viz. by revealing the glory of his Godhead in his human nature, more clearly than ever before.

to Christ, that they might sit one at his right hand, and the other at his left in his Kingdom; that is, that they might have the two highest places of honour and dignity in his Kingdom. So here, God the Father is said to ordain Christ to his right hand; that is, to be advanced to the highest honour and dignity in his Kingdom next unto himself. More particularly and distinctly, two things are here implied by the setting of Christ at the right hand of God.

1. His advancement or exaltation unto the highest honour and dignity, and glory, next unto God the Father, and above all creatures. *Phil. 2. 9. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, etc. So Ephes. 1. 20. & Heb. 1. 2.*

2. His exaltation to the full possession and administration of his Kingdom and government over all the world, and especially over his true church. Thus *Paul* himself expoundeth those words of the *Psalm, 1 Cor. 15. 25. He must reign till he have put down all enemies under his feet.* Note that this exaltation of Christ which is here prophetically foretold by *David*, was afterward fulfilled in the time appointed, viz. immediately after his resurrection and ascension into heaven. Then, and not before, was he set at the right hand of God, in the sense as *David* here foretold it.

It followeth, *Until I make thine enemies thy footstool*] That is, till such times as I shall utterly vanquish and subdue unto thee all enemies, which shall rebel or oppose themselves against thee and thy Kingdom or government.

Quest.

Quest. When was this to be fulfilled?

Answ.

Answ. At the end of the world, etc. See *1 Cor. 15. 24.*

Until] Not that Christ's kingdom or glory shall then cease, after the subduing of his enemies; but a limited time is put for unlimited, as in other places of scripture, as *Matth. 28. Ult. – I am with you always to the end of the world.* But God is said to speak thus to his Son Christ Jesus, thereby to imply the truth and certainty of this subduing and vanquishing of all the enemies of Christ's Kingdom, and that this subduing of them shall be one special effect and consequence of his exaltation to the glory of his Kingdom. So much of the meaning of the words.

Now in the words explained, consider these particulars. 1. The person that is said here to have called and advanced Christ to this high degree of glory and kingly authority, viz. God the Father, called here *Jehovah*, or the Lord; *The Lord said.*

2. The person called or advanced to this glory, Christ the true Messiah, whom *David* here calleth his Lord; *The Lord said to my Lord.*

3. The ground or cause of his advancement, God's decree or appointment from everlasting, implied by these words, *The Lord said, etc.*

4. The advancement or exaltation itself, expressed in these words, *Sit thou on my right hand*.

Lastly, the time or continuance of this Kingdom and glory of Christ, unto which he should be advanced, implied by these words; *Until I make thine enemies, etc.* In which words also is expressed one special effect and consequence of Christ's exaltation to his Kingdom and glory, *viz.* the utter vanquishing and subduing all enemies of his Kingdom.

Of the first. The person who is said here to call and advance Christ, etc. which is God the Father. *The Lord*.

Observ.

Observ. Christ Jesus the Son of God, and true Messiah, did not advance himself to his Kingdom and glory, but was exalted unto it of God the Father. This *David* here foretelleth prophetically, bringing in God the Father thus speaking to Christ his Son; that is, calling and appointing him to sit on his right hand, etc. So *Psal. 2. 6.* And the same was afterward fulfilled. *Phil. 2. 9. God hath highly exalted him, etc. So Ephes. 1. 20.*

Use 1.

Use 1. Hence gather, that although Christ as he is God be equal unto God the Father in divine nature, power and majesty; yet as he is God incarnate; that is, God and man in one person, and as he is Mediator, he is inferior to God the Father, for else he could not be called or advanced of God the Father to this dignity and honour of sitting at his right hand: this calling and advancing of Christ to sit at the right hand of God, doth argue a superiority in God the Father, who advanced him, and an inferiority in Christ who is thus advanced by him. I say an inferiority, not simply as Christ is God, but as he is God and man, or as he is Mediator, in respect of his office unto which he is called and designed of God the Father. And thus we are to understand it, when Christ is said to be exalted of God the Father to this dignity of sitting at his right hand. Understand it not of Christ considered as God simply, but as Mediator, etc.

Use 2.

Use 2. Seeing Christ did not call or advance himself to the glory of his Kingdom, but was advanced of God the Father unto it; hence learn, how unfit it is for Christians believing in Christ, and professing his name, to be ambitious of any honour, dignity or preferment in this world; how unfit to advance themselves or to seek to advance themselves to high places or dignities in the world, or to usurp or take to themselves any honour or dignity without a calling from God. If Christ Jesus the Son of God would not exalt himself as he was Mediator to the honour of his Kingdom, but waited until it was said unto him of God the Father; *Sit thou at my right hand*; much less ought we to exalt ourselves in this world, or ambitiously to usurp any honour or dignity, without a calling from God, and from his Word. Remember *Luke 14. 11. He that exalteth himself shall be abased, etc.*

Observ. 1

Here followeth the second thing in the words, the person called, and advanced to this glory, Christ the true Messiah, whom *David* here calleth his Lord, *The Lord said to my Lord*.

Observ. 1. (by comparing these words together) That there is a distinction of Persons in the Godhead. Though there is but one God in nature and essence; yet there is more than one Person in this Godhead: there is plurality and distinction of Persons, etc. There is God the Father, the Lord; and there is also God the Son, the Lord as *David* here calleth him, *The Lord said to my Lord*; God the Father spake thus unto God the Son, the true Messiah, who was to be incarnate, etc. And unto these two Persons here mentioned, we are to add the Holy Ghost, as another distinct Person in the Godhead, who also is named in the words going immediately before: so that there are in all, three distinct Persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. *1 Joh. 5. 7. There are three which bear record in heaven, etc.* Note, that these three Persons are really and truly distinguished, one from the other; so as the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, etc. And yet they are not divided, or separated one from the other, but are all three most nearly united in one divine essence common to them all: for the Godhead being infinite, cannot be divided. This is one of the great mysteries of our Christian faith, taught in the Word of God: which is rather to be religiously adored, than to be over-curiously searched into, farther than we have ground from the Word of God.

Use 1.

Use 1. This doctrine touching the distinction of Persons in the Godhead, teaches us how to distinguish the true God, from all idols and false gods; and how to worship him aright; *viz.* As he has revealed himself in his Word; as one God distinguished into three Persons; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus we are to conceive of him in prayer, and all other parts of his religious worship: yet so, as in prayer or other worship of God, we are not to take up our minds with over-curiously speculations about the distinction of Persons in the Godhead, lest it hinder our affection in prayer or other duties of God's service.

Observ. 2.

Observ. 2. The truth of Christ's Godhead, or divine nature, in that *David* here by the Spirit of prophecy calleth him his Lord; which must needs imply the Godhead of Christ: for as he was man, he was the Son of *David*, being born of his posterity after the flesh; and therefore could not in that respect properly be called *David's* Lord: especially considering that *David*, being king of *Israel*, had no man to be his lord; which therefore shows, that when he calleth Christ the Messiah, his *Lord*, it must needs imply, that the Messiah should be more than a mere man; even the natural Son of God. So that, as before, *versu* *praced.* we heard of the truth of Christ's human nature, that he was and is true man; in that he is called the Son of *David* (and so much the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, with the other Jews in our Saviour's time, did rightly acknowledge): so here we are taught the truth of his Godhead or