

does, bringing a great sense of fulfilment to our Lord's last day on earth. Not many hymns end with an exclamation mark!

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour  
first-begotten from the dead,  
thou alone, our strong defender,  
liftest up thy people's head.  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Jesu, true and living bread.

Here our humblest homage pay we,  
here in loving reverence bow;  
here for faith's discernment pray,  
lest we fail to know thee now.  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
thou art here, we ask not how.

Though the lowliest from doth veil thee  
as of old in Bethlehem,  
here as there thine angels hail thee,  
branch and flower of Jesse's stem.  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
we in worship join with them.

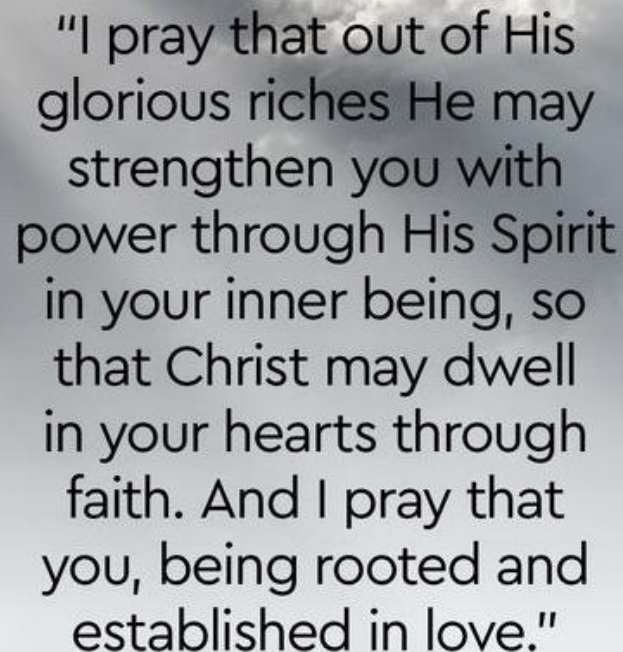
Paschal Lamb, thine offering, finished  
once for all when thou wast slain,  
in its fullness undiminished  
shall for evermore remain.  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
cleansing souls from every stain.

Life-impacting heavenly manna,  
stricken rock with streaming side,  
heaven and earth with loud hosanna  
worship thee, the Lamb who died.  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Risen, ascended, glorified!

## Reflections for THE SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION

### Jesus The Intercessor

*Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour  
first-begotten from the dead,  
thou alone, our strong defender,  
liftest up thy people's head.*



"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love."

**EPHESIANS 3:16-17**

***Prayer does not fit us for the greater work.  
Prayer is the greater work.***

*(Oswald Chambers).*

*All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers. (Acts 1 v 14)*

*I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. (John 17 v 9-11)*

## **Jesus the Intercessor** from Rev'd. David Blackwall –

We can learn so much from the times when Jesus prays. It gives a model for us.

In the gospels, often tucked away in a single verse we read, 'and Jesus, early in the morning, while still dark, got up and went out to a deserted place to pray', Mk 1:35. Later he would do this together with his disciples. It was time out from the constant demands of the people and activity – getting away from the busyness, crowds, noise and requests. Time away, alone with his Father.

Time for listening and finding renewed energy and direction in order to be fully engaged with the world once more.

There was a sharp learning curve here for the disciples (and possibly for us!) as, for example, when they struggled to heal the boy 'with the dumb spirit', Mk 1:14-29. It was unsuccessful – until Jesus came. When the disciples asked him, 'Why could we not cast it out?' Jesus replied, 'This kind can come out only by prayer'. This was more than an invitation to them to get on their knees more – Jesus is saying all mission, theirs and ours, must be bathed in prayer and confident that we are doing the Father's will. It is an encouragement to make prayer more central in our lives and to strengthen our spiritual development and mission.

Interestingly, what do we find the disciples doing when they return to Jerusalem after the Ascension? Act 1:14. They come together with a 'number of women' to pray. This is the first of many instances in Acts indicating Prayer, waiting on God and listening to him was a primary act of the Early Church – seeking the way forward in the company of the Holy Spirit.

What can we learn from this?

Prayer with the Father is the energising force for our life in the Spirit and our spiritual growth. This is what feeds our intercession and fires our mission.

During Lockdown, can we find time to delve deeper into our relationship with the Father and Jesus?

Be encouraged! God is a God of Surprises!

## **HYMN MEDITATION FOR** From Malcolm Sturgess

Do you know who George Hugh Bourne and George Clement Martin are? I thought not. That is a comfort to all of us, proving that you do not have to be famous or a "celebrity" to bring joy to our fellow human beings. The two Georges were exact contemporaries, being born in 1840 and 1844 respectively, and between them they wrote a cracking hymn for The Ascension of our Lord. George Martin was later Sir George, knighted as Organist at St. Paul's Cathedral from 1888 - 1916 (there was another Sir George Martin who managed the Beatles). George Bourne, who wrote the words of our hymn, finished his life as Sub-dean and a Prebendary of our own Cathedral, and died in St. Edmund's College (sic). So it is quite possible that this hymn was first sung in one of the two Cathedrals, or, conceivably, in both at the same time, just over 100 years ago.

The resounding words link everything together, from Jesse, via Bethlehem and the Crucifixion to the present day. Note the second comma in verse 4, a very good example of how both organists and congregations should take note of the punctuation in hymns, and not just sing line by line (David Halls' advice to organists when playing hymns: "Breathe with your congregation"). St. Helen is a great tune. It was originally in C, but we usually do it in B flat, which is a bit of a pity. Either way, the diminished 7th chord five notes from the end is a stroke of genius. As I said two weeks ago, if you don't know what I mean it doesn't matter; it works and we can all feel that it