

# The Gospel MAGAZINE

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FEBRUARY 1967

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# THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."

"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

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No. 1373  
New Series

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## EDITORIAL

Each year one of the main items of news after Christmas is the grim total of deaths on the roads. This sorry arithmetic of death and suffering has become the regular feature of any holiday period, but it is especially prominent at Christmas for the obvious reason that a great deal more alcohol is consumed then than at any other time of the year. Even what some might term moderate amounts of drink are no preparation for driving. The hazards of traffic-laden roads are difficult enough to master without the added encumbrance of the numbing effect of alcohol. The Christian with his realisation of his duty to his neighbour will surely keep well away from what may be the instrument of injury or death to others. Even the most careful driver among us is liable to the occasional lapse of concentration which leads to an accident, but to drink before driving is to invite disaster, and this the Christian must not do.

But there are other statistics which are not always so prominent in the news but are in many ways even more appalling. I refer to the steep rise in deaths from lung cancer which are now reaching epidemic proportions. A great many of these deaths are directly attributed by the medical experts to cigarette smoking which gives its devotees a passing pleasure while exacting a fearful toll from many of them. If drink kills thousands on the roads and we deplore the senseless slaughter, should we not feel the same in face of the even greater ravages of tobacco? It is simply a fact that where drink slays its hundreds nicotine is now slaying its thousands.

For the Christian this is a spiritual issue which he must face with an open Bible and with an honest realisation of the present serious situation—and it is surely serious when the tobacco casualties of

1966 reached into the thousands and when 1967 will probably emulate or surpass its predecessors. This is no longer a matter that can lightly be dismissed with a few glib words about Christian liberty—the motoring organisations are just as glib when they protest against any encroachment by means of drink tests on the liberty of the motorist—the Christian must ask himself some serious questions if he is among the smokers.

There is the obvious fact that the Bible sets a great value upon the body. The Manichaeian heresy in the days of the early church, which pronounced matter evil is no part of the gospel. It is true that the body has been affected by sin like every other part of our nature. But the body is also affected by redemption which reaches to every part of our being. So Paul speaks of our body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6 : 19). He calls on us to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12 : 1). He insists that the body is for the Lord (1 Cor. 6 : 13). He speaks of the destiny of the believer in bodily terms, for we look forward not to a bare immortality of the soul but to the resurrection of the body (Rom. 8 : 23; 1 Cor. 15 : 35 ff.).

Now all this must surely affect our attitude to anything that concerns our bodies. It has been quite clearly demonstrated that there is a direct connection between cigarette smoking and lung cancer. Nicotine is clearly a harmful and indeed a killing poison. Not all will succumb, but very many will. Can the Christian thus defile the temple of the Spirit? The temple in the Old Testament was the dwelling place of God, and as a consequence was greatly revered by God's people. Our bodies are precisely this and ought equally to be revered. It is good to remember that the New Testament speaks of our bodies in a way that it never refers to the buildings we call churches. Most Christians would be rather horrified if someone lit a cigarette in a church, even if there was no service being held. Surely it is much worse to have the real temple of the Spirit defiled!

Then, too, we must look at the whole issue of Christian freedom. It is easy to reject any suggestion of rules and prohibitions in the name of liberty. But the further question must be asked—is the final condition of the man a true state of freedom? A man who has a habit which he cannot break is certainly not free. He is at that point a slave. Now it is quite obvious that there are those who would gladly give up smoking but they simply cannot. The thing has got such a hold on them, and the craving is so great that they cannot break free. Listen again to the Apostle Paul: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are

lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6: 12). Clearly any indulgence which is habit-forming and which makes men slaves has brought them under its power, and should therefore be resisted at the outset before it binds its chains about us.

There is also the matter of money. The Christian is a steward of the possessions with which God has entrusted him. He has not discharged his stewardship simply by giving this or that contribution to the work of the church or to charity. He is accountable to God for the way in which he spends all his money. Now smoking is a very expensive habit. A moderate smoker might easily spend up to £50 a year and others will spend much more. Can the Christian justify such waste in view of the clamant needs on every hand which call for much greater financial support? The call of Malachi still rings out as he speaks in God's name: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. . . . Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

There is one more consideration. It applies especially to those who claim that they practise moderation and so do not come under the censure of Scripture. The reply to such is Paul's contention that we are not isolated individuals, but have a responsibility for others. Both in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 he deals with this matter. "But take heed," he writes, "lest this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." Young people in a congregation naturally follow the practice of their elders. But there is never any guarantee that the first cigarette will be the prelude to moderate smoking. It may well lead to a compulsive addiction, to chain smoking, to cancer, to death. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The voice of Cain would say "No," but the child of God must reply "Yes." I am responsible before God in the example I set. If then some action of mine is liable to lead some young Christian along an ultimately disastrous path I must forego even my vaunted liberty, "lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8: 13).

H. M. CARSON.

# Creation Created

ERIC T. GURR

The first chapter of Genesis never ceases to arouse interest and provoke questions. A few scattered observations may help in the understanding and appreciation of it, and if this is so, may God Himself be glorified.

(1) *It is constantly under attack.* This chapter, perhaps more than any other in the Bible, is the subject of bitter attack and controversy. Why do men of learning take time to argue about it? There are other records of the earth's origin. There is the Egyptian record and the Babylonian record, but scholars do not weary themselves discussing these. Why? Because they are so obviously mythological, legendary, crude and polytheistic. But, with the first chapter of Genesis it is different. In that account there is a ring of reality. There is nothing fantastic or grotesque about it. There is no evidence whatever that Israel borrowed its creation story. It owes nothing to other records. This blinding light owes nothing to the gloom of heathen darkness. It is very much more likely that the other records are a corruption of an originally pure revelation, which, in Genesis one, has been preserved in integrity by the Spirit of God. The chapter is attacked, in the first place, because it is foundational to the rest of the Bible and Divine Revelation. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" In the second place, it is attacked because it establishes God's absolute sovereignty and our creatureliness and dependence! These are truths repugnant to the natural man.

(2) *The style of the record.* The creation story had to be recorded in a style suited to all classes and ages. Readers of Genesis are to be found in the arctic circle and on the equator. They are to be found in cottages and palaces. They are to be found in factories and universities. They are to be found living in ships and tents. This is not a scientific description of creation. Such a description of a single atom of hydrogen would fill a whole book. What sort of scientific description would be required to embrace the creation of man and the universe? What kind of a library would be necessary to house all the thousands of books essential to that description? Then no one living would understand it! In Genesis one there are only 76 different root words! But, this is no saga. It is no myth or poetical fancy. Many of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry are missing. The poetic description of creation is to be found in Psalm 104. No, this is a literal, historical view of

creation, written in simple human terms, from the earth level. Genesis as a book is so strongly historical that one could quite rightly call it genealogical. And, the first chapter is an integral and essential part of that historical book. Ten times in the record we read "God said." Some believe that this is a precursor of the ten words or commandments later given on Sinai.

(3) *When the Bible comes into conflict with other sciences and sheds its light upon them, it does not suddenly cease to be God's word.* The Bible, it is true, is not a text-book of science, but we must not make this an excuse for treating lightly the contents of Genesis one. What a low estimate of the Bible some Christians have! Whenever it comes into conflict with Science it is the Bible which must give way. It is seldom suggested that science should correct its answers in the light of the Scriptures. It always seems to be the other way round. Yet, this is surprising, for the answers the scientists have given have changed with the passing of the years. The "authoritative" answers of the Pre-Copernican scientists are no longer acceptable. Nor, for that matter, are the answers of twenty-five years ago. But, surely, even the Bible tells us that the heavens declare the Glory of God—they tell the truth about God, and is it not the responsibility of the scientist to investigate and lay bare that truth in nature? It surely is, but fallen man must read general revelation in the light of Scripture or he will go basically astray. Psalm 119 : 130, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." When the Bible speaks of origins and other matters regarded by the various sciences as their peculiar provinces, it deserves equal trust and faith as when it speaks of anything else. We do well to remind ourselves of Brunner's Law—"The further removed a study is from the personal centre of our lives and responsibilities—as for example in physics and mathematics—the less will the sinful warping of our nature affect our conclusions. The nearer a study brings us to our personal responsibility to our Creator the more does our sinful nature seek to blind our minds to truths which we do not want to believe and to encourage us to cling to some hypothesis which looks like relieving us of that responsibility."

(4) *The trustworthiness of apostolic teaching is involved in our acceptance or rejection of the creation story.* And, this, in turn, would involve the whole structure of our Christian faith. See Hebrews 11 : 3, 2 Peter 3 : 5, 2 Cor. 4 : 6, Acts 17 : 24, 1 Cor. 11 : 7, and, indeed, our Lord Himself is involved as is plain from Matthew 19 : 4.

(5) *Why is it regarded as silly and naïve to believe that God created all things in six days of twenty-four hours? Why is it*

regarded as naive to believe that God created the earth before the sun, or light before the sun? Even if this were a human composition, the writer would surely know that light as we know it comes from the sun, and wouldn't have made a ridiculous and elementary mistake. Matters must have been set down as they are for a purpose. In any case, why should this be a problem? We still don't know what light is! Does it envelope the sun, or is it an intrinsic part of it? Why could it not have existed by itself without being localised in any heavenly body? Does the presence of light demand a light-bearer? What about the lightning flash? Perhaps it is put in this way to disabuse our minds of the idea that light is dependent upon the sun, and to turn our eyes to God as its Creator. Isaiah 60 : 19, "The sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy Glory." Rev. 21 : 23, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." But, what of those days of twenty-four hours? "This could never be," it is argued. "Light," we are told, "travelling at 186,000 miles a second, takes hundreds of years to reach us from many distant stars. Man, therefore, at the end of a creation week of ordinary days, wouldn't see most of the stars! Indeed, it would be countless years before the light of the stars would appear upon earth as they do now." Our answer to that is this: we cannot measure creation by what we know now. We cannot take nature's laws and apply them to creation. This would be to confuse creation with providence and to limit the power of God. Limitless time is a poor substitute for that omnipotence which can dispense with time.

If you read the New Testament you gain the distinct impression that Jesus rose again from the dead. But, can we be expected to believe that in this scientific age? Things do not happen in that manner now. Such a thing is quite contrary to the operation of nature's laws. We must remember that Christianity is a supernatural religion. It is a religion of miracles. It is a religion of redemption.

(6) *But what of the proven age of the earth and the universe?* This question can be looked at in different ways. For example, if we believe in special creation, we believe that Adam was created a full-grown man. Did he have a navel? Did the first created oak tree have age rings? If Adam had no navel and the oak tree no age rings, Adam was not a true man, nor was the oak tree a true tree. In other words, if the things of this earth were brought into being as such, by a creative act, and if they were true to their nature at the very first, they would carry with them evidence of an

ancestry they never had and an age that was altogether false, and those who seek truth only by the scientific method and apart from the Word of God are likely to be misled. But, it also has to be pointed out that the Bible does contain many references to the earth's great antiquity. In Exodus 15 : 18 we read, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," and in Hab. 3 : 6 we find that the same word is used for "the everlasting mountains." The same word is used in Deut. 33 : 15 for the ancient mountains as is used in verse 27 for the eternal God.

(7) *We need to note that the creation story is told in terms of one week of six days and not in terms of one day and one fiat.* We are surely taught by this that the Creator did not choose to bring everything into being by one single and instantaneous act. The work was done progressively and by orderly stages.

(8) *Why is creation represented as the work of a week?* One week's work! Something amounting to little! Or, to put it in another way, why do we have one chapter for the whole work of creation, and nearly thirteen chapters in the same book for the life of one man—Abraham? Because of relative importance and values! Because the one is the servant of the other! Creation is for man. It is the sphere of his redemption. That which looms large in the thinking of God is that which is spiritual; that which pertains to faith, and Abraham was the father of the faithful. That which is important to God is the calling out of a people for His own possession, of whom Abraham is the archetype. Do you belong to that people? Do you have that faith? Is your trust in that Christ by whom God made all things, who died on the cross for our sins, and in whom, in his day, Abraham rejoiced?



## SERMON

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### REJOICE THE LORD IS KING

H. M. CARSON

*Preached in Westminster Chapel on  
Sunday morning, 4th September, 1966*

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16 : 18).

In this series of sermons we have already thought together about the foundation of the church of Christ, that foundation which is the apostolic testimony to Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. We have also considered together the building of that church and we have seen that in the building of the church the Lord is Sovereign. It is the church of Christ and not a human institution, so that the building of the church is always under the sovereign control of Jesus Christ Himself. This morning we turn to the final statement in this verse. The Lord speaks of His church. He looks across the years and across the centuries. He sees all that His people will have to endure and He speaks of this church, this church founded upon the apostolic testimony, this church of which He is Lord and which He is building. He says "the gates of hell shall not prevail against this church."

Now at the outset we must ask the meaning of "the gates of hell" which are thrown against the church of Christ and over which the church of Christ shall ultimately and finally triumph. In any ancient city the gates of course were of vital importance; indeed, upon the strength of the gates could hang not only the security of the city but the very lives of all its inhabitants. If the gates were breached by an invading army the city would fall. The gates were therefore the place where the strongest defence was mustered against anyone who tried to attack the city. The gates in an eastern city were also the place where the leaders of the city gathered to take counsel together. It was the place where the laws of the city were dispensed and where particular cases were heard and discussed. And of course it was also the place to which the returning army came when they had gone out to battle, and when they came back from their battle as conquerors the gates were opened wide as the general led his troops back into the city from which they had gone. It is the picture of Psalm twenty-

four: "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." So when Christ speaks about the gates of hell, He is speaking about the powers of hell.

We must ask further, in what sense then is this word "hell" being used here? Now there are two words in the New Testament which are used for hell and they are both translated by the one English word "hell." One word, the one that is used here, is the more general word which speaks of the condition of the departed; it speaks of the grave, of death. The other word speaks more particularly of the place of punishment, the place of torment. But the more general word that is used here is one which also takes its colour from its particular context. It is the word, for example, which is used in Christ's story of the rich man and Lazarus. You will remember that they both died; the rich man went to hell and it is this word which is used. But hell in that situation is in contrast with Abraham's bosom, in contrast with the blessings of God's presence, so that hell in that context takes on a particular significance, and of course this is naturally so because death in the Bible is never a merely physical occurrence. Death is not simply the ending of life as we know it. It is not merely the sundering of soul and body and the departure of a person from this world. Death as described in Genesis chapter three is God's judgment upon sin, and so as Paul looks back he says that the very prevalence of death is an indication that man is under God's judgment. So death, apart from the grace of God which delivers God's people from death and draws the sting from the grave—apart from that, death is indeed the very last enemy and the awful enemy of men.

Now in the Old Testament this phrase "the gates of death" is used to speak of this final conclusive thing that happens. Hezekiah said, "I am consigned to the gates of death." He meant that he was being brought under the power of the grave. The Psalmist, by contrast, looks with rejoicing to what God has done for him; he says, "Thou hast lifted me up from the gates of death." So death, in the sense of God's judgment upon sin, is the enemy of man and it is that which exercises a tremendous power over man; indeed, it is that which exercises a power which man cannot break and it is only God who can deliver a man from the power of the grave. Now in this particular context, hell is being spoken of as that which is opposed to the church of Christ. The gates of hell here are hostile powers. It is something which is pitted against the church, which is seeking to overcome the church, and it is that which the power of Christ overwhelms. The word is clearly being used here in the sense

of something which is hostile to God, hostile to Christ, hostile to Christ's purposes; so that in actual fact we come full cycle and we discover that the English translation here is indeed doing justice to the word that is being used. It is the powers of hell; it is the powers of darkness, the powers of evil, the powers of Satan. These powers are thrown against the church of Christ, and as Christ sees all these hostile forces, all the powers of darkness thrown against His church, He says with a confidence which in turn begets confidence in the hearts of His people, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against My church."

Now this clearly means that the church of Christ is always the church militant. It is always the church involved in conflict and in battle. When we are called into that church by the working of the Holy Spirit we are involved in an army, and an army which is constantly in action. When I was coming down Whitehall this morning there was the usual crowd watching the changing of the Horse Guards—very pleasant, very enjoyable; but of course in peace time it is merely a ceremonial occasion. Well, the church of Christ is never intended to be engaged in ceremonial parades, although, alas, at times church leaders seem to imagine that this is **their** chief object. The church of Christ is always intended to be the church militant. It is always war-time as far as the Christian is concerned, and the battle in which he is involved is one that is unending until the final day of victory. Now there are some Christians who apparently have not realised that, and that is why they are so often perplexed about many of the experiences which come to them as Christians. They have so misunderstood the very purpose of the church of Christ and the significance of membership of that church. Possibly when they heard the gospel and when they turned to the Lord Jesus Christ they were thinking of a haven of security; here was a refuge where you could find peace, where you could get away from the turmoil of the world. But far from finding a haven of rest and security they seem to have found a great many more problems than they had before. The Bible says, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," but the Christian discovers that he seems to be born again to a great deal more trouble even than the man of the world, and he is thoroughly perplexed. Of course, the reason for his perplexity is his failure to understand that we are not called to some quiet haven or to some easy path that takes us direct to glory. We are called to buckle on our armour, to be soldiers in the army of the King of kings and to engage in a constant battle with the powers of hell. So if we are perplexed about some of the problems and troubles and trials through which we are going, let us

realise that the Lord who called us never promised ease. He promised strife and said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow." That is why when people were ready with a glib enthusiasm to profess faith in Him and their readiness to follow Him, He reminded them that they must count the cost, and that the Christian life and membership of His church were not to be thought of in terms of something upon which we embark lightly. It is something which is so demanding, so costly and at times so bitter, that a man must know all that is involved in membership of the church militant.

There are other Christians who fail to appreciate that this life is a warfare, with the result that they tend to look upon their Christian experience and their membership of the church of Christ simply in terms of moving steadily towards heaven, and so often they drift along in a condition of spiritual complacency. They do not accomplish anything very much for God and they do not contribute very much to the life of the church of Christ. They are just like a meandering river, going on and on without any real sense of power and direction and purpose. Such Christians need to be brought back to this basic awareness that when Christ brought them to Himself, when He made them members of His church, He enrolled them in an army. The church, I say, is always the church in action, the church on active service, the church involved in a battle with the powers of darkness.

Now any good general will tell you that the first important thing is that you should know your enemy, and any good general will study the known tactics of his foe. But all too frequently Christians are abysmally ignorant as to the tactics and the strategy of the arch enemy of Christ and of His people. So this morning we are going to look at some of the tactics of the powers of darkness, the kind of strategy which the devil employs as he tries to undermine the life of the church and as he tries to deflect God's people. Naturally there is an infinite variety in his mode of attack, because there is such variety in the people who come under attack. None of us are exactly the same; and although modern evangelicalism tries to make us all the same—praise God, we are different. But because we are different, with differing temperaments, and differing backgrounds, and differing weaknesses, the devil approaches us in an infinite variety of ways. Admittedly he adopts certain basic methods which he has used down the years and which he still continues to use, but, being a good general, he knows the particular situation and the particular person, and when he is dealing with the life of a church

he knows that church, and so he may employ different methods from that which he employs in another situation.

Well, let us look at some of his methods, some of the ways in which the powers of darkness seek to overthrow the church of Christ. One which is as old as Christian history is of course the method of persecution, and the Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples that they might expect this. He says, "The servant is not above his master and the disciple is not above his Lord." If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, they will do the same to his servants. Who is this Master of ours? Who is this Christ who is our Lord? He is the One of whom the prophet spoke; "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The Lord was not the popular figure or the popular preacher. There were those, of course, who flocked enthusiastically in the early days, but when they saw the significance of His message many went away and left Him with an increasingly smaller group. He was the lonely figure. He was the One whom they opposed, whom they hated, and whom ultimately they nailed to a Roman scaffold. And He says, "These are the conditions which My church must expect. This is the kind of hatred My people must learn to encounter." If they hated Him, well, says Christ, they will also hate you. And it was not long until the infant church discovered how true the Lord's predictions were. It was not very long before the first name was being written in that roll which has grown so long down the centuries, the roll of the martyrs, those who for Christ's sake and for their testimony to His gospel have been prepared to lay down their lives. Stephen, the first martyr, was cruelly stoned to death because of his faith in Christ. James perished with the sword, Peter and John were in prison. Paul the apostle is stoned, beaten, scourged; and so it goes on. Paul writes some of his epistles from prison. He writes the pastoral epistles and he is waiting for the time of his martyrdom. We read this morning from the book of the Revelation. It was written in a Roman penal settlement, the Island of Patmos, where John had been banished because of his testimony to the word of God.

This persecution has continued right down the centuries. It continued in those three centuries of blood when the infant church faced all the might of Imperial Rome, when Christians were hounded to the death, when they had to hide in the catacombs, when they had to hold their services at night and in hiding in order to get away from the unrelenting persecution. They were thrown to the wild beasts in the arena; they were tortured with devilish cruelty, they perished in their hundreds, and still the gates of hell

did not prevail against the church. It went on right through the Middle Ages. It reached its ghastly crescendo in all the bloody tortures of the Spanish Inquisition when an apostate church laid hands upon the true people of God and tortured them in order to make them blaspheme. It has continued in some of the glorious annals of our own day and we look to a place like Kenya and we think of the Kikuyu martyrs. We look to the Congo and we think of Europeans, Africans and Americans, standing and falling together for the sake of Christ. We think of some of our brethren today in China who in prison and in labour camps are facing this same opposition from the powers of darkness. Christ is speaking about this when He speaks about the powers of hell being thrown against His church.

But in this persecution the devil has varied his methods. Sometimes it has not been in terms of physical torture, imprisonment and death; it has been rather a matter of mental torture. We see that in the gospels. You will remember men's verdict on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Do not listen to Him; why, He is mad. This is not the language and the message of a sane man; the man is out of his mind. Festus had the same thing to say to Paul—"Paul," he said, "you are beside yourself; much learning doth make you mad." When the Greek world listened to the gospel which was being preached—how did they describe it? They described it as foolishness, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1. The word which is used for foolishness is the word from which we get our English word "moron." They were saying, "This gospel which these people are preaching—why, it is the preaching of a moron, an utter fool." And Christians, of course, being sensitive like any other human beings, are very liable to give way because of this kind of approach. How many students, for example, have failed to stand firmly for Christ because of the rather superior smile which appears on someone's face, the rather pitying attitude, the condescension which looks with amazement that someone who claims to be reasonably intelligent could be so wedded to such an outworn superstition as this? How many Christians in that kind of situation have muted their witness, have kept somewhat quiet simply because they could not face this kind of scorn? Indeed, I suspect that a great deal of the trouble in many of the pulpits in our country today is due to this very thing. How many men in their theological colleges have retreated at precisely this point because they could not face the scorn? Theological colleges, alas, are so often the places where men with a very superior air look very pityingly on those who would still attempt to maintain the authority of the word of God, and some

men have simply given way; they have not been prepared to face that kind of contempt. So the devil and the powers of darkness have won victories at that point, and what victories they have been—because men, having conceded there, go out into a ministry in which they have lost their hold upon the Scriptures and as a result they have nothing to preach, nothing but pitiful little homilies and moral essays which never do anyone any good. And I believe it is because the powers of darkness have won this initial victory by employing the weapons of contempt and scorn.

You get it also in the matter of social ostracism. The early Christians found that this was really their great problem. Here they were—they had become new men and new women in Christ, but inevitably they no longer belonged to the group. The rest of the community went to the heathen temple. If you wanted to work you had to belong to the trade guild, and the trade guild had its feast in the heathen temple, and the food that was used for the feast had been offered to idols. The Christian for conscience sake had to stand apart, and so he was looked upon as anti-social, and a great deal of the persecution that he faced was along these lines; he was treated as an outcast. There is many a young Christian today who faces this to an intense degree. In Moslem lands, for example, to become a true Christian and to be baptised means that you are cut off, not only from the community, but very often from your family and from your intimate friends, and that is a tremendous cost. We, with the ease and the security and the comfort that we enjoy, ought to be a great deal more sympathetic and prayerful as we think of those who are in this way facing the onslaught of the powers of darkness.

But the devil is not stereotyped in his methods. Again and again there have been times when he has used open persecution, even employing physical torture and death to try to overthrow the church, but he has changed his ground and used another method which in some ways has been far more successful. You will know the oft-quoted phrase, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Well, this has been true and right down history Christians have perished, sometimes by the thousand and in the most appalling ways, but the church has gone on. Indeed this happened in the Roman Empire. During those first three centuries, humanly speaking it seemed impossible that the church could continue, but the church *did* continue; it flourished, and by the third century it was beginning to dominate the empire which was trying to crush it. Then the devil varied his attack and instead of the bitter enmity of persecutors he used the praise of men, he used popular esteem, he

used men's favour, and by that means he won victories such as he had never succeeded in winning during all the years of fierce persecution. When the church became popular, when it became respectable, when it was accepted into the community, it was then that the devil could rub his hands with pleasure because victories were then being won. The church, which in the slaughter of the arena and in the bitterness of worship in the catacombs had stood firm and had faced death joyfully, went soft; it came to terms with the world and the powers of darkness won a resounding victory.

Now that is not merely something that happened in the fourth century. This is the recurring pattern right down the years. If you read Christian history you will find it happening again and again. There comes a movement in the Spirit of God; great things happen within the church; there is a surge of new life; there is blessing; many are brought from the world to a saving faith in Christ; and the result is that the church is looked on as the off-scourings of the world. But then the church tends to become adjusted to the situation, it becomes respectable and the whole movement settles down. You see that with the Puritans. When they were ejected in 1662 they were in every sense outcasts. Men who were in the ministry were thrown out of their parishes. They could not even come near the town where they had ministered, and the whole Puritan movement was looked on with absolute hatred and contempt. But I fear their successors have become respectable members of the community, and their churches are no longer places which people look on askance. They are now respectable, ecclesiastical institutions. The same thing goes for the 18th century awakening. Read John Wesley's journal; read his descriptions of some of the open-air meetings which he conducted. Read indeed of the ways in which those early Methodists were persecuted. Their houses were broken into, their goods were destroyed, they were assaulted. To be a Methodist was to be treated with violence and with contempt. But alas, the same thing happened. Methodism became respectable, and as respectability spread, so did spiritual torpor and death.

The praise and the favour of men is a very potent instrument in the hand of the evil one. I am sure that one of the greatest scourges in evangelical Christianity today is the desire for respectability. This is especially obvious in the new attitude which evangelicals are adopting to the ecumenical movement. You hear them saying—and how naive they are at this point—"But look, we are being accepted by these people now; they are ready to listen to us." And we say in reply, "Well, that is not surprising, they are ready to listen to anyone." It is rather like Robinson Crusoe's stockade, which was



so large that the goats inside were as wild as those outside! So the whole ecumenical movement has become so all-embracing that we need not be surprised that evangelicals are welcomed. Everybody is welcomed! And not only that, but we must say that if an evangelical is acceptable in a situation where there are men who would deny the divinity of the Lord and deny the very fundamentals of the gospel, surely there is something wrong with his evangelicalism. We must beware lest we give way to this very danger, this subtle attack of the devil whereby he uses the praise of men and the favour of Christendom as a means of sidetracking God's people.

He employs another method—one with which we are familiar in warfare. A general may attack frontally, he may attack from the flanks, but he has one other method and that is to try and infiltrate the positions of the opposing force. He does it sometimes with small groups of picked troops. Sometimes he does it by means of traitors within the camp. But the main thing is to try to penetrate the defences by infiltration so that, being established within, you can then deal with the opposing forces. The devil is a past master in the art of infiltration. He penetrates within the life of the church and from within the church he wins many of his victories. What does he use as his method of infiltration? Well, he has picked troops. We call them heretics. They are men like the false prophets of the Old Testament who bring in what the New Testament calls "damnable heresies," because, of course, the New Testament does not use the polite language of modern ecclesiasticism, but speaks bluntly and plainly. These are not to be accepted as genial friendly people who are contributing something to the general theological debate. We are to see them for what they are, bringing in I say damnable heresies, infiltrating into the life of the church, and bringing in that which poisons the life of the church, and destroys it.

All this can be going on at the very same time as a great movement of the Holy Spirit. Just over a hundred years ago in these islands great things were happening. The 1859 revival saw a mighty movement of the Spirit of God, a movement which transformed the life of churches up and down the land, a movement indeed whose effects were felt to the far ends of the earth through the going forth of men like Hudson Taylor. But at the very same time the devil was working. The whole Higher Critical approach to Scripture was being adopted in many parts and there was also the rise of Tractarianism as it was called, the forerunner of Anglo-Catholicism, with its ultimate goal a return towards Rome. These two movements were drawn together by Charles Gore at Oxford to produce

Liberal Catholicism, a blend of Romanism and Modernism. The devil was infiltrating within the church, and now a hundred years after 1859 we see the disastrous outcome of that infiltration. That is why we must be on the watch today for false teaching. That is why, although people will object when you denounce error, we are not to be concerned whether they object or not. If the error is there, we must see it, not as an unfortunate occurrence that we must treat reasonably gently, but rather as the infiltration of the enemy of Christ, and therefore in God's name and in the power of the Spirit, we must resist.

He also infiltrates by means of the unholy living of God's people, and in some ways this can be really more disastrous. How often a church slides into a sorry condition of ineffectiveness and spiritual sterility because the members have ceased to live to God's glory. You see it in Corinth. What had gone wrong with this church, with all their spiritual gifts? Why, they had come to terms with the world and the spirit of the world had invaded the church, so much so that Paul has to speak in the most scathing terms as he calls them to repent. Is this something that belongs only to first-century Corinth? I think it is something that is very much a fact today. Worldliness, this accommodation to the thinking of the world, this adopting of the standards of the world, is present amongst evangelical believers. Many of us no longer have the standards that our forefathers had; we move in a much easier realm. Indeed, things have gone so far that today, in its attempt to reach the outsider, the church has so come to terms with the world that its methods, its mode of presentation of its message, are drawn not from the New Testament but from the advertising gimmicks of the world. We need to be on our guard at this point and watch for the devil's infiltration.

And lest we should be too sure of ourselves that we are maintaining orthodoxy, that we are standing for the truth, that we are seeking to live holy lives, may I remind you of another method of infiltration which he has used again and again. It is to bring disunity within a local church. Euodias and Syntyche—there they stand in the New Testament, and the one thing that we can remember about them is that they were two women at Philippi whom Paul had to try to bring to a more friendly state of affairs. But unhappily they have had a numerous progeny down the centuries within the churches of Christ, and the devil has won untold numbers of victories in this way. How does he do it? Well, he uses criticism, gossip, backbiting, misrepresentation, slander, all the bitterness, all the tittle-tattle, all those corrupting things which Christians so easily

tolerate, and those things which are the devil's great instrument for undermining the whole life of the church. There are Christians who would be horrified at the suggestion that they might be guilty of some gross sin of the flesh like adultery, but they are not a bit horrified that they are guilty of sins which in the apostle's thinking are on the same level, because when he speaks about the works of the flesh, adultery and fornication and all the rest are on the same level as envy, hatred and strife. So when we are tempted to open our lips and pass on some malicious rumour we have heard about another Christian, when we are tempted to magnify and exaggerate slightly in order to convey a rather wrong impression, when we are tempted to criticise, let us remember that we are just like traitors in an army; we are fomenting trouble within the camp when all the time we should be working for a united front against the foe. Yes, I say, we need to recognise our enemy and to realise some of the stratagems that he employs.

But the Lord says, and I trust He will say it to our hearts this morning, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." There may be temporary setbacks; the army may fall back at this point and that. Indeed, a local church may slip into such a state of decline, like the church at Ephesus to which John wrote from Patmos, that the Lord removes its candlestick and writes it off as a church. There are areas like North Africa where a decadent church was removed by the Lord of the church. But the general pattern, as we survey the whole battlefield of history, is advance and ultimate triumph. Why are we confident? Why are we so sure? Why does the Lord speak of the gates of hell failing? Surely because of the foundation upon which the church of Christ is built. You see this sentence follows immediately on what He has just said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." The conclusion is that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is because the church of Christ is founded, not upon human wisdom but upon the word of God, that the church can and must prevail; because the word of God is not some temporary word that men speak. The word of God is that which liveth and abideth for ever. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," says Christ, "but My words shall not pass away." The church therefore is firmly planted upon the impregnable rock of the word of God. It is true, of course, that there can come seasons when the church loses its hold upon the word. It is rather like a traveller who is following a winding road through boggy country. As long as he keeps on the firm road surface he is all right. But let him try to take a short cut and soon he will find himself floundering in the marsh until he pulls himself out of the mud and gets back on the

highway. Well, there are times when the church flounders in the morass, and often her floundering is due to her own stupidity. She has to get back on to the rock of the word of God, and when she is there, again she knows victory.

Why is the triumph sure? It is because of the One who speaks of that triumph. This is the Christ who set His face to go to Jerusalem. This is the One who "for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame," the One who went steadily and firmly in face of all the blandishments of the evil one, to accomplish His purpose. Is He going to falter? Is He like a child building his sandcastle and then giving up half-way? Is he like one of those men who in days past have started a building and have left it in the district and it is spoken of as "so-and-so's folly"? Is the Lord of glory one who builds and then gives up? No, He is the One who begins and perfects, and because He will persist right to the end, the gates of hell shall not prevail. He is the all-powerful Christ. He is the One who has already wrought out that great victory at Calvary and by His resurrection, so that the devil who musters all his hosts is ultimately a defeated foe. Of course he still struggles. If you have ever been down on a farm and have tried to catch rats, you will know that when you corner a rat he is particularly vicious; you have to be careful at that point, and until you give him the "coup de grace" he can cause a great deal of trouble. And the devil is rather like that cornered rat, venomous, vicious, doing as much damage as he possibly can to the church of Christ, but the Conqueror upon the throne will one day crush Satan under our feet.

Now this is not a word to lull us into a state of complacency. This does not mean that we can now settle down and go quietly along the road to glory. This is rather a word to stir us to action. Because we serve a victorious Christ, because we are in an army which must win, we give ourselves to the conflict and we are ready to follow the King wherever He leads. This is also a great word to Christians who suffer from depression and discouragement. I acknowledge that it is very easy in these days thus to suffer, especially if you know something of the situation in this country generally. You see a situation in which churches during these past years have been closed, not by the score but by the hundred, with Sunday School numbers falling, church membership declining, and on every hand apostasy—well, it is very easy to become discouraged. But the Lord says, "Lift up your hearts, because the coming of the Lord draws nigh," and the coming of the Lord will usher in that final triumph which is absolutely sure because He has promised it.

I would say this morning to any who feel somewhat discouraged

by the situation, Cannot you hear by faith something of the triumph song of heaven of which we were reading in our Scripture lesson this morning? Why, they are singing now in glory and some of them in that company are people you knew and loved. They are people perhaps who worshipped with you on the Lord's Day, people perhaps whom you knew in the intimacy of family life; and now they are in Christ's presence. They are joining in praise. They are worshipping Him that sits upon the throne, and with Him they are waiting for the great day of His final triumph. I say, can you not hear that song of the redeemed? There will come a day when that song will burst right about our ears. Today we cannot hear it because we hear the clamour of the world; we hear men speaking, and so often our ears are open to hear what they have to say. But there will come a day when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with great power, and in that day the clamour of the world will be silenced. Men will be forced to listen to what God has to say. In that day we will join those who are already in His presence, and the church which through the long grim years has fought its way to glory, will now be glorified and perfected in His presence to all eternity. What will be our theme? "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever." So I say, "Lift up your hearts, lift up your voice; Rejoice, again I say, rejoice."

*Fellow believer, fellow worker, let us awake! How much there is to do and how few there are to do it! Consider too how short the time is, that is left to witness to the power of God's great salvation, and to the near approach of our quickly coming Lord. Let our testimony be with boldness. Do not let our own interests dominate our lives, do not allow His interests and claims upon us to flag and lose power over us. Let our diligence and zeal be apparent!*  
—J. G. MATHISON.

# Doctrinal Definitions

## THE PERSON OF CHRIST

### HIS HUMILITY AND HIS MANLINESS

PAUL TUCKER

#### A. HIS HUMANITY.

The Second Person of the Trinity entered the human race in humility but with a view to permanent identification with the human family. In our day it is the Deity of the Lord Jesus which has been brought into question, yet at the beginning of the Christian era it was not His Deity that was doubted but His humanity. The Docetists taught that the Lord Jesus appeared to have a human body but in actual fact He did not possess this. He was divine in every sense but not physical as well. The Apostle John wrote his first Epistle in one sense to expose that heresy. There are not many today who deny that the Lord has come in the flesh, but Christian Science originally denied that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Mrs. Baker Eddy, the founder, wrote, "Christ is incorporeal and spiritual." May I suggest that in our own day there are certain Evangelicals who in their justifiable jealousy for the Deity of our Lord are in danger of minimising His humanity. The Word of God says that the Lord Jesus was truly man and truly God, in all points human and in every essential divine. His Deity did not overwhelm His humanity nor did His humanity undermine His Deity. We shall consider the marks of His Manhood as brought before us in the Word of God.

#### I. HIS MANHOOD IS SEEN IN THE TITLES GIVEN TO HIMSELF BY HIMSELF AND BY OTHERS.

(a) More than eighty times in the N.T. the Lord Jesus is spoken of as *the Son of man* and on most of these occasions He uses the title of Himself. It was the favourite title that the Lord Jesus had for Himself. Again and again He said things such as "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head." It is rather significant to notice that even when others acknowledged Him as the Son of God, yet He would turn from their statement and refer to Himself directly afterward as the Son of man. See John 1 : 47-51. He had

been addressed as the Son of God. Our Lord accepted that, but then goes on to speak of Himself as the Son of man. See again Matt. 26 : 63, 64. I suppose there are those who will tell me that the term "the Son of man" was an official title related to our Lord's mission as the Messiah. I am prepared to agree with that, and yet this does not mean that our Lord was using it as simply an official title. The title is used of Ezekiel and it occurs in Daniel, but the term "the Son of man" is a comprehensive one. It is not "a son of man" but "the Son of man." For all humanity is gathered up in "the Son of man."

(b) *Others gave Him the title of a man.* The Angel called Him "Jesus," which is a common Jewish name, a human name. It is the title of our Lord in humiliation. It means "Deliverer" or "Saviour." We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Our Lord is offered as our Representative and one great qualification that the Priest had to have was that he had to be taken from among the people so that he might have patience. Note the references in Hebrews where Christ is regarded as our High Priest. (See Heb. 5 : 1-10; 6 : 20; 7 : 14, 28, and ch. 8-10.) Think of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. See Acts 2 : 22; 10 : 38. God was with Jesus of Nazareth. God cannot be with God, but He can be with man, and He endowed Him with power to do the miracles. He takes upon Himself the title of the Son of man and is spoken of as the Man approved by God, and the Apostle Paul says, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

## II. HE HAD A HUMAN PEDIGREE AND WAS BORN OF A WOMAN.

(a) *His ancestry could be traced.* Matthew traces it to Abraham, and Luke to Adam. He was of the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3 : 15), and it was necessary that this should be, in order to become our kinsman that He might redeem us. He had to be related to ourselves. He had to come of the seed of Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. (See Heb. 2 : 16, 17.) He had to come of the seed of David in order to occupy the throne of Israel. (See Rom. 1 : 3.)

(b) *He had a human birth,* see Luke 2 : 7. "She brought forth her firstborn Son . . . and laid Him in a manger." In the interests of accuracy there is no such thing as a supernatural birth where the Lord Jesus is concerned. It was His conception by the miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit within the womb of the virgin that was supernatural. His delivery was the same as with any other child. The Apostles' creed brings this out. "Jesus Christ our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary." This

One who is the Father of eternity is now subject to the revolutions of time, He is brought forth by the very woman He had created, as the Eternal Father.

III. HE EXPERIENCED AND UNDERWENT NATURAL DEVELOPMENT. SEE LUKE 2 : 40, 52.

(a) *He grew physically.* See vv. 40, 52. Isaiah 53, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant." He would have to learn to read and write like any other child. He was not pretending to be a boy or man, for He was human.

(b) *He grew intellectually.* See v. 52. He probably went to the school attached to the synagogue, called the House of the Book, and there He would be taught along with the other boys of His age. During this time He would learn to memorise portions of the O.T. Scripture. All this He acquired through learning. He increased in wisdom and He was sinless.

(c) *He grew spiritually.* God looked down from Heaven upon One Life that was unfolding in a way that none other had ever done. No boy had even been born minus original sin. Here was one who was growing up with a perfect symmetry of character. As He increased in His knowledge of God and in His response to the Will of God, so God the Father looked down upon Him with increasing favour. The Father said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

(d) *He grew socially.* Our Lord was no recluse. He went to school with the other boys and played with them, but there was a singular quality of charm that made Him different. So, He grew in favour with man.

IV. HE HAD THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF A MAN.

Remember the woman of Samaria says, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, dost ask water of me, being a Samaritan?" The two disciples on the road to Emmaus saw Him and thought He was an ordinary man. Mary in the garden also thought He was human, for she thought He was the gardener and said, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him." So that, even after the resurrection, He said, "Behold it is I, handle Me and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." We read of the eyes, hands, knees, head and feet of Jesus. He looked like a man but He was different. That is why the Jews commented as they did in John 10 : 33, "... thou being a man makest thyself God."

V. CONSTITUTIONALLY OUR LORD'S MANHOOD WAS INDISPUTABLE.

(a) *He had all the essential elements of humanity.* We have seen that He had a body. He had a soul and also a spirit. See Mark 2 : 8.

(b) *He had all the sinless infirmities of human nature.* Infirmities



are not sins but weaknesses. We read of our Lord that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

- (i) He had weariness. See John 4. "Jesus, being weary, sat thus on the well."
- (ii) He was hungry. Remember the story of the wilderness. God is never hungry.
- (iii) He was tempted. God cannot be tempted.
- (iv) The Lord Jesus was limited in His knowledge as the Son of man. See Mark 13 : 32. We are speaking of His manhood. The Lord Jesus in His manhood did not know everything. We speak of Him in His humiliation. Remember the story of the demon-possessed boy. The Lord asked how long the boy had been suffering in this way. Remember also the woman who pressed through the crowd and touched His garment.
- (v) Jesus wept, over Lazarus and over Jerusalem.
- (vi) Jesus was amazed. Remember the story of the centurion's servant.
- (vii) Jesus died. God cannot die, but man can die. The Lord Jesus took upon Him human nature and bore our sins in His own body. He yielded up His Spirit, gave up the ghost and died.

(c) *He had the human limitations of a man.* That is why He prayed. He lived a human life dependent upon God, His Father. He relied upon that communion with His Father and upon the Holy Spirit to help in all His ministry. See John 5 : 19, 30. He looks to the Father for goodness, wisdom and strength, and then works in perfect harmony with His Father. His life was sustained by prayer, communion and the Holy Spirit given to Him without measure.

(d) *He was the One Perfect Man.* Could He be truly human if He were not sinful? Sin is not necessary to humanity. Man was perfect when he came from the hands of his Maker. The Devil brought in sin. Since then, there has only been one perfect human and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the Perfect Man, Pilate was right when he said, "Behold the Man."

## B. HIS MANLINESS.

The Lord Jesus was not only **man** but a **manly man**. There was something full-blooded and muscular and dynamic, virile and almost austere about the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Very often the artist has depicted the Lord with a halo round His head and given the impression that the Lord was not down to earth and not related to human life and circumstance. There are many who have given the impression that somehow the Lord Jesus is all right for

little children and old ladies, but He is not a person who can help a man in all his trials. If Jesus Christ is just meek and mild, how could people mistake Him for Elijah or John the Baptist? It is easy to imagine that the Lord Jesus was almost inoffensive. But meekness is not weakness. Weakness is weakness of character. The easiest thing to do is to fly off the handle when someone upsets you, but the manly thing is to be meek. The Lord Jesus was meek but not weak. We shall look at some of the indications of the manliness of the Master.

1. WE SEE IT IN HIS SELF-POSSESSION AT TWELVE YEARS OF AGE.

When the Lord was twelve He was taken by His parents from Nazareth to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. It was probably His first visit to Jerusalem since His circumcision in the Temple. At twelve years, a Jewish boy crossed the line from childhood to youth. The Jewish boy became known as a Son of the Law. He would be catechised and then confirmed as a Son of the Law and from then onward his religion would be his own personal responsibility. We can imagine what a solemn action this was in the life of the boy Jesus. Remember after the feast the parents returned. They supposed that He was with them somewhere. It was customary for the youths to travel and sleep together on a journey like this. But at the end of the day's journey they looked for Him and could not find Him and so they returned to Jerusalem and on the third day they found Him where they had left Him. See Luke 2 : 46-49. Mary might wonder if she had failed in her charge. The R.V. translates it, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's House?" The Lord Jesus relegated Mary and His foster father to that position beyond which they were in danger of going. The Lord denied any direct relationship to Joseph. He is speaking of His relationship to His Father. We see His manliness emerging here. For two days and nights He had been on His own. We have this sense of holy independence. This lad was not concerned because He was apart from His mother, for He had this high and holy consciousness of His relationship to His Father. He is, in an amazing way, independent of Mary and Joseph. Notice how Luke goes on to say in v. 51, "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." The law of God was written on two tablets of stone. The first four commandments were written on one tablet and the last six were on another stone. The first commandment had to do with relationship to God. The first on the second stone had to do with relationship to parents. He was in a right relation to both God and His parents.

**2. WE SEE HIS MANLINESS EXPRESSED IN THE NATURE OF HIS EARTHLY OCCUPATION.**

The Lord Jesus went down to Nazareth and we hear no more of Him for eighteen years. We find Him hidden away. We know from two other references that during those years He pursued a manly occupation. See Matt. 13 : 55 and Mark 6 : 3. He was the carpenter's son and then became a Carpenter. He had His mother and at least six others to look after. He was using the hammer, plane and saw. Every Jewish youth had to be proficient in a trade. Paul was a tent-maker. This Boy was apprenticed to His foster father and eventually took over the responsibility of the business. A carpenter's life was not easy. There were no modern facilities as there are today. The angels must have wondered when they saw that the Lord was taking on His foster-father's profession. Does this suggest effeminacy? It is striking to notice that our Lord was longer in the carpenter's trade than He was in His world-shaking ministry. Our Lord often took up the lessons to be learned from the carpenter's shop. "Take My yoke upon you, My yoke is easy," "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." We are so afraid that we shall degrade and dishonour our Saviour that we almost idealise those early years in Nazareth. But they were years of preparation for the great and gigantic ministry that He had to fulfil.

**3. WE SEE HIS MANLINESS EXPRESSED BY HIS OUTSPOKEN AND FEARLESS SPEECHES TO ALL MEN.**

He is a strong man who knows that what He had to say is going to get Him into trouble. The Lord was always outspoken. See John 18 : 19. He never concealed anything. He spoke pointedly and clearly, and He spoke to everyone. See John 19 : 10. The Lord Jesus was telling these people that God's grace extended beyond the bounds of the Jew. See Matt. 23 : 15, 27-28, 33. Christ said this. Is this effeminate?

**4. WE SEE IT IN THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS ACTIVITIES AND THE GREATNESS OF HIS LABOURS.**

If you bring together the different journeys that our Lord took during His ministry, you will find that He covered no less than 2,500 miles on foot. He was not simply walking, but He was preaching, teaching, healing and praying. Virtue was always going out of the Lord Jesus Christ. That was why He turned aside to pray. Take one or two typical days in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Mark 1 : 21, 23, 29-31, 32-34, 35. Also see John 6 : 5. He sent His disciples away, sent the people away, went up to a mountain to pray, and after this, found people waiting for Him to heal them.

5. HIS MANLINESS IS SEEN IN HIS TREATMENT OF TRADERS IN THE TEMPLE.

See John 2 : 13. Does this suggest a soft, effeminate Saviour? We are told that He took a cord and made a scourge of it and drove them out of the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and all those who sold sacrifices and drove them out, and said that His Father's House should be called a House of Prayer and not be made a house of merchandise. There was somehow a flashing through it all of the Deity of Jesus. None challenged Him. Is there any softness here?

6. HIS MANLINESS IS SEEN IN HIS PHYSICAL COURAGE.

See Luke 9 : 22. After His transfiguration (see v. 44), did He shrink from going to Jerusalem? No. He was determined to go. It is one thing to be given to bravado and to make some resolution. It is another thing to know the consequences of an action and yet because you know the action is right, you go through with it. He set His face to go to Jerusalem. When He found Himself in the garden surrounded by the soldiers and chief priests, He said, "Whom seekest thou?" And they were overwhelmed by that question. He stood there, and apart from the kiss that Judas gave, He identified Himself. And at the Cross in the fearful agony, with every joint dislocated, He cried, "I thirst," and they handed to Him vinegar mingled with myrrh. This was offered as a draught to help Him. It was given to dope a man on the cross. We are told that when He received the vinegar, He would not drink it. There was no refusing of the suffering in the physical realm.

7. HIS MANLINESS IS SEEN IN HIS ALMOST REPELLING CANDOUR.

That is, His utter frankness. Jesus never hid His scars to win the disciples. That is, no one was asked to follow the Lord who was not asked to count the cost of becoming a Christian. Our Lord said that if a man love his wife, sister or child more than He, then he could not be His disciple, and when one would become a follower, the Lord said, "You will not have anywhere to sleep tonight." We never read that that man did follow the Lord Jesus. So the Lord was so manly that He repelled people rather than coaxed people. He never hid a single scar. Today, we have to humour people. We are afraid of losing them and we have such an assortment that it is more like a hospital than an army of God.

*(To be continued)*

# THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS

LEITH SAMUEL

*The Cross!* I wonder how you react to those two words. Do you recoil from them. Or do they leave you cold and unmoved? Do they make you sad? Or do you feel grateful as you think of the benefits coming from one particular Cross?

Whatever it may have meant before the coming of Christianity, the cross is the best-known symbol of the Christian Faith. It is found in a wide variety of forms. But the Apostle Paul was not referring to a symbol when he speaks of "the offence of the cross." He was not thinking of a pretty ornament in gold or silver, worn round a girl's neck, whether as a tacit admission of faith or as a talisman worn superstitiously in the hope of warding off danger or evil. Nor did he mean a stone ornament in or outside a church, nor a period of lengthy suffering some people have to endure, which they may refer to as their "cross."

Paul was speaking of something ghastly and grim beyond words. The cross he referred to was a wooden stake used as an instrument of death, a slow, agonising form of death, usually reserved for criminal slaves, the lowest of the low.

Death by crucifixion was introduced to the Roman world by Tarquinius Superbus from the Phoenicians after 600 B.C., something like 400 years after the vivid description of the experience of such a death was recorded prophetically in Psalm 22. The Romans used four kinds of cross: a simple upright stake; what we would call today a St. Andrew's Cross; a stake with a cross-bar at the top, like a capital T; and a stake with the cross-bar a little way from the top. The Greek word *stauros* could be used for each of these.

But "the offence of the cross" spoken of by Paul does not mean the scandal of anybody dying such a death. It is true that anybody's cross was offensive to a cultured Roman, as we know from Cicero. "Let the very name of the cross be far away from Roman

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*This article is based on a sermon preached on Galatians 5:11—  
"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer  
persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."*

citizens, not far from their bodies only, but from their thoughts, their eyes, and their ears."

Galatians 6 : 14 makes clear that Paul was referring specifically to the *cross of Christ*, and it is the offence of His cross that we are considering.

Think for a moment of Who He was and where He came from, for the dazzling glory from which He came throws into more vivid relief the awful shame of His cross. As the Everlasting Son, eternally begotten, not created, He was with the Father, before the world was. He not only shared the Father's glory, He was the brightness of the Father's glory, the visible forth-shining of His radiant splendour. In Heaven, His dwelling-place, all the angels of God worshipped Him as they did His Father. Equality with God was no prize for Him to struggle to win, no unlawfully acquired possession for Him to hang on to, but His eternal, undeniable right (Philippians 2 : 6).

It was through Christ that the Father chose to make the universe, and one day everything will come to Him as His rightful inheritance (Colossians 1 : 16, 17; Hebrews 1 : 1-3). Yet He left a throne of glory for a cross of shame, so great was His concern for His Father's honour on earth, and so great was His love for sinners with whom He wanted to share something of His glory. He knew there was no other way whereby they could find an entrance into the Heavenly Father's home.

The Gospels quickly introduce us to the fact that He came to save sinners, and that the way He was taking would lead to the cross. He was born to die. *The shadow of the cross* fell across His birth when Simeon prophesied that a sword would pierce His mother's soul. He came to take the sinner's place, and early in the Gospel record we find Him who was without sin, submitting as if He were a sinner to a baptism which was evidently for sinners only.

He came to fulfil all the righteous demands of His Father's holy law, and He qualified by a life of perfect obedience to offer Himself as a sacrifice, to atone for man, His creature's sin. John the Baptist foresaw this most clearly when he said to his disciples on the day he baptised Him, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

From the time of Peter's momentous confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He warned His disciples that He was going to suffer and die. He even specified that it would be by crucifixion, after scourging. When eventually *the sentence to the cross* was pronounced, it was followed by His being scourged. Strong men had died under such scourging as the lead-loaded thongs

bit deeply into their flesh. He was mocked and taunted as He left Pilate's courtyard carrying the cross-bar from which He was to hang.

Even in His extreme weakness, Jesus was the dominant figure. All eyes were upon Him. On one side of Him died a sinner who had repented of his sins, and had put his trust in Him for salvation, strengthened by the gracious words, "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." On His other side died an unrepentant, unbelieving sinner. In these two attitudes we see the whole world in miniature.

Other gracious words had come from the cross, to His Father in Heaven, concerning those who nailed His hands to the beam, "Forgive them, they know not what they do." And to His mother on earth, "Woman, behold thy son," as He committed her to a beloved disciple's care.

Words of unspeakable desolation also came from the cross. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Wave upon wave of the darkness of the holy wrath of God against evil rolled over His infinitely sensitive soul, as He who knew no sin was made sin for sinners, that they might be freed from their sin. Something unspeakably awful happened to Him so that something unspeakably wonderful might happen to us.

Loud words of triumph too were heard by all who stood near His cross. "It is finished!" The bridge of forgiveness from a holy God to His sinful creatures was completed. The doom due to us was endured by Him. The penalty demanded by the Law of God was paid for all who will put their trust in Him who hung and suffered there.

The final words from the cross came as Jesus said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." Man had lifted up on a cross the Son of God. But as soon as the purpose of it all was fulfilled, God lifted Him up, highly exalting Him, for His is the Name which is above every name, that in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, bowing before Him either as Saviour or as Judge.

He who was in the awful darkness is now back in the sunshine of His Father's Presence. And the Christ who was once crucified is the Christ who determines our destiny. It is our relationship with Him that decides where we spend eternity. Eternity lies ahead of each one of us, no matter who may say that death is the end of everything human. What is He to you? Where will you spend eternity?

*What then was the offence of the cross to the first readers of the letter to the Galatians?*

The Greek word for offence is skandalon, something that tripped

people up, or that part of a trap which, when touched, triggered off the mechanism that pinned down—therefore something to be avoided. So the proud Jew shied away from the cross. To start with, his Scriptures taught him that anyone who hung on a tree was cursed. In Old Testament days the Jews had occasionally hung dead bodies on trees as a warning to wrong-doers. The New Bible Dictionary points out that this practice accounts for the New Testament reference to Christ's cross as a "tree." It was a symbol of humiliation to Jews long before death by crucifixion was known.

But the preaching of the cross of Christ was a far greater stumbling block. The Jews thought that because of their special place in God's plan of history, their special ceremony of circumcision, the blood of Abraham flowing through their veins, and the law of Moses at their finger-tips, they were automatically acceptable to God. The cross of Christ taught the Jew that these things could not save him. Only by personal faith in a crucified Saviour can a man be saved, whether Jew or Gentile. To owe your salvation to the work of another is humbling. To admit that this Other is the Creator, whom your people crucified, is humiliating beyond words. The Jew had to go back on the verdict of his race. Family, loyalty, pride, nationalism, everything was against such a decision. No wonder Paul spoke of the offence of the cross.

For the Gentile, too, there was an offence in the cross. He was often more intellectual than religious. He wanted to find the good life by working out his own philosophy and trying to live up to it. Salvation through a crucified Saviour seemed to be just nonsense to him. But *Jew and Gentile alike* are guilty before God, and have to come to Him in exactly the same way, through Christ's cross.

*What is the offence of the cross today?* To the Jew it is unchanged. The Gentile of the modern world may tend to put church ordinances and Christian upbringing in the place occupied for the Jew by circumcision and Mosaic instruction. The offence of the cross is that it denies to these things any saving efficacy. And those who claim religious privileges do not like being brought down to the same level as the rest of mankind, as being in common need of the mercy of God in Christ.

The cross of Christ is a great leveller. It humbles our pride. It leaves no room for pride of race, or pride of place, or pride of grace! It shows us that we are powerless to save ourselves. For if we could earn our salvation by effort and good works, the cross of Christ was unnecessary, indeed the most ghastly mistake of all history.

Ceremonies cannot save. Self-effort cannot save. Only Christ



can save. That is why He died as the sinner's substitute on a cross of blood and shame. No wonder we shrink by nature from the offence of the cross. But no wonder the Christian echoes Galatians 6 : 14!—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

## **I HAVE NOT SENT THEM**

STEPHEN CHARNOCK

Look, then, my dear brethren, as carefully and as prayerfully as you can into this great subject. The day will come when you will lack a minister. May it not be for long! But then all your discernment, your hunger for God, your thirst for Him, and for the knowledge of the truth, as the truth is in this blessed Book, will be tried.

Men may, men do, assume to be ministers who are not sent; they have some knowledge, it may be, of what are called the doctrines of grace, and they go here and there and speak them, and people receive them. But if they are followed, you will find that word to be true of many: "I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Bring all hearings to the test: Does God speak? Not to every person in a congregation, but does He speak to some? Does He speak to you? Are there evidences that sinners are convinced of their sins, that the hungry are fed with the gospel, that the thirsty are led to the Fountain of living waters, that the weak are encouraged to lean on the strength of Christ, that the ignorant are told to go to Him who is understanding, and whose words are right? The mystery is that God will have heaven inhabited by saved sinners.

# PROSPECT FOR THE CHURCH

T. H. ALDRIDGE

We face a world church situation which is both grave and full of tension. The wind of change is becoming a storm. The long-accepted delineations of denominationalism, the doctrines of our reformed faith, the very concept of God is once again in the melting pot. There is a re-thinking from basic principles and an inevitable re-alignment.

Of course, this mood of re-examination is not peculiar or confined to the Church of God, it is part of the climate of opinion of our day. We sometimes fail to notice, because of our immediate proximity and involvement, the general loss of freedom and independence. When we consider the regulations governing employment, education, the welfare state in general, it is quite evident that independent action, individual responsibility is becoming an increasingly difficult concept, is officially discouraged, being transferred to this body or that department. All for "our good," of course, and ultimately in our name and on our behalf.

Together with the loss of independence goes a loss of individuality by amalgamation. Small firms are engulfed by large. Small boroughs are amalgamated into larger units of local government. The international scene shows huge economic accretions such as the European Common Market; military alliances like NATO; the great political groupings of East and West—all with a view to greater efficiency, economy, viability.

I say, therefore, there is a general climate of opinion. As we examine our own situation, we need to ask ourselves a number of questions. Perhaps the first and most fundamental is simply this:

- (1) In this present urge towards Unity and Amalgamation, are we being prompted by the guidance and leading of God, or are we, perhaps even unwittingly, merely governed by the secular current of opinion?
- (2) Have we realistically examined the processes which determined our present position?
- (3) Why are there so many denominations today?
- (4) Have the spiritual and historical principles underlying these become irrelevant, or are they merely forgotten?

- (5) What is a valid standpoint from which to evaluate the situation and propose solutions? Can the Church of God be equated with a human society? Can we apply "business methods"? Is it the child of its age? Is it a changeable community or an eternal?
- (6) In any case, have we a *right* to reach and make such decisions? Whose is the Church?
- (7) What is the testimony of History? Are there any historical precedents for our guidance?

It is with this in mind that I direct your attention to these verses in Isaiah, chapter 22. We have here a historical situation. The ministry of Isaiah extended over the reign of four kings of Judah and its general purpose was to remind the nation of Israel of their past, their covenant relationship to God as His chosen people; the responsibilities which these privileges imposed; the necessary judgments which evasion of these responsibilities entailed; and finally, that unless there was a spirit of repentance and a return to God, the great calamities which God had linked with disobedience and apostasy at the time of the covenant (Deut. 28 : 58-62; 2 Chron. 36 : 15-16), would most certainly and shortly fall upon them. And so, through the long glass of prophecy, God reveals to Isaiah what one hundred years later, in the time of Jeremiah, was actually to come to pass.

The facts of history are plain. The Northern Kingdom of Israel has already been annihilated; its people are in captivity. The armies of the Chaldeans have arrived the second time. The land of Judah, its cities and territories are already conquered, and only the ultimate citadel, Jerusalem itself, remains.

It is hardly difficult to see the close analogy to our present situation. In almost every sphere the Church of God is losing ground. Physically its periphery is shrinking. More and more of the Mission fields are closing, in spite of great efforts. Our numbers are decreasing, in spite of a population explosion. Churches and chapels are shutting their doors. Our influence in world affairs, or community circles, is now almost non-existent. The forces of Secularism, Materialism and Science seem to be driving us into our ultimate position of defence.

What did those people in Jerusalem, therefore, do to meet the situation, what can we learn from them and apply to our own? Our first concern must be to examine their whole approach to the situation, and relate this to the realities as God revealed them to Isaiah.

- (1) *They were mistaken in their assessment of the basic situation.*

Undoubtedly they regarded their present situation in terms of a failure of politics and administration. It was no more than the natural interplay of cause and effect. Yet all the time the truth of the situation was "*He discovered the covering of Judah.*" The crisis was not historical in origin, but divine. Together with this, their assessment was in terms of the Chaldeans and inhabitants of Jerusalem, when in fact the confrontation was between a heathen nation and the people of God.

(2) *They were mistaken in their estimate of their own identity.* Jerusalem was not merely a mountain city, the capital of Judah, but the City of God. They had forgotten their history. They had forgotten that God had made certain promises concerning this city (1 Kings 9 : 1-3) concerning His presence in it and care of it, His previous aid in similar situations. But more significantly still, they had forgotten the prophecies concerning the city as yet in the future.

(3) *They were mistaken in their evaluation of the means of deliverance.* In the defence of the city they looked for offensive weapons to break out with: v. 8, "Thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest." This was the ancient arsenal which Solomon had built and equipped. They were concerned about the breaches in their defences, and so repaired these by demolishing houses (v. 10). They flooded a moat between the outer and inner wall (v. 11). Finally, they arranged for adequate water provision to withstand a long siege (v. 9), when in fact, humanly speaking, their position was hopeless, and only divine intervention could bring help.

(4) *They were mistaken in their prognosis of the end.* To them defeat could only be delayed. The end was inevitable. All calculations pointed to this. They quite forgot that on several previous occasions God had delivered the city from identical predicaments. Indeed, they quite forgot that He had covenanted to do so (1 Kings 8 : 33-34).

(5) *They were mistaken as to the significance of their attitude.* Since defeat was inevitable, so they supposed—let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die. It no longer matters what we do, or how we behave. It is all finished, let us enjoy ourselves while life and opportunity remains (v. 13).

In fact they made two cardinal, basic mistakes:

*They were mistaken about themselves.* This situation was not accidental, but providential. It had nothing to do with the power of Babylon, but everything with the power of Sin.

*They were mistaken about God.* He was the maker of the City (v. 11). He was the owner of the City, and, by covenant, of its

inhabitants. Equally He was also its Protector, Guardian and Redeemer.

The city of Jerusalem was not being attacked, it was being judged. And the call of God was not to arms, but repentance; not to the armour, but to sackcloth and mourning; not to the defences, but to tears and weeping.

It was a call to re-orientation—Look.

It was a call to re-alignment—Respect.

It was a call to re-examination—Repent.

Not to self-vindication—but to Salvation.

I put it to you, that not only are we in an analogous position, but that we are making the same mistaken assumptions, and drawing equally false conclusions. The future of God's Church lies in God. Our present dilemmas are the result of grievous sin for many generations. We are in a position of being judged of God, by means of the ungodly. Our remedy is not in ecclesiastical politics, or commercial time and motion studies, but in looking to our God—the Maker of the Church, having respect unto Him that fashioned it long ago; and to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth.

When Martin Luther faced the Diet of Worms, stripped of all protection and help, he cried: "Here I stand, I can do no other." Let us join him, and see the mighty hand of God begin to effect such a deliverance as to astonish and confound the enemy, humble and renew His people, and glorify His great and holy Name.

If God be for us, who can be against us!

*There could not be a better guide in controversy than the verse . . . "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you contrary to the gospel which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." That text excludes personalities in debate; but it also demands the most unswerving loyalty to the gospel of Christ, no matter what personalities may be opposed, and no matter what sacrifices loyalty may involve.—J. GRESHAM MACHEN.*

# NO MORE CRYING

J. C. RYLE

*"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."*—Rev. 21 : 4.

A Bible text stands at the top of this page. I should like you to read it twice over. I am going to tell you something which, I hope, will make you remember that text as long as you live.

I am going to tell you about three places, of which the Bible says a great deal. It matters little what we know about some places. But it matters much to know something about the three places of which I am now going to speak.

I. Firstly,—There is a place where there is a great deal of crying.

II. Secondly,—There is a place where there is nothing else but crying.

III. Thirdly,—There is a place where there is no crying at all.

I. First of all, THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF CRYING.

What is that place? It is the world in which you and I live. It is a world full of beautiful and pleasant things. The sun shining by day and the stars by night—the blue hills looking up to heaven, and the rolling sea ebbing and flowing—the broad quiet lakes, and the rushing restless rivers—the flowers blooming in the spring, and the fields full of corn in autumn—the birds singing in the woods, and the lambs playing in the meadows—all, all are beautiful things. I could look at them for hours and say, "What a beautiful world it is!" But still it is a world where there is a great deal of crying. It is a world where there are many tears.

There was "crying" in Bible times. Hagar wept when she thought Ishmael was dying. Abraham mourned when Sarah died. Joseph wept when his brothers sold him into Egypt. David wept when Absalom was killed. There was weeping at Jerusalem when good king Josiah was slain in battle. There was weeping at Bethlehem when Herod killed all the little children who were two years old. These things, and many like them, you will find in your Bibles.

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*Bishop Ryle, whose doctrinal writings are well known, appears here in a different role as he speaks to children. There is a marked contrast between this nineteenth-century children's sermon and much of the current shallow approach.*

There is "crying" now all over the world. Little babies cry when they want anything, or feel pain. Boys and girls cry when they are hurt or frightened, or corrected. Grown up people cry sometimes when they are in trouble, or when they see those die whom they love. In short, wherever there is sorrow and pain, there is "crying."

I dare say you have seen people come to church all dressed in black. That is called being in mourning. Some relation or friend of these people is dead, and therefore they dress in black. Well! remember when you see people in mourning, somebody has been "crying."

I daresay you have seen graves in churchyards, and have heard that when people die they are buried there. Some of them are very little graves, not longer than you are. Well! remember that when those graves were made, and little coffins were let down into them, there was "crying."

Children, did you ever think what all this crying came from? Did you ever consider how it first began? Did you ever hear how weeping and tears came into the world? God did not make crying; that is certain. All that God made was "very good." Listen to me and I will tell you how "crying" began.

Crying came into the world by reason of sin. Sin is the cause of all the weeping, and tears, and sorrow, and pain, which there are upon earth. All the crying began when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and became sinners. It was sin which brought into the world pain, and sickness, and death. It was sin which brought into the world selfishness, and ill-nature, and unkindness, and quarrelling, and stealing, and fighting. If there had been no wickedness, there would have been no weeping. If there had been no sin, there would have been no "crying."

See now, my beloved children, how much you ought to hate sin. All the unhappiness in the world came from sin. How strange and wonderful it is that anyone can take pleasure in sin! Do not let that be the case with you. Watch against sin. Fight with it. Avoid it. Listen not to it. Take the advice of St. Paul: "Abhor that which is evil." Take the advice of Solomon: "When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Say to yourself every morning, "Sin caused crying, and so I will hate sin."

See again, my beloved children, how foolish it is to expect perfect happiness in this world. It is expecting what you will not find. The world is a place where there is much "crying," and where things do not always go on pleasantly. I hear many boys and girls talking of the pleasures they will have when they are men and women. I am sorry for them when I hear them talking in this way. I know

they are mistaken. I know they will be disappointed. They will find when they grow up that they cannot get through the world without many troubles and cares. There are no roses without thorns. There are no years without dark and rainy days. There is no living on earth without "crying" and tears.

II. I will now speak of the second place about which I promised to tell you something. THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NOTHING ELSE BUT CRYING.

What is this place? It is the place to which all bad people go when they are dead. It is the place which the Bible calls hell. In hell there is no laughter and smiling. There is nothing but "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." In hell there is no happiness. Those who go there cry on night and day without stopping. They have no rest. They never go to sleep and wake up happy. They never stop crying in hell.

Beloved children, I am sorry to tell you that there are many people going to hell. "Broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be which go in it." I am afraid that many children are going to hell. I see many boys and girls who are so naughty and ill-behaved, that I am sure they are not fit for heaven. And if they are not fit for heaven, where will they go if they die? There is only one other place to which they can go. THEY MUST GO TO HELL.

Dear children, it makes me sad to say these things. I cannot bear the thought of boys and girls going to that dreadful place where there is nothing but crying. My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may not go to hell. But I want you to know some things which you must mind if you would not go to hell. Listen to me now while I ask you a few questions.

For one thing I will ask you: Do you love Jesus Christ? You ought to love Him. He died for your sins upon the cross, that He might save you from hell. He allowed Himself to be shut up in the dark prison of the grave, that your sins might be forgiven and that you might not be chained in hell for ever. Dear children, think about this! If you love nothing but play, and eating, and drinking, and fine clothes and story-books, and do not love Christ, you are not in the right way. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing. Do you try to please Christ? You ought to do so. I read in the Bible that Jesus Christ said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Dear children, think about this! If you are selfish, or passionate, or tell lies, or quarrel with one another, or do not do as you are bid, you are not Christ's friends.



Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing. Do you keep the Sunday holy? You ought to do so. God commands it, and it is for your good. I once heard of a little boy who went to play upon the ice on Sunday instead of coming home straight from church. "Tommy," said his mother, "why did you do so?" "Mother," said Tommy, "I did not remember that it was Sunday." "Tommy," said his mother, "that is the very thing God told you not to do. He said in the fourth commandment, remember, 'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath.'" Dear children, think about this! If you do not like to give God one day in the week, your hearts are not right. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing. Do you say your prayers? You ought to do so. God will never be a friend to you if you do not speak to Him, and ask Him to take care of your soul and make you good. If you never pray, or say your prayers without thinking, your heart will soon be full of mischief and sin. It will never be empty for a day. I once heard of a boy who had a little garden given to him all full of flowers. But he did nothing for it. He never raked it, or weeded it. And after a few weeks the weeds came up so thick that the flowers died. Dear children, think of this! If you do not ask God to put the Holy Spirit in your hearts, the devil will soon fill them with sin. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you one more question. Do you read your Bible? You ought to do so. That beautiful book is able to keep you from hell and save your soul. If you use the Bible rightly, you will not be hurt by the devil. I once heard of a little boy in Africa who was sleeping with his father in the open air, near a fire. He awoke in the middle of the night, and saw a great lion close to him, looking as if he was going to seize him. The little boy took up a lighted stick out of the fire, and put it in the lion's face, and drove him away. Dear children, think of this! The devil is "a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." But he cannot harm you, if you make a right use of the Bible. If you would drive him from you, you must read your Bible. If you can read, and yet neglect your Bible, you are in great danger. Take care. If you do not mind, the devil will carry you off to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

Beloved children, remember my five questions. Think of them often, and try your own hearts by them. I am not afraid about

children who love Jesus, and try to please Him, and keep the Sunday holy, and pray and read their Bibles. I am not afraid that they will go to hell if they die. But I am afraid about children who care nothing about these things. I think they are in great danger.

III. I will now speak of the third place about which I promised to tell you something. THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO CRYING AT ALL.

What is this place? It is heaven. It is the place to which all good people go when they are dead. There all is joy and happiness. There no tears are shed. There sorrow, and pain, and sickness, and death, can never enter in. There can be no crying in heaven, because there is nothing that can cause grief.

Dear children, there will be no more lessons in heaven. All will have been learned. The school will be closed. The rod and correction will be laid aside for ever. There will be an eternal holiday.

There will be no more work in heaven. Man will no longer need to labour for his bread. The head will no longer have to ache with thinking. The hands will no longer be stiff and brown with toiling. There will be an eternal rest for the people of God.

There will be no sickness in heaven. Pain, and disease, and weakness, and death will not be known. The people who dwell there shall no more say, "I am sick." They will be always well. There will be nothing but health and strength for evermore.

There will be no sin in heaven. There will be no bad tempers, no unkind words, no spiteful actions. The great tempter, the Devil, will not be allowed to come in and spoil the happiness. There shall be nothing but holiness and love for evermore.

Best of all, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be in the midst of heaven. His people shall at last see Him face to face, and go out from His presence no more. He shall gather His lambs into His bosom, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. Where He is will be fulness of joy, and at His right hand shall be pleasures for evermore.

Dear children, would you not like to go to heaven? We cannot live always in this world. A day will come when we must die, like the old people who have died already. Children, would you not like to go to heaven when you die? Listen to me, and I will tell you something about the way by which you must go.

If you would go to heaven, you must have your sins forgiven, and your hearts made new and good. There is only one who can do this for you. That One is the Lord Jesus Christ. God has appointed Him to be the Friend of sinners. He can wash away your sins in His own precious blood. He can make your hearts new by putting

the Holy Spirit in them. He is the Way and the Door into heaven. He has the keys in His hand. Children, if you want to go to heaven, you must ask Jesus Christ to let you in.

Ask Jesus in prayer to get ready a place for you in that world where there is no "crying." Ask Him to put your name in His book of life, and to make you one of His people. Ask Him to cleanse you from all your sins, and to put the Holy Ghost in your heart. Ask Him to give you power to fight His battle against sin, the world, and the devil. Ask Him to give you grace to make you good while you are young, and good when you grow up, that so you may be safe while you live, and happy for ever when you die.

Children, Jesus Christ is ready to do all this, if you will only ask Him. He has done it for many people already. He is waiting to do it for you at this very time. Do not be afraid to ask Him. Tell Him you have heard that He was very kind to people when He was on earth, and ask Him to be kind to you. Remind Him how kind He was to the poor dying thief on the cross. Say to Him, "Lord Jesus, remember me; I want to go to heaven. Lord, think upon me. Lord, give me the Holy Spirit. Lord, pardon my sins, and give me a new heart. Lord Jesus, save me."

And now, children, I have kept my word. I have told you of three places. I have told you of a place where there is nothing but crying. I hope none of you will go there. I have told you of a place where there is no crying. I hope you will all go there. I have told you of a place where there is a great deal of crying. That place is the world in which you are living. Would you like, last of all, to know the best way to be happy in this world? Listen to me, and I will tell you.

The happiest people in this world are those who make the Bible the rule of their lives. They read their Bible often. They believe what the Bible says. They love that Saviour Jesus Christ of whom the Bible speaks. They try to obey what the Bible commands. None are so happy as these people. They cannot prevent sickness and trouble coming to them sometimes. But they learn from the Bible to bear them patiently. Children, if you would get through the world happily, make the Bible your best friend.

Shall I tell you a story that I once heard about a little boy and the Bible? Perhaps it will help you to remember what I have just been saying. I want the words I have just written to stick for ever in your minds.

"Father," said this little boy one day, "I do not see any use in reading the Bible. I do not see that it does people any good." Little Johnny said this in a rather cross and pettish way, and his father

thought it best not to begin reasoning with him. "Johnny," he said, "put on your hat, and come out, and take a walk with me."

Johnny's father took him first to a house where there was an old woman who was very poor, and he talked to her about her poverty "Sir," said the old woman, "I do not complain. I have read in the Bible these words, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content'." "Johnny," said the little boy's father, "hear what the old woman says."

They went on to another house, where there was a young woman who was very ill, and never likely to get better. Johnny's father asked her if she felt afraid to die. "No!" she said, "I find it written in the Bible, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me'." "Johnny," said the little boy's father again, "hear what the young woman says."

Children, when Johnny and his father came home that afternoon from their walk, his father asked him one question. "Johnny," he said, "do you think it is of any use to read the Bible? Do you think reading the Bible does people any good?"

And now what do you think Johnny said? I will tell you. He held down his head and said nothing. But his face got very red, and he looked very much ashamed.

Children, from that day Johnny was never heard again to say, "It is of no use reading the Bible."

Beloved children, remember my parting words. The way to get through the world with the least possible crying, is to read the Bible, believe the Bible, pray over the Bible, live by the Bible.

He that goes through life in this way will have the least "crying" in this world. And best of all, he will have NO CRYING AT ALL IN THE WORLD TO COME.

*Thou, O God, wilt Thou do something for the proudest of men also? Make me humble-minded, and lowly in heart. Take away from me all this spirit of pride and haughtiness and ambition and self-flattery; all this self-confidence, and all this unseemly gaiety of mine. Teach me to love concealment; teach me to love to be little esteemed. Let me be heartily ashamed of all my past sin, and all my present folly. Enable me to bear reproaches evenly, for I have fully deserved them all, to refuse and to lay down all honours that are offered me because in reality I have deserved none of them. Also to suffer all reproof thankfully, and then to amend all my faults speedily. Invest my soul with the humble robe of my meek Master and Saviour Jesus Christ. And when I have humbly, patiently, charitably, and diligently served Thee on earth, change my confusion into glory, my folly into perfect knowledge and true wisdom, and all my weaknesses and dishonours into the strength and the beauty of the sons of God. And in the meantime use what means Thou pleasest to conform me more and more to the sweet image of Thy Son. Make me gentle to all men and severe to myself. Make me willing to sit down in the lowest place, striving to go before my brother in nothing but in doing him and Thee honour and service.—JEREMY TAYLOR.*

# *Young People's Page*

## **THE COTTAGE ON THE CLIFF**

Near the edge of a cliff overlooking an arm of the sea, stood a picturesque old cottage. Roses and honeysuckle climbed over the porch, encircling the windows; old-fashioned flowers filled the garden—marigolds and pansies and wallflowers, with a row of tall hollyhocks down one side. Here lived the Careys, Peter and Nancy and their only child, Harry. Peter, a fisherman, owned a share in a trawler. The ship made short voyages only, and was never long away; Nancy's heart was so full of the boy, that the time passed quickly.

The parents took the greatest pride and pleasure in their boy, but they were very anxious to bring him up in the fear of the Lord. Peter was a man of few words; but it was said of him in the village that what he prayed for on meeting night, he lived out all the week. He and Nancy were very regular worshippers at the chapel, and it was seldom that they missed the weekly prayer-meetings. From the beginning Harry was taken to the services, and he went up the Sunday school from the infants.

Peter and Nancy often discussed their only child's future. From an early age his father decided that he would never choose the hardships and dangers of a seafaring life for Harry. "We'll have money enough to 'prentice him well," said Peter, "and when he's through with that, we'll set him up in a good shop of his own." Nancy was as anxious as her husband to do the right thing for Harry, but she was not quite sure of the wisdom of his decision. Peter was so often away, that she knew the boy much better than he did. When he was at home, Peter was too grave and stern to invite a child's confidence. Nancy knew the boy's wilfulness, but hesitated to trouble her husband; and before Harry was twelve years old there were secrets kept from his father.

Ourwardly, all went well, and Peter had no idea how deeply his son disliked the prospect of spending all his days in a little town. Harry wanted freedom and adventure, and would himself have chosen the sea. It was a great mistake that the father would never discuss Harry's future with him. His plan was carried out, and at fifteen the boy was apprenticed to a prosperous tradesman in the neighbouring town.

Peter stipulated that his son should always come home for Sundays, and the first winter went by so uneventfully that Nancy hoped he was really settling down. But the lad's discontent smouldered constantly. Listening to boys older than himself, he began to gamble and drink with them, still carefully concealing his new habits from his parents. At last there was a crash. Harry stole from his master's desk all the notes and cash that he could find, and disappeared into the night.

To his father and mother the blow was a terrible one, worse than any bereavement. Peter was taken entirely by surprise, Nancy much less so. They were both broken-hearted. Every day Peter grew more stern and silent; he sold his share in the trawler, and with the proceeds and most of his savings, paid for the broken indentures, and made complete restitution of the stolen money. After this Nancy began to lift up her head again; but her husband never recovered from the shattering blow. Illness set in, and it became apparent that the fisherman's days were numbered.

Late one stormy night, poor Nancy watched at the bedside of her dying husband. Suddenly he awoke to full consciousness, with a smile of delight upon his face. "Nancy love!" he said, "the Captain's calling me! You'll have to bide alone a bit, sweetheart, till our prodigal comes back—tell him from his father that he's welcome home." He paused; then he said, "Sing, Jesu, lover of my soul." Nancy began, with faltering voice; but as she came to the words "Till the storm of life be past," she saw that the fluttering breath was still for ever.

After his burial in the quiet churchyard, Peter's friends tried to persuade his wife to give up the lonely cottage and to move into the town. But Nancy was resolute; she must stay where she was until Harry came home. She began to take in sewing and knitting, managing (with the garden produce, too) to make a living for herself. She always sat in her window to work, often gazing out to sea in the hope of her boy's home-coming.

But time went on, bringing no news at all of the missing lad. It was now four years since his disappearance. Many thought him dead; others that if he were alive, he would never dare to show himself at home. But Nancy waited still upon her God.

On a terrible night of storm and gale, a ship went down in the channel some way below the Careys' cottage. Every man aboard was lost but one, who found himself at the mercy of the waves in a tiny open boat. It was Harry. For months his conscience had been stirred, and now it had forced the wanderer to return. He intended to give himself up to the police, confessing all. But now,

in peril on the waters, so near to his own home, the Lord spoke to his heart, reminding him of verses of Scripture, learnt long ago, which told of the forgiveness of sins and of redemption through the blood of Christ. Yearning desperately for pardon and peace, the boy cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness. His prayer was heard, and there in the raging waters he obtained the mercy he cried for. Filled now with hopes of heaven, Harry began to sing his father's favourite hymn—"Jesu, lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly"! In the darkness, he had no idea that a lifeboat was close at hand; his singing was heard, and he was rescued.

The next day the tempest had spent itself. The sun was shining on the cottage on the cliff when Harry passed once more through the little garden gate, and paused on the threshold of his home. Nancy saw the manly figure at the door, and hope leapt up as always. No disappointment this time—mother and son were clasped in each other's arms. It was hard to tell of the one who was gone; but when Harry opened his heart to his mother, telling her of the great change that had come to his soul, she could only whisper, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace"!

News of the wanderer's return was quickly spread. Harry made full confession of his crime to his former employers; but as his father had made complete restitution, the lad was freely forgiven. He set himself down to begin a new life, and it became his pride and joy to provide for his mother, and to minister to her needs.

DAMARIS.

### SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 155

*The whole: Wife of Moses.*

1. Mending nets in his ship, his two sons left at once at the call of Christ.
2. Murdered as he lay on his bed at noon.
3. When Christ called him, he was casting a net into the sea with his brother.
4. First-named of Haman's sons.
5. "A faithful and beloved brother."
6. Treasure city built for Pharaoh.
7. Meeting brethren here, Paul "thanked God, and took courage."
8. This prophet's last chapter is directed to "the chief singer on my stringed instruments."



## SOLUTION OF No. 154

*The whole:* Euphrates (Gen. 2 : 14).

1. Eglon (Judges 3 : 20, etc.).
2. Unbelief (Mark 6 : 6).
3. Pharaoh (Gen. 47 : 8).
4. Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1 : 15).
5. Rechab (Jerem. 35 : 6).
6. Augustus (Luke 2 : 1).
7. Tarshish (Jonah 1 : 3).
8. Elymas (Acts 13 : 8).
9. Sarah (Gen. 18 : 10, 12).

**SITUATIONS VACANT**

**WELFARE WORKER** wanted with or without nursing qualifications, for the CAMBERWELL Home of the AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY, to assist the Wardens in the General care of some 36 Residents occupying self-contained flatlets, would suit active retired Christian, but must have a love for the Lord's elderly people. Good flatlet provided.—Apply, giving full details, age, etc., to the Secretary, A.P.F.S., 19 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

**COOK HOUSEKEEPERS** (Residential). Wanted urgently for the HORNSEY RISE, LONDON, and HOLLINGTON, ST. LEONARDS-on-SEA Homes of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. Applications are invited from Christians with a love for the Lord's elderly people. Salary in accordance with Whitley Council Scale.—Apply, giving full particulars, to the Secretary, A.P.F.S., 19 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**BRISTOL. KENSINGTON BAPTIST TABERNACLE**, Stapleton Road. D.V. Rev. H. M. Carson, M.A., B.D., will preach in connection with Sovereign Grace Union, **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16th**, at 7.30 p.m. Chairman: Rev. D. Abernethie.