

# THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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"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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## ***EDITORIAL***

There is a strong and constantly recurring emphasis in the New Testament on the need for a spirit of discernment. The Lord warned His disciples to 'beware of false prophets'. The apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to 'prove all things'. John added his warning, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits'. Because the devil, the father of lies, is constantly at work in his endeavour to sidetrack the Church, the believer must be on the alert. The honour of the Lord demands a watchful spirit, so also do the purity of the gospel, the well-being of the churches, and the spiritual welfare of men and women.

But a discerning attitude very easily degenerates into a critical spirit. The devil is very subtle and when he fails with his well-tried weapon of complacency—a method which is very successful in the churches at the present time—he so pushes Christians to the other extreme that they become harshly critical.

Often a Christian will not realise that he is drifting in this direction. After all, the Bible is on his side in warning against complacency. A flabby attitude to the doctrines of the gospel is clearly unbiblical. Surely he is justified in standing firmly for the truth! All this is very true, but the trouble is that sometimes he may stand for the truth in the wrong way and do just as much harm to the cause of the gospel as the woolly-minded Christian who is untroubled by error and leaves things to take their course.

It is possible to move from a perfectly correct attitude of discernment to a wholly negative mentality. In this frame of mind the Christian critic is always on the look-out for error and becomes such an adept that he can pick up the most minute trifle and make it a major issue. He becomes censorious and hard. He is quick to dismiss those who do not agree with him, and his tongue usually matches his attitude so that he becomes the master of the scathing word.

There are sad consequences. He will magnify the weaknesses or failures of another Christian until the man's general godliness is obscured. He will expose with such triumphant zeal some minor infringement of doctrinal orthodoxy that a faithful preacher of the gospel is dismissed as if he were a cross between a knave and a fool.

This critical outlook refuses to allow a reasonable difference of opinion among Christians on issues where the Scriptures leave the matter open. His interpretation on a debatable issue is, he considers, the only correct one, and any who differ must not simply be instructed and helped—a biblical approach this—but must be criticised and even at times dismissed with scant respect if not with thinly disguised contempt. How far removed it all is from Paul's discussion of the matter in Romans 14. On the question of the observance of one day above another Paul insists 'let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind'. But let neither side to the debate indulge either in a censorious or a contemptuous attitude.

By a strange twist the critic at times can become soft with those whom in fact he should be resisting. With the inconsistencies of his fellow church members he has little patience; their eccentricities of manner or of expression in the prayer meeting he can scarcely abide; their failure to fit in with his ideas provide his indignation and scorn. But meanwhile there are men who are teaching blatant error in the name of Christ and they are ignored. There are men who are compromising the gospel by their trimming, but they do not come under the lash. Indeed, they may even be defended in the name of a charity which is in short supply when fellow believers are concerned.

Such an attitude dries a man up spiritually. He cannot derive full benefit from the ministry of the Word, for if his favourite preacher is not in action he is so critical of the visitor that he is unlikely to glean much from the preaching.

Then again the hypercritical brother discourages the weaker believer. The young convert who may not have any Christian background and whose mode of living or length of hair do not

fit into the accepted pattern, will be hindered as he takes the first stumbling steps along the path of discipleship. If there is little evident acknowledgement that he is making some progress and abundant comment on his failures, it is no wonder if he falters.

Above all, the censorious Christian is in danger of grieving the Spirit. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to glorify Christ and He will assist the man who seeks to resist whatever may obscure the glory of the Saviour. But the Spirit will not bless a loveless, harsh and censorious spirit. We must speak the truth, but if we are to know the Spirit's help we must speak the truth in love. We must withstand error, but if we are to have the Spirit's blessing then we must exhibit the meekness of the Spirit-filled man.

What are the warning lights? How may we know if we are drifting in this direction? Love, says Paul, rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth, and if we take a delight in discovering error in order that we may expose it, then we are on dangerous ground. Then again, if we find ourselves moving beyond what a man has actually said or written to the motives which we consider to be behind his words, we are going well beyond the biblical call to prove all things. If in addition we find that we tend almost automatically to react in a critical way we need to take heed to ourselves. Above all, if we find that we are much easier on ourselves than on others, if we find that we tolerate thoughts and imaginings in ourselves which if they were even hinted at in the words of others we would at once condemn them, we will do well to reflect on some salutary truths—'By the grace of God I am what I am', 'Judge not that ye be not judged', 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall'.

H. M. CARSON.

# I know that my Redeemer Lives

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached in Hamilton Road  
Baptist Church, Bangor, Co. Down.*

'For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another' (Job 19 : 25-27).

'I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' One of the amazing things about the Old Testament is the way in which these men of God so often reached heights of understanding of God's purposes. After all, Job lived centuries before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; centuries before the thrill came to those who waited in Israel, that Christ had been born in Bethlehem in Judaea; centuries before Christ had gone as the Lamb of God to bear away the sin of the world; centuries before the Resurrection; centuries before the Day of Pentecost. And yet here is a man who rises to rare heights as he speaks from his heart of the deep confidence he has, not only that his Redeemer lives, but that he also shall share in that life.

Job had been going through a time of severe testing, indeed 'severe testing' is an understatement. He had been stripped of everything that, humanly speaking, would make life worth living. He had lost his children in a tragic disaster; he had lost his health and his property; he was in a state of utter misery. At such a time, human sympathy means a great deal, but human sympathy was the very thing that was lacking in Job's situation. His own wife misunderstood. His friends who gathered ostensibly to sympathise, well they have lent their title to our common language—we talk about a 'Job's comforter' and they were precisely that, for they showed complete misunderstanding. Far from contributing to him, far from helping him, they simply hindered. Yet in the midst of this impossible situation, in complete darkness of spirit, Job rises, and by faith he cries out 'I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though

after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another'.

Now you and I stand this side of Bethlehem. We have the narrative of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; we can read about His ministry there in the gospels. We stand this side of Calvary, and we can look back again and read, and with our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we can begin to appreciate the significance of it all. 'He died for our sins according to the Scripture.' We stand this side of the empty tomb, this side of the Resurrection. We stand this side of Pentecost; the Spirit of God has been poured out upon His people, and with the coming of the Spirit there have come enlightenment and understanding so that the gospel flames with light and meaning. This means, too, that all the predictions of the Old Testament light up now with a new significance. All the shadows and the types, all the first faint foregleamings of the coming of the Saviour, now they are full of meaning because it has happened. The Christ for whom they were looking, the gospel which was still in the future, for us they are realities. So this word of Job is not simply an interesting word which a man spoke centuries ago in a rare moment of spiritual insight and understanding—it is an abiding word. Indeed it has been enriched in a way that is possibly far beyond what Job could have anticipated by the resurrection of Christ, and as we stand beside the empty tomb and with our thoughts dwelling upon the risen Saviour, we can say with an even greater fullness of meaning, 'I know that my Redeemer lives'.

This morning, in this hour of worship, we are concentrating our thinking upon our Redeemer; upon the Son of God who for our sakes and for our salvation, came down from heaven, was made Man, suffered and bled and died, and rose again from the dead; who ascended and lives at God's right hand and is coming again to take His people to be with Himself. We are thinking this morning of the once crucified but now risen, exalted and glorified Jesus Christ.

He is our Redeemer. The word that Job used here is a word that to anyone listening and speaking his language, would have suggested an advocate, one who is called in to speak on your behalf. It is a word that might have been used in a law court. If you are facing a charge, you call for an advocate, someone who will stand by you, someone who will present your case, someone who will speak on your behalf. Now Job speaks of the Lord as his Redeemer, his advocate, his go-between. Is

this not the glory of the New Testament that we have a Redeemer, we have an advocate, we have One who can stand on our behalf, and how sorely we need such an one. I know there are many who do not think they need an advocate. They imagine that by the ordinary run of their everyday living, as long as they contribute to the general life of the community in terms of decency and so on, then all will be reasonably well. I was speaking at a meeting over in England last week and I was speaking on the gospel, on what it means to be a Christian, and someone was questioning and discussing afterwards and it was precisely in these terms—surely if you live an ordinary decent life, if you are as helpful as you can be, is this not enough, without this radical experience of being born again, of coming to trust in Christ? So many people think in these terms and therefore to talk about a Redeemer, a mediator, an advocate, is for them really rather irrelevant. They do not see the point of it. But the moment I begin to see God in all His holiness, the moment I begin to see God as my Creator, as the One to whom I owe everything; the moment I begin to see myself in my sin, my uncleanness, my impurity, that moment I begin to realise how desperately I need a Redeemer, how desperately I need an advocate, one who can speak for me.

Now Jesus Christ is the only and the all-sufficient Redeemer because He is the One who is by right in heaven. He is Himself divine; from all eternity He has been with the Father. He is the One who took our nature upon Him; He was made man and so He can speak on our behalf. But He did something more when He took our nature upon Him—‘He bore our sins in His own body on the tree’. This is the glory of the gospel. He came to redeem lawbreakers and so He took the penalty that was due to the breach of God’s law. He came to those who had failed to keep the law of God and He Himself perfectly kept it on their behalf. So my Redeemer, my advocate, is my righteous One, my sin-bearer, the keeper of the law on my behalf, and in His Name I can go boldly to the Throne of Grace. Admittedly, in myself, I am not even fit to approach God, I dare not go near such holiness. ‘He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity’ and each one of us, if we are honest with ourselves before God, will acknowledge that there is an abundance of iniquity. But the greatness of the message of the gospel is that we may go, not unsure, not afraid, not hesitant, but we go with boldness to the throne of grace, because we have a Redeemer, One who shares our nature, One who bore our guilt and One who has been accepted by the Father, for the Father has exalted Him at His right hand as a Prince and

a Saviour, and so in His Name we go. And the Christian says very humbly but with deep thanksgiving of heart, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.

Yes, He is alive! The crucifix plays no part in Christian thinking or Christian living. Christ died and we glory in the message of Christ crucified, but death could not hold Him; He broke the bands of death and hell; He rose and lives. Had Christ perished in the attempt to save His people, we might have looked back with gratitude but there could not have been much more than gratitude tinged with regret. If you look back to someone who has tried very hard to do something for you and has perished in the attempt, well, clearly there will be deep gratitude. For example, someone who knows that his mother died in giving birth to him will look back obviously with thanksgiving and with deep regret. But this is not One who died and that was the tragic end of the story—this is the One who died and rose again, and so it is not simply thanksgiving, it is thanksgiving blended with hope, with confidence, with assurance. He died, He rose, He lives!

It is very hard for us to recapture the excitement of that first Lord's Day when the disciples heard that He had risen from the dead. The 'to and fro' in their minds, the deep depression through which they had gone; and now they are alternating between fear and hope, wondering if they could believe the witness of those who said they had seen the empty tomb, wondering if they could accept the testimony of those who said they had seen the risen Lord—until the amazing fact is gradually forced upon them all that He is alive, and one can see their exuberance of soul. When you see them preaching in the Acts of the Apostles, these are not professionals merely producing sermons, these are men who are overwhelmed with the wonder of it all. They had seen Him crucified, they had seen Him taken from the Cross and laid in the tomb, but with their own eyes they had seen Him alive; they had heard Him speaking to them, and they went out and could hardly find words to express the amazing message—Jesus Christ is alive! No wonder they were described as those who had turned the world upside down. The great message, the message that revolutionised their lives, they believed was a message that could revolutionise the lives of any who would come in simple faith to this Lord Jesus Christ. He is alive!

But Job looks even beyond that. He looks not only to the first coming of Christ, not only to Christ's rising from the dead, he looks right to the very end of the purposes of God: 'I know that my Redeemer lives and He shall stand at the



latter day upon the earth'. It is an amazing fact that Job, centuries before, could see so clearly the great truth that runs right through the New Testament, the truth of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Job had not stood on the Mount of Olives with the disciples; he had not heard the angelic messenger bringing the word 'This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go'. He had not heard the apostolic testimony concerning the coming again of Christ and yet by faith he looks right down the vista of the years and he sees it. God's purposes will reach their climax. God will not falter half way. The God who from all eternity planned this mighty work of salvation will bring it to its glorious fulfilment.

Says Job, 'I know He lives and I know that He will stand at the latter day upon the earth'. Yes, upon this earth, defiled and corrupted by man; this earth which came fresh from the hand of its Creator and bears so much evidence of its Creator's handiwork, and yet this earth which alas has seen so much evidence of man's misuse of himself, misuse of his fellows, and indeed man's misuse of the very Creation itself. This earth—what has it seen down human history? It has seen so much war and strife and bloodshed; nations pitting themselves one against the other; men defiling the humanity which God had created. It has seen indeed the very created order itself increasingly defiled by man, man in his greed—we are seeing it today—making use of the earth for his own ends and forgetting to give glory to the Creator. But Job is looking forward to that day of which the New Testament speaks, 'We look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness'. The Christian does not see history petering out to a meaningless ending. He looks rather towards the climax. God's purposes have significance and meaning and they will reach their goal; and the goal, says the Bible, is the Day of the Lord, the day of Christ's appearing. 'He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' It will be the day of Christ's triumph, the day when God shall forever vindicate His Son and vindicate His people, and declare His Son to be, in the words of the Revelation, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'.

Then Job turns his thoughts from the glory of the Redeemer and the greatness of the purposes of God, and he turns his thoughts to himself, and what he will experience because he has such a Redeemer. The gospel, you see, is not simply theory, it is not simply abstract doctrine which one receives with a nod of assent. It is truth which reaches into the life and transforms a man. So he looks forward and he says, 'Though



after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God'. Job is a realist. He deals with the great inescapable fact of life, which is death. The tragedy of so many people is that they are not realists. There are so many people, at a holiday time, who go out and the only interest they have is to enjoy themselves, to take a break from work, but they never take into account that every experience here is a very temporary one. Death is the inevitable reality that confronts everyone of us. Indeed, at the end of a holiday weekend there is the grim toll of casualties upon the roads. There are those who started out for a weekend's holiday, full of life, full of interest, and in a brief moment suddenly the whole thing is terminated. Whether it comes in that way or whether it comes through a long illness or in various ways, it is still the inevitable fact that confronts every one of us. When we hear of someone dying from an incurable illness, well, we are stirred with sympathy, but we tend to forget that we are all dying from an incurable disease because every one of us is mortal—death is the inescapable fact. Well now, some people will say, 'Forget about it, let us concentrate on living'. That is why people joke about death, it is their way of trying to escape its ugly reality. But the Bible does not try to escape reality, it faces the facts as they are, and here is the great reality—we are all going to die.

Has God a word to say to us in our situation? Job says He assuredly has: 'In my flesh shall I see God'. The humanist will tell you that this world is everything and beyond the grave there is nothing; when you come to the end your body is thrown into the ground and that is the end of the story. The Bible does not speak in those terms. It speaks not of extinction of being, it speaks of the fact that we shall live on, and it speaks of something much richer than mere survival. The Greeks used to talk about the immortality of the soul, a kind of shadowy survival of the person who lives on beyond the grave. But the Bible has a much richer picture of not simply shadowy survival but the resurrection of the body.

Now of course there is a mystery here, there is something beyond our comprehension. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 deals with the mystery and he uses an illustration in order to bring home something of what he sees in the resurrection. He says that if you take a piece of grain and put it in the ground, apparently it dies, the outward husk decays away, but the germ of life is there, and it is liberated by this apparent dying and it grows and at harvest time there is a golden head of grain. Now there is a continuity between the grain that you

put in the earth and the grain that you see at harvest time, but there is, says Paul, a difference of form. The bare grain, dull and uninteresting, and the golden head at harvest time—different and yet the same. So, says Paul, there is continuity and there is a difference. It will be the same people who shall be in Christ's presence. We shall not be different in that sense. It will be the very same ones whom He came to save, the very same ones whom the Spirit brought to trust Him, the very same ones who by His grace were kept right the way through. We shall see Him personally, but there will be a difference. 'Flesh and blood,' says Paul, 'cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' Flesh and blood, as we know it, is subject to corruption and decay, and so if we are to meet with Him and to enjoy His presence to all eternity, there must be a transformation so tremendous that human language cannot do justice to it and, indeed, in our present condition, our poor minds cannot even begin to grasp the wonder of it. So Paul has his great series of contrasts that we were reading this morning: this corruptible must put on incorruption, there must be the change from weakness to strength, from mortality to immortality.

We have, of course, a pledge, and indeed I believe a very clear picture of something of the greatness of this change when we read the gospel narratives and we hear the account of the appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the same, He was the same Jesus they had known, the Jesus with whom they had broken bread, the Jesus whom they had heard speaking His parables, the Jesus whom they had seen working His miracles, but there was a difference. There was something supernatural, there was something they could not understand. He appeared in that miraculous supernatural fashion and then was removed from them. The same—and yet there was this great transformation. This is what the Christian looks forward to. Not, I say, to a mere shadowy survival, but the resurrection of the body, the glory of that which lies beyond the grave.

That is why the Christian can face the coming of death with calm. That is why when a Christian goes through that bitterest of all experiences, losing someone who is very near and dear to him, he can still in the midst of tears rejoice because he has this confidence that the body laid in the grave is not the end of the story. Change and decay—well, of course, this is the evidence of our mortality, but 'in my flesh shall I see God'. This is the glory of the resurrection. No wonder Paul burst out into such a lyrical strain at the end of 1 Corinthians 15, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus

Christ'. No wonder Paul could say that this will transform the whole of your living; 'therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord'.

'I know that my Redeemer liveth; in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself.' This is the surpassing wonder of it all, that I shall see God. This is the thing for which the people of God have always longed and this is the glory of heaven that we shall see Him, we shall be with Him and we shall know Him as He is. We shall see Him with that sight which is undisturbed by the clouds of sin and unbelief. So often there is a cloud which hides this Saviour from the Christian's eyes. It is not a cloud of the Saviour's making. He delights to manifest Himself to His people, but all too often I fear we are taken up with other things, taken up with the things of this world, taken up with the petty things of time and we fail to see Him as He truly is. There can come mists of doubt, mists of fear and anxiety concerning the future, so many things can come in and we can fail to see Him. When the Lord is working deeply in our hearts, the great thing that characterises such spiritual experiences is the desire to see Him, and indeed there are times when in His great mercy He enables us to see Him with the eye of faith; but all this, even the greatest moments of spiritual exultation, pale into insignificance in comparison with that day. Says Paul, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face'. 'I shall behold Him, I shall see Him.'

This was Job's great confidence. 'I shall see Him,' he says, 'for myself; it will no longer be the testimony of others to which I listen, but I shall see Him for myself.' We have the testimony, it is in this Book, and we rejoice that we have such a testimony. We are not dependent upon some tradition percolating obscurely down the years; we have the word which God has spoken concerning Himself. Here is the apostolic testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ; we can turn here and we can see Him. O but in that day, we will not even need the Book, we will not even need the apostolic testimony, because, with those apostles, we shall be in the presence of the Lord Himself and we shall see Him. It will be no passing glance. Job says, 'I shall see Him, mine eyes shall behold Him'. And this, in the Book of Revelation, is surely the glory of heaven, that we His people shall there, in a bliss which is at the moment beyond our imagining, see our Saviour face to face; we shall behold His glory and we shall delight thus to behold

Him. Worship will not be a formal routine as, alas, it so often is when we gather with God's people on the Lord's Day. It will be 'joy unspeakable and full of glory'; we will see the Lord.

'I know that my Redeemer liveth'—what a personal confession it was. This is not a man who is theorising about death and about eternal matters, and about life after death. This is a man who knows God, and because he knows God he rejoices that he has a living Redeemer. We meet this morning in company with many across the land and across the world and we are singing and we are saying, 'I know that Jesus Christ lives', but I wonder, have we all got this intensely personal emphasis in what we are saying? Can you say—not with your lips, because it is very easy to say things with one's lips, very easy to make a profession with the lips, but can you say from your hearts, I know that *my* Redeemer liveth? He is mine; He has saved me from my sin; He has made me a new man; I know that He is mine! Do you thus know Jesus Christ? Because if not, then great will be your condemnation in that final day. Jesus spoke of those cities where He Himself had preached, where He had made Himself known, He said: 'It will be more tolerable for foul, indescribably foul, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of Judgment than for those who have the gospel and fail to receive that gospel and respond to that Christ'. And I say to you in this congregation, that the day of Judgment—for that is the sort of day it is—it will reveal whether our profession was with our lips or whether it came from our hearts; and greater is the condemnation of those who have heard and failed to receive—'Unto whom much is given, of them shall much be required'. If this morning you are uncertain or unsure, I point you to Jesus Christ, the One who died, the One who rose again. He lives! If only my words could really thrill with the wonder of it. At this point any preacher must feel how inadequate his language is; he just gropes for something that could really bring home the electrifying character of this message. We have a living Saviour, a living Christ; He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. We put out a poor weak groping hand of faith, but when we grip such a Saviour we find that faith becomes strong, in fact we find that we have the very life of God in our souls. I point you to Him.

But so many this morning in this congregation *have* come to Christ, you have trusted Him as your Saviour—tell me, are you really rejoicing? How often we fail to commend the

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# Doctrinal Definitions

PAUL TUCKER

## THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

The Bible plainly teaches that there are heavenly beings, celestial creatures, who occupy an exalted position, who are distinct from humanity and distinct from the Godhead. The angels are mentioned no less than 108 times in the Old Testament and some 165 times in the New Testament. There are rationalists who deny that there is any possibility of angelic creatures existing. See Acts 23 : 8. There are those who would dismiss all teaching of angels in the Bible as a rather primitive element in the minds of those who believed in them long years ago. Even among Bible-loving and Bible-believing Christians there are not many who have very much to say with regard to the angels. There is the tendency to relegate the angels into the area of a subject that is secondary and after all rather unimportant and insignificant. But it seems to me that there is valid ground for giving measured consideration to what the Bible has to tell us concerning the angels. The most precious and powerful realities of our faith belong to the realm of the heavenly and the invisible. We glory in an invisible God. The Saviour to whom we owe everything is at present hidden from us. The Holy Spirit who indwells the believer and abides with the church cannot be seen by mortal vision, and the true church of Jesus Christ which is His body is a divine entity and it cannot be measured in terms of bricks and mortar, it is the mystical body of Jesus Christ. Then again, the inheritance which we seek is incorruptible, undefiled and fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. So that within this invisible and Heavenly economy the angels have a very real place and we cannot ignore the doctrine of angels without limiting our spiritual knowledge and without impoverishing our spiritual experience.

### I. THE REALITY OF THEIR EXISTENCE.

1. *The Testimony of the Old Testament.* (i) The angels appeared to Abram as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day (Gen. 18 : 1-2). One of these three was God in human form, because He is spoken of as Jehovah. The others were angels and in chapter 19 : 1 they are expressly referred to as angels. In the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 13 : 2, we have an allusion to this incident. (ii) Gen. 28 : 12. Jacob at the end of the day came to Luz and lay down to sleep. This was a

vision, but it is referred to in the New Testament. God was teaching this man that communication between earth and heaven is a possibility and angelic ministry is also a reality. (iii) 2 Kings 6 : 15. At Dothan Elisha found he was surrounded by the Syrian host. The prophet's servant was filled with consternation and Elisha prayed that the eyes of the young man would be opened. There were heavenly reinforcements, celestial beings who came to protect the servant of God. This is surely a fulfilment of Psalm 34 : 7, remember Dan. 6.32. These passages prove a divine attestation, a clear testimony to the fact that these beings obviously exist.

2. *The teaching of our Lord.* (i) See John 1 : 50-51. The Lord Jesus Christ is the anti-type of Jacob's ladder. He is the mediator between God and men. He is the One from whom angels ascend and descend, taking our prayers to heaven and bringing back the answers. (ii) See again Matt. 18 : 10. (iii) The Lord Jesus makes it clear that His Second Coming will be associated with angels (Mark 13 : 32), but when that day does come, the angels will know and will accompany Him (see Mark 8 : 38). We must remember that our Lord was not accommodating Himself to any superstition of His day. He never gave anyone an impression which was false, because He is the truth. The Lord Jesus is confirming a divine truth when He speaks of the angels. The testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be relied on in every particular.

3. *The added witness of the Apostles.* Each of them has something to say concerning the angels. (i) Paul, 2 Thess. 1 : 7. (ii) Peter, 1 Peter 3 : 22. (iii) John has a great deal to tell us of the angels in Revelation.

## II. THEIR MINISTRY ON BEHALF OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1. It was the angel Gabriel who announced to Mary the marvellous news that in the providence of God she was to be the mother of the Messiah (see Luke 1).

2. It was an angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that the Child was of the Holy Spirit and that His Name should be called Jesus, 'for He shall save His people from their sins'. The angels have access to the inner consciousness of a man because they are spirit beings.

3. The angels were the first to worship the new-born King (see Heb. 1 : 6).

4. When the devil had ended his temptation, and had left the Lord Jesus for a season, then the angels appeared and ministered unto Him (see Matt 4 : 11).

5. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in that hour of supreme agony, we are told in Luke 22 : 42-44 that there appeared unto



Him an angel strengthening Him. We cannot say how the angel strengthened Him. Maybe angel hands wiped away the blood from the brow of the Son of God. Maybe the angel bowed prostrate before Him and worshipped Him, reminding Him that all heaven was focused upon Him in wonder and in worship and adoration.

6. When we come to our Lord's resurrection, the angels were there. The women asked who shall roll away the stone from the sepulchre, because, according to the authorities, that stone would weigh something like four tons, and had been placed there by strong men and then sealed with the Roman seal. We are told in Matt. 28 : 2 that an angel came from glory and rolled away the stone. He did not roll away the stone in order to let Jesus out, because the Lord Jesus Christ had already risen triumphant, but in order to show and prove to people that Jesus Christ was not there. He was already risen. 'Come and see the place where the Lord lay, He is not here, He is risen.'

7. When our Lord ascended into glory, we read that two men in white apparel appeared to the disciples and asked them 'Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go'. 'And a cloud received Him out of their sight.' There are those who believe that the cloud is not a vapour in the sky but a retinue of heavenly angels, a cloud of angels who escorted Him through the gates saying, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in'.

8. We know that His second coming will be escorted by the angels (2 Thess. 1 : 7-8).

### III. THEIR MINISTRY ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD (Hebrews 1 : 14)

1. They are sent forth to minister to them who shall inherit salvation. The angels are the servants of God's people. We cannot command their service. There is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that we can command their service. They are superior beings, Heavenly intelligences, great in wisdom, great in power, immortal spirits. We cannot command them, but God can give them charge concerning us. And in that sense they minister to the child of God.

2. They have been used to reveal God's purposes to His servants. See Job 33 : 23; Daniel 7 : 16, 10 : 5, 11.

3. And then the angels can deliver from peril and all kinds of evil. See Acts 12 : 7-10. We have a similar case in Daniel in the den of lions. Some might ask, does this sort of thing



happen today? Well, I think, in rare occasions perhaps it does happen today. The angels in our day are generally invisible in their ministry, but their ministry is very real. I am quite sure that God has a purpose in withholding the vision of angels from His people. The great danger would be, if we saw an angel, that we would want to bow down and worship him. We are so given to that sort of thing. See Col. 2 : 18. But they do minister and deliver God's people, perhaps, when they are not aware of it.

4. Then, of course, the angels are able to cheer God's servants in danger. Remember Paul and his shipwreck (Acts 27 : 23-24).

5. Then the angels are eyewitnesses of the church and of the believer and very jealous of the well-being of the work of God on earth. See 1 Tim. 5 : 21. There is a triple charge here. 1 Cor. 4 : 9, 'We are made a spectacle of the world and to angels and to men'. The word 'spectacle' literally is 'theatre'. The very angels are witnessing our ministry, trials, adversities, temptations and testings. This is spoken for our encouragement and strength.

6. And then, of course, the angels take God's own people to a place of joy and blessedness at death (Luke 16 : 12).

*(To be continued)*

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*Continued from page 12*

gospel because of the drabness of our lives and the poverty of what we call our testimony. We should be rejoicing, you and I, if we know this Saviour. We should be going out to men and women with this most glorious message—a message that can meet their needs, a message that can transform fear into hope, can take the sting from death and the grave, and point men to God and to hope. May God grant that you and I who know Him may begin to rejoice and to exult—'I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God'. May the Lord prepare us for the day of His crowning. May the Lord enable us to live to His glory.

# MARTIN LUTHER

*(continued)*

S. M. HOUGHTON

It was ten o'clock on the morning of the 16th April, 1521 when the watchman of the German city of Worms, from the elevation of the cathedral spire, blew his trumpet and announced to all and sundry that distinguished visitors were approaching the city gate. Horsemen to the number of about a hundred who had held themselves in readiness for this long-expected moment rode out to meet them and to make the most of the great occasion. By eleven the cavalcade was cantering through the streets, watched by a vast number of spectators who crowded walls, windows and even trees in order to catch a glimpse of the famed monk of Saxony, Professor of Theology in the University of Wittenberg, who had set the German world, and indeed the whole of Western Europe, aflame.

The papal nuncio Aleander in a recent visit to the city had met with a less rousing reception. In fact he had found difficulty in procuring a lodging, despite his affluence, and had been obliged to content himself with a mean unheated room. To his master in Rome he had reported that the bookshops were keen to display Lutheran writings and pictures, while the mass of the citizens were shouting 'Luther, Luther!' and 'Down with Rome!' And now, on this notable spring morning, he further reported to the Vatican that, as Luther emerged from his carriage, he eyed the assembled crowds with 'demoniac eyes' and announced to them, 'God will be with me'.

In the afternoon of the following day, the Diet before which the reformer was to appear met in an upper room at the palace of the local Bishop, and the Imperial chamberlain and herald duly appeared at the House of the Knights of St. John, where Luther had spent the preceding night, to conduct him to the palace. Public excitement was at fever pitch. Some doubtless wished that before long the city would witness the heretic's fiery death, by which the country and continent would be purged of the pestilential Lutheran teachings. The majority of spectators, however, for a variety of reasons desired the contrary. The herald conducted Luther along various alleys and by-ways in order to escape the crowds, but despite his precautions the journey was not made without difficulty. As at the time of his entry into the city, some even clung precariously to the roofs

of the houses surrounding the palace, or filled the windows with a view to witnessing the scene to better advantage.

When a way through the crowds had been made by the guards Luther passed into the entrance hall, where his supporters welcomed him with words of exhortation and good cheer. 'Be bold,' said one, 'and fear not those who can kill the body but are powerless against the soul.' 'My poor monk, my poor monk,' said another, a warrior of fame, 'thou art on thy way to make such a stand as I and many of my knights have never done in our toughest battles. If thou art sure of the justice of thy cause, then forward in the Name of God, and be of good courage—God will not forsake thee.'

After waiting from four o'clock until six, Luther was at length admitted to the upper room and the Imperial presence. The Emperor Charles V was twenty-one years of age. Around him, in imposing array, were the great ones of Church and State—princes, dukes, landgraves, margraves, counts, bishops, abbots, archbishops, in all two hundred and six persons. Acting as Presiding Officer was Johann von Eck, who addressed the reformer in the following words: 'Martin Luther, his sacred and invincible Majesty, with the advice of the states of the Empire, has summoned you hither, that you may reply to the two questions I am now about to put to you: First, do you acknowledge yourself the author of the writings published in your name, and which are here before me; and second, will you consent to retract certain of the doctrines which are therein taught?' At this point Luther's lawyer (Dr. Schurff) intervened (for the reformer had a lawyer to assist him in a legal way) and requested that the titles of twenty-five works should be read aloud. This done, Luther admitted that all of them were the products of his pen, but to the second question he pleaded that he could not give an immediate reply, lest he err through rashness. He desired, he said, time for quiet meditation so that he might answer in the fear of God and without bringing a reproach upon Holy Scripture. The Emperor accordingly granted a respite of a day.

On the following evening at the same hour Luther again awaited audience of the Diet. Another delay of two hours, while the Diet transacted sundry business and doubtless debated matters ecclesiastical once more, gave Luther opportunity for genial conversation with his friends in the crowded entrance hall until the summons of the herald called him away. A second time Dr. Eck put to him the question as to whether he would defend the books he had written or withdraw them in whole or in part. It was a tremendous moment in history.

J. C. Philpot speaks of it as 'one of the sublimest scenes which earth ever witnessed, and most pregnant with blessing' (*Gospel Standard*, 1867). The occasion is reminiscent of Elijah at Carmel, of the Saviour Himself before the Jewish Sanhedrin, of Paul the apostle before Agrippa and Festus, of Athanasius 'contra mundum' (against the world). In this later day, Christians with historical and doctrinal sympathies can still feel the tensions of the Worms judgment hall. Unhappily, the exact transcript of the reformer's speech is not extant, but the notes which he prepared for his reply are still to be seen in the archives of Weimar. Eloquent is the truth.

At the outset of his reply Luther apologised in advance for any fault of etiquette that might be his in addressing such an august assembly. He reminded all present that, as he had not been reared in a king's court, he was unacquainted with the wide variety of titles, ranks and honours of the company to be addressed, and that he might unwittingly stumble as he gave honour to whom honour was due. This done, and with an absence of the apparent temerity which had marked his demeanour at his first appearance, he proceeded with all boldness to deal with the charges brought against him. His hearers sat with bated breath and straining eyes and ears. The world of men, believing and unbelieving sitting cheek by jowl, was all attention as God's man, frail yet strong, poor yet rich, ignorant yet learned, humble yet bold, was speaking in trumpet tones for his Lord and Master, Maker of Heaven and earth. 'A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He'; and a miner's son, without social standing, was His chosen spokesman.

Luther first remarked that the twenty-five books could not well be dealt with as one whole. Some of the volumes, he said, dealt in a practical way with issues of Christian morality and doubtless even his most outspoken foes would not find it troublesome to assent to their message. Others, however, were treatises in which he attacked the Papacy and such of its works as were in plain opposition to God's truth. Those works, he claimed, had enslaved the souls of his countrymen and many others, and he could not but aim at their utter repudiation and overthrow. A third part of his writings, he proceeded to say, had been written in defence of the Gospel and this necessitated an attack upon the foes of that Gospel. The only hint of regret that Luther gave was that he might have spoken too vehemently against the protagonists of evil doctrine; yet even so, his ardour had not been displayed in his own defence but in defence of the true Gospel of Christ.

The reply was delivered, first in Latin for the benefit of the ecclesiastics, and then in German for the enlightenment of the rest. In summary, it demanded as a sacred right that evidence from the Word of God itself should be brought forward, if possible, against any of the alleged errors of the twenty-five books. 'If,' said Luther, using the words of his Master, 'I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?' 'In the Name of the living God I entreat your sacred Majesty, your illustrious Highnesses, every human creature, to come and depose what they can against me, and with the Prophets and the Gospel in their hands, to convict me, if they can, of error. I stand here, ready, if any one can prove me to have written falsely, to withdraw my errors, and to throw my books into the fire with my own hand. Be assured I have well weighed the dangers, the pains, the strife and hatred that my doctrine will bring into the world; and I rejoice to see the Word of God producing, as its first-fruits, discord and dissension, for such is the lot and destiny of the Divine Word, as our Lord has set forth, saying, "I came not to send peace but a sword".'

This, and much more to the same effect, was Luther's reply to the Diet, made, as one who was present afterwards said, with such bravery and modest candour, that all were astonished. It was something altogether novel for a plea to arise in such a gathering for liberty of speech and the sole supremacy of the Word of God. What the Diet, its few Lutheran members excepted, desired was that Luther, without argument, should recognise the authority of Popes and Church Councils as equal to or even superior to that of the Scriptures, but this the reformer firmly refused to do, for his position depended in its entirety upon the final and sole authority of 'every word that had proceeded out of the mouth of God'. A state of deadlock thus ensued.

As was the case after Paul had concluded his address to Agrippa and Festus, the great ones went aside and 'talked between themselves', but while in the apostle's case the verdict was favourable, and 'nothing worthy of death or of bonds' was found in him, in the case of the German reformer the Diet as a whole desired his overthrow. When the Emperor returned from his consultations, Dr. Eck announced that the Roman Catholic party was not interested in Luther's opinions on Scripture; instead the Emperor demanded a direct answer 'without horns or any evasion', to the second of the questions. Was Luther prepared openly, publicly and unequivocally to recant his errors? A plain 'Yes' or 'No' must be forthcoming.

Turning his piercing black eyes upon his questioner, as one historian reports, Luther replied:

‘Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures or evident reason (for I believe neither in the Pope nor Councils alone, since it has been established that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience has been taken captive by the Word of God; I am neither willing nor able to recant, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen.’

An alternative rendering of the last-quoted words, more usually heard, runs: ‘Here (i.e. on this truth) I take my stand; I can do no other; so help me, God.’

These bold and uncompromising words caused a measure of ‘pandemonium’ in the Diet chamber. Everyone was speaking simultaneously. ‘There was a great noise’ wrote a contemporary. Above the uproar Dr. Eck tried to make himself heard as he warned Luther that his conscience could not be used as a standard of truth, and that general Councils were a much safer guide to truth than the individual conscience. The Emperor for his part showed little patience with Luther’s doctrine and person. Rising from his seat in anger he informed those around him that he had had enough of such talk, and thereupon he went out from the Diet. Luther was escorted back to his lodgings. When he left the hall darkness had fallen upon the city, but the multitudes still thronged the streets, and the feeble and wavering light of numerous torches only seemed to add to the general confusion. Many, giving vent to passion and bitterness, were eagerly making inquiry as to the verdict of the Diet. When the reformer appeared with his escort some who sympathised with him thought that he was being haled to prison and seemed to be prepared to release him by force. When these misunderstandings were dissolved and Luther was moving through the streets, certain Spaniards, servants of the Emperor, followed at his heels, venting raillery and mockery, and imitating the cries of wild beasts in pursuit of their prey.

Despite the general adverse verdict, there is no doubt at all that Luther’s demeanour and firm doctrinal stand had made a deep impression upon many members of the Diet. Some, by the grace of God, were pre-disposed to receive the testimony of Scripture as presented by the reformer. Others, of inferior spiritual calibre, were stirred by the fact that a German had dared to challenge the vaunted supremacy of a proud Italian potentate, and they were not unmoved by Luther’s plea that



Rome enslaved the souls of men. As for the Emperor, he was himself on the horns of a dilemma. He had no wish to alienate the German people, for he required their support in matters political which pertained to his vast Empire. Furthermore he was bound by a Constitution which gave him little true authority within Germany. As for the doctrinal aspect of the affair, he had little knowledge of the Word of God, and to his immediate circle of friends he confessed that he could not see how a solitary monk could be right and the testimony of a thousand years of Christendom be wrong. For himself, the faith of his fathers sufficed. One would like to know what he thought of the words pinned to his own door at this time by a Lutheran, 'Woe unto the land whose king is a child', but history does not record the matter. Suffice it to say that Charles reluctantly agreed that Luther should be allowed three more days in which he could be spoken to privately by Roman theologians and debaters in the hope that, later if not sooner, he might yield his intransigence and return as a dutiful son to Mother Church. Aleander mentions, in his account of the consultations, that Rome's overtures even included the offer of a rich priory and complete protection in a Papal castle. 'What more can we do?' asked the Archbishop of Trier. Luther replied that he could give no better advice than that given by Gamaliel to the Jewish Sanhedrin, 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God'.

The reformer now asked permission to return to his home, and be it said to the praise of the Emperor, the safe-conduct with which he came to Worms was honoured. Many urged Charles to cancel his word of promise and to behave as the Emperor Sigismund had behaved a century earlier in the case of John Hus, reformer of Bohemia. But Charles' grant of a safe return was accompanied by one prohibition, namely, that on his homeward journey he should not **preach, speak,** or 'inflammé' the people through whose lands and cities he passed. Luther gave no such pledge. In his opinion the command was *ultra vires*, and he openly said that he would ignore it. As with the apostles to whom the Sanhedrin gave a similar warning, he ceased not 'to teach and preach Jesus Christ'.

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In the above account, mention has been made of J. C. Philpot, and as some readers may like to know what Philpot says about the advantages which accrued to the Reformation by Luther's slow and gradual progress to correctness of doc-



trine (mentioned in a previous article in this Magazine), the following is quoted from a review in the *Gospel Standard* dated June, 1856:

Several great advantages were secured by the slow and gradual way whereby Luther advanced onward in the path of Reformation.

1. He won his way thereby gradually and slowly in the understanding, conscience, and affections of the people of God, who received the truth from his mouth and pen by the same gradual process as he himself had learned it. Had he at once burst forth into all the full blaze of truth the light would have been too strong for eyes sealed in darkness for ages. But like the sun his light broke gradually upon the eyes of men, and thus they could follow him as he clambered slowly up to the full meridian. Thus he and those whom he taught grew together, and the master was never so much in advance of the pupil as to be out of sight and hearing.

2. Again, by this means, as each corruption of doctrine or practice was laid open to the conscience of the reformer, or as each truth was made sweet and precious to his soul, he spoke and wrote under the influence as then and there felt. As he gathered the manna fresh, so he filled his omer, and that of his neighbours who had gathered less. . . .

3. But further, if Luther had at once come forth with his sweeping denunciations of the Pope as Antichrist, without the minds of men being gradually prepared to receive his testimony, his career, humanly speaking, would have been short, and he would have been cut off at once by the iron hand of the Papacy, and not only his work cut off with him, but his very name now might have been unknown. Charles V, it is well known, regretted to his dying day what he considered the grand error of his life—not violating the safe conduct he had given Luther to come and return uninjured from the Diet of Worms. . . .

# The Epistle to the Romans

## CHAPTERS 12-13

R. N. CASWELL

### Chapter 12

I dislike calling this the 'practical' part of the epistle, as some do, for what could be more practical than being justified before God? (ch. 3). Here Paul works out the great truths of chapters 1-11 in terms of doing the will of God, being humble in the exercise of gifts, and fervent in the living of the Christian life (vv. 1-2). His appeal is based on the mercies of God—the justification, sanctification and future glorification of the sinner. In view of these great things, it is a reasonable thing, he says, to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. Such is our antipathy to the will of God ('the mind of the flesh is hostile to God', 8 : 7) that some great force is needed to move it. Some powerful lever is needed to lift it off its bedrock of rebellion to God. This lever is the love of God in Christ. Only this can do it.

In negative and positive phrases he exhorts us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed away from it to the will of God. This world is under the dominion of Satan, its inhabitants are children of disobedience and follow the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2 : 1-2). A radical transformation of mind (a 'new birth', if you like) is necessary first in order that man may do the will of God. To man in revolt the will of God is odious, to a man in Christ this same will is good, acceptable and perfect. We are acceptable to God and at the same time His will is acceptable to us. Such is the transformation that is wrought by Christ and the Holy Spirit's work in us.

3-8. Paul here exemplifies his own command to be humble by confessing that his command stems from the grace given to him. His apostleship and his acceptance with God are closely linked; both are matters of grace, not works. Our humility will not be of the Uriah Heap variety, self-deprecating. Rather it will be based on a sober estimate of our abilities, and upon the recognition that all our abilities are, strictly speaking, gifts of God. What have we that we have not received?

Our humility is helped, too, by the thought that our gifts are different from those of other Christians. The idea of 'greater' or 'smaller' is avoided in this way. Who is to say

which part of the body is more important than another? We all, as Christians in the body of Christ, depend on each other. We need each other and should, so to speak, 'cash in' on the gifts of others.

Gifts, of course, are meant to be used. Here Paul enumerates half a dozen. Elsewhere, in 1 Corinthians 12 and in Ephesians, he added another ten or so. Attempts have been made to divide these into temporary gifts and permanent gifts, the argument being that some, like healing and tongues, have been extinct since the days of the apostles. The only one in this list that will come in question is prophecy. A whole chapter (1 Cor. 14) is given to showing that prophecy is more useful than tongues, because prophecy is intelligible and edifies the listener. It is preaching, but with a difference; the word or message is not just an exposition of scripture, but a shaft of truth and conviction sent from God Himself. The best preaching has this quality of 'a knock on the door'. This has to be done in faith, not rashly, but in the conviction that we have a word from the Lord.

'Service' here may refer to the practical aspects of Christianity, serving tables, helping widows and orphans, distributing to the necessity of the saints.

'Teaching' is mentioned in all three lists in the Pauline writings. It denotes the explaining of scripture, making the sense plain and the application thereof. 'Exhortation' goes further, for it implies the persuading and encouraging of a congregation to *do* the will of God.

It is interesting to see 'liberality' mentioned as a gift of the Spirit, which some exercise as their particular ministry. 'Giving aid' is to be done with enthusiasm and 'acts of mercy' with cheerfulness. There is no doubt that taking all sixteen or so gifts together, there is scope here for the humblest believer, and, as Paul makes clear, each believer has a gift (1 Cor. 12 : 6, 7).

9-21. Then follows a scintillating collection of Christian qualities which, I think, defy classification. Genuine love and deference to other believers, unflagging enthusiasm and glowing spiritual life; full of joyful hope, constant prayer and practical generosity; non-retaliation to enemies, sympathy with others in their joys and trials, deep humility, generous treatment of foes—who could live out such a catalogue? We are amazed at the range of virtues here described, no doubt a picture of Paul's own wonderful life, or better still, of his matchless Lord.

**Chapter 13**

Since the Jewish leaders tried to catch Jesus out with that trick question about paying taxes to Caesar, it has been a point of Christian behaviour to 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's'. Here Paul is expanding that aphorism of our Lord's. What duties do we owe to governments and magistrates? What is the political duty of the Christian?

For Christians in the first century, under the heel of Rome, this was a difficult problem, as no doubt it is still for Christians in Communist countries. How far should one obey the State? Does there ever come a time when we should resist the government? Is it right to evade, say, paying taxes because these regulations are 'man-made', as some Christians describe them?

The reason for obeying magistrates is that God is pleased to govern the world through them, restraining the lawlessness of a sinful world. The right ordering of government is one of the ways God has of dealing with the present situation. The principle of government is ordained by God and we are to be subject to the higher powers in the land.

To despise the right use of government is to incur the displeasure of God, and, eventually, however it may come, His judgment (2). On the other hand, rulers, magistrates and public servants may learn from these verses that they should exercise government righteously. They are deputed by God to do His service (6). They have the right forcibly to restrain evildoers (4) and to defend law-abiding people.

The reference here, of course, is to power rightly exercised. By this is not meant any reference as to whether the legislation of Labour or Conservative governments happens to please us. But when obedience to power would involve a man in sin, then he should render to God the things that are God's. He would be justified in disobeying the government, for example, if it forbade him to worship, as in the case of Daniel, and in a slightly different situation, of his three friends.

In a democracy, this presumably means that, although we may legitimately take part in political opposition to the governing party—even start a new party if we so desire—we will count it a point of honour to obey the legislation that passes through the Parliament.

In the second paragraph (8-10) we learn that our relationship to our fellow men is to be governed by love. If we love them, we are not likely to sin against them. This is a positive way of putting all the negatives of the decalogue.

# ANANIAS

CYRIL J. BARBER

## THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN

Acts 9 : 10-19.

What is your idea of an ideal Christian life? How do you live this kind of life if you are not a D. L. Moody, a C. H. Spurgeon, a George Muller, an F. B. Meyer, or an A. W. Tozer? Is it possible for you, in this latter half of the twentieth century era, to live a life that triumphs over circumstances, dares to do things for God, and accomplishes the seemingly impossible? How can you live an extraordinary life while following the ordinary routine of daily living?

When you became a Christian you probably expected that the change which had taken place in your life would cause it to run smoothly from then on. You expected a constant victory over every circumstance and never thought you would be subjected to any trouble or distress. Now, perhaps, you have concluded that this kind of life, a life in which a person lives in continuous victory over sin, is read about only in books or listened to at testimony meetings; but in reality it is completely unobtainable. If this is how you feel then you need the message which comes to us from a careful consideration of the life of Ananias. He was an ideal Christian, and a careful study of God's Word will reveal the secrets of his success.

Ananias was an ordinary type of person like you and me. He had no magical formula that would suddenly transport him into a mystical world where everything was divorced from reality and where life would be perfectly happy. Instead, he was able to translate the practical principles of Christianity into the ordinary work-a-day world of a man who put into practice what he believed. Seeing something lived out in practice is far better than being given a lot of theoretical teaching. One writer has expressed it this way:

I'd rather see a sermon  
Than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one would walk with me  
Than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil  
And more willing than the ear;  
Fine counsel is confusing,  
But example's always clear.

The best of all the preachers  
Are men who live their creeds.  
For to see good put in action  
Is what everybody needs.

As we study the life and contribution of Ananias we notice, first of all,

#### THE CHARACTER OF AN IDEAL CHRISTIAN

*The character of an ideal Christian is marked by consistency.* All born again believers recognise this fact. Why then is Christianity plagued with inconsistency? Pastors, Christian educators, and counsellors bear testimony to the constant lament over inconsistency. There are some people who are put off becoming Christians by the bad example of others. Weaker Christians are caused to stumble by the inconsistent lives of their peers. Well-meaning Christians are bothered by their own inconsistency. Some try to excuse their inconsistency by blaming it upon others or upon circumstances. They say, 'I could be a better Christian *if* only I had a better job', or 'I could be a better Christian *if* only my husband didn't drink', or 'I could really live for the Lord *if* only I was like So-and-so'. Employment, friends, financial security, environment, and one's home life are important; but improving these temporal circumstances will not really aid our Christian experience. This does not mean that we should not improve our surroundings and circumstances as the opportunity presents itself; but having all our temporal problems solved will not help us live to the glory of God, it will not solve the problem of inconsistency. We bring glory to Christ by triumphing over our circumstances rather than by having them changed. A change may make a difference in our general happiness, but it will make little or no difference as far as our Christian characters are concerned.

Ananias lived in times which were not conducive to Christianity, for they were times of persecution! The chapter opens, 'Now Saul (Paul), who was still breathing out murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, when he had approached the high priest asked from him letters to Damascus to the synagogue, so that if he found any being of the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem'. These times were far from ideal. They were times when the reality of a person's faith was being tested and when those who were genuine Christians had to pay a heavy price for their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ananias' life was marked by consistency in spite of the difficulties under which he lived.

In considering the life and ministry of an ideal Christian we notice that *consistency begins with discipleship*. Discipleship is not something reserved for the pastor, the elders, or deacons of your church, your Sunday School superintendent, or your teacher. Nor is it something which we are told about in 'Discipleship Classes' before we join the church. Discipleship should characterise each and every Christian and become an integral part of our daily lives. Ananias is not described as the pastor of the church in Damascus, he is not spoken of as an apostle of the Lord, and he was not an evangelist. He was an ordinary man, a businessman, a disciple of the Lord Jesus who was available, willing, and obedient to the Lord. As a result, he was able to live an extraordinary life amid the pressures and frustrations and vicissitudes which were being exerted upon Christians in the early church.

You often hear it said that to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in New Testament times was to be a follower; because a disciple in the New Testament was a learner, one who followed his teacher. A study of the Gospel records reveals that this is an inadequate definition. First of all, in Luke 14 : 26-33 we are told that discipleship involves counting the cost of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Secondly, in Luke 9 : 23 we find that discipleship also involves self-denial: a willingness to say 'No' to one's own desires, ambitions, plans, likes, and dislikes. When these things are put together and applied to Ananias we find that he was one who had counted the cost and was prepared to face up to the command to put the Lord Jesus first in his thoughts, affections, and actions. This kind of dedication enabled him to rise above the storms of persecution which were breaking upon the early church and seeking to envelop it. It made him usable even when the church was harassed by those who opposed 'the Way'.

In addition to the need for true discipleship as the foundation upon which to build Christian character, Paul mentions two other factors about Ananias which are of great importance. Paul describes Ananias as 'a devout man according to the law, being witnessed to by all the Jews' dwelling in Damascus (Acts 22 : 12). Ananias' attitude towards the Lord was marked by piety; he was *devout*, and his conduct amid the commonplace affairs of life was marked by *discretion*.

While discipleship constitutes the foundation upon which we build, discipleship is incomplete without devotion. The life of Ananias shows us that *consistency in the Christian life is maintained by devotion!*



The word translated 'devout' is an interesting one and is used to describe the character of aged Simeon. Luke records that he was 'just and devout, expecting the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him' (Luke 2 : 25). The word is also used of Jews of the dispersion who had been scattered among 'every nation and heaven', but whose zeal for the Lord could be seen in the fact that they loyally adhered to the Law and journeyed to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of the Passover and the feast of Pentecost which followed fifty days later (Acts 2 : 5). Lastly, the God-fearing men who carried Stephen to his burial are described as 'devout', and the immediate context seems to indicate that they did this at great personal risk (Acts 8 : 1-3). From the usage of the word we can begin to formulate an idea of its meaning. Certain elements stand out: piety, a fear of (or reverence for) God which excludes the fear of man, loyalty at the expense of one's self, and an element of love which forms the basis of this relationship between man and God. Ananias may well have exemplified all this in his devotion to the cause of Christ; for he possessed a mingling of reverence and love for God which, when combined, constitute piety of man towards God and a loyalty to the Lord which excluded self-interest and personal preference.

Paul tells us how Ananias attained to this degree of spirituality in his personal experience. Ananias was 'devout according to the Law'. The New Testament had, as yet, not been written; and therefore God's divinely inspired revelation to man was incomplete. Ananias had only the Old Testament and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to guide him. Yet, with the Psalmist he could say, 'Oh, how I love thy Law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies . . . I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. . . . How sweet are thy words to my taste. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way' (Psalms 119 : 91ff). Ananias lived up to the light God had given him; he ordered his life according to the standard of the Old Testament Scriptures and followed the counsel of God's infallible Word. Such devotion to the Lord and such meditation upon and obedience to the Word bore fruit in his relationships with men, for he was well spoken of by *all* the Jews living at Damascus. He walked in wisdom towards those who were outside the church (Col. 4 : 5) and won their respect.

It is possible for a Christian to be dedicated to the Lord and yet fail to please the Lord by his walk. Ananias' life, however,

influenced his walk. The genuineness of his relationship to the Lord was seen in his discretion. The influence of the Word upon his life was seen in the way he conducted and regulated his business life in the midst of a keenly competitive Near-Eastern city. He had a good reputation even among his competitors and among the orthodox Jews who were hostile to the new sect of the Nazarene that had sprung up.

A good reputation takes time to develop, and it is only developed through consistency! There can be no breach of promise, no exaggeration, no conniving or misrepresentation of any sort. We do not know what business pursuit Ananias followed; but to enjoy a good reputation among *all* Jews in Damascus he must have been transparently honest, a man of integrity, whose religious convictions were seen in what he did, not merely by what he said.

There are some people whose walk with the Lord is so close that they are an inspiration to all who meet them. One lady was particularly known for her saintliness; she was Sarah Edwards, the wife of Jonathan Edwards. After visiting Northampton, where Jonathan Edwards was pastor, George Whitefield wrote: 'Mrs. Edwards is adorned with a meek and quiet spirit; she talked solidly of the things of God and seemed to be such a helpmeet for her husband . . .' Was life easy for Mrs. Edwards? Not at all! She reared her children, kept house, stood solidly with her husband when he was ousted from his pastorate for his beliefs, and contented herself with a meagre income when he assumed charge of a church in Stockbridge and ministered to the Indians in Massachusetts. In all the difficulties which faced her as a wife, mother and helpmeet her consistency remained constant; she never deviated from the path of duty; and, in spite of all the pressures brought to bear upon her, her dedication and devotion to the Lord were apparent to all.

The character of an ideal Christian is marked by consistency. It begins with discipleship, is continued through the development of a devout spirit, and is evidenced by our discretion.

The second feature we notice in the example before us is

#### THE DISPOSITION OF AN IDEAL CHRISTIAN

*The disposition of an ideal Christian is marked by obedience.* Bishop Westcott has remarked that 'a Christian is one that throws himself with absolute confidence upon the living Lord'. This is worth noting for it is exactly what Ananias did, and his obedience was implicit. The Lord appeared to him and said, 'Rise up and go to the street called

Straight and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying' (vv. 10-12). How often have we been in a similar situation? The Lord has told us to speak to someone about Him, and we have demurely backed off and questioned whether or not it is fitting or expedient to speak to the individual now. By doing so we have been disobedient and rebellious, resisted the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and hindered the work of the Lord. It was disobedience which cost King Saul his kingdom (I Sam. 15 : 15, 22-23). Disobedience caused Israel to forfeit God's blessings in the land (Deut. 4 : 24-27), and it led to their exile in Babylon. It is disobedience in the lives of Christians today that robs them of the blessing that the Lord has for them. Through disobedience prayers go unanswered, failure dogs the footsteps of the child of God, and opportunities for service are lost. God spoke to Ananias because he was available, willing, and obedient.

Ananias had good grounds upon which to question the commission the Lord had given him. It is right to be cautious (Luke 14 : 28-32), but it is wrong to be disobedient! 'Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he did to your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name"' (vv. 13-14).

To this honest inquiry the Lord gave a perfectly satisfactory answer, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel (instrument) of Mine . . .' (v. 15). Upon hearing this Ananias went. He was obedient. He did not convene with the elders of the church to ask their advice, nor did he take someone with him for moral support. He went to the 'street called Straight and inquired at the house of Judas for a man . . . named Saul'. Obedience is the portal to the pathway of blessing!

#### THE SERVICE OF AN IDEAL CHRISTIAN

The 'street which is called Straight' may still be seen in Damascus, although it is much narrower now than in New Testament times. In the time of Ananias it was the principal thoroughfare linking the eastern and western gates and was divided into three avenues by Corinthian columns. Two avenues were for traffic going in either easterly or westerly directions, and the central avenue was reserved for pedestrians.

Finding the home of Judas (probably an influential Jew of Damascus whose home was open to official delegates from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem), Ananias asked for Saul (Paul). He then 'entered the house, and after laying his hand on him said,

"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road . . . has sent me so that you might regain your sight".

In his contact with Paul, Ananias gives us an accurate picture of the service of an ideal Christian. *His service is marked by identification* with the one to whom he ministered, *humility* in going about his appointed task, and *love* (the sincere desire for the highest good in the one ministered to). When he entered the house and was shown the room where Paul was praying he laid his hands on him. In the New Testament the laying on of hands was a sign of *identification*. When a person is set apart by a church for a specific task, the leaders of the church lay their hands on them to signify their oneness with them in the work to which they have been called (cf. Acts 13 : 3-4). The fact that Ananias laid his hands on Paul does not mean that he ordained him but rather that he fully identified himself with Paul. It was a sign of oneness and unity in the Lord. The former persecutor of the church was being welcomed into the fellowship of the church.

In this there is a lesson for all of us. We will have meagre results from our work for the Lord unless we are able to identify with those to whom we minister. A seminary graduate, for example, will accomplish very little among the farming community to which he ministers unless he can identify with them and their problems. There is a need for a warm-hearted, down-to-earth rapport to be established between the servant of the Lord and those whom he seeks to serve. For this oneness of spirit to be achieved the servant of God must get down to where people live and understand their problems before he can appropriately apply the remedy of the Word of God to their particular needs. Ananias, in his service, was fully identified with Paul.

Not only did Ananias identify with Paul in his situation, he also manifested a spirit of genuine *humility*. When he was shown into the room where Paul was he did not obtrude himself by saying, 'Saul, I am Ananias and I represent Christians here in Damascus'. He simply said: 'Jesus has sent me'. This is the true nature of Christian service. It is not our ability to impress people that will affect a change in their lives, but rather, who He is. Like John the Baptist we must constantly be emphasising His greatness, superior position, and importance to the exclusion of ourselves (John 3 : 30). The Master should never be obscured by the servant. When we recognise Whose we are and Whom we serve and fix our eyes upon Him—not ourselves or the work we are doing—we will have the same characteristic of humility that Ananias had.

While identification with those to whom we minister is imperative, and while humility is vitally important, these elements without the third ingredient will meet with little success. Ananias manifested a spirit of true Christian *love*. He addressed Paul as: 'Brother Saul . . .' He wasn't told to say that; those words were not in the original commission, but they manifest a disposition of heart which is absolutely essential. Without a genuine concern for those whom we seek to help, our most hallowed contacts with others will be marred by self-seeking and pride. If, on the other hand, we have this characteristic of sincere, untarnished love—a characteristic so ably portrayed by Ananias—we will have a quality of heart and mind that will be persuasive and influential as we try to win the confidence of those whose blessing we seek.

This man's example of true Christian service, embodying identification, humility, and desire for the greatest good in others, should serve to illustrate how we should think and act as we go about our service for the Lord. As a result of Ananias' actions, Paul, the persecutor of the early church, was welcomed into the Christian community at Damascus.

From the record of Ananias we learn many important lessons. Above all we see what God can do through an ordinary person who lived an extraordinary life in the midst of uncongenial circumstances. Ananias was *consistent* in his walk because he had counted the cost of life-long discipleship; he had developed a devout and reverent spirit through his meditation upon the Word of God; he had allowed the effect of his submission to the Scriptures to bear fruit in his life, and this was seen in his relationship with others. Ananias' example of *obedience* to the revealed will of God should serve to motivate us when the Lord tells us to do something for Him. He was available when God summoned him, and he was usable because he trusted God implicitly even when his own reason would lead him to be cautious. Lastly, the secret of true *service* is to be found in a oneness with those to whom we minister, a humility in which self is effaced; Christ is given His rightful place. A sincere love for those whom we seek to influence for the Lord becomes evident.

Consistency, obedience, and service make up an ideal Christian. None of them are beyond the reach of each one of us to whom God has given His Spirit. Do we want to be more effective in our Christian lives? Let us learn from Ananias! Do we want to be used of the Lord? Let us follow the example before us. Do we want to live an extraordinary life in the midst of the very ordinary circumstances which sur-

round us? It is possible; it can be done; it all begins with our dedication to the Lord.

On one occasion the late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman asked General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, the secret of his success as a Christian. After hesitating a few moments the saintly General replied, 'I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me to have. There have been men with greater opportunities, greater talents, and greater abilities; but I made up my mind that God would have all there was of William Booth'. On that day, said Dr. Chapman, I learned the efficacy of a man's service can be measured by his surrender to the will of God.

One night two men spent a considerable amount of time in prayer. One of the men, Henry Varley, remarked to the other man, 'The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him'. The words penetrated deeply into the soul of his friend, and from the depths of his being D. L. Moody determined that by God's grace he was going to be that man. All the success which attended Moody's meetings from that time onwards can be attributed to this act of complete dedication.

George Muller was once asked how it was that God used him in such a remarkable way. In replying to the question George Muller said, 'There was a day when I DIED, utterly died—died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval, or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends. Since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God'.

We do not have to be influential in the work of the church or occupy important positions in our place of business before God can use us. God used the little slave girl from Israel to bring His word to Naaman the Syrian. God used Ananias to bring His message to Paul. He can take the little we have and use it for His glory.

Shamagar had an ox goad,

Rahab had a string,

Gideon had a trumpet,

David had a sling,

Samson had a jawbone,

Moses had a rod,

Dorcas had a needle—

All were used of God!

God used these people because they were yielded, willing, and obedient.



# English Puritanism

PETER TOON

## Part III. Puritanism crosses the Ocean, 1630-1640

In 1629 Thomas Hooker, the silenced lecturer at Chelmsford, said these words in his farewell sermon. 'God is going, his glory is departing, England has seen her best days, and now evil days are befalling us; God is packing up His Gospel because nobody will buy His wares, nor come to His price. Oh, lay hands upon God and let Him not go out of your coasts; He is going, stop Him, and let not your God depart.' Hooker may be pardoned for his exaggeration, for it was he who was departing for New England; the Gospel would both remain in Old England and be taken to New England.

In 1620 a group of English Christians living in Leyden had had thoughts like Hooker's. We know the members of this separatist group as the Pilgrim Fathers. Earlier we noted that a separatist church left Scrooby in 1608 to seek religious freedom in Holland. Led by John Robinson, they settled in Leyden where for ten years they enjoyed excellent Christian fellowship as they met for worship in a house called Groene Port (the House of the Green Door). Yet the possibility of war coming to Holland, the fear that their children would adopt Dutch customs, and a desire to plant a Christian civilisation and a Gospel church in a new land led them to investigate the possibility of settlement in South or North America.

Virginia was chosen, but by the time that they were ready to sail only a small part of the Leyden church desired to go. There had been so many delays that most members had lost interest. So only one third of the passengers who sailed on the *Mayflower* from Plymouth on September 6th, 1620, were Pilgrims. The rest were going primarily in search of a better life. After meeting some bad weather the *Mayflower* anchored off Cape Cod, near a place which sailors from Plymouth had previously called New Plymouth. Here the Plymouth Plantation began and the first congregationally-governed church was formed on American soil. The settlement should have been made to the south of this area in the large colony of Virginia, but, as events transpired, it was perhaps providential that the Pilgrims settled in New England, to which thousands of English Puritans were to come in the 1630's. For, as we shall see, the pilgrim church of New Plymouth may have had some



influence in the development of a Congregational church order in the colony of Massachusetts from 1629.

(a) ORIGINS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY.

In 1621, John White, rector of Trinity Church, Dorchester, began to take a special interest in the welfare of the men who sailed from his and nearby parishes to fish in the Western Atlantic or trade with the Red Indians of North America. With others he formed a stock company, the Dorchester Adventurers. Its purpose was to found a settlement for sailors on the coast of New England where they could rest or trade under the supervision of a godly preacher. The plantation at Cape Ann in 1622 ended in failure and it seemed as if White's plans would never be realised. But he was a man with a vision and by 1627 he was planning greater things for his plantation. It could become a refuge for Puritans.

Hearing of his ideas, several rich gentlemen from London and East Anglia expressed great interest. Sir John Young, Sir Henry Roswell, Thomas Southcote, Simon Whitcomb, John Endicott and John Humphrey obtained an enlarged grant of land from the Council of New England. With White they told the king and the Council that they would form a settlement and take the Gospel of Christ to the ignorant savages. With John Endicott in charge, the group's first expedition sailed in 1628 and at Naumkeag its members joined those who had previously left England under the sponsorship of John White. Thus the new colony now numbered about sixty persons.

By 1629 the enlarged company had received a charter of incorporation. John Endicott was named head of the settlement but the executive power remained in London with the patentees. This state of affairs would have been entirely satisfactory in normal times but in 1629 it was hazardous. The charter could be recalled at any time and, with King Charles' support of Laudian policies, this seemed most probable since the company was made up of Puritans. Therefore, the charter and governor of the corporation had to be transferred to New England so that the settlement and the corporation could become as one. Those members of the London board who were not able to migrate resigned, John Winthrop was elected governor, and a large expedition was planned to sail for New England in the Spring of 1630.

The preacher who addressed this expedition (which was the most considerable body of colonists both in quality and quantity ever to leave England) at Southampton as it prepared to sail was John Cotton, the nonconformist minister of Boston, Lincolnshire. He took for his text 2 Samuel 7 : 10: 'Moreover

I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more'. He supplied three negative grounds for colonisation. They would avoid the contamination of widespread sin, the incurrence of financial debt and religious persecution. Positively, they would gain new knowledge, earn their daily bread in a better way, use their talents more effectively, and enjoy liberty of ordinances. With regard to the Church of England he counselled that they 'forget not the wombe that bare' them 'and the breast that gave' them suck. England contained the 'Jerusalem at home' which they should never forget. Of the Indians, he urged them not to offend them but to enter into an exchange; 'as you partake in their land, so make them partakers of your precious faith; as you reap their temporals, so feed them with your spirituals'.

On the voyage, aboard the *Arbella*, the new governor also delivered a sermon. He warned of possible dangers and of God's wrath and then said:

Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck [of faith], and to provide for prosperity is to follow the counsel of Micah—to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end we must be knit together in this work in the bond of peace . . . We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, 'the Lord make it like that of New England'. For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world . . . Therefore let us choose life, that we and our seede may live by obeying His voice and cleaving to Him, for He is our life and our prosperity.

He prayed that God would ever be their guide and ruler.

Before the *Arbella* and the other ships arrived in America, church reform had proceeded at a considerable pace. When Governor Winthrop landed in 1630 at Naumkeag (Salem) he had to profess himself a sincere believer and subscribe to a church covenant before he could become a member or partake of the Holy Supper. On first sight at least, the parish church of New England was very different to its counterpart in old England.

The birth of Congregationalism in Salem and then through-

out Massachusetts resulted from three basic influences—old Non-Separatist Congregationalism, frontier isolation, and the example of the church of New Plymouth. Those who came to settle in Salem in the late 1620's were nonconformists who were influenced by the writings of such men as William Bradshaw and William Ames; they believed in the sovereignty, under Christ, of the local parish church. In the wilderness of North America, they could experiment without fear of persecution; they could worship God in the way their Bibles and consciences dictated. Their only neighbours (apart from Indians) were committed to a form of Congregationalism, and necessity brought an officer of the Plymouth church to visit them. Samuel Fuller, a deacon and a physician, came to help deal with an infectious fever in the Spring of 1629. After his departure, Governor Endicott wrote to Governor Bradford in Plymouth affirming that 'God's people are all marked with one and the same mark, and sealed with one and the same seal . . . and guided by one and the same spirit of truth'. He went on to say, 'I acknowledge myself much bound to you for your kind love and care in sending Mr. Fuller among us, and rejoice much that I am, by him, satisfied touching our judgments of the outward form of God's worship'. Mr. Fuller had obviously talked about other matters than medicine during his visit. In fact Non-Separating Congregationalism and Separatist Congregationalism, though theoretically different, developed in much the same way in a land where there was no church and where new churches had to be planted. The two attitudes towards church polity were, in New England, differences of profession rather than practice.

The essential features of the Salem church polity were as follows. It was a reformed congregational church and refused communion to anyone who did not belong to such a church; it admitted to membership only those who showed that they were regenerate; it was united by a covenant which all the members signed; it chose and ordained its own officers—pastor, teacher, ruling elder and deacon, and it claimed to be subject only to Christ Jesus. By 1633 there were seven such churches in Massachusetts. In that same year there arrived in New England the man who was to be recognised as its greatest theologian and who was first to use the term 'Congregationalism'. John Cotton sailed into Boston Harbour on the 4th September. With him was his wife and their baby who had been born at sea. He was elected as the teacher of the Boston church; and so, though he had travelled some three thousand miles, the name of his church and town remained the same.

So a Puritan Church which was to some extent a state was founded in Massachusetts Colony. Yet not all English Puritans approved of it, for it was founded on Congregational principles; presbyterians were not welcome unless they were willing to change their ways. There was no religious toleration; the ministers found a blueprint of church government in Scripture and that was Congregationalism; thus nothing else was permitted by law. Massachusetts was a theocracy. Modern scholarship has effectively discounted the notion that the American Puritans were early democrats who farsightedly sowed the love of liberty that came to flower at the American Revolution. As Cotton put it, 'I do not conceive that ever God did ordain democracy as a fit government either for church or commonwealth'.

Perhaps the whole key to the early Separatist and Puritan migrations to America is their belief in the Christian magistrate. In order that they could continue to see in magistracy the ordinance of God, they had to forsake those who did not live up to the part and escape to a land where they could choose for themselves men that would act as Christian magistrates. The principle that the magistrate was the ordinance of God was fundamental to their understanding of human society and at all costs this principle had to be preserved. So, though a desire to convert the Indians is often mentioned, the great migration of the 1630's, when ten thousand or more sailed over the Atlantic to Massachusetts, is to be seen as essentially a courageous act of self-preservation by one part of the English Puritan movement.

#### (b) ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

Along with other Puritans, the Congregationalists had identified themselves with the Parliament in opposition to certain royal policies in the Church. Therefore, the dissolution of Parliament in 1629 was a severe blow to all who opposed High Church policies. By 1628 the king, Charles I, was firmly committed to William Laud and the High Church party. In 1628 Laud became a Privy Councillor and in 1629 he was promoted to the bishopric of London. Thus he effectively controlled the Church for several years before he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Charles shared his views on doctrine and ritual and allowed him to proceed with a religious policy that eventually led the nation into civil war. Unhappily, unlike his father, James I, Charles never really understood that people with different religious views to his own could be as sincere as himself.

Laud believed that religious unity had to be based on uniformity of practice. As he said at his trial:

Ever since I came in place, I laboured nothing more than that the external worship of God, too much slighted in most parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be; being still of opinion that unity cannot continue in a Church where uniformity is shut out at the church door.

To establish this unity he did not only rely on his bishops since some of them were worldly and irresponsible. In 1634 he revived the custom of an archiepiscopal visitation of every diocese in his province. Throughout England (for Archbishop Neile of York followed Laud's lead) enquiries were made about the conduct of worship and the state of the clergy. Those who did not wear clerical vestments or use the Prayer Book were suspended; those churches where people used the facilities for such activities as cock-fighting and pigeon-shooting were ordered to be cleaned up, and those local magistrates who openly favoured Puritanism were referred to the Court of High Commission.

One of the Archbishop's most controversial orders was that which set aside the Elizabethan compromise and ordered the communion table, designated the altar, to be moved to the east end of the chancel and protected by rails, 'one yard in height and so thick with pillars that dogs may not get in'. Some saw this as popery, others as illegal, but for Laud it was part of his attempt to establish the beauty of worship in the nation. He wanted reverent, liturgical worship in clean churches.

In the execution of his policy, Laud made full use of both the Court of High Commission and Star Chamber. Even the rich were hauled before the former if they were known to be immoral and in the latter (which he once boasted was his pulpit) men who opposed his policies were subjected to such indignities as having their ears cut off. His zeal and the severity of the Courts was a mistake, for it caused public opinion to turn against him; also he was blamed for everything that was wrong in the land. Actually, it was the Queen who was responsible for the favour shown to Catholics by the Court, but Laud was blamed for this.

While Puritans opposed him because they saw him as an agent of international Roman Catholicism, lawyers resented his exaltation of the ecclesiastical courts, and nobility and gentry smarted under his conduct of cases in Star Chamber and High Commission. Anticlericalism was naturally revived,

especially in London, where Laud had tried to increase the yield from tithes.

Then the attempt to establish and enforce religious uniformity between Scotland and England was disastrous. The imposition of the Canons in 1635 and the Liturgy in 1637 by the King, without the consent of the Scottish leaders, led to great troubles. The tumult in St. Giles' Cathedral, the drawing up and signing of the National Covenant, the Glasgow General Assembly of the Scottish Church, and the two Bishops' Wars were the unfortunate chain of events caused by the misguided policy of Charles and Laud.

In England, apart from the political repercussions of his policy, the only effect of his trying to eliminate Puritanism was to provoke the more determined preachers to a bolder stand and extremists to more active agitation in the press and among the underground sects. Most Puritan ministers stayed in their parishes but, apart from those who went to America, there was a small but influential group (including Thomas Goodwin and Jeremiah Burroughs) which sought refuge in Holland. All waited for better days and continued to find comfort in their reading of Scripture which assured them of the coming triumph of the Biblical, Protestant religion.

#### (c) LEADING OPPONENTS OF LAUDIANISM.

An extremist High Church policy had the effect of producing an extremist reaction. Alexander Leighton, a dedicated Scottish presbyterian, attacked the bishops in 1628 in his *An Appeal to the Parliament, or Sions Plea against the Prelacie*. William Prynne, a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, made a virulent onslaught against stage-plays, may-games, dancing and pictures in church (all of which the prelates had encouraged) in his *Histriomastix* (1632). Then in other pamphlets—*Newes from Ipswich* (1636), for example—he attacked the bishops for their worldliness and suppression of evangelical truth. Henry Burton, a London preacher, published two sermons which he had preached on Guy Fawkes Day, 1636, even though he knew their contents would bring him much trouble. They were printed in a booklet entitled, *For God and the King*, and they described Laud's policies as papistical innovations. John Bastwick, a physician, also identified the prelacy with the papacy in several Latin treatises.

Leighton was fined, pilloried and lashed; his ears were cut off, his nose slit, and his cheeks branded. Prynne, Burton and Bastwick were fined, pilloried and had their ears cut off. The mood of London was such that instead of being regarded as criminals they were regarded by most people as heroes. And



the longer they were kept in prison the more friends they gained. So by 1640 Laud was probably the most unpopular man in England. Puritans in the 1640's looked back in horror at his policies in the 1630's. John Owen, for example, who left Oxford University in 1637 because he could not partake of the ceremonialism imposed by Laud on the Colleges, had the following to say in 1646:

Such were the innovations of the late hierarchists. In worship, their paintings, crossings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, altars, tapers, wafers, organs, anthems, litany, rails, images, copes, vestments—what were they but Roman varnish, an Italian dress for our devotion, to draw on conformity with that enemy of our Lord Jesus? In doctrine, the divinity of Episcopacy, auricular confession, free-will, predestination on faith, yea, works foreseen, 'limbus patrum', justification by works, falling from grace, authority of a church . . . canonical obedience, holiness of churches, and the like innumerable—what were they but helps to Santa Clara, to make all our articles of religion speak good Roman Catholic? How did their old father of Rome refresh his spirit to see such chariots as those provided to bring England again unto him.

Discretion and censorship prevented most Puritans from saying things like this in print before 1640. Prynne and his friends were bold, daring spirits.

After eleven years without a Parliament, Charles was forced to call one in 1640 in order to raise money to make war upon the Scots, who were resisting his religious policy for the nation. This Parliament, usually called 'The Short Parliament', was in a somewhat rebellious mood. John Pym assumed the leadership of those, and they were the majority, who were against the religious policies of the king and his archbishop. The king decided to dissolve it and try again to defeat the Scots. But his forces were defeated in the Second Bishops' War and he had no alternative but to call another Parliament, which was summoned in November, 1640, and which has become known as 'The Long Parliament'.

By the time this Parliament met there was violent feeling against bishops and archbishops. One famous petition, signed by 'many of His majesty's subjects in and about the City of London and several counties of the kingdom' (the Root and Branch Petition) called for the abolition of prelacy. As its sentiments were shared by most members of Parliament it will be well to quote its opening paragraphs:

That whereas the government of archbishops, bishops, deans and archdeacons, &c., with their courts and ministra-



tions in them, have proved prejudicial and very dangerous both to the Church and Commonwealth, they themselves having formerly held that they have their jurisdiction or authority of human authority, till of these later times, being further pressed about the unlawfulness, that they have claimed their calling immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, which is against the laws of this kingdom, and derogatory to His majesty and his state royal. And whereas the said government is found by woeful experience to be a main cause and occasion of many foul evils, pressures and grievances of a very high nature unto His Majesty's subjects in their own consciences, liberties and estates, as in a schedule of particulars hereunto annexed may in part appear:

We therefore most humbly pray, and beseech this honourable assembly [the Long Parliament], the premises considered, that the said government, with all its dependencies, roots and branches, may be abolished, and all laws in their behalf made void, and the government according to God's Word may be rightly placed among us: and we your humble suppliants, as in duty we are bound, will daily pray for His Majesty's long and happy reign over us, and for the prosperous success of this high and honourable Court of Parliament.

The petition goes on to show what were the 'manifold evils, pressures, and grievances caused, practised and occasioned by the prelates and their dependents'.

Puritan ministers and laymen, lawyers and parliamentarians, were agreed that there must be reform in the Church, and reform 'according to God's Word'. But a major problem of the 1640's was to be what God's Word exactly taught. Some preachers still favoured a reformed episcopacy, others a form of presbyterianism, and yet others (who returned to England from exile in Holland or New England) favoured Congregationalism. Then there were the sectarian separatists with their 'mechanick preachers' and their belief that the inspiration of the Spirit was all that a true Gospel preacher required; under the peculiar conditions of the 1630's such groups had prospered amongst the London apprentices and workpeople. However, the relief felt in late 1640 led men to optimism, not pessimism, and the possible problems of the future were little anticipated.

[Suggested reading: Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* and H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud*.]

# SATISFIED

*'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness;  
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness'*

(Psalm 17 : 15).

J.B. ROWELL

A satisfied Saviour and a satisfied saint shall meet at last in the realms of Glory. Every believer, every redeemed child of God shall one day be satisfied, completely satisfied in Christ, and in the fulness of His redemption. This assurance is not to be relegated to the future, or postponed until we get to heaven, since in this present life every child of God has a sufficiency of scriptural authority for a restful faith in the finished work of Christ, which confidence in Christ can be a present, living, bright reality.

We have considered in an earlier article the words concerning our Saviour, 'He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied'; and now we shall reflect on the words 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness' (Isaiah 53 : 11 and Psalm 17 : 15).

## PERSONAL ANTICIPATIONS

The Psalmist rejoicingly affirmed five anticipations as the ground for present exultation. (1) It is a personal anticipation expressed in the words 'As for me'. Spiritual expectations based on spiritual truths must be personal if they are to be of spiritual value in the present experiences of life. (2) The certainty of being face to face with Christ is pledged in the assurance 'I will behold Thy face'. (3) In the very glory of heaven, beholding Christ with no veil between—'In righteousness will I behold Thy face'.

'Face to face with Christ, my Saviour,

Face to face—what will it be?

When with rapture I behold Him,

Jesus Christ who died for me.'

(4) The believer's goal and glory in Christ—'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness'; and finally, the believer's rapturous experience in the realms of glory throughout the countless ages of eternity—'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness'.

## GOD'S PURPOSE FROM ALL ETERNITY

Running through life's ever-changing circumstances is the pre-determinate will of God. 'And we know that all things

work together for good . . . according to His purpose . . . to be conformed to the image of His Son' (Romans 8 : 28, 29). Thus, from all eternity, it was God's predetermined will, planned beforehand, that believers should be conformed into the very image, the spiritual likeness of His Son. We see the transient incident, God sees the intended, the purposed likeness. Thus all God's will, God's perfect plan, by many seemingly contradictory experiences, is being fulfilled in our lives, filling our hearts with the conviction, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness'.

#### LIKENESS TO CHRIST INCREASING UNTO FULL CONSUMMATION

A very remarkable Scripture is 2 Corinthians 3 : 18, 'But we all'—referring to all believers—'with open face'—or unveiled face, with nothing between—'beholding as in a glass'—that is, reflecting as in a mirror—'the glory of the Lord, are changed'—being changed, transformed, or, being transfigured—'into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'.

The present tense emphasises the believer's responsibility regarding being transformed into the very image or likeness of Christ; and that is to keep on reflecting the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, with nothing between to obscure the vision, no unconfessed sin between. Where there is sin or self between, the glory of the Lord will not be seen, and consequently cannot be reflected. The hymnwriter expresses this thought:

'The veil of sense hangs dark between  
His blessed face and mine.'

However, where there is a present tense reflecting the glory of the Lord, and showing forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2 : 9), there will be a present tense of being transformed into the likeness of Christ. All this is really living in anticipation of that glorious moment, 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness'.

#### OUR BODY OF HUMILIATION LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIFIED BODY

A glorified body for a heavenly citizenship is the biblical teaching in Philippians 3 : 20, 21. Only in this place in the New Testament is the word for citizenship found. *Politeuma*, meaning citizenship, or commonwealth, is applied to believers who have been born again, born into the kingdom of God, and who constitute a new race of people, citizens of a heavenly

kingdom. Hence the Scripture affirms 'For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ'.

Astonishing and most reassuring truth is revealed in the following passage. Not as in the Authorised Version, 'Who shall change our vile body', but, rather, as in the original, 'Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned anew like the body of His glory, or like unto His glorious body'. In this lies the assurance of the declaration, 'As for me . . . I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness'.

#### PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE TO SHARE IN THE DIVINE GLORY

'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust' (2 Peter 1 : 4).

#### THE CERTAINTY THAT WE SHALL BE LIKE OUR LORD

'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is' (1 John 3 : 1-3).

These Scriptures clearly present the Christian's present life in the enjoyment of a Saviour's love, and his future when he shall be eternally satisfied in Christ. 'As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness' (Psalm 17 : 15).

*Let dissolution come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it will be but a passage out of a prison into a palace; out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies into an innumerable company of true, loving and faithful friends; out of shame, reproach and contempt, into exceeding great and eternal glory.*—JOHN BUNYAN.

#### THE TEARS OF THE LORD JESUS

*When our Lord wept over Jerusalem that was a great outlet of His glory. There was much that was human in it. The feet were human that stood upon Mount Olivet. The eyes were human eyes that looked down on the dazzling city. The tears were human tears that fell upon the ground. But, oh, there was the tenderness of God bearing that mantle. Behold your God! He that has seen Christ has seen the Father. This is God manifest in flesh. See here the heart of the Father and the Son laid bare!*—R. MURRAY MCCHEYNE.

Lastly, from 11-14, we see that all these duties are enforced by the thought of the nearness of the day of the Lord. The world will come to an end. Our final salvation is nearer than it was (11). Eternal day will follow the night of pilgrimage and trial. So we should cast off the works of darkness (12) of which three are mentioned: 1, drunkenness; 2, debauchery; 3, strife (13). On the positive side, we are exhorted to put on the armour of light—a phrase meaning those good qualities which will help us to fight against evil and resist temptation. Verse 14 refers to putting on Christ (like Eph. 4 : 24—putting on the new man), that is, holiness as an adornment, instead of the filthy garments of sin. And finally, as well as resisting temptation, we are to avoid it by making no provision for the flesh. Jesus said this when He spoke of cutting off the hand and the foot and plucking out the eye (Matt. 5 : 29-30). There is little hope of winning the victory if we constantly entertain the enemy!

(To be continued)

## THE GOOD, GREAT, AND CHIEF SHEPHERD

*As the good Shepherd, the blessed Lord died for His sheep. 'I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep . . . I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand' (John 10).*

*As the great Shepherd He rises from the dead to watch over with tender care, and to fold in His everlasting embrace, the flock for which He died. 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' (Hebrews 13).*

*As the chief Shepherd He will gather around Himself all His under shepherds, and place upon their heads a crown of glory as the answer of His love for their care of His sheep and lambs. 'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' (1 Peter 5).*

—ROBERT MURRAY MCCHEYNE.