

# 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***

Gardening is not only a skilled occupation but also a well-planned one! Take those lovely flowers blooming in all their beauty in the summer garden, delighting both with their colour and their perfume. There have been much work, much skill, and careful planning well beforehand! It is no wonder Paul can use the gardening analogy to illustrate the work of the minister of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 3.

Winter-time in a greenhouse is not a time of inactivity, but of preparation for the coming season. The tender shoots appearing in the seed boxes would quickly wither and die in the biting cold of a winter day. But in the warmth and light of the greenhouse they develop. So God nourishes the first signs of life in the soul of the newly regenerate. Satan would gladly destroy it, and will summon to his assistance his usual instruments. He will bring the chill of doubt, the sharp biting frost of fear, the harsh gale of persecution. But God is gracious. Having begun a good work, He will perform it! The warmth of His love embraces His own. The shelter of His power surrounds them. The light of His presence guides them. 'I give unto them eternal life,' He says, 'and they shall never perish.'

But a plant in the greenhouse is not designed to remain there. Sooner or later it must face the rigours of the outside world. But the good gardener is not so foolish as to act with undue haste. He does not transfer the seedlings at once to the flower bed, but to the cold frame. Ask him why and he will tell you it is to harden them out ready for transplanting.

So God continues to work with the believer. He uses the cold frame of discipline. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' He deals with us with an apparent sternness, but it is really with purposeful love. Were the seedling capable of human response it might protest at the change from the cosy warmth of the greenhouse to the more austere conditions of the cold frame. But it would be a foolish protest—as is ours when we complain about the Lord's dealings with us. Rather we should accept the chastening. Indeed, we should delight in it in view of the purpose God has in view.

And what is the gardener's purpose? It is to see a flower-bed ablaze with the glory of opening blooms and heavy with perfume. Is this not God's purpose for us? He aims to produce in us a holiness of character which will be beautiful in His sight, and, like the perfume of flowers, will be a delight to Him, in a life of holiness here and finally in the glory of heaven.

With such a prospect, should I not gladly welcome whatever He may choose to do with me? Let Him do what He will if only my life is made acceptable to Him. Let our response be that of Christ Himself, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God'. With such a goal in view, then chastening becomes simply a means to a greater end, and that end is the glory of God.

H. M. CARSON.

*We believe in the five great points commonly known as Calvinistic; but we do not regard these five points as being barbed shafts which we are to thrust between the ribs of our fellow-Christians. We look upon them as being five great lamps which help to irradiate the cross; or, rather, five great emanations springing from the glorious covenant of our Triune God and illustrating the great doctrine of Christ crucified.*—C. H. SPURGEON.

# I AM JESUS

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached on Sunday morning,  
20th December, 1970, in Hamilton Road  
Baptist Church, Bangor, Co. Down.*

Continuing our studies in the Acts of the Apostles, this morning we turn to the ninth chapter, the account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who by God's grace was to become the great apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle Paul. There are three accounts in the Acts of the Apostles of his conversion; this one narrated here directly by Luke, and then Paul's own testimony given on two subsequent occasions in Acts 22 and Acts 26. If you compare the three accounts, you will find that one supplements the other and you get a total picture of what happened that day on the Damascus road and subsequently in Damascus itself. We come back again and again to this narrative because of its extreme importance for the whole history of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, because this man was to play a key role particularly in formulating the gospel. The classic statement of that gospel, after all, is the epistle to the Romans, and that epistle came from the pen of a man who had once been bitterly opposed to the gospel, but by God's grace had become a new man in Christ Jesus.

Now when you read the story and when you come to think about the story, there is a tendency, and a very natural tendency, to concentrate upon the man, upon Saul of Tarsus, because there are such vivid contrasts here. He was the self-righteous Pharisee, desperately trying to produce a righteousness which would satisfy God, and in his fury against this gospel, he was persecuting the Christians. And then came the amazing change—Saul, humbled under the convicting power of the Spirit of God; Saul, brought to a saving knowledge of Christ; Saul (now Paul the apostle) sent out to preach the gospel. Some of you may remember that in my early days here I spent quite a period on Sunday evenings studying with you the conversion of the apostle Paul, so we are coming back to a passage which at that time we considered in some depth. But I want to approach it this morning from a different direction and to look, not so much at the apostle Paul and the transformation in his life, although inevitably that comes into the picture, but to look more specifically at Christ as He is revealed to the

apostle on the Damascus road, and so to understand some fresh aspects of the person and the work of Christ.

The Lord who appeared to Saul of Tarsus appeared to him in glory. There was a majesty and a glory about the Saviour that day when Saul saw Him on the Damascus road. Indeed, subsequently he was to speak of the light that shone round about him as a light that was brighter than the sun at mid-day. When the sun is shining at mid-day in the Middle East from a clear sky, there is a dazzling brightness, but the brightness that shone about Saul of Tarsus that day eclipsed the very brightness of the mid-day sun. It was a dazzling radiance such as he had never experienced before. And the Christ who appeared to him in that bright light was the exalted, risen, ascended and glorified Son of God.

Now in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 15, he is dealing with the resurrection of the believer, the hope which the Christian has that beyond death there is something more than mere survival, the hope of the resurrection of the body; that he, and all those who have died in Christ, will be raised with a glorified humanity, and in their resurrection bodies shall be with Christ for ever. Now Paul roots our hope and our confidence that we shall thus be raised in the fact that Christ was raised, and so he speaks of the resurrection of Christ as being the very foundation of the gospel and of all our hope and confidence. In order to establish the reality of Christ's resurrection he quotes the different witnesses who saw the Lord after His resurrection. Then having cited the various witnesses, he says this: 'Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am'. Paul says 'I saw Him'. Paul puts his sight of Christ on the same level as the sight which the others had, and we are not to dismiss what happened on the Damascus road as some kind of vision, that Paul was in a kind of ecstasy or trance and had this kind of vision.

So Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that he saw the risen Lord as really as the others did, he was a witness as they were, and yet at the same time we have got to notice that there were distinct differences between his experience, his encounter with the risen Lord and that of the others. Take for example the two who were on the road to Emmaus on that first Lord's day evening. Now the Lord joined them, and talked with them, and they walked down the road to Emmaus together, and quite obviously He was, to them, as another man. They did not

recognise Him at first as the risen Lord, but quite obviously He was so essentially human that they did not think that there was anything extraordinary; in fact in their subsequent conversation they reveal that they simply thought He was a stranger in Jerusalem, in view of the fact that He apparently did not know what had been happening in the few days previously. So to the two on the Emmaus road He was a man and recognisably a man. The same thing was true in the garden; Mary thought He was the gardener, He was a human person, He was a man, recognisably so.

Now when Saul of Tarsus meets Him on the Damascus road, it is not exactly the same as on the road to Emmaus and in the garden. There is this dazzling light and the voice is not just a human voice. It is a voice so strange that while the men heard it, they did not recognise it as a voice, and only Saul, enlightened by the Spirit, with his ears attuned by the Spirit, could hear what the voice said. In fact when you read the narratives you find that one, at first sight, seems to contradict the other; one said they didn't hear the voice and the other said they did hear the voice. Well, Luke is too good a historian to be involved in such a blatant contradiction, and Saul was there himself and he gives the subsequent testimony. Surely the answer is that in a sense they heard and yet they didn't hear. They heard something, so that you could say they heard the voice, but they didn't hear in the sense of understanding what the voice was saying. So the point I am making is just this, that, while Paul's encounter with Christ was as real an encounter as was the encounter of Mary Magdalene or Peter or any of the others on Easter Sunday and subsequently, there was something very different. To them He appeared in His resurrection body and He was recognisably a man. When He appeared to the apostle Paul, there is this dazzling light and there is this voice which those around don't even recognise.

What is the difference? Well, surely the difference is simply this, that subsequent to the appearances after the resurrection there was a further great event in the life of our Lord, namely the ascension. It tends to be one of the events that Christians rather overlook, but the ascension is not simply the neat ending off of the story. The ascension is the final moment of glory and exaltation. He died, He rose again, He appeared in human form to His disciples, and His humanity was so real that when they were questioning whether they were seeing a spirit, He said, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They offered Him broiled fish and a honeycomb, and He took it and ate with them. He was really man, He had really risen in bodily fashion

from the grave. But when they went out to the Mount of Olives, He was taken up from them and a cloud received Him out of their sight. He was exalted to the right hand of God, and in that ascension and in that exaltation, there seems to have been a further transformation, so that when He appears here to the apostle, it is not exactly as He appeared to the others just after the resurrection. There is this radiance, this dazzling light, and there is this voice so tremendous that those about the apostle cannot even understand what is being said.

Now if you compare this sight, which the apostle had of Christ, with the vision which John describes on the island of Patmos, you will find a close similarity. You will remember that John was an exile because of his preaching of the gospel, and Patmos was a Roman penal settlement, and there he was isolated from everything. But the Lord in grace and mercy appeared to His servant. And John, in the opening chapter of the Revelation, describes the overwhelming vision he had of Christ. It was the Christ ascended, exalted, glorified. 'His face,' he says, 'was as the sun in its strength; His voice like the sound of many waters.' It was a vision so overwhelming that the apostle John was prostrated in worship before Him. Now the apostle Paul (still at this point Saul of Tarsus) goes through a very similar experience. The Christ who showed Himself to Saul came in this light and with this voice.

In Scripture, light, especially dazzling light, is associated with Deity. When God created at the outset, the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and God said, with that voice of authority, 'Let there be light', and there was light. The light that was shed across the universe was the manifestation of the presence and the power of God. He dwells in light inaccessible, light unapproachable. When God comes to the tabernacle or to the temple, there is a radiance and a glory, a transforming light. So when Christ appears to Paul with this dazzling radiance which simply eclipses the mid-day sun, He is declaring to Paul His majesty and His glory. This, after all, is the One whom Saul of Tarsus had hated. This is the One whom the Jews had dismissed as an imposter, and because they considered Him an imposter they had considered Him a blasphemer because He had made Himself equal with God, and that is why they crucified Him. Paul needed to realise who this One was whom he had been rejecting, this One who for him was simply a memory of the past. He had been crucified and that was the end of Him—there was some story that His followers had been producing that told He was risen, and the whole thing as far as he was concerned

was ridiculous and he would stop it all. God intervened! God brings home to Paul in this dramatic fashion that Jesus of Nazareth is not a figure of the past whom they have finished with now, and this story which His disciples are preaching is not something that they have dreamed up out of their own imagination. This Christ, with whom the apostle has to do, is none other than God incarnate. And as the light flashes around him and Paul is blinded by the light, and as the voice overwhelms him and he is convicted in his heart as that voice searches his very soul, he realises that he is dealing with God. All his resistance, all his bitter hatred of the gospel, all his hostility against those followers of Christ whom he has been hounding to death—the whole thing crumbles, and the self-assured and self-righteous young Pharisee is down in the dust on the Damascus road, utterly humbled and broken before the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is an aspect we need to appreciate. Our Jesus Christ is the ascended, exalted Lord. He is the One who is in glory, the One at the right hand of the Father, the One to whom all authority has been given in heaven and in earth. We must beware of the tendencies in these days to reduce Him to less than He is. He is not a shadowy figure of the distant past. He is not someone who belongs to the history books and is now almost a forgotten figure. He is the One certainly who had His roots in history; He really did live, He really did die, He really did rise again. But He is essentially the living Lord, the ever-present Lord, the Lord of majesty and power and glory. He is the One before whom, one day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

There is another aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ presented in this encounter with the apostle Paul—He is the gracious Saviour. There is a dazzling light and the voice overwhelms the apostle, but when Saul asks, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' the answer comes, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest'. Very significant! It is not—I am the Christ, I am the Messiah, I am the Lord, I am the Son of God. Any of those titles might have been used. But it is: 'I am Jesus'—Jesus, the name which spoke of His humanity; Jesus, the name which the angel had declared before His birth; Jesus, the name which Mary gave to that Child in her arms in Bethlehem; Jesus, the name which He bore right through the days of His obscurity in Nazareth, when the other boys in the street would have known Him as Jesus; Jesus, the name which He bore in His ministry, and in His dying, for it was the name which was above His Cross, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

So when the name Jesus is used in the New Testament it stamps firmly the fact of His humanity. When you turn to the epistle to the Hebrews and you get the great stress on the sympathy of the Lord for His people, He is spoken of as Jesus. The call in Hebrews 12, for example, is to run with patience in face of the difficulties, in face of the obstacles that you encounter, to run steadily with perseverance, having your eyes on Jesus. In other words, you realise that the One who has run the race and won the prize and is exalted in glory, is not some remote figure. He is the same Jesus who walked the roads of Galilee, the same Jesus who met with the leper, who met with the mourning widow of Nain who had lost her son, who met with the family at Bethany bereft of a beloved brother—it is the same Jesus. True, He is exalted, ascended, glorified, but it is Jesus who is there. Do you recall earlier in the Acts, when Stephen was facing his persecutors, an encounter with them which was simply the prelude to his murder, he saw Jesus (again it is the same name) at the right hand of power? He looked into the glory, and the One who was waiting for him, the One indeed who rose to welcome His returning saint, was the same Jesus whom they had known in the days of His humiliation.

How typical is the attitude of this Jesus here. He is the risen Lord, the exalted One, the One to whom judgment has been committed, and here is a man who has been rejecting the gospel. Indeed, more than that, here is a man who has been persecuting and destroying anyone who would stand for this gospel. Here is a man who had stood by and taken a part in the stoning of Stephen, for he had kept the clothes of those who were doing Stephen brutally to death. Everything about him would seem to call for the judgment of God. But what do you find? You find that this exalted Lord is still as gracious as the Jesus who put out His hand to a leper and said, 'I will, be thou clean'. He is still as tender as the Jesus who met the woman taken in adultery, and you remember that the desire of the men around was that she should be stoned, but Jesus graciously forgave; He didn't condone the sin. He said, 'Go, and sin no more', but there was forgiveness. And as Saul of Tarsus encounters the radiance of the glory of Christ, and the majesty of it all overwhelms him and casts him to the ground, he hears the voice—I am Jesus, the One who has come, Saul, to bring you to an end of yourself, to make you realise your sin, but I have come in order to bring forgiveness.

A further aspect of the Lord's person and His ministry is His close and intimate union with His people. 'Who art thou,

Lord?' says Saul of Tarsus. 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.' Now at first sight this is a strange statement. As far as we can understand, Saul wasn't involved in the persecution of Jesus as such; he certainly is never mentioned as one of those who were involved in the actual rejection of the Lord, in His betrayal and death, and yet here he is accused of persecuting Jesus. The answer, of course, is that he had been persecuting the followers of Jesus, he had been persecuting the church, he had been opposing the people of God, and the Lord is simply saying—Saul, I am so much identified with my people that what you have done to them, you have done to me. When you were taking Stephen, and when you were watching him being brutally killed, you were doing it to me, Saul. When you went into those houses in Jerusalem with the forces at your command, and when you took those Christians and threw them into prison and some of them were killed, Saul, you were doing it to me. You are here, on your way to Damascus; you have got permission from the High Priest, you are going there to persecute Christians—Saul, you are doing it to me.

The Lord is so much one with His people that what happens to them happens to Him. He is the Head of the body, and you know if one part of your body is involved in suffering, well, you feel it throughout. This can be a very minor injury—if you break a toe or something of that sort, it may seem a very insignificant thing but right through your body the pain registers, and also afterwards right through your body the inconvenience registers; the whole body is involved. And the Lord Jesus is saying—I am involved in all that happens to my people; when they suffer, I suffer; when people oppose them, they oppose me. So Saul, in opposing and persecuting the church, you are persecuting the church's Head.

Now I believe this is a word that brings real comfort and strength to the Christian in times of testing, in times when trouble comes, because one of the things that makes trouble so much more difficult to bear is that so often there is an element of loneliness about it. If you have gone through a time of bereavement and sorrow, for example, or if you have had some major disappointment, or if you have had some great burden to carry, you know that one of the difficulties about it all, and one that makes the darkness at such a time so much more apparently impenetrable, is the fact that you seem to be so much on your own. There are those who will sympathise. Your friends try and stand with you and you deeply appreciate their sympathy; perhaps they have tasted in some measure your experience, and they are able to speak all the more clearly to

you, and again you deeply appreciate what they have to say. But after all, they can only be with you for a time; they go back to their work, they go back to the demands of everyday life, and you are on your own. And even the most sympathetic friend, who has had a similar experience, well, you can never feel that they have had exactly your experience. It is this loneliness of spirit that can make the situation so intensely dark.

I believe there is a tremendous word of comfort here. The Lord who is the Head of the church, the Head of the body, is so united with His people, so identified with His people, that what hurts them affects Him; the pressures upon them are pressures upon Him. So that when we go through the darkness, when there is trial and suffering, when there is disappointment and sorrow and loss, we are never on our own. It is not simply that He knows and understands in some measure because He was 'tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin', but He is now as the living Head of the church, so intimately knit to us that He feels for us.

What is sympathy? Well, the word literally means 'suffering along with', and the true sympathiser is not the person who stands outside you, but the person who tries to enter into your experience. But even the most helpful sympathisers are always somewhat on the outside, because they cannot read your mind, they cannot really probe into the turmoil of soul which is beyond their ken. But here is One who can enter into the very depths of our being. By His Spirit, indeed, He dwells within us. He is the great heavenly sympathiser, but He is not looking from a distance at His people, at their troubles and needs, but really entering in, and in a mysterious way and in a quite extraordinary way, He suffers in the suffering of His members. Saul! you are persecuting them, you are persecuting me; you are hurting them, you are hurting me. I say to any Christian who is tested, tried, disappointed, sorrowing—the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, He is the Lord of glory, He is the One who dwells in the Father's presence, He is the authoritative Lord, but He is intensely sympathetic and understanding, entering into our experience.

A final word about the Lord, as we see it in this experience of Saul of Tarsus—this Lord of majesty and glory, and yet this very gracious and gentle and sympathetic Lord, is still and always the Sovereign, the One who is absolutely in control, the One who gives His words of command. Notice how He speaks to Saul. 'What wilt thou have me to do?' says Saul. 'Go into the city,' says the voice, 'and it will be told you what you are to do.' Go! And Saul goes; indeed, he has to be led by the

hand since, blinded by the light, he cannot even find his way into the city. What a change from the self-confident Saul, breathing out threatenings against the servants of the Lord, ready to persecute, to torture and to kill them. Here he is, a pathetic, broken man, being led abjectly into the city of Damascus. The sovereign Lord, the One whom he had despised and rejected, is quite clearly the Lord upon the throne. Saul, go! And Saul submits and obediently goes.

This sovereignty of Christ, this authority of Christ, comes again into prominence in the city. It comes as Ananias, this rather obscure and unknown disciple, is told to go and speak to Saul and baptise him—Ananias, you are to go! Of course Ananias has his excuses and his objections—Lord, this man? You know what he has done, you know what he has done in Jerusalem, he has been persecuting the people of God. I can't go to this man! The Lord says, Go! for he is a chosen vessel. Ananias goes, and as he goes to Paul he goes with the authority of the Lord, and as Ananias speaks, it is the Lord speaking through his lips, and how clearly He speaks. 'Rise and get yourself baptised, and call upon the name of the Lord.' It is an authoritative word; He doesn't suggest that baptism is a spiritual luxury he can consider in a few years' time, it is a word of command now. He calls for obedience, and behind that call for obedience is all the sovereign authority of the risen Saviour.

That same Christ has a final word for Saul—'a chosen vessel'. He says—You are to go, you are to be a witness, and not only that, but you are to go to the Gentiles. What a shattering word that was! Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, and very conscious of his Jewish background, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, and as a result one who looked with scorn upon the Gentiles in their paganism and in their ignorance of the Word of God—and he was to go to the Gentiles! You can appreciate what it must have meant to Saul when you discover what happened later in his ministry, when he told a Jewish crowd that God had said to him that He would send him to the Gentiles. The crowd dissolved into a riot, and Paul narrowly escaped being murdered. To the Jew, the idea of welcoming Gentiles was an absolutely intolerable one. But the Lord is now in control. Saul of Tarsus is no longer directing his life, he is no longer declaring what he is going to do and what plan he is going to carry out. It is the Lord who is giving His commands. Saul, you are to go, you are to be a witness; you are to go to the despised Gentiles and you are to take to them the Word of Life.

The New Testament has a wonderful balance in its truth and in the presentation of that truth. This evening, for example, I hope to preach on Bethlehem, the city of David to which the Lord came, and on the birth of that Child to Mary in Bethlehem. We will concentrate on that aspect of the Lord's humanity, His humility, His coming to be our Saviour. This morning we are looking at the other side. The Lord who thus came to Bethlehem is now the risen, exalted, ascended and glorified Lord, and we bow before Him this morning, we bow in adoration and worship. We realise who He is. We ask Him to deliver us from any minimising views which would make Him less than He is. Rather our concern is that He might be magnified before our eyes, that He might be glorified, that with Spirit-taught understanding we might appreciate the wonder, the glory, the transcendent power of the Son of God, that we might be lost in wonder, love and praise.

Yet as we bow before the throne, as we acknowledge Him to be our almighty and sovereign Saviour, we take heart and remember He is the sympathetic Lord. He is the Lord who suffered and the Lord who still feels intensely the suffering of His people. So as we adore Him and as we worship Him, we may as it were take fresh heart this morning. Perhaps some of us came in here with very real problems and real burdens; some there are for whom sorrow is still a reality; some for whom the future is perhaps very uncertain. I am pointing you this morning afresh to your Saviour, and when I say *your* Saviour I am making it intensely personal. He is yours as if no one else had ever sinned or ever been forgiven. He is yours as if no one else had ever experienced the marvel of the new birth. He is yours as if no one else had been brought into union with Him. He cares intensely for *you*. He looks into the depths of your need, and with that divine compassion which He exemplified in the days of His ministry on earth, with that same compassion He still feels, He suffers, He sympathises. So we say from our heart, in worship, in adoration, and also in humble confidence, and with renewed assurance, 'Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou, that every knee to Thee should bow'.

# Jesus Christ, the Saviour

P. TOON

In the first of these five articles we briefly examined the word 'Jesus'. We said that it was the Greek form of the well-known Hebrew word, Joshua—the name of the successor of Moses as leader of the people of Israel. Joshua means 'Jehovah is my rescuer', 'Jehovah is my help and my saviour'. From this fact we reminded ourselves of the great Christian truth that it is Jesus who brings salvation to men. He is the divine Rescuer and Saviour. I want to develop this theme further by exploring the meaning of the title 'the Saviour'.

In both the Old and New Testaments God the Father is called 'the Saviour'. Isaiah the prophet prays to God, saying, 'Truly thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour' (45 : 15). In reply God says, 'There is no God beside me, who is a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me'. Often in the Psalms we read that God is our salvation; this is just another way of saying 'God is our Saviour'. For example, in Psalm 27 : 9 the psalmist prays, 'Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation'—that is, O God my Saviour. In Psalm 79 : 9 the psalmist prays, 'Help us, O God of our salvation . . . and deliver us and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake'. Also in the Old Testament many times we read that God *saves* His people—from the Egyptians, from the Red Sea, from the Philistines, and so on.

Moving into the New Testament, we find that on eight occasions God the Father is called 'the Saviour'. In Mary's song (the Magnificat) she prays, 'My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'. Paul tells us that he is an apostle by the command of God our Saviour (1 Timothy 1 : 1), the same Saviour who (he tells us) is the Saviour of the world (1 Timothy 4 : 10).

Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, is also called 'the Saviour' in the New Testament. The message of the angels to the shepherds on the first Christmas Day was, 'To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord' (Luke 2 : 11). After Jesus had spoken to the woman of Samaria at the well, the people of Samaria, so John tells us, began to realise that 'Jesus is indeed the Saviour of the world' (4 : 42). The

title is repeated in the Acts of the Apostles, in some of the letters of Paul and on five occasions in the second letter of Peter. For example, Peter bids his readers grow 'in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ'.

So we see that both God the Father, and His Son, whom we know as the God-Man, Jesus, the Christ, are 'the Saviour'. Of course this is so because they act perfectly and harmoniously together in everything that they do. So what One does, the other does, for in the mystery of the Holy Trinity they are, with the Holy Spirit, ever one God.

We must now ask ourselves, 'What does calling God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour, imply?' A simple answer would be that it implies that human beings are in need of being saved and rescued and that only God can be and is that Saviour. Let me explain. We usually use the word 'save' today when we are describing some kind of a rescue. We speak of people being saved from disaster on the mountain by a mountain-rescue team, of sailors being saved from a burning ship by a helicopter, and a child being saved from drowning in a canal by the passer-by diving in to help him. In each of these cases there is the removal of the person or persons from the sphere of danger (be it the mountain, ship or canal) and the placing of him or them in a safe place.

If we can now move from the physical to the spiritual sphere we see that here it is Jesus who rescues us from danger and brings us into a safe place. The danger from which Jesus rescues us is a danger that ordinary, worldly, secular eyes do not immediately behold. You will not find your newspaper or your television programmes warning you of this danger. The reason for this is that as a nation and as individuals we have lost the sense and the fear of God who is holy. Overwhelmed by the benefits of our technological age, by the provisions of our medical services, and by the affluence with which we are surrounded, we forget that behind the changing scenes of life there lives and there is the eternal God. He is holy, He is perfect, He is glorious and He is righteous. He looks upon this world and sees men and women in great danger. What is that danger? It is the danger of being declared unwanted when they die and meet their God. It is the danger of being declared unacceptable for heaven at the Last Judgment. But we are dulled to the sense and the call of eternity by the noise and bustle of the world in which we live. We easily and readily forget that God who is righteous requires of us a perfect life; nothing less is acceptable to Him. Only perfection pleases Him. Though written in old-fashioned language, the general confes-

sion from the Prayer Book expresses our real state. 'There is no health in us.' So when we place ourselves before God and drive from our hearts and minds the noise and the allurements of this world, we recognise we are in danger. We know that we have wronged and have insulted the God who is our Creator, the God who is holy and righteous.

Only those who have truly experienced this sense of having displeased and offended God can truly begin to appreciate and understand the meaning of the subject of this article—'Jesus Christ is Saviour'. Man is quite helpless to help himself in the sight of God. Try as he may, work as he may, discipline himself as he may, he just cannot be perfect. He cannot fully control his mind, his thoughts, his words and his actions. How then can he ever hope to please God? How then can he ever hope to appear before his Creator and not tremble in fear of punishment and judgment? The answer is clearly given in the New Testament. Being in danger of receiving God's judgment and punishment in hell, he can only help himself by recognising that he cannot help himself. He must look outside himself for help; he must look unto Jesus, the Christ and the Saviour. The whole purpose of the Son of God taking human flesh and living a human life, dying on the cross, being raised from the dead and returning to heaven, was to help mankind, to help you and to help me. He came, as the meaning of the name Jesus reminds us, as the divine rescuer. What we could not do for ourselves because of our sin, our pride, our weakness and our guilt, He did. He lived on our behalf a perfect life. He loved God and man in a perfect way. Never an evil thought entered His mind and never an evil action was performed by Him. He was perfect. But He died. Why? He died in order to bear in His own soul and body that punishment which we, as disobedient creatures of God, deserve. This is the message of Good Friday.

This is what we mean when we say 'Jesus Christ is the Saviour'. We, as guilty human beings, are in real danger; the danger of eternal punishment from God. On our behalf Jesus presented to God His perfect life and said, 'Count my life as the life of all those who believe in me'. On our behalf Jesus presented His death and suffering to God and said, 'Count my suffering as the punishment which those who believe on me deserve'. Thus in and through Christ we are accepted by God. We are rescued and put in a safe place.

Our Saviour rescues us from punishment and hell and positively gives us eternal peace and joy.

# J. C. Ryle — The Country Parson

M. J. SMOUT

*(Series continued from last issue)*

The first Church Congress was held at Oxford in 1862 to serve as an annual forum for the Church of England, where views could be aired on a variety of subjects concerning the life of the Church. Ryle was one of the first Evangelicals to speak at Congresses, where his frequent appearances both in discussion and giving set addresses helped to secure his position in the eyes of the Church at large as the leading Evangelical spokesman. It was at the Norwich Congress of 1865 that he first claimed attention speaking on one of his favourite subjects—preaching—while at Dublin three years later he was propounding his thoughts on Church services. At Norwich he complained that when he stood in the pulpit to preach to a country congregation, it was ‘very much like standing on the battlements of Norwich Castle trying to make oneself heard in Norwich Cathedral, the distance is so great’, while at Dublin he made known his dislike of services which were ‘a duet between the man in his reading desk and his “dearly beloved Roger”’. If he was outspoken about preaching and services, he had even less regard for church buildings with ‘dark and gloomy corners’ and ‘old stuffed-up galleries’. This latter remark had obvious reference to the proposed alterations which were to be carried out at Stradbroke church.

At Nottingham in 1871, Ryle gave a paper regarding the relations of Church and State, where he bemoaned the fact that people had no more consideration for ancient institutions like the Church of England than ‘dead men’s bones if a new railway goes through the churchyard’. He also joined in the discussion about ‘Spiritual Life’, making a plea that attention should be paid to caring for the people already inside the Church as well as those on the outside. A year previously at Manchester, speaking about ‘Non-conformity’, he had expressed the fear that the subject of unity was likely to prove to be ‘a shuttlecock, flying backwards and forwards for years between Congress battledores, and nothing was likely to come of it’. At Leeds in 1872, he intervened in the discussion on ‘Lay-co-operation’ to state that he personally had no objection

to the layman doing almost everything that a clergyman did himself. His main address at that Congress was on 'Church Reform', where he summed up his ideas (somewhat advanced for the evangelicals of those days) by saying that 'the clothes which were a comely suit of apparel in 1572 may be rather threadbare and out at the elbows and too tight in 1872'. Then the following year at Brighton he remarked, with an obvious eye on his critics, that 'if I learned nothing else from Congresses, I hope I caught no diseases'.

When he gave a paper on the 'Comprehensiveness of the Church' at Sheffield in 1878 it was, surprisingly enough, the first full address he had been asked to give since Leeds in 1872. He obviously still attended the Congresses even when not asked to speak, for at Croydon (1877) he was prominent in discussions on such varied subjects as Non-conformity, Trade Unions and Toleration. He raised the roof at one of the meetings by telling of overhearing someone saying, 'Here comes that dreadful Ryle; he is nothing better than a Dissenter'. At Sheffield he gained murmurs of approval by his remark, during his address on comprehensiveness, that 'we should make generous allowance for the infinite variety of men's minds, the curious sensitiveness of scrupulous consciences and the enormous difficulty of clothing thoughts in language which does not admit of more than one meaning'. During the discussion on 'Intemperance' he told of one occasion on which, in an earlier parish, he had refused communion to a man who was drunk. Ryle also intervened in the debate on ordinands to say that he felt that there were enough theological colleges already and no more were needed at the moment. He also had the honour to be one of the speakers at the final meeting of the Congress. He raised cheers when he told of a pamphlet concerning attending Congresses, entitled 'Shall we go?', which was answered by one with a shorter title still, entitled 'No!'.

Swansea in 1879 found Ryle speaking about Church Unity. He saw the various parties in the Church 'like islands in some parts of the Pacific Ocean, almost within sight of one another, but inhabited by distinct tribes variously coloured, painted and dressed, ruled by ever-quarrelling chiefs and with a deep sea rolling between'. After listening to the addresses given on the subject of Ecclesiastical Law, he was moved to observe that there was so much disagreement on the platform that anyone who went away with any clear idea of what ecclesiastical law was must be very wise indeed. As we shall see later, Ryle continued to be in demand at Congresses during his years as

Bishop of Liverpool, but already we can see the breadth of his interests in all matters concerning the Church of England.

Besides speaking on public platforms on their behalf, Ryle was also happy to serve evangelical interests behind the scenes when the need arose. A good example of this is his part in the founding of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, whose first Principal was Handley Moule, who later became Bishop of Durham. Ryle took a great interest in it, as he did with the forming of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, in 1877. He was one of the eleven original members of the College Council, and speaking at the laying of the foundations in 1879, he told his hearers that they had no need to be ashamed of the word 'Protestant'. It was indeed as Protestant colleges, committed to evangelical teaching, that both Ridley and Wycliffe were founded to add to the already existing evangelical colleges of St. Aidan's (1847) and the London College of Divinity (1860). But for Ryle the importance of the former two was that they were placed in the two major university cities where the theological students would come into contact with other students and also be able to listen to the university lecturers.

In spite of the constant demands on his services up and down the country, Ryle also maintained his concern about the evangelical cause in Suffolk. The evangelical awakening in Britain was reaching its peak at the time Ryle moved from Helmingham to Stradbroke in 1861. Two of the leading evangelists of the revival, Reginald Radcliffe and Shuldhham Henry, visited Suffolk, taking meetings in all the leading towns. Ryle acted as their sponsor in Ipswich and was probably one of the clergymen referred to in a letter to the *Suffolk Chronicle*, who gave the meetings 'an appearance of respectability'. A hostile critic described the evangelists as 'working' upon the feelings of the audience. He continued, 'For this purpose strange and fearful anecdotes are related, until large portions of the audience are worked into a state of great excitement until . . . hysterical fits are produced in weak-minded women and children'. But the objections of the critics were of little effect, and the revival meetings continued to be successful. In Stradbroke, in the June of 1861, special services were held in the Corn Hall besides those in the open-air. It seems that the Baptist Church in the village was more a centre of the revival than the parish church.

It is remarkable how Ryle found either the time or the energy to carry out all the various tasks he undertook. The basis of his reading had been laid in Helmingham, when the calls upon his time were not as great as they were now.

Nonetheless, he must still have had to spend a lot of time in his study preparing for the various talks he had to give, besides his regular ministry to his own congregation Sunday by Sunday. Those were still the days when listeners felt cheated if the speaker went on for less than an hour. But on top of this he found time to continue his writing ministry. By 1873 he had completed his 'Expository Thoughts on the Gospels'. He had started the commentary on John's Gospel at Helmingham, and in apologising for the fact that it had taken 12 years and more to complete it he brought forward two facts in mitigation. Firstly, the writing had been brought to a complete standstill by his 'heavy domestic affliction' at Helmingham, and then arriving at Stradbroke he found 'a parsonage had to be repaired, large schools had to be built, and a huge old dilapidated church had to be restored'. It might be felt that Ryle had little need to apologise for his notes on John were much longer than those on the other three gospels. They ran to three volumes, and not only contained a simple commentary but also copious detailed notes on each passage. It might be rather wondered that he ever finished the work at all. In addition to this major work, he wrote 'Christian Leaders of Last Century' (1869), 'Lessons from English Church History' (1871), and 'What we owe to the Reformation' (1877).

Ryle still continued to produce tracts, even if not in such large quantities as at Helmingham. Whenever some event happened in the nation's life which he felt needed a prophetic word, he was quick to put pen to paper. For example, when in 1865 the country experienced a major outbreak of cattle plague, Ryle produced a tract entitled 'The Finger of God'. In it he pointed out that the Egyptians in the time of Moses acknowledged 'the finger of God' in their plagues. He called upon Englishmen to consider their national disaster in the same light. He saw it as God's judgment upon the sins of England, 'a special national chastisement . . . because of our special national sins'.

Ryle was a great believer in the power of the press and was a frequent contributor to the correspondence columns of the *Record* newspaper. The *Record* had been founded in 1828, and under Alexander Haldane, its first editor, took up an extreme position. Gradually it became more moderate and by the 1860s was appearing three times a week. Ryle wrote on a vast range of subjects, including such matters as the proposal for nonconformists to be buried in Anglican churchyards, church unity, the suggestion of reviving Convocation, defending his use of the surplice for preaching, and many other issues

of the day. He made vigorous replies to the attacks made on him for his regular attendances at the Church Congresses, and was outspoken in the controversy over Perfection, connected with an American Quaker, Mrs. Pearsall Smith, and the early Keswick movement.

During the last ten years of his ministry at Stradbroke, Ryle had more and more honours heaped upon him. In 1873 he was invited to be the Select Preacher at Cambridge. This was a recognition of his standing as one of the leading preachers in the country. Curiously enough, it was only the following year that his own university of Oxford bestowed this honour upon him. Partly this may be explained by the fact that he never kept in contact with his university. After graduating in 1837, it was not until 1865 that he ever set foot in the city again. The occasion of the visit was to preach at St. Aldgate's at the invitation of the vicar, Canon Christopher. Canon Christopher recalled years later: 'Sometime after his visit to me, the Dean of Christ Church, the late Dr. Liddell, being Vice-Chancellor, and having formerly been Mr. Ryle's tutor when he was an undergraduate of Christ Church, wrote to him nominating him to preach before the University one of the sermons for which the Vice-Chancellor selects the preacher. Dr. Liddell had to write next day, saying "I find that you are only a B.A." To preach before the University a clergyman must be an M.A. I then wrote to the B.A. and said, "You must come up and take your M.A. degree". He did so, and it was curious in 1871 to see this stalwart veteran of fifty-five among the young M.A.s taking his hitherto avoided M.A. degree'. In view of the pride Ryle later had in calling himself 'the first Bishop of Liverpool', it is not really possible to believe that he had not taken his M.A. out of modesty or as a matter of principle because it was not an earned degree. It is more likely that he just never had any desire to go back to Oxford. He first preached at Oxford, having obtained the necessary qualifications, in 1874 and the two following years, as well as preaching again at Cambridge in 1874. He later preached at Oxford in 1879 and 1880.

In his own diocese of Norwich, Ryle became Rural Dean of Hoxne, an area of 25 parishes including Stradbroke, in 1870, and two years later was appointed an Honorary Canon of Norwich Cathedral. By now he felt that his career was coming to an end, as his remark to his son Herbert about the deaths of his friends and contemporaries clearly indicated. He was now in his sixties, a time which, even in that age of long-lived clerics, most men were looking forward to retirement rather

than to preferment. A few more years in the pastoral setting and then a little easing up. It is not hard to imagine what a shock it was for him when in 1880 he was invited to become Dean of Salisbury. And even then more shocks were still in store.

In March 1880 Ryle received an invitation from Lord Beaconsfield to become Dean of Salisbury. It came as a bolt out of the blue. It took him a week to make up his mind whether to accept the call or not. He did not feel at ease about the matter. 'The more I looked at it,' he commented, 'the less I liked it.' He wrote to friends to seek their advice. They replied that he ought to accept. So he did. But he continued to feel miserable about the whole affair. So much so that his parishioners noticed it, and said that he looked like a dog with its tail between its legs. It is not hard to imagine the thoughts that ran through Ryle's mind at this time. There is no doubt that he loved Stradbroke with all his heart. He had never been so happy as he had been during the past 18 years. To leave would be a great wrench to him. Yet on the other hand he had to think of what it would mean to the evangelical cause at large as well as his own inclinations. This came out when he preached in the parish church on the Sunday after accepting the Deanery. He significantly took as his text John 13 : 7. They were the words of Jesus to Simon Peter, who had protested at Jesus's washing of his feet. 'What I am doing you do not know, but afterward you will understand.' Ryle was obviously deeply moved as he spoke, and many of the congregation were in tears. He said that the appointment to Salisbury had come unsought and unexpected. But as a soldier fighting for evangelical truths, he felt bound to accept. He could not say no, for he had received his marching orders from Christ. His departure would add nothing to his income, so he could not be accused of wrong motives. He was certain that he would never be as happy as he had been at Stradbroke. But God had called him and he had to go. Here indeed spoke the reluctant disciple.

*The Times* newspaper was favourably surprised at Ryle's appointment. The writer commented acidly that most Exeter Hall preachers were usually promoted when they had become 'extinct volcanoes', when all the lava had run out. But he did not put Ryle in that category. He was confident that on reaching Salisbury he would not become 'a bit of mossy wall in an old-world garden', but would be as controversial as ever. He was curious to see how 'the eager and restless temperament of the controversialist will reconcile itself to becoming the central

figure of a pre-arranged ecclesiastical pageant'. The inquisitive writer never had the opportunity of having his curiosity satisfied.

Within a few weeks of becoming Dean-elect of Salisbury, Ryle found himself Bishop Elect of the new diocese of Liverpool. No one could have been more surprised than Ryle himself. Beaconsfield had been in power since 1874. He went to the polls in February 1880 and suffered a crushing defeat. It was one of his last acts before handing over the reins of power to his arch-enemy, William Gladstone, to appoint Ryle to Liverpool. On the 10th April he wrote to Queen Victoria, 'The people of Liverpool are very anxious about their new Bishop. The Tories subscribed the whole of the endowment and built the palace. Lord Sandon (M.P. for Liverpool) says his seat for Liverpool depends upon the appointment being made by your Majesty's present advisers. The whole city are most anxious that your Majesty should appoint the present Dean of Salisbury, Canon Ryle. He is known at Liverpool . . . (he) has a great following. There would then be Salisbury vacant for your Majesty's choice . . . Lord Beaconsfield could not refuse Lord Sandon, to whom he owes so much for his present exertions . . .' Disraeli had originally intended to appoint Dean Bickersteth of Lichfield as Bishop of Liverpool. Besides, as he indicated to the Queen regarding the possibility of Sandon losing his parliamentary seat, the defeated Prime Minister had been nettled by the opposition of the High Church Party during the election. The Queen agreed to Beaconsfield's request and, on the 19th April, Ryle received a telegram from him asking him to go to London immediately. Ryle caught the next train and was in London by mid-day. On arrival he was met by Lord Sandon. Ryle asked him why he had been sent for, to which Sandon replied, 'We have sent for you for one purpose, to ask you to accept the bishopric of Liverpool'. Ryle was dumbfounded. 'Well, you strike me all of a heap' was all that he could reply; 'I don't know what to say. It takes me unawares; it is a very serious matter'. Then Sandon confided in him the reason for the haste, saying, 'We go out of office only next Monday, and when we go out of office Mr. Gladstone may come in our place, and you must give us your answer as soon as you possibly can. You see, if you don't make up your mind, we will lose the Bishopric of Liverpool'. Ryle reminded them that he was now 64 and by no means a rich man. From this we can assume that he was expecting to be well out of pocket as a bishop. Lord Sandon replied, 'We know all that. We made up our minds about that. Now will you be

Bishop of Liverpool or not?' Ryle had made up his mind. 'My Lord,' he said, 'I will go.' Sandon jumped in the air for joy, saying that he was delighted with the decision. He had been afraid that Ryle would want to go home and think about it. The Bishop-to-be then had a brief interview with Beaconsfield, whom he found very courteous. He mentioned that he was getting on in years and would find it very hard in a diocese which had never had a bishop before. Beaconsfield replied succinctly, 'I think you have a pretty good constitution, and I think you will live a few years yet'. How right he was.

Ryle sent a telegraph to his wife, saying, 'Look out tomorrow. See good news in the paper'. Then he caught his train from Liverpool Street station. Arriving back at the rectory at Stradbroke that night, he greeted Mrs. Ryle with the words 'I am Bishop of Liverpool'. His wife told the housekeeper, who told someone whom Ryle called 'that famous inhabitant of Stradbroke, Master Brown'. Master Brown was obviously the village gossip, for soon the whole street knew, and by the time the villagers went to bed that night there were few people who did not know that their Vicar was to become a Bishop. The next day the flags were hoisted, the bells rung, and Ryle was a happy man once more. On the 19th April letters patent were issued appointing the new Bishop, just three days before Gladstone took office.

It is hard not to avoid coming to the conclusion that Ryle's appointment owed itself to a combination of Beaconsfield wanting to get his own back in a small way on Gladstone, the High Churchman, for his defeat at the polls, and Lord Sandon's fear that Gladstone would not appoint an evangelical to Protestant Liverpool. At that time Gladstone was greatly disliked by Protestants of his native Liverpool because of his advocacy of the disestablishment of the Irish Church and his friendship for the Ritualist party. 'Not only would Mr. Gladstone be less likely to give them a Bishop of their own school of thought, but even if he had met their wishes, in the heated and controversial atmosphere of the Liverpool of those days, any nominee of Mr. Gladstone's would have been suspected, and the usefulness of the Bishopric which they had worked and subscribed to secure would have been badly prejudiced from the start.'

Beaconsfield had, during his six years of ministry, been very fair and comprehensive in his distribution of patronage. The temptation was great, though, in 1880 to put an Evangelical in his opponent's home city. He would not, therefore, have needed much persuading by Sandon to ask the Queen to

appoint Ryle. In her turn, Victoria was very disappointed at the result of the election, because her antipathy for Gladstone was notorious. Beaconsfield's letter to her could not be said to be entirely accurate. For example, there was not much ground for saying that Ryle was well known in Liverpool and had a great following there. We can guess that Ryle himself smiled at Gladstone's discomfiture, for he must have remembered how he had been offered the job of one of the new Prime Minister's secretaries long before his rise to the top of the political world.

It would be untrue to say that Ryle's rise to the episcopal ranks had not been prophesied at least in one quarter. In 1875 a book had been published dealing with 'Public Men of Ipswich and East Suffolk'. Ryle was one of the personalities dealt with. In describing him the author had said, 'I have always thought that if Mr. Ryle should be blessed with reasonable length of life he would be a bishop'. He then described his subject's evangelical views, which were anathema to High Churchmen, and continued on to say, 'It is perhaps not very likely that so long as Mr. Gladstone is Premier a bishopric will be offered to Mr. Ryle; but Mr. Gladstone will not always be First Lord of the Treasury, and sooner or later I expect our canon's time will come'. And so it did. Whereas on accepting Salisbury the people of Stradbroke had noticed how miserable their vicar looked, now he was the opposite. Commenting on the difference it made to him, he said that whereas it had taken him a week to decide to be Dean of Salisbury, it had taken only five minutes for him to decide to be Bishop of Liverpool. It speaks volumes for his previous feelings when he remarked that it was far better for him to wear out in Liverpool than to have rusted out in Salisbury.

On the 26th April the Bishop-designate was in Liverpool primarily to meet the Bishopric Committee, which had worked hard in the previous years to bring about the formation of a bishopric. Ryle stayed with Rev. J. Bardsley, a prominent evangelical whom he had met at some of the big Exeter Hall meetings. Bardsley was then Vicar of St. Saviour's, Falkner Square. Later he became one of Ryle's Archdeacons, and finally Bishop of Sodor and Man. The bishop-to-be was frank in what he said to the members of the Committee. He shared with them that he was still overwhelmed by the events which had taken place and had hardly had time to breathe in the last few days. Nonetheless, he made it clear that he was coming to Liverpool as a Protestant and Evangelical Bishop of the Church of England. He was prepared to hold out the right hand of fellowship to all loyal churchmen, but at the same time

would hold firmly to his own opinions. He said he was sure they did not want a 'milk and water' bishop. Although he did not expect to find that everyone thought the same as himself, he did expect to find them loyal churchmen. Ryle was indeed a busy man at this time, for after attending the Mayor's 'At Home', arranged so that he could meet the leading citizens of the new city, he set off for Oxford to preach on the Sunday, having been again chosen as Select Preacher for that year.

Naturally enough, his appointment was hailed with glee in the evangelical world. When Ryle rose to move a resolution in early May at a meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he was greeted with 'loud and prolonged cheering'. He revealed that since he had been called to Liverpool he had had all sorts of advice given to him. 'I have been recommended not to be extreme,' he observed, 'and I have been recommended not to haul down the old colours or to "show the white feather".' He had decided to use his own discretion in using the advice given to him. His only regret was that in not becoming 'the quiet Dean of Salisbury Cathedral' he would not be working in the home territory of Lord Shaftesbury, who was the chairman of the meeting. Ryle received a similar reception at the May meeting of the Church Missionary Society, where he was again received with tumultuous applause. He replied by saying, 'I thank you with all my heart for the kind and flattering reception you have given me. I tried to "hold the fort" for Christ during the past 35 years in the comparative seclusion of Suffolk, and I hope by God's grace to hold the same fort in the great city of Liverpool'. To the amusement of the audience, he also pointed out that Liverpool was the largest, not just the second largest, city in Great Britain, since the city of London proper only had 80,000 inhabitants, whereas Liverpool had 500,000. The *Record* newspaper was delighted and suggested that the appointment was one of the best things that Beaconsfield had ever done for the Church of England.

If the evangelicals were delighted, many others in the church were less than pleased. Lord Halifax wrote to Liddon on April 17th, 'I must relieve my feelings. Canon Ryle Bishop of Liverpool! As I told Lord Devon last night, I rejoice beyond the expression of words that we have got rid of Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Cairns, and all their works, and only regret I did not stump the East Riding more than I did to turn out any one who belongs to a party which, in addition to its misdeeds, is stupid enough to ignore what as Conservatives are their obvious relations to the Church. The Radicals may be bad, but

at least they don't sin against the light. I declare I prefer Bradlaugh to Lord Beaconsfield, and I cannot say more'. This was a predictable reaction from the High Church chairman of the English Church Union. Reaction in Liverpool itself consisted of the same mixture. The *Liberal Review* sarcastically stated, 'Our bishop is quite a Blue Beard in the matter of wives, and he is temporarily indulging in a fourth wife'. Another Liverpool newspaper regretted the fact that Ryle talked too much about himself, and added, 'A low church divine menaced with the fate of vegetating the rest of his vigorous days in the Deanery of High Church Salisbury, might be forgiven for forgetting himself in the joy of being removed to the oversight of a diocese in which Anglicanism is for the most part of a rather Puritan pattern'. At the opposite extreme, Richard Hobson, the evangelical vicar of St. Nathaniel's, Liverpool, hailed the appointment of Ryle as one which would be enthusiastically greeted by all evangelicals. Hobson, in saying this, was unaware at the time of how close a connection there was to be between the new bishop and himself. William Atkinson, an evangelical layman from Southport gave practical approval to the arrival of Ryle on Merseyside by donating £1,000 towards his removal expenses.

And so the time had come for Ryle to say farewell to his beloved Stradbroke. On June 22nd he preached his final sermons in the parish church. It was raining at the time of the morning service and this kept the congregation smaller than it might have been. He dwelt on the fact that he had no fault to find with his congregation since he had come to the village. Then he looked forward to his new task, saying, 'I go from you with sorrows to new quarters, a new position, new battles, new work, new toils, new difficulties in that great city of Liverpool. Pray . . . that I may be a true bishop of the Reformed Church of England and that I may not be a mere Popish bishop. . . . Pray for the 1,200,000 people living in that diocese to which I go'. By the afternoon the weather was fine, and so many people came from outside the parish that extra benches had to be brought in. All Ryle's affection for his parish welled up within him. 'A few more days and all the familiar scenes to which I have been accustomed will be strange to me,' he started. Then, warming to his theme, he continued, 'The old street down which I walked so often, the school which I so often visited, the shops to which I have so often gone, the fields over which I have so often walked, the road with every yard of which I was so thoroughly acquainted, my own little garden in which I had meditation and prayer, my own little field shut

out from the world, where I have had quiet walks and communion with God, my own beautiful little church in which I have often seen so many faces—all these things I am about to leave, and leave for ever. I go, called by God, to the noise, bustle, smoke and confusion of a great seaport town!’

As the sermon went on, both preacher and congregation felt deeply moved. Ryle told of how his 35 years in Suffolk had made it, to him, a second home. He was finding words difficult. ‘What you feel I know not, but what I feel I cannot give adequate expression to,’ he told his listeners. He felt deeply aware of some who were not yet converted, and yet whom he believed would be before they died. They would be able to say to themselves, ‘What will our old vicar, Mr. Ryle, say when he meets me in heaven?’ He prayed that he might never hear it said, ‘There goes one of Mr. Ryle’s converts; when Mr. Ryle went, his religion went as well’. His final plea to his congregation was, ‘Pray for me, name me before the throne of grace and say, “Lord God, bless Bishop Ryle”.’

Three days later, the final presentations were made to the Ryle family at a meeting held in the Corn Hall. Ryle received a silver flower vase plus a plate with the inscription, ‘Presented to John Charles Ryle on leaving Stradbroke to be the first Bishop of Liverpool by the parishioners and others to whom he had been for 18 years a faithful minister and friend’. Mrs. Ryle received an album containing portraits of all those who had subscribed to the £60 which had been raised, as a gift. The senior churchwarden then summed up how the parish felt about their vicar’s departure. He spoke of the years during which Ryle had ‘gone in and out among us during that long period, ministering to the sick, bringing comfort to the sorrowful’, and for all his help and counsel. But above all this, he felt, what would be remembered longest was his ministry of the Word. ‘Your sermons have been first to last full of Christ,’ he told Ryle. Then again they would always remember the time, trouble and thought that he had given to the restoration of the church, that from the tower to the chancel everything had been put in complete order and the comfort of the congregation ensured. Also not to be forgotten was the erection of the schools to ‘supply a thorough religious and secular education to the children of the lower and middle class’. The churchwarden’s speech ended on an embarrassing note for Ryle, for he was reminded of how many ladies thought he was handsome!

Mrs. Ryle was then thanked for her work among the sick, the poor and the needy, as well as her services to the school and on the organ.

In reply, Ryle said that if anyone had told him on Midsummer Day 1880 that he was to be Bishop of Liverpool he would have laughed. He obviously did not think much of the work of the former vicars of Stradbroke, for he mentioned that 'although I would not say a word against my predecessors, there was much to be done'. He thanked his parishioners for the backing they had given him in the task, because he felt he would not have been able to do anything without their support. During his time in the parish he was happy to say that he had never fallen out with anyone and that they had all lived peaceably together. He admitted that he had never expected an evangelical to become a bishop, for in general bishops and deans were 'quiet kind of men, who do not kick up a row'.

Ryle finished first of all by apologising for the fact that he had not done all that he had wanted to in Stradbroke. Especially he would have liked to have had time to have done more visiting. These words ought to be taken in the context of the day, for Ryle was here comparing his visiting to days such as those in Exbury, when he would visit over 30 families a week. But with a population of only 1,200 in the parish and a curate to assist him, it is hard to imagine that any one of the parishioners could have remained unvisited for any great length of time. Ryle's last word was to commend to his listeners his successor, Dr. Tate. Realising perhaps how difficult it would be for anyone to follow him, he gave a reminder that 'all men have not the same style of doing things, nor exactly the same voice or manner, but it is not the dish, but the meat upon it which is the thing'. He counselled them to stick to Dr. Tate as long as Dr. Tate stuck to the gospel.

As he left the quiet of the countryside for the hustle and bustle of the city, Ryle perhaps wondered to himself how long he would have for his task. Even in his wildest dreams he could not have thought that he would be Bishop of Liverpool for the next 20 years.

# Doctrinal Definitions

PAUL TUCKER

## SELF-EXAMINATION

Romans 8 : 1; John 3 : 13

This is a doctrine clearly taught in the Bible, and we all know that in the business realm of life there is such a thing as taking stock. Now, if that is necessary in the realm of business it is even more necessary in the realm of the culture of our spiritual life, because self-examination is of value not only while we are here in this world, but it is with a view to our eternal wellbeing. Three times over Paul expressly commands us to examine ourselves. In *1 Corinthians 11:28*, he warns us of the peril of partaking of the Lord's Table unworthily. This self-examination has to do with our separated walk, with our fellowship with God. In *Galatians 6:4*, the word 'prove' in Greek is exactly the same as the word 'examine' in *1 Corinthians 11*, so we could render this 'Let every man examine his own work'. Here self-examination has to do with our service, with our ministry in the Lord's Name. We are not to rely upon the praise of others, we are honestly to examine our own work. If it is genuine and to the glory of God, we shall have an inward rejoicing. But the most vital type of self-examination is mentioned at the end of *2 Corinthians 13:5*. We shall look at three things.

### I. THE PURPOSE OF SELF-EXAMINATION

1. *That we may be quite sure about our spiritual development.* We walk by faith and not by sight, and there are times when our hearts are so cold towards the Lord Jesus, when we seem to be so lacking in love, that we may well examine ourselves and ask 'Am I really the Christian that I claim to be?' It is necessary for the culture of our spiritual life.

2. *Because there is a possibility of self-deception.* The devil can pose as an angel of light, his ministers can be transformed into apparent ministers of righteousness and the devil can tell a person that he is a Christian when that person has never really had a definite experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. See *Matthew 7 : 21*. Take the parable of the virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish, yet all ten of them were looking for the Bridegroom. They all believed in the Second Coming, they were all waiting for the Bridegroom. Five of them had oil in

their lamps, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. Five of them did not have oil in their lamps. They were self-deceived and self-deluded. Or take the parable of the builders (Matthew 7 : 24-27). One man built upon a sandy foundation, the other man built upon rock. I suppose those houses were very similar and probably to look at them you would not be able to tell any difference between them, but when the storm came the house that was not built upon the proper foundation collapsed. The other stood immovable and firm. So self-examination is necessary in order to examine our spiritual foundation.

3. *That it is a corrective to our much activity.* Some are straining every nerve in the interests of the Kingdom of God, but it is possible to mistake much activity for spiritual life. Some people are so constituted physiologically that they must be active and busy. So sometimes we need to stop amid all our activity and service and ask, 'Are we growing in grace? Are we more concerned about service for Jesus Christ than we are about fellowship with Jesus Christ?'

4. *That it can be of great encouragement to us.* Where some people are concerned it is a great challenge and warning. But for others it is a great comfort and encouragement. There are two difficulties over which many people stumble in relation to the Christian life.

(a) *That of the place and importance of experience in the Christian life.* There are some people who are troubled because their experience does not tally with the experience of some outstanding convert. The New Testament says nothing at all about a standard type of experience. God does not deal with us all on the same level, but as individuals. There are those who have been right out in the far country and when they are arrested by the Spirit of God they have a spectacular conversion. There are others like Timothy, brought up in the environment of a spiritual home, who open up gradually to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

(b) *That of temptation which is so pressing and real to them.* They say, 'If I am a Christian, why do evil thoughts come to me? Surely I should not be tempted like this?' There is all the world of difference between temptation and yielding to temptation. Temptation is not sin, but yielding to temptation is sin. Even our Lord Himself knew what it was to be assaulted by the devil. What is your reaction to temptations? Do you hate them? Do they trouble you? Do you dismiss them? Do you repudiate them? Do they make you wretched and miserable when they assail you? If they do, it is a proof that you are a

child of God. It is a proof that the new nature within you is rebelling against these things. To such as are troubled, self-examination can be a great comfort.

## II. THE PROCESS AND METHOD OF SELF-EXAMINATION

Paul says, 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith'. The emphasis is upon 'yourselves'. So Paul is more concerned about us personally than about our orthodoxy. He does not say 'Examine your doctrine of faith'. He says, 'Examine yourselves'. Doctrine is important, but Paul goes beyond mere orthodoxy. When he says 'in the faith' he does not simply mean the body of teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ often talks in this way, 'Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace'. Jesus was not referring simply to a body of doctrine, but rather to a living confidence in Himself: a vital union with Himself. The apostle Paul simply means you to take yourself apart and try by a process of self-scrutiny really to assure yourself that you are in living touch with the Lord. The most fundamental test as to whether or not a person is a child of God is given us here, (2 Corinthians 13 : 5) 'Prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates.' The fundamental test is that the Lord Jesus Christ is in me. If we are children of God we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who ministers the presence of Christ in our hearts. See Romans 8 : 9. There are certain results when the Lord Jesus Christ is within us. There are signs of life. The first sign is that we have a desire for heavenly things. Romans 8 : 5. The unconverted man has his mind set upon the things of this world only. But the believer in whom the Spirit of God dwells has a renewed mind and is concerned about the things of the Spirit. His thoughts and desires are for the glory of the Lord. He is concerned about growth in grace and the extension of God's kingdom. See 1 John 3 : 14, 19, 24. John is giving tests by which we can see if we are really in the faith.

1. *Love for one another as children of God.* See verse 14. Do you love your brother in Christ enough to die for him? (verse 16). This is something very practical. 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth'.
2. *Answered prayer.* If we are children of God, then our God is the living God and there are times when He hears us and when we know that He answers our prayers. Verses 19, 20. Every Christian ought to have a few fresh miracles up his sleeve to prove that he is a child of God.
3. *The witness of the Holy Spirit within us.* Verse 24. That links us with Romans 8, 'His spirit beareth witness with our

spirit that we are the children of God'. Here are some of the tests and if we would examine ourselves properly we should be very candid about this. We should do it as under the eye of the Lord. We must be more drastic with ourselves than with our brother. This is something we have to learn. We are first to cast the beam out of our own eye and then we are more able to help with our brother's speck of sawdust. This word 'prove' is very strong. It occurs in 1 Corinthians 3 : 13, where it is used of a refining fire. The judgment seat of Christ there will be a refining fire of God's omniscient holiness and it will try and examine every man's work.

### III. THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH SELF-EXAMINATION

One reason why some people do not like this doctrine of self-examination is because there are certain perils with it, and problems. There are two outstanding problems.

1. *That of temperament.* When you were converted God did not change your personality, He gave you a new nature; He implanted Divine life. Conversion does not alter a man's temperament. If a man is of a nervous disposition before his conversion he is likely to remain of a nervous disposition afterwards, though the grace of God will enable him to overcome his nervousness. The old philosophers used to say there are four types of temperament.

(a) *The man with a sanguine temperament.* This man is voluble and extrovert. He has a very sunny temperament. A person like that is not very interested in self-examination. The main trouble with a sanguine Christian is that he wants to sail on through the Christian life without disciplining himself to self-examination.

(b) *The man with the choleric temperament.* He is the kind of man who is either right at the very pinnacle, very happy and elated, or else he is right in the very depths of despondency and despair. David in some of his Psalms is on top of the world and in others he is down in the valley. Peter was like that, too. Remember the mountain of transfiguration and then after he had denied his Lord. The danger of a person like that is that he does not want to be bothered with self-examination when he is on the mountain-top, and when he is down in the depths he does not want to add to his agony, so he is certainly not interested in self-examination.

(c) *The man with a phlegmatic temperament.* A sluggish temperament; the kind of person who is never moved in any way; is never stirred. It is very difficult to bring that kind of

sluggish personality to this matter of self-examination because you cannot move him and reach him.

(d) *The man with a melancholic temperament.* The man who is never more happy than when he is miserable. He is really a problem case. He goes around as though he has the weight of the whole world on his shoulders and there is always a snag in everything. To tell that sort of person to give himself to self-examination is rather to add to his problems. The Word of God teaches that though the temperament is not altered by conversion, it can and should be controlled by the grace of God. Therefore we have to master our temperament. We have to ask ourselves if self-examination is the sort of thing for a Christian, and if it is, then I must address myself to it in the interests of my soul.

(2) *The problem of extremes.* It is so easy to become unbalanced. It would seem that some Christians never examine themselves. On the other hand there seem to be Christians who are always examining themselves and they are so taken up with themselves that they lose the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not to be forever doing it, but I do think that there are certain anniversaries in our lives when we ought to give ourselves to self-examination. For example, at the beginning of the New Year. Have I grown in grace? What is my real position now? What is the position of the Church now in the sight of God? Is it not good to stop on your birthday and examine yourself and ask yourself very personal questions about your life? And to a limited extent, is it not a good thing at the end of the day? We must always examine ourselves in the light of justification by faith alone. We come to self-examination first with a realisation that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour, that the merit of His precious blood has been applied to us and that we are standing before God not in our righteousness but in His righteousness. Now accept Him by standing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me go on to examine my state in Christ and my character. Let me go on to examine my personality: let me do that, but always with a view to the fact that 'Every virtue we possess, and every victory won, and every thought of holiness are His alone'.

# Book Reviews

**1 JOHN.** A Commentary by R. S. Candlish. (Two volumes in one). Banner of Truth Trust. 674 pp. £1.65.

When this commentary first appeared in 1866 it was immediately hailed as a standard work on the First Epistle of John. C. H. Spurgeon wrote, 'We set great store by these lectures. A man hardly needs anything beyond Candlish. He is devout, candid, prudent and forceful'.

We are reminded in the preface that these are lectures which were initially delivered to Candlish's own congregation and that they make no pretence to forming anything like a critical commentary in the generally accepted sense of that term. 'I do not quote authors or discuss their different views and opinions. I attempt no minute analysis of texts nor any elaborate verbal and grammatical construing of them. My object is a wider and broader one. It is to bring out the general scope and tenor of the apostle's teaching as simply and clearly as I can.'

To do this, Candlish paid particular attention to the *theology* of the epistle. 'I am deeply convinced,' he wrote, 'after years of thinking about it, that it can be studied aright exegetically only when it is studied theologically. Of course, I do not mean that a cut-and-dried creed, accepted beforehand, is to rule, or overrule, the critical and grammatical interpretation of the ascertained text. But I think no one is competent to deal in detail with this wonderful book who is not familiar with the Evangelical system as a whole and able therefore to appreciate the bearings of John's line of thought in connection with it.'

Mention of the ascertained text draws our attention to Candlish's position with regard to textual matters, and this is interesting when we recall that the lectures were delivered some two decades before the appearance of the Revised Version. At 3 : 1, the words *and so we are* are included, 'a gem from the Revised Version' as Spurgeon was later to describe the passage. On the other hand, Candlish is willing to omit the words *of God* from 3 : 16, holding it 'to be of no importance whatever'. In the fifth chapter the whole of verse seven and the words *in earth* (verse 8) are omitted, the commentator supplying a footnote to the effect that this is the position of 'intelligent critics'.

Students who wish to trace Candlish's theology somewhat further than the bounds of this commentary may wish to use

it in conjunction with the author's volumes on *The Fatherhood of God* and *The Atonement*. Candlish himself felt that to do justice to his position on these doctrines that procedure should be followed. This is particularly important with regard to the exposition of 2:2, where the emphasis is placed, not on doctrinal differences, but on the tremendously important practical bearing of that passage. A reading of the exposition at this point will prove the accuracy of W. M. Taylor's assessment when he wrote, 'His forte was in exposition and practical appeal . . . he grappled with the intellect and the conscience and made everyone feel that he had to do with God. Listening to him . . . was like being subjected to a sort of spiritual vivisection'.

Candlish is a great promoter of thought, his comments often starting a whole train of ideas which might profitably form the basis for Bible-Class discussion. In this connection, the note on page 225 (volume one), where the author discusses the relationship between the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Atonement, should not be overlooked.

Candlish came to the fore as one of Thomas Chalmers' trusted lieutenants during the Ten Years' Conflict which issued in the Disruption of 1843. Taylor describes him as one of the great debaters in the Disruption controversy and says, 'His speeches were like trumpet calls for the mustering of the hosts to battle and one blast upon his bugle-horn was worth ten thousand men'. J. Addison Alexander described him as praying like an inspired Hebrew prophet and reckoned Candlish the greatest preacher he had ever heard.

It is small wonder, then, that this commentary has always been greatly prized. Now that it has been reissued so attractively and at such a modest price we should imagine that this edition will soon be exhausted. It is a really welcome addition to the Geneva series of commentaries. ROBERT RODGERS.

**EXPOSITION OF ROMANS.** D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Banner of Truth. 359 pp. £1.95.

This is the fourth volume in the series of expositions of the Epistle to the Romans. It covers chapter 7:1-8:4, and its theme is 'the Law—its function and limits'.

When a series is being produced there is the probable question—will the quality be maintained? Certainly that is a valid question in view of the high standard set by the earlier volumes. But the answer to that question—at least from this reviewer—is an emphatic 'yes'. This is magnificent exposition

which not only probes with a remarkable insight into the closely-knit argument of the Apostle, but leaves you with a deep sense of wonder at the glory of God's work of redemption.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones admits the great difficulty of the passage and acknowledges the diversity of interpretation. But this does not deter him from ploughing a straight furrow! His method is to work steadily and with meticulous care through the passage, and as he progresses, so it becomes increasingly clear where he is heading.

He contends that part of the trouble in the past is that interpreters have been so taken up with the problem of identifying the 'wretched man' of Romans 7 that they have failed to see the main theme of the chapter, which is the role of the Law. In fact the section on the vain struggle of the 'wretched man' is simply by way of exposition of the main theme.

This is not to ignore the problem of identification which must be faced. But it is best faced, as the Doctor does, not by a preconceived idea, but by examining it in the context of the discussion of the Law and working carefully through the passage.

He examines the various theories—that it is Paul in his unregenerate days; that it is the defeated Christian prior to his transition to the life described in Romans 8; that it is a man at the apex of spiritual experience with a deep awareness of sin. One might expect the last-named interpretation to be used, as it is the classical Reformed position. But while the Doctor acknowledges this he still rejects it, as he does the other two.

What then is his conclusion as to the identity of the wretched man? I will leave you to discover that, and I put it like that not simply to tantalise but to do justice to the Doctor's method. You will only appreciate the strength of his conclusion when you have worked your way through his argument. Personally, I found both the argument and the conclusion very compelling.

This series on Romans will surely join the ranks of the classics of Christian literature. That is high praise and it is not lightly given, but it is compelled by the sheer quality of the exposition. We await with eager anticipation the next volume.

**THE EXPERIENCE MEETING.** William Williams. Evangelical Press. 62 pp. 40p.

Translated from the Welsh original by Mrs. Lloyd-Jones and with an introduction by the Doctor, this book is sub-titled

'An Introduction to the Welsh Societies of the Evangelical Awakening'.

The great movement which transformed the face of England in the eighteenth century was preceded by the moving of the Spirit of God in Wales. Great numbers were awakened, convicted of sin and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. But how were they to be shepherded, especially in the face of the prevailing deadness of so many of the parishes? The answer was the fellowship meeting, which became such a feature of the Revival.

These meetings were not primarily for Prayer and Bible Study. They were intended for deep fellowship and sharing, in which the members told one another what God had done for them and also confessed their failures. Obviously such meetings, with all their value, had great possibilities for evil if exhibitionists or prurient minds were allowed rein. This book was an attempt to meet these dangers and to give positive advice.

Leadership is of primary importance and there is a great deal of emphasis on this. What kind of questioning should be carried on? What kind of restraint should be imposed? Where should silence rather than confession be the rule?

One of our needs today is the restoration of true fellowship at this kind of deep level. Human nature being still the same, there will be dangers. But the spiritual advantages far outweigh the possible perils, and both in restraining abuses and in giving positive practical help this will prove a useful volume.

**WITNESSING FOR CHRIST.** Leith Samuel. Pickering & Inglis. 95pp.

This little book comes as a rebuke to many of us who let too many opportunities pass of speaking to others of our Saviour. It is not a manual which gives you the techniques for what is often called 'personal work'. The author is too clear that God alone saves men for him to slip into that. So he writes, 'Christ is going after His lost sheep . . . He is *the* soul-winner. People are not won by us for Him. They are won through us by Him. He can win them without us, just as He can speak to them through the Bible quite apart from anything that we might say. But He has chosen to work through and with us'.

There is practical advice here on how to deal with various groups of people. There is strong emphasis on using the

*Continued on page 96*

# The Extent of the Atonement

JOHN MURRAY

The question of the extent of the atonement is simply: for whom did Christ make atonement? In even simpler language it is: for whom did Christ die? It might appear that the Bible gives an unambiguous answer to the effect that Christ died for all men. For we read: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned away every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53 : 6). It would be easy to argue that the denotation of the 'all' in the last clause is just as extensive as the number of those who have gone astray and have turned every one to his own way. If so, the conclusion would be that the Lord laid on His Son the iniquity of all men and that He was made an offering for the sin of all. Again we read: 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man' (Hebrews 2 : 9). And it might be said that John puts the question beyond all debate when he says. 'And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world' (1 John 2 : 2).

## UNIVERSAL EXPRESSIONS

We are not to think, however, that the quotation of a few texts like these and several others that might be quoted determines the question. From beginning to end the Bible uses expressions that are universal in form but cannot be interpreted as meaning all men distributively and inclusively. Such words as 'world' and 'all' and such expressions as 'every one' and 'all men' do not always in Scripture mean every member of the human race. For example, when Paul says with reference to the unbelief of Israel, 'For if their trespass is the riches of the world . . . how much more their fulness' (Romans 11 : 12), are we to suppose that he meant that the trespass of Israel brought the riches of which he is speaking to every person who had been, is now, and ever will be in the world? Such an interpretation would make nonsense. The word 'world' would then have to include Israel which is here contrasted with the world. And it is not true that every member of the

human race was enriched by the fall of Israel. When Paul used the word 'world' here he meant the Gentile world as contrasted with Israel. The context makes this abundantly plain. So we have an example of the word 'world' used in a restricted sense and does not mean all men distributively. Again, when Paul says, 'As through one trespass judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so through one righteous act judgment came upon all men unto justification of life' (Romans 5 : 8), are we to suppose that justification came upon the whole human race, upon all men distributively and inclusively? This cannot be Paul's meaning. He is dealing with actual justification, the justification that is in Christ and unto eternal life (cf. verses 1, 16, 17, 21). And we cannot believe that such justification passed upon every member of the human race unless we believe that all men will ultimately be saved, something contrary to Paul's teaching elsewhere and to the teaching of Scripture in general. Consequently, though Paul uses the expression 'all men' in the first part of the verse in the sense of all men universally, yet he must be using the same expression in the second part of the verse in a much more restricted sense, namely, of all those who will be actually justified. To take another example, when Paul says that 'all things were lawful' for him (1 Corinthians 6 : 12; 10 : 23), he did not mean that every conceivable thing was lawful for him. It was not lawful for him to transgress the commandments of God. The 'all things' of which he speaks are defined and limited by the context. Numerous other examples might be quoted and cited to show that expressions like these, though universalistic in form, frequently bear a restricted reference and do not mean every person of the human race.

So it will not do to quote a few texts from the Bible in which such words as 'world' and 'all' occur in connection with the death of Christ and forthwith conclude that the question is settled in favour of universal atonement.

#### AN EXAMPLE

We can readily show the fallacy of this procedure in connection with a text like Hebrews 2 : 9. What provides the denotation of the 'every one' in the clause in question? Undoubtedly the context. Of whom is the writer speaking in the context? He is speaking of the many sons to be brought to glory (verse 10), of the sanctified who with the Sanctifier are all of one (verse 11), of those who are called the brethren of Christ (verse 12), and of the children which God had given to Him (verse 13). It is this that supplies us with the scope and

reference of the 'every one' for whom Christ tasted death. Christ did taste death for every son to be brought to glory and for all the children whom God had given to Him. But there is not the slightest warrant in this text to extend the reference of the vicarious death of Christ beyond those who are most expressly referred to in the context. This text shows how plausible off-hand quotation may be and yet how baseless is such an appeal in support of a doctrine of universal atonement.

#### WHAT THE QUESTION IS NOT

In continuing the analysis of this doctrine, it is necessary to be clear what the question is not. The question is not whether many benefits short of justification and salvation accrue to men from the death of Christ. The unbelieving and reprobate in this world enjoy numerous benefits that flow from the fact that Christ died and rose again. The mediatorial dominion of Christ is universal. Christ is head over all things and is given all authority in heaven and in earth. It is within this mediatorial dominion that all the blessings which men enjoy are dispensed. But this dominion Christ exercises on the basis and as the reward of His finished work of redemption. 'He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name' (Philippians 2 : 8, 9). Consequently, since all benefits and blessings are within the realm of Christ's dominion and since this dominion rests upon His finished work of atonement, the benefits innumerable which are enjoyed by all men indiscriminately are related to the death of Christ and may be said to accrue from it in one way or another. If they thus flow from the death of Christ they were intended thus to flow. It is proper, therefore, to say that the enjoyment of certain benefits, even by the non-elect and reprobate, falls within the design of the death of Christ. The denial of universal atonement does not carry with it the denial of any such relation that the benefits enjoyed by all men may sustain to Christ's death and finished work. The real question is something very different.

#### WHAT THE QUESTION IS

The question is: On whose behalf did Christ offer Himself a sacrifice? On whose behalf did He propitiate the wrath of God? Whom did He reconcile to God in the body of His flesh through death? Whom did He redeem from the curse of the law, from the guilt and power of sin, from the enthralling power and bondage of Satan? In whose stead and on whose

behalf was He obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? These are precisely the questions that have to be asked and frankly faced if the matter of the extent of the atonement is to be placed in proper focus. The question is not the relation of the death of Christ to the numerous blessings which those who finally perish may partake of in this life, however important this question is in itself and in its proper place. The question is precisely the reference of the death of Christ when this death is viewed as vicarious death, that is to say, as vicarious obedience, as substitutionary sacrifice, and expiation, as effective propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. In a word, it is the strict and proper connotation of the expression 'died for' that must be kept in mind. When Paul says that Christ 'died for us' (1 Thessalonians 5 : 10) or that 'Christ died for our sins' (1 Corinthians 15 : 3), he does not have in mind some blessing that may accrue from the death of Christ but of which we may be deprived in due time and which may thus be forfeited. He is thinking of the stupendous truth that Christ loved him and gave Himself up for him (Galatians 2 : 20), that Christ died in his room and stead, and that therefore we have redemption through the blood of Christ.

#### WHAT DOES REDEMPTION MEAN?

If we concentrate on the thought of redemption, we shall be able perhaps to sense more readily the impossibility of universalising the atonement. What does redemption mean? It does not mean redeemability, that we are placed in a redeemable position. It means that Christ purchased and procured redemption. This is the triumphant note of the New Testament whenever it plays on the redemptive chord. Christ redeemed us to God by His blood (Revelation 5 : 9). He obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9 : 12). 'He gave himself for us in order that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works' (Titus 2 : 14). It is to beggar the concept of redemption as an effective securing of release by price and by power to construe it as anything less than the effectual accomplishment which secures the salvation of those who are its objects. Christ did not come to put men in a redeemable position but to redeem to Himself a people. We have the same result when we properly analyse the meaning of expiation, propitiation, and reconciliation. Christ did not come to make sins expiable. He came to expiate sins—'when he made purification of sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high' (Hebrews 1 : 3). Christ did not come to make God reconcilable. He reconciled us to God by His own blood.

## THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S MISSION

The very nature of Christ's mission and accomplishment is involved in this question. Did Christ come to make the salvation of all men possible, to remove obstacles that stood in the way of salvation, and merely to make provision for salvation? Or did He come to save His people? Did He come to put all men in a salvable state? Or did He come to secure the salvation of all those who are ordained to eternal life? Did He come to make men redeemable? Or did He come effectually and infallibly to redeem? The doctrine of the atonement must be radically revised if, as atonement, it applies to those who finally perish as well as to those who are the heirs of eternal life. In that event we should have to dilute the grand categories in terms of which the Scripture defines the atonement and deprive them of their most precious import and glory. This we cannot do. The saving efficacy of expiation, propitiation, reconciliation and redemption is too deeply embedded in these concepts, and we dare not eliminate this efficacy. We do well to ponder the words of our Lord Himself: 'I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that of everything which he hath given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up in the last day' (John 6 : 38, 39). Security inheres in Christ's redemptive accomplishment. And this means that, in respect of the persons contemplated, design and accomplishment and final realisation have all the same extent.

## LIMITED ATONEMENT

This doctrine has been called the doctrine of limited atonement. This may or may not be a good or fair denomination. But it is not the term used that is important; it is that which it denotes. It is very easy to raise prejudice against a doctrine by attaching to it an opprobrious and misunderstood epithet. Whether the expression 'limited atonement' is good or not, we must reckon with the fact that unless we believe in the final restoration of all men we cannot have an unlimited atonement. If we universalise the extent we limit the efficacy. If some of those for whom atonement was made and redemption wrought perish eternally, then the atonement is not itself efficacious. It is this alternative that the proponents of universal atonement must face. They have a 'limited' atonement and limited in respect of that which impinges upon its essential character. We shall have none of it. The doctrine of 'limited atonement' which we maintain is the doctrine which limits the atonement to those who are heirs of eternal life, to the elect. That limita-

tion ensures its efficacy and conserves its essential character as efficient and effective redemption.

#### THE OFFER OF SALVATION

It is frequently objected that this doctrine is inconsistent with the full and free offer of Christ in the gospel. This is grave misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The truth really is that it is only on the basis of such a doctrine that we can have a free and full offer of Christ to lost men. What is offered to men in the gospel? It is not the possibility of salvation, not simply the opportunity of salvation. What is offered is *salvation*. To be more specific, it is Christ Himself in all the glory of His person and in all the perfection of His finished work who is offered. And He is offered as the One who made expiation for sin and wrought redemption. But He could not be offered in this capacity or character if He had not secured salvation and accomplished redemption. He could not be offered as Saviour and as the One who embodies in Himself salvation full and free if He had simply made the salvation of all men possible or merely had made provision for the salvation of all. It is the very doctrine that Christ procured and secured redemption that invests the free offer of the gospel with richness and power. It is that doctrine alone that allows for a presentation of Christ that will be worthy of the glory of His accomplishment and of His person. It is because Christ procured and secured redemption that He is an all-sufficient and suitable Saviour. It is as such He is offered, and the faith that this offer demands is the faith of self-commitment to Him as the One who is the eternal embodiment of the efficacy accruing from obedience completed and redemption secured.

#### ROMANS 8 : 31-39

It is proper, however, that the inquirer should ask the question: is there not also more direct evidence provided by the Scripture to show the definite or limited extent of the atonement? There are indeed many biblical arguments. We shall content ourselves with setting forth two of these, not because there are only two but because these are examples of the evidence which the Scripture itself provides to show the necessity of this doctrine.

1. The first is drawn from Romans 8 : 31-39. There is no question but that on two occasions in this passage explicit reference is made to the death of Christ—'he that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all' (verse 32) and

'Christ Jesus is the one who died, yea rather is raised up' (verse 34). Hence any indication given in this passage respecting extent would be pertinent to the question of the extent of the atonement.

### 'FOR US'

In verse 31 Paul asks the question: 'What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?' We are compelled to ask the question: of whom is Paul speaking? In other words, what is the denotation of the expressions 'for us' and 'against us'? The answer is that the denotation cannot be other than that provided by the preceding context, namely, those spoken of in verses 28-30. It would be impossible to universalise the denotation of verse 31 if we are to think biblically, and it would be exegetically monstrous to break the continuity of Paul's thought and extend the reference of verse 31 beyond the scope of those spoken of in verse 30. This means therefore that the denotation in view in the words 'for us' and 'against us' in verse 31 is restricted, and restricted in terms of verse 30.

When we proceed to verse 32 we find that Paul again uses this expression 'for us' and adds the word 'all'—'he that spared not his own Son but delivered him up *for us all*'. Here he is dealing expressly with those on whose behalf the Father delivered up the Son. And the question is: what is the scope of the expression, 'for us all'? It would be absurd to insist that the presence of the word 'all' has the effect of universalising the scope. The 'all' is not broader than the 'us'. Paul is saying that the action of the Father in view was on behalf of 'all of us' and the question is simply the scope of the 'us'. The only proper answer to this question is that the 'us' in view in verse 32 is the 'us' in view in verse 31. It would be doing violence to the most elementary rules of interpretation to suppose that at verse 32 Paul had broadened the scope of those to whom he is speaking and included many more than he included in the protestation of verse 31. In fact Paul is continuing his protestation and saying that not only is God for us but will also freely give us all things. And the guarantee of this resides in the fact that the Father gave up His Son on our behalf. Lest there should be any doubt as to the restricted denotation of the words, 'for us all' in verse 32, it is well to be reminded that the giving up of the Son is correlative with the free bestowal of all good gifts. We may not extend the scope of the sacrifice of the Son beyond the scope of all the other free gifts—every one on whose behalf the Father delivered up the Son becomes the beneficiary of all

other gifts of grace. To put it briefly, those contemplated in the sacrifice of Christ are also the partakers of the other gifts of saving grace—'how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

When we proceed to verse 33 the restrictive scope becomes unquestionably patent. For Paul says: 'Who will bring a charge against the elect of God? God is the one who justifies: who is he who condemns?' The thought moves strictly within the orbit defined by election and justification, and the reference to election and justification harks back to verses 28-30, where predestination and justification are shown to be co-extensive.

At verse 34 Paul again refers to the death of Christ. He does so in a way that is significant for our present interest in two respects. His appeal to the death of Christ is co-ordinated with the fact that it is God who justifies. And he does this for the purpose of vindicating the elect of God against any charge that might be brought against them and to support his challenge, 'who shall lay a charge against the elect of God?' It is the elect and the justified that Paul has in mind here in his appeal to the death of Christ and there is no reason for going outside the denotation provided by election and justification when we seek to discover the extent of Christ's sacrificial death. The second respect in which his reference here to the death of Christ is significant is that he appeals to the death of Christ in the context of its sequel in the resurrection, the session at the right hand of God, and the intercession on our behalf. Again Paul uses this expression 'for us' and he uses it now in connection with intercession—'who also makes intercession for us'. Two observations bear directly upon our question. First, the expression 'for us' in this case must be given the restricted denotation which we found already in verse 31. It is impossible to universalise it not only because of the restrictive scope of the whole context but also because of the very nature of intercession as availing and efficacious. Second, because of the way in which the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ are co-ordinated in this passage, it would be quite unwarranted to give to the death of Christ a more inclusive reference than is given to His intercession. When Paul says here, 'it is Christ that died', he of course means that 'Christ died for us', just as in verse 32 he says that the Father 'delivered him up for us all'. We cannot give wider scope to the 'for us' implied in the clause 'it is Christ that died' than we can give to the 'for us' expressly stated in the clause 'who also makes intercession for us'. Hence we see that we are led into impossible suppositions

if we try to universalise the denotation of those referred to in these passages.

#### SECURITY IN THE LOVE OF GOD

Finally, we have the most cogent consideration of all. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8 : 35-39). Paul is here affirming in the most emphatic way, in one of the most rhetorical conclusions of his epistles, the security of those of whom he has been speaking. The guarantee of this security is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. And the love of God here spoken of is undoubtedly the love of God towards those who are embraced in it. Now the inevitable inference is that this love from which it is impossible to be separated and which guarantees the bliss of those who are embraced in it is the same love that must be alluded to earlier in the passage when Paul says, 'He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' (verse 32). It is surely the same love, called in verse 39 'the love of God which is in Christ Jesus', that constrained the Father to deliver up His own Son. This means that the love implied in verse 32, the love of giving the Son, cannot be given a wider reference than the love which, according to verses 35-39, ensures the eternal security of those who are its objects. If not all men enjoy this security, how can that which is the source of this security and the guarantee of its possession embrace those who enjoy no such security? We see, therefore, that the security of which Paul here speaks is a security restricted to those who are the objects of the love which was exhibited on Calvary's accursed tree, and therefore the love exhibited on Calvary is itself a distinguishing love and not a love that is indiscriminately universal. It is a love that ensures the eternal security of those who are its objects and Calvary itself is that which secures for them the justifying righteousness through which eternal life reigns. And this is just saying that the atonement which Calvary accomplished is not itself universal.

#### 'ONE DIED FOR ALL: THEREFORE ALL DIED'

2. The second biblical argument that we may adduce in support of the doctrine of definite atonement is that drawn from the fact that those for whom Christ died have themselves

also died in Christ. In the New Testament the more common way of representing the relation of believers to the death of Christ is to say that Christ died for them. But there is also the strand of teaching to the effect that they died in Christ (*cf.* Romans 6 : 3-11; 2 Corinthians 5 : 14, 15; Ephesians 2 : 4-7; Colossians 3 : 3). There can be no doubt respecting the proposition that all for whom Christ died also died in Christ. For Paul says explicitly, 'one died for all: therefore all died' (2 Corinthians 5 : 14)—there is denotative equation.

The significant feature of this teaching of the apostle for our present interest is, however, that all who died in Christ rose again with Him. This also Paul states explicitly. 'But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him' (Romans 6 : 8, 9). Just as Christ died and rose again, so all who died in Him rose again in Him. And when we ask the question what this rising again in Christ involves, Paul leaves us in no doubt—it is a rising again to newness of life. 'Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of the resurrection' (Romans 6 : 4, 5). 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died: and he died for all in order that those who live should no longer live to themselves but to him who died for them and rose again' (2 Corinthians 5 : 14, 15). 'For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God' (Colossians 3 : 3).

We have, therefore, the following sequence of propositions, established by the explicit utterances of the apostle. All for whom Christ died also died in Christ. All who died in Christ rose again with Christ. This rising again with Christ is a rising to newness of life after the likeness of Christ's resurrection. To die with Christ is, therefore, to die to sin and to rise with Him to the life of new obedience, to live not to ourselves but to Him who died for us and rose again. The inference is inevitable that those for whom Christ died are those and those only who died to sin and live to righteousness. Now it is a plain fact that not all die to sin and live in newness of life. Hence we cannot say that all men distributively died with Christ. And neither can we say that Christ died for all men, for the simple reason that all for whom Christ died also died in Christ. If we cannot say that Christ died for all men, neither

can we say that the atonement is universal—it is the death of Christ for men that specifically constitutes the atonement. The conclusion is apparent—the death of Christ in its specific character as atonement was for those and those only who are in due time the partakers of that new life of which Christ's resurrection is the pledge and pattern. This is another reminder that the death and resurrection of Christ are inseparable. Those for whom Christ died are those for whom He rose again and His heavenly saving activity is of equal extent with His once-for-all redemptive accomplishments.

This article is taken by permission of the Banner of Truth Trust from the book, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, by John Murray—a book which is of great value. It is at present out of print, but the Banner hopes to reprint in due course.

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### BOOK REVIEWS—continued from page 85

Scripture. Indeed, the booklet is really a series of Bible studies and the reader is asked to look up the references. The author confesses his initial reluctance lest some Christians might think they have only to learn the techniques. But as he stresses, 'Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit'. None the less we are called to be witnesses and this little book may stimulate us in that task.