

about this book . . .

- Can man in his misery be saved into joy and peace?
- How can such a thing be effected?
- Can we really know what the Father (God) was and is about in His Son, Jesus Christ?
- What work did the Cross effect and what was the practical value to man of the Resurrection?
- Can a man live in peace and purpose today through something which happened two millenniums ago?
- What in fact does it mean to be 'saved' in the twentieth century?

These and other questions are both raised and answered in this simple but profound series of studies. Anyone can read them and grasp the notions presented, even if the experience of them may yet have to follow via the adventure of faith.

The writer—Geoffrey Bingham—has taught classes, groups and schools over many decades, and this is part of the distillation of his wisdom.



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the SAVING WORK of CHRIST

Geoffrey Bingham

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CHRIST

Geoffrey Bingham

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FOREWORD

Some years ago these studies were given in an after-church series and published in note form. Now we seek to make them available in more attractive format. The materials were assiduously gathered, and in many ways are so full that it may seem there is too much content in each to be covered in a single study. If this proves to be the case in personal or group studies, then the three questions given at the end of each study could help to divide each into three.

In any case I believe the treatment of the saving work of Christ is quite thorough. I would like to recommend two books I have written as companion volumes for these studies, namely *The Person and Work of Christ* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1977, 1983), and *Christ the Conquering King* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1986).

There are audio cassettes available for each of the studies, and these can be helpful for leaders of studies or for those doing personal studies.

The whole theme of the saving work of Christ is urgently needed in a world of changing thought, not only in the world, but also in the church. It is in the church that humanism is gaining ground, even a kind of 'Christian' humanism. It really does not see Christ as the only Saviour sent by God the Father to redeem sinful man from his

bondage to evil into the Kingdom of 'the Son of His love'.
For this reason we need to apply ourselves to understand the vast and magnificent work of Christ to achieve redemption, to bring us to it, to keep us in it, and to glorify us by it.

G. Bingham

Coromandel, July 1986

STUDY ONE

Man's need for salvation

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

A glance at the index of studies will indicate the comprehensive nature of the work of God in Christ to bring man to salvation. The word 'salvation' used within the Scriptures has its own special use. In normal (secular) usage its meaning is simply preservation from loss, calamity, ill health, and so on. Its biblical use is derived from the Latin *salvare* 'to save' and *salus* 'health' and 'help'. This translates the Hebrew *yesua* 'breadth', 'ease', 'safety', and the Greek *soteria* 'cure', 'recovery', 'redemption', 'rescue', and 'welfare'.

In practical terms it means a man is lost, that his whole being is deeply affected by sin and other evil, and he needs rescue initially, the restoration of his true person by means of that rescue, and then preservation from the malignancy of evil and its effects upon his person, as also healing from the damage done by it. It has an ultimate outcome which is a renewal or glorification of the body from the processes of mortality and decay.

It can be seen, then, that salvation is initially a crisis affecting the entire being of a person. This crisis leads to a process which is lifelong and which results in, and leads to,

an ultimate climax in which that salvation is perfected. In theology it is common to speak of salvation as a past definitive act (Eph. 2:8), as a present continuing action (I Cor. 1:18), and as a climax to come (Rom. 8:23).

One thing is certain, and that is that man requires salvation, and this subject is one he cannot afford to ignore. He does so in peril of his whole life and being.

WHAT MAN WAS CREATED TO BE

What man was created to be is relevant to discovering his moral dilemma which has come about through his sin. When we see what he was, and what he was intended to be, then we can see what he needs to be saved from and unto. We now examine man as created.

Two source passages are found in Genesis chapters one and two. From them, together with other source passages (eg. Ps. 8:3f.; Heb. 2:5-8; Gen. 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; Eccl. 3:11 7:29; Jer. 10:23; Ps. 37:23; James 3:9; cf. Jer. 2:13; Prov. 4:23; James 1:14-15), we may derive the following pattern of what created man was:

- (a) He was in the image of God, i.e. like Him in His being and actions. We mean he was the active, dynamic representation of God by what he was and did. He was not static, immobile, expressionless, but dynamic, reflecting God.
- (b) He was part of a functional world, and climaxed it by being a little less than God (or, lower than the angels). In this respect he had 'glory and honour'.
- (c) He was involved in God's plan for the world and His

work within it.

- (d) He was innocent of evil, and simple. Not being *as* God he did not, of his own discernment, know good and evil.
- (e) As God is the fountain of living waters, so was man, from whom flowed 'the issues of life'. He is an under-fountain.
- (f) Man's created nature was contingent upon God. From Him he had the breath of life. He was a contingent creature, a contingent subject (servant), and a contingent (originated) child of the Father-God. This means,
- (g) He was a relational creature. He related to God and his fellow beings.
- (h) The exercise of his powers was to be (i) in conformity with the commands and laws of God, and (ii) for the benefit of man himself and his universe.
- (i) He was not subject to sin, death, guilt, divisions, broken relationships, etc.

WHAT MAN HAS BECOME

We see then that man is not truly man unless he is in full relationship with God, His world, and with fellow man. This is simply by nature of the case. However, there is also more to it than this. In Genesis 2:15-17 God gives man a mandate to care for the paradise in which he was placed, and warns that eating of the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil will bring death. 'In the day you eat of it you shall surely die'. This is definitive. Man will die and that will be that. He 'lives' in a state of death (cf. I Tim. 5:6; Eph. 2: 1-3; Heb. 9: 14), and is doomed to eternal death (cf. Rom. 6:23; 5:12-21; Ezek. 18:19ff., etc.). The following shows how changed is man because of the fall from his created nature into the state of being a sinner.

- (a) *Man has departed from the truth.* He has 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie'. He no longer knows truth as such (Rom. 1:25).
- (b) *Man no longer knows God as God.* Man denies (i) his contingency upon God as an originated child, a creature and a subject-servant of God. Thus in his supposed autonomy he has also (ii) died in relationship to God. Since he relates to himself and others through God, he has died in relationship to them (cf. Gen. 2:17; 3:1-10; II Cor. 5:15; Rom. 3:11; Ps. 14:1-2; cf. Rom. 1:28) by dying in relationship to God (cf. 1 John 3:14).
- (c) Whilst undoubtedly created to be the image of God, he cannot truly reflect God. Romans 3:23 says *he has fallen short of the glory of God*, i.e. he does not truly reflect Him, however much the image may not be said to be lost.
- (d) The seeming or partial loss of the image can be described variously. The *under-fountain, instead of sending out the issues of life, is a 'muddled stream', 'a polluted fountain'* (cf. Prov. 4:23; 25:26). Mark 7:29ff. and Jeremiah 17:9 are powerful descriptions of this element of the depraved man.
- (e) *Man no longer knows the will of God.' he is baffled as to living truth and true life.* God is purposive; God has given man work-in-purpose. Man has rebelled, hence he has a loss in meaning and purpose, which are indispensable to being

truly human. Man in fact has to oppose the creational mandate of Genesis 1:28ff. Note in this connection Genesis 4:17 and 11:4 which represent a deliberate refusal to come under that mandate.

- (f) *Man has lost his simplicity.* This was the simplicity of innocence (see Eccl. 7:29). It was not ignorance (cf. Titus 1: 15). 'Man has sought out many devices', i.e. he has become devious. His rationalisations of God and the creation have to be complex, since he has lost the wisdom of innocence and denied the essential nature of 'things-as-they-really-are' -
- (g) *Man has come under the power of evil and many enemies, who are hostile to him and seek to dominate and enslave him.* These enemies we will consider in future studies. It is sufficient here simply to nominate them as Satan, the world system, the world powers, sin, death, flesh, the wrath of God, law, and conscience. These are powerful enemies and of themselves stronger than fallen man is of himself.

MAN'S DILEMMA

If we compare what man was created to be and what he has become, we can see that he is in a very real dilemma. However, the nature of that dilemma cannot truly be known until we consider the following:

- (a) God is holy, righteous, good, true and loving. Indeed He is love, but His love cannot act incongruently with His righteousness and holiness. Passages such as Habakkuk 1:13; Psalm 7:11; Ezekiel 7:5-9; Romans 1:18ff., all show that God's holiness demands

the total holiness of man and will punish human disobedience by wrath and death.

- (b) Man of himself is unable to save himself from his basic initial rebellion and his own personal acts of sin. He is weak and ungodly (Rom. 5:6; Ps. 143:2). He can offer nothing to God.
- (c) Works which man does cannot be called *good*, and so they cannot save him (Eph. 2:9; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:4-5).
- (d) The inevitable outcome of man's evil is his own destruction (Rom. 6:23, etc.).

We see then that man is in an inescapable dilemma. He has neither the will, the power, nor the moral ability to save himself. He is a doomed creature. God is under no obligation to save him. If He does, then this will be sheer grace.

CONCLUSION

Within his dilemma, man is under the deceit of his own sin (cf. Heb. 4:13). This links up with the fact that man has exchanged the truth of God for a lie (Rom. 1:25). This being so, man cannot see his dilemma. He easily rationalises his sinful failure. However, when the Spirit of truth comes (John 16:7-11), and the word of Christ is uttered (Rom. 10:17), then man is convicted of the facts, and is faced with his terrible condition. As we have said, if there were no word of God's grace, then man would find his situation intolerable.

It is, then, a welcome relief for him to hear the news,

'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners', and, 'The Father has sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world'. This is the truth we wish to fully examine.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How do you see man as God created him?
2. What does it mean by 'all have fallen short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23)? What did man lose?
3. What is man's dilemma before a holy God?

STUDY TWO

He who saves is first Creator

INTRODUCTION: FATHER-CREATOR

In Hebrews 1:2 the writer makes it clear that God creates. He says that it is through His Son. This is also the case in Colossians 1:15-17, I Corinthians 8:5-6, and other places. What is clear is that the Father is the Initiator of creation. We know also that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of creation and life (cf. Ps. 104:29-30; Job 33:4). Creation in fact is the operation of the Triune Godhead. At the same time we understand the Father to be Creator.

In this spirit, Isaiah 64:8 says: 'Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand.' This follows on the thought of Isaiah 63: 16: 'For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O Lord, art our Father, *our Redeemer from of old is thy name.*'

This latter verse introduces the idea that He who is Creator is also Redeemer. Moreover, He is *Redeemer from eternity*. The thought of God being Redeemer is repeated many times in Isaiah (cf. 41:14; 43: 14; 44:6; 54:5), and often in the connotation of God being over all the earth. Whilst His Redeemerhood is seen primarily in relation to Israel,

the prophet insists that this redemption stems from His Eternal nature. In fact the statement of Peter that 'God is a faithful Creator' must link up with His Redeemerhood. What He creates, He redeems!

THE SON WHO IS SAVIOUR IS CREATOR-MEDIATOR

The Scriptures give us evidence that God is always working (cf. John 5: 17). He creates the world, but then He upholds it, as we see in Psalm 104:29-30. In the Old Testament He is said to uphold it by His Holy Spirit. In the New Testament the Son is said to uphold it (Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:17). The work of redemption is likewise by Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The renewal of man and creation, and the glorification of both, is likewise shown as a Trinitarian work. For convenience, then, we speak of God as the Initiator of these things. We speak of the Son as the Mediator, and the Holy Spirit as the Agent. Thus all participate in the works of time and eternity, each, so to speak, in His own functional operations. Only true knowledge of love will reveal how that work is *one*, so that God is the *one True God*, over and against the fragmentary and fissiparous nature of the gods who are divided amongst themselves, and in perpetual rivalry.

That the Son is Creator-Mediator is clearly stated in Hebrews 1:2-3, which says,

... in these last days he has spoken unto us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God, and bears the very stamp of his nature. upholding the universe by the word of his power.

Here the Son creates under the Father. He shows his true nature of Creator-Mediator, by also *upholding the universe*

by the word of his power, i.e. his powerful word. Likewise in the prologue of John's Gospel, chapter one, verses 1-5, he is the Creator of all things. Nothing was made without him. Moreover, he is greater than the darkness which has come to oppose him. His life is the light of men, for without that Life all would be overpowering darkness.

Again in Colossians 1: 1 5-17 the thought is repeated that he is the reflection of the Father, whether in his eternal being or his incarnate nature. What is sure is that he is pre-eminent in all creation, for all things are made by him. What he has created is nominated and covers all creatures celestial and terrestrial. They are created by means of him, and for him. Again, everything subsists in him, i.e. 'holds together' in his being.

Finally, in I Corinthians 8:1-6 Paul debates the idols as against the true God, the idolatrous order of things (the false order) as against the authentic order of things. There is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things are created *through* the Son, and *by* him we exist, whilst the same things are created from the *Father, for* whom we exist. This latter idea is repeated in Romans 11:36 and Hebrews 2:10.

We conclude then that Jesus Christ, the Son, was always, and at the beginning of time he created all things, and so is Lord over them. This he did as his part of the Triune work of creation. Likewise he constantly sustains the same creation in his mediatorial work. In this sense he is 'faithful Creator-Mediator'.

THE SAVING WORK OF THE SON IS PLANNED BEFORE CREATION

We saw that God is 'Redeemer from eternity'. The theme of

the book of life and the names which are written in it is a concept in both Old and New Testaments. Redemption, then, is something God has planned. The ultimate of this is seen in passages such as Luke 10:20, Revelation 13:8, and 20:15. Alongside this idea is the fact of the Lamb being slain, in purpose and principle, from before the foundation of the world, i.e. it was intended that those whose names are written in the Book of Life should have them there legitimately by the slaying of the Son, the Lamb. Hence Peter says: '... you were ransomed . . with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb... He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest *at the end of the times* for your sake'. This thought is echoed in Revelation 13:8: '... everyone whose name had not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain'.

There are other Scriptures which point to God's plan before time. These are John 17:1-2, 24; I Corinthians 2:6-10; Acts 2:23; I Timothy 1:9; Romans 8:28-30; 11:28; 16:25. One of the most powerful is the passage of Ephesians 1:3 14. In all of these Scriptures it is made clear that the Son, the Word, the person of Jesus Christ, had been planned to be the Saviour of the world. This is the theme which the prophets declare, though often in language which seems to veil the coming event. However, sometimes it is stated in terms of startling clarity. Christ himself (cf. Luke 24:26-27, 44ff.) insists that what he does is in fulfilment of the prophecies of the prophets, and Acts 3:21 (amongst other passages) insists the prophets have been in operation 'since the world began' (see also Rev. 10: 1-7). In the Acts the apostles claim that they say nothing but what was written in the prophets.

We conclude, then, that he who becomes the Saviour of the world, is by creation its Creator-Mediator, its Lord as the Word and the Son. He is planned as Son-Redeemer before creation thus revealing the important truth that all history is in the hands of the Triune God, and nothing-despite the many appearances to the contrary—is, in the ultimate, arbitrary or out of the control of the Sovereign God.

**CONCLUSION: THE CREATOR-MEDIATOR
MUST BE THE REDEEMER-MEDIATOR**

Ephesians 1:3-10 is extremely important. It tells us that God's plan for us *is all in Christ*. We are chosen *in him* to be 'holy and blameless before him'. He has predestined us to be His sons, *through Christ Jesus*. We are also told that His (God's) plan for the fullness of time is to 'unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth'. This tallies with other statements such as Ephesians 4:10 where it is God's plan that the Son 'fill *all things*', and Colossians 1:20 where He reconciles *all things* by the blood of the Cross, thus making peace.

Uniting, filling and reconciling are terms which state the one thing. At the end, the creation will be in total harmony (cf. Isa. 11; Rev. 21-22). Harmony does not mean that all things that have been *created* will be at one, but rather that all things *redeemed* will be at one. However, that which is redeemed is at the same time (originally) creational, and that which is truly creational longs, in Paul's terms, for 'the unveiling of the sons of God', i.e. it is subjected to vanity (pointlessness, emptiness, functional frustration) in fulfil-

ling that for which it was created. However, it was subjected in hope, i.e. it has hope that it will eventually be liberated into functional fullness and so fulfil its purpose for which it was created. The impenitent elements in creation are those creatures (celestial and terrestrial) which are of the rational (i.e. moral) order. Such elements will be disengaged from the true creation (from which, in any case, they have irrevocably abdicated), and find their judgement and punishment according to the true nature of God. In one sense they will henceforth have no authentic being.

What concerns us here is that the Son-Creator-Mediator will bring into unity and harmony those things which he created, and which, in accordance with God's will, he has saved, i.e. redeemed. These will constitute the ultimate and final unity of creation, the 'all things' which have been brought under his Lordship and sovereignty.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Does man's fall into sin prompt God to become a Saviour and to redeem man?
2. What do we mean by the term 'Father-Creator' and 'Creator-Mediator', and 'Redeemer-Mediator'?
3. What do we learn about God from His planning of all that will happen in His creation, in time?

STUDY THREE

Man is saved from sin

INTRODUCTION: MAN IS IN SIN

Romans 3:23 says, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' The glory of God is His own personal being and action. Man was created in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 8:3ff.; I Cor. 11:7, etc.). This means he is like God and intended to reflect God. His high calling is to do just this, and to do this is true human being and living. In the Fall (Gen. 3:1-6) or the Rebellion (Rom. 1:18-32), man refused to be merely *like* God, and chose to be *as* God. This high rebellion issued in a dreadful result. Man lost his innocency, became united with evil powers (I John 5:19), and his heart changed in its direction. From being God centred, it became man-centred or self-centred.

There are, then, two things in regard to man which need to be seen: (a) his heart which had been pure (cf. Jer. 2:13; Prov. 4:23) now *became polluted* (Prov. 25:26; Jer. 17:9; cf. Mark 10:20ff.). Man, then, has become an unclean thing in the sight of the Holy God; (b) man has come under guilt. Guilt is *objective* in that he sins, and all sins must be punished. It is also a *subjective* experience of the human personality, and this guilt is linked with the functioning of

conscience. Human sin is not merely a failure to obey law (Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10, 13), but it is a direct and personal offence against God (Ps. 51:3-4). Man then has to contend with the defilement which proceeds from him and the guilt he incurs. Both of these elements are departures from his original glory and the pure purposiveness of true created humanity. Romans 3:9 says that all are included under (the power of) sin.

MAN'S PREDICAMENT IN SIN

Romans 5:6-10 records the following elements of fallen man:

- (a) *Helpless*, entirely without moral strength to do anything.
- (b) *Ungodly*, i.e. irreligious, not capable of godliness. (c) *Sinful*, i.e. sinners essentially, and not un sinful.
- (d) *Under wrath*, i.e. under judgement, and unable to expiate judgement.
- (e) *At enmity* with God, i.e. unable to be or become friends with God.

Man's predicament lies in the following:

- (a) God is holy and demands total holiness of man.
- (b) God is righteous and demands full obedience from man.
- (c) God's holiness and righteousness (the latter linked with His law) demand judgement where there is unholiness and disobedience.

- (d) Doing 'works of the law'—were it possible to do them from a good heart, which it is not—would not expiate or cover sin. One offends all the law when one sins any sin. Sin is directly against God; hence man is indicted for both *sinfulness* and *acts of sin*.

Thus man's predicament is that, through sin, he is under doom of judgement. God cannot be merciful in regard to sin (Hab. 1: 13; Ps. 143:2), and works of the law only bring than more deeply under the curse of law (Gal. 3:10; cf. 2:16ff.). How then does man escape from sin, its judgements, and its personal consequences?

GOD'S PROMISES CONCERNING SIN

Genesis 3:15 is a promise concerning the defeat of satanic power and forces. The Abrahamic Covenant promises 'the blessing of Abraham' (Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:13-14; cf. Rom. 4:1ff.). This is the blessing of grace, that is, justification from sin. In the covenant with Moses the sacrifices were needed for forgiveness and justification, since the law demanded penalty for sin, and provided it in the sacrifices. However, in many promises the prophets foretold of a time when sins would be forgiven, presumably without the sacrificial system. Such promises can be seen in Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-28; cf. Isaiah 1:18; 43:25; 44:22. Cleansing was also promised in Ezekiel 36:24-28; Isaiah 4:1ff.; Zechariah 13:1.

When John the Baptist preached, he called for repentance and a water-baptism with a view to the remission of sins. He promised that Christ would take away the sin of the

world (John 1:29). Jesus affirmed this, especially in Matthew 26:28, where he links the covenant of Jeremiah 31: 31-34 with his death. On rising from the dead he directs his followers to proclaim such forgiveness.

However, whilst in Luke 4:18 he pronounces *generally* the liberating of people from the powers and effects of evil (cf. Acts 10:38), he explicitly states in John 8:31-36 that (a) he who sins becomes the slave of sin (cf. Prov. 5:22-23; 11 Pet. 2:19). and (b) that he will liberate such, and make them completely free. He says this in other ways also, namely that he will liberate men and women from the bondage of Satan.

That these promises are not empty but real, and that they are effective, is shown in the events following Pentecost. See, then, Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31-32; 10:42-44; 11:18; 9:16; 22:16; 13:38; 26:18. The forgiveness of sins is a dynamic reality in the new community of God. They are forgiven people. Hence in Revelation 1:5 Jesus is addressed as the one who 'loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood', whilst in I John 2:12 John addresses 'little children' because 'your sins are forgiven'. Likewise in other Epistles the whole matter of forgiveness and liberation is discussed (cf. Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Gal. 5: 1, etc.). Forgiveness, then, is an established fact.

THE MODES OF OBTAINING THE REMISSION OF SINS AND CLEANSING FROM SIN'S DEFILEMENT

In Hebrews 9:22 the statement is made, 'under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins'. Doubtless this links with Jesus' words, 'This is my blood of the new

covenant which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins'. Hence the many New Testament references to *blood*. Also the Old Testament figures of *sacrifice*, *atonement*, *propitiation*, and *blood of sacrifice* are used. See Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:24; I John 2:2; 4:10; Hebrews 9: 14. Again, *sin-bearing* is another theme from the Old Testament. It is used in the sacrificial cultus, and in the New Testament there are references (eg. I Pet. 2:24; 3:18; II Cor. 5:21). All of these figures and their modes can only be understood by reference to their Old Testament contexts, and an understanding of the principles then obtaining.

At the same time the Gospel, in every age, needs to be rational, at least in its explanation to current thought. Hence a *rationale* of the Cross is necessary. Something of this is given in Luke 24:26-27, 44ff.; John 1:29; Matthew 26:28, and other passages. Yet in the Acts the greatest claim is that of the Resurrection. Its historical and physical fact is the basis of the proclamation of the good news. The reason for this is as follows: (a) Christ is risen; (b) this makes him Lord, especially Lord over death, that is Lord over sin. He is stronger than sin. Therefore he must have defeated it. Therefore man, in him, can be delivered from sin.

On this basis an exhortation is given to repent towards God, believe in Christ, receive the forgiveness of sins, and also the gift of the Spirit.

In the Epistles, especially the Pauline ones, a full doctrinal argument is given. In Romans it is set out *par excellence*. Paul's argument is briefly:

- (a) man has sinned in rejecting God, and has become foolish, and has extended his sinfulness;
- (b) God's wrath is upon this;

- (c) the law condemns such sin and demands the judgement of death;
- (d) that death for sin has come not only to Adam, but in Adam to all the human race;
- (e) Christ has been set out as a propitiation for sins. In this act of the Cross, i.e. propitiation, God has somehow dealt with men's sins. By faith in this work, and in Christ who did it, men may now be justified, i.e. acquitted from the condemnation (sentence) of sin.

In other New Testament treatments of the atonement, other elements are discussed. However, within this study we will observe simply the following:

- (a) Man, having sinned, is under judgement.
- (b) That judgement is partly the sin itself that man has committed and the guilt of which he bears. Partly that judgement is the final action of God *upon* sin.
- (c) In Christ and his Cross, God has brought judgement *upon* sin (Rom. 8:1-3) when Christ died *in regard to* sin (see Rom. 8:3; I Cor. 5: 14-15; 1 John 2:1-3; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:18).
- (d) In that Cross, God has purified His people from sin (Heb. 1:3; 9:14; cf. I Cor. 6:9-11).
- (e) Christ has (i) borne all sin(s) (I Pet. 2:24), and even (ii) become sin.
- (f) This means he has sustained and worked out the curse (Gal.3:10, 13-14) which is the wrath of God on sin (Rom. 1:18; cf. 1:24, 26, 28; I Thess. 1:9-10).

Only if we understand the various components of sin(s) will we understand the nature of sins. These are guilt,

failure, fear, dread, pain, shame, loneliness, restlessness, rebellion, punishment, and so on. We mean that the elements nominated are not merely the *outcome* of sin, but the elements within sin(s). Hence when Christ bears the sins of the world he bears these things, playing them out to obliteration. That is why believers are (a) dead to sin, ie. its penalty; (b) dead to sins, ie. the powers of these various sins.

We cannot understand the dimensions of the love of the Cross, and the great work of the Atonement, unless we understand what actually happened on the Cross. So demanding was it that it issued in the cry of dereliction. So effective was it that it issued in the cry of total accomplishment.

Whether we understand this work in pan or full, it nevertheless is sufficient for sin(s), and was (is) totally effective.

CONCLUSION: WE CAN ENTER IN TO THE FULL BENEFITS OF THE CROSS

Faith is primarily in God as Father, and then (and so) in Christ the Son (see John 14: 1-2). Man does not necessarily understand all the working(s) of the Cross. He knows nevertheless that God demands total satisfaction for His holiness, and for His law. Since He has set forth Christ as a propitiation (Rom. 3:24; I John 4: 10), then that must be satisfactory *to Him and for us*. Our faith is in Christ, and this embraces the work he has done. So we are justified by faith, are cleansed by his blood (death), and forgiven our sins.

At the same time, Christ's dying for the sins of the world does not mean all automatically receive forgiveness and cleansing. Whilst repentance and faith are gifts (Acts 5:31;

11:18; Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8-9), yet these must be received and exercised under the influence (and power) of the Holy Spirit. Knowledge of these facts does not, of itself, bring these dynamic acts and benefits. One must believe and receive. It is then that the promise of Christ to make us free comes into full operation. It is in this way that *man is saved from sin*.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What various elements are there in sin? Describe their effects on man.
2. Why does man need God's promises concerning liberation from sin?
3. How is man liberated from the elements of sin?

STUDY FOUR

Man is saved from his enemies

INTRODUCTION:

PROMISE OF SALVATION FROM ENEMIES

Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, interprets the Abrahamic Covenant as containing promises of salvation from enemies. The passage of Luke 1 :68-79 explicates this principle. It should be studied closely. Excerpts are:

•.. that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hands of all that hate us... that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus proclaims release to the captives and the oppressed. This is in conformity with Isaiah 61: I f. and other Scriptures. The same principle is found in Isaiah 26:12-14. Here Israel is to be released from all her enemies. They will be utterly destroyed, and even their memory will perish.

When it comes to specific promises concerning liberation, or comments upon the accomplished liberation, the New Testament shows itself to be filled with them. For

example, I John 3:8; John 8:31-36; Luke 1 1:21ff.; Revelation 1:4-5; Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:1-3. The promises are of *total* liberation.

HOW MAN'S ENEMIES CAME TO BE, AND WHAT THEY ARE

The fact of the enemies

Jesus' categorical statement, 'He who commits sin is the bonds slave of sin', makes it clear that man has an internal enemy, sin. However, man's internal enemies are of himself, namely his passions and desires which are out of his control, and which so habituate themselves that they rule him. Greed, jealousy, sexual lusts, and the like control a vast part of his life. These subjective operations are energised or wrought upon by objective enemies also, such as Satan, demonic powers, etc.

Nominated, man's enemies are as follows: sin, Satan, the world powers of evil, the world system and its principle of existence, death. the flesh-principle, idols, the law, the wrath of God and conscience. There are other elements which relate to these. What has to be seen about them is that apart from the wrath of God, the law and the conscience, the others are enemies which are essentially evil, and which manipulate man by his conscience. Bonhoeffer once said, '**Satan only tempts where there is innocency. Where there is guilt he has already gained power.**'

The incursion of the enemies

Man is under the power of evil (1 John 5:19: cf. Eph.

2:1-3). This happened at the Fall. The serpent of Genesis 3:1f. is shown to be Satan in Revelation 12:1-9. He is described as the Deceiver. He seeks to deceive the whole world. John 10:10 shows him as seeking to steal, kill and destroy. John 8:44 shows him as a liar and a murderer. He has come to destroy God's creation, or at least to take it under his own control. Hebrews 2:14-15 (cf. I John 4:17-18) shows him to have power because of the (judgemental) fear of death. Man came into his world system when he fell in Adam.

From Satan's power through guilt (cf. Jude 9; cf. John 14:30-31) men came under the whole world system. Their created nature became twisted to fleshliness (cf. Gen. 6:3; Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 5:19-21). The *flesh-principle* is man under the effects of his rebellion. Man now is incorrigible. He is set against God. He has the mind-set of the flesh. This is another way of saying he has become innately a sinner in his fallen state. To sin is to come under the power of sin, which is the power of guilt. For this we must examine such Scriptures as John 8:31-36; II Peter 2:19; Romans 6:17; Proverbs 5:22-23. Sin has power by guilt, but then guilt related to sin's rebellion and sin's pollution. The enslavement of sin can be seen in Psalms 31; 32; 38; 51; amongst others.

God created principalities and powers to have useful control and direction of His universe (Col. 1:15-17; cf. Eph. 6:12; Rom. 8:38), but a host of these powers rebelled with Satan (cf. Rev. 12:4, 9; II Pet. 2:4-5) and became hostile to man, as to God. Were man not guilty he could not be manipulated by these powers. Sometimes they are threatening and sometimes seducing. The Christian has to battle with them, especially by means of the armour of God

and prayer (Eph. 6:10ff.).

We know from I Corinthians 15:55-56 (cf. Rom. 6:12-14) that sin has power by reason of guilt, but then so does the law by the same reason. Again, death would present little problem if it were not for sin and the law. The wrath of God is simply His present and ultimate judgement upon evil, but because man fears the outcome of sin he is in bondage to law and wrath. Allied with the law and wrath is the conscience. It is not merely a monitor of evil and good, but itself passes judgement (primarily) following the event, of either good or evil. Man then is caught up in this vast complex of enemies by having sinned.

The enemy we have not explicated is the idol or idols. In Romans 1:20ff. we see man in rebellion against God. Having rejected God, he now becomes part of the satanic world-system and its evil. His own person becomes fleshly. Yet part of that world-system is its idols and its spirits (cf. I Cor. 10:19-21). The truth is that man must worship-whatever. The idols then come to him, or rather he makes them, projecting his patterns for life and dependency upon them. They come to rule over him (cf. Isa. 26:12f.). They tyrannise him {Gal. 4:8-10}. Emotionally he is deeply tied to his idols.

The manner of the power of the enemies

We have seen that were man not to have sinned, then he would never have come under this great complex of enemies. Whilst law, wrath and conscience must not be seen to be at one with the remainder of the enemies (Satan, evil powers and world system, death, flesh, and idols), yet they are used by evil (eg. Rom. 7:7-11). All these enemies

manipulate man by reason of his guilt. This fearful complex keeps man in constant tension and fear, and such provides the perfect climate for the further development of sin and evil. Guilt brings hatred of God (Rom. 5: 10; Col. 1:21; Rom. 1:30), and consequent actions of sin and rebellion which compound guilt which compounds hate, and so on.

The distress, dislocation, disorientation (from the true creation) which sin brings, makes man desperate to fulfil his (creational) functional needs. Hence he seeks stimulation or anodynes. He seeks out his dependencies and further compounds his problems. The gods, the lords and the dependencies (drugs, sensual experiences, money, pleasure, vocation, etc.) cannot, by nature of the case, fulfil his needs. He comes under deep distress, and on the one hand seeks to harden himself against hurt and distress, or on the other to build up defensive systems of indifference, rage, hatred, and so on. We can see that man, by his guilts, becomes highly manipulable.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE ENEMIES

We saw above that the promise of liberation is given by God, both prophetically from the Old Testament and directly in the New Testament. We cannot here survey the relationship of the principles of Kingdom and Covenant to man's liberation. We must, however, see that both Kingdom and Covenant stretch beyond Israel itself, whilst of course including Israel.

Christ is the Deliverer. This is the meaning of Messiah and his Kingdom. It is intolerable to think of creation

remaining forever under an unresolved conflict between God and Satan, good and evil, light and darkness. The story of the end-things is that Satan and his powers, sin, death, and all things impure and evil are cast into the conflagration of the lake of fire. They are rightfully (and righteously) judged and destroyed. There is no indication that they are obliterated as such, but that judgement commensurate with their evil proceeds in eternity.

The point intimately related to us is, 'How does God deliver us from these evil powers and things, and how does He remove the penalty, pollution and power of sin?' The answer is, 'By Messiah, His Son.' In order to understand these matters, we need to see that Christ's ministry fell into two parts:

- (a) He came as Victor. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (Matt. 3:17; Acts 10:38) and defeated Satan wherever he met him, i.e. in the Temptation, in exorcising demonic powers, in defeating sickness and sin. This was the Kingdom triumphantly moving forward and thrusting back darkness.
- (b) The work of the Cross.

The work of the Cross was prophetically assured and indispensable to the liberation of sinful man. Christ's promise, 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed', relates to total deliverance from sin. This deliverance automatically means deliverance from all forms of evil. It is of course a faith-deliverance rather than a sight-deliverance, so that the just will have to come to life by faith and then go on living by faith.

If it can be seen that man fears death because of judge-

ment, then it can be seen that the guilt of sin, the law, wrath, and the conscience are together in a complex which has man in a fearsome bind. Again Satan and his powers cannot manipulate man where there is no genuine (i.e. objective) guilt. They have no hold over man. They use fear of death (i.e. fear of judgement) to manipulate man. Hence they underline the law and its guilt, God and His wrath, and they seek to so affright man that he will further hate the God of justice.

Christ, in his death, bore our sins (I Pet. 2:24), became sin for us (II Cor. 5:21). All our sins were laid on him (Isa. 53:3ff.), and so he bore the sins of many, thus making (effective) intercession for the transgressors. He purged our pollution of sin (Heb. 1:3; 9:14). He defeated Satan by doing such (Heb. 2:14-15), and also ridiculed the evil powers (Col. 2:14-15). He destroyed the fear of judgement (I John 4:16-18) and so set man free. To liberated man, the idols are puerile and unsatisfying. Man, then, is liberated. The cry, 'It is finished! [i.e. completed]', is the assurance to repentant, believing man, that he is free because the work required to liberate him has been fully accomplished.

THE POWERS OF LIBERATION

Romans 8:1-3 (cf. II Cor. 3:17; I Cor. 6:9-1 I; Titus 3:3-5) assures us that the Spirit has applied the work of the Cross in the repentant believer. That is, the liberation of the Cross destroys the weapon (fear of death) which Satan has wielded. Man is freed from his enemies. Yet the very liberation floods man's heart with love. He now loves God. He has no need of idols. He wishes only to serve God (Rom.

12:1-2; Heb. 9: 14; Rev. 7: 14f.). He is functionally restored to the operation and joy of obedience. His liberation is not only *from* the enemies but *to* God (the creation, true relationships, etc.).

His cry is, 'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ', and, 'Thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in triumph' (1 Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2: 14). Our only part is to live constantly by faith, in sobriety and vigilance, and to remember:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty for which [or, with which] Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What are the enemies of man? How is man under their domination?
2. By what means is man delivered from these enemies?

STUDY FIVE

Salvation and the nature of the Atonement

INTRODUCTION: SALVATION

What is salvation? This English word is derived from Latin words which have the meanings of 'to save' (verb *salvare*) and 'health', 'help'. The Hebrew has the idea of 'breadth', 'ease', 'security', whilst the Greek has thoughts of 'cure', 'recovery', 'redemption', 'remedy', 'rescue', 'welfare'. Most of us have caught the general sense. Salvation, then, is the state or act of being saved from something, this action issuing in a state of experience of being, of freedom, deliverance, health, security, and so on.

Our question then is, '**What are we saved from, and what are we saved to?**' This means we must know the state of man which requires salvation. In our previous studies we have seen the dilemma in which man is placed by his rebellion of the Fall. There he refused his true creational state, choosing to be as autonomous as possible. This can be called the sinful state, or the sinful 'mind-set'. We saw also that man thus placed himself within a state where his sin would compound itself'. We also recognised that God being holy

means man must be holy, but being a wilful sinner has placed himself under the judgement of God and His law. He has no disposition to repent and be restored—if indeed that were possible. Hence he lives under guilt and condemnation. He therefore has to be saved from his own sin and guilt.

We saw that man has many enemies. These are sin, Satan, the world system, the world powers, the flesh, death, the wrath of God, the penalty of the law, and the conscience which itself relates to law, judgement, and the wrath of God. Man is in bondage to these elements, and has to be saved from them. None of them is a light matter, so that rescue from them requires all the work of the Cross. This we saw in our last study. The action of salvation is that action of the Cross which (a) delivers man from his own dilemma of sinfulness and unholiness and sets him free to be holy, and (b) delivers man from the enemies we have nominated so that he is no longer under them, but is free to serve God and creation without basic hindrance from them. We recognise that they will oppose him as strongly (if not more strongly) as before. However, salvation means that these enemies now have no hold over man. In regard to them he is a free agent. In regard to God he is a willing servant.

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

The work of the Cross

The nature of atonement is the nature of the death and resurrection of Christ. When we see what these were, what they accomplished, and what were the effects, then we see the true nature of the Atonement. Many attempts have been

made to explain the Atonement, i.e. the death of the Cross and the subsequent Resurrection. We reproduce these theories here briefly, for together they cover much of the basic meaning of the Atonement. They are as follows:

- (a) *The Ransom Theory*. The earliest of all, originating with the Fathers, claiming that Christ offered himself as ransom (Mark 10:45), which of course he did. It was debated as to what the ransom was, and to whom it was given. Some views were quite bizarre. It relates to the later views of victory, called:
- (b) *The Victory Theory*. ‘Christus Victor’ by Bishop Aulen propounds this view, held to a great degree by Luther and some Reformed theologians. However, this is a richer view than that of the Fathers.
- (c) *The Satisfaction View*. Its main proponent was Archbishop Anselm, who wrote *Cur Deus Itomo (Why God Became Man)*. He says that God’s offended honour and dignity was restored and rehabilitated. Later theories incorporate the idea of *satisfaction*. The satisfaction is given by Christ in his suffering.
- (d) *The Moral Theory*. First propounded by Abelard and Origen, it was later reshaped by men such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell and Campbell. Briefly, it insists that no satisfaction for sin (or God’s dignity) was required. The death of the Cross identified God with man in his grief and suffering. Such an example inspires to great (responsive) love. Obviously there are great weaknesses here.
- (e) *The Governmental Theory*. God is Governor. He is able to determine what He requires. He can abrogate the law, or rather its total punishment. Christ on the Cross bears a nominal punishment, thus showing that God views sin seriously. However, He forgives, having put this safe-

guard around His law.

- (f) *The Example Theory*. Man, as well as God, needs to be reconciled. Expiation is pagan, and not Christian. Christ dies, not effectively as an expiatory sacrifice, but as a noble martyr, and provides the example for us. We are inspired to repent, and to reform by the act of the (influenced) will. propounded by Socinus in the sixteenth century, it has a unitarian background.
- (g) *The Mystical Theory (Gradual Extirpation of Depravity)*. Christ entered the world in the flesh of fallen humanity, but brought a new factor, a new kind of life, which destroys original depravity on the Cross, so that a new humanity emerges through Christ. By identification with us, and we with him, man is gradually sanctified, and his sanctification becomes, in fact, his justification.
- (h) *Vicarious Repentance Theory*. Evolved by McLeod Campbell, who claimed that perfect repentance is all that is required for forgiveness. This Christ effects in the Cross, where he identifies with man under condemnation. Man, thus being forgiven, has an impetus to holiness.
- (i) *The Substitutionary Theory of the Atonement*. Generally expounded by the Reformers, and held by evangelicals—though with varying modifications—it says simply that Christ died for man, in man’s place, taking his sins and bearing them for him. The bearing of the sins takes the punishment of them, and sets the believer free from the penal demands of the law. The righteousness of the law and the holiness of God are satisfied by this substitution. Opponents of this theory say that expiation or propitiation are pagan concepts, and that in fact such substitution is immoral. Exponents reply that substitution was a principle of the Jewish economy and that current (Greek) views

rejected expiation whilst Christianity (and Judaism) espoused it.

What, then, did actually happen on the Cross? What was the *mode* of salvation? The answer to this lies in (a) the principle of sacrifice in the Old Testament; (b) the prophetic principle of redemptive suffering (cf. I Pet. 1: 10-12); (c) the teaching of Christ relating to the Cross; and (d) the teaching of the Acts, Epistles and the Revelation. Obviously all this material is too much to discover in one study, so we will treat them briefly.

(a) *The principle of sacrifice in the Old Testament.* Hebrews 11:4 (cf. Gen. 4:6-7; I John 3:12) shows that faith was necessary to true sacrifice, i.e. faith that the sacrifice was efficacious because of God. Hebrews 9:22 (cf. Lev. 17:11) shows that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Blood-shedding was a vicarious form of atonement (Lev. 17:11). Man was brought to be in a state of 'at-one-ment' with God.

(b) *The teaching of the prophecies.* I Peter 1:10-12 speaks of the principle of Christ suffering, this being the theme of the prophets. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah's latter chapters is one who will suffer much, and this is shown in the fifty-third chapter in powerful terms. References are to a Lamb who bears away the sin of the world. John the Baptist (a prophet) confirms this (Mark 1:4; cf. Luke 1:77; John 1:29). Other prophecies (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36: 24-28; Zech. 13:1; cf. 13:7) speak of the effects of the New Covenant in forgiveness, obedience, the new heart, and purification from sins.

(c) *The teaching of Christ concerning the Cross.* Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32 show the indispensable nature of the Cross. John 10:11-17 teaches the necessity of the death. Matthew

26:28 shows that the death effects the (universal) forgiveness of sins. It links it with the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and kindred prophecies. Mark 10:45 links the death with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah's latter chapters. One of these is the fifty-third chapter, to which we have referred. Luke 24:26 and 44ff, rationalises the death and resurrection as being for 'repentance and remission of sins'.

(d) *The teaching of Acts, the Epistles and the Revelation.* These are of one piece. In *the Acts* justification and forgiveness are offered on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection, although no basic *rationale* is indicated. It is self-evident that if Christ is stronger than death, then he also is stronger than sin. In passages such as Acts 17:1-3 and 20:28 the Cross is shown to be indispensable. I Corinthians 1:17; 2:4-5 (cf. 1:18) and Galatians 3:1-3 make it clear that the Cross was preached in the period of the Acts as being the basis for salvation (cf. Acts 16:31; 10:43).

In *the Epistles* we have a wealth of material which rationalises the Cross and Resurrection. Paul says simply in I Corinthians 15:3 that Christ died for our sins (Matt. 26:28), and this in accordance with the Scriptures. In 15:17 he shows that the resurrection is needed for that death to be authentic and effective for forgiveness. For the rest, the writers use the terms of sacrifice (Hebrews, Ephesians, etc.), or propitiation (Romans and I John), of blood-shedding (Hebrews, Romans, I John), sin-bearing (I Peter), and other elements. All of these terms refer to Old Testament principles of salvific death.

The Revelation has reference to the death, to the blood, to the resurrection, and links these with salvation. It would be difficult to dissociate the teaching of salvation in these New Testament materials from the principles of sacrifice,

purification, propitiation, and other elements of the Old Testament. They are of the one piece.

The action of the Cross

To understand the Atonement means we must go back to the Old Testament in order to comprehend the meanings of words such as atonement, sacrifice, propitiation, sin-bearing, blood-shedding, and the like. The Epistles use these terms many times. However, without fully understanding the significance of the words we can get much of their general sense. If we then take a verse: 'He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree' (I Pet. 2:24), we are faced with what sin-bearing is. John 1:29 says, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who bears away the sin of the world!' The first verse speaks of beating sin with all its component elements until the bearing is completed and sins are no more. That is, the guilt is played out and full propitiation effected. The second speaks of bearing sin away, i.e. from the sinner. A third verse says, 'For our sake he [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin' (II Cor. 5:21). What then is it to be sin? Whatever it is must mean that he became as the sinner, and the sinner other than what he had been.

We have seen the terms 'ransom', 'satisfaction', 'sacrifice', 'substitute', and none of them covers the entire gamut of sin-bearing. II Corinthians 5:14 says, 'We thus judge that if one died for all, then did all die'. This must mean Christ's *total identification with us*. This in turn must mean more than that he were a representative or substitute, even if he were also these things. Hence Scriptures of the Cross, like John 3: 14; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24 and 6:14, must mean Christ bore all the evil of man and

destroyed it. In this evil was also the moral defilement or pollution. This, too, he destroyed (cf. Heb. 1:3). The Cross, then, was sufficient for destroying (or fulfilling) the penalty of sins, the judgement of the law. It was sufficient to sustain the wrath of God on all evil, and cause sin's judgement (Rom. 8:3; I John 4:10; Rom. 3:24f.).

The action of the Resurrection

The Resurrection has its primary power in the effecting of justification (Rom. 4:25). It showed death (hence judgement) to be defeated. We have seen that without resurrection there is no forgiveness of sins, i.e. all that happens on the Cross in regard to penalty, wrath, and de-pollution of sin is invalid when Christ does not rise. The factual rising of the body is the sign and seal that Christ has triumphed over sin, Satan, death, and the like. Man now can be saved when this Gospel is preached to him, especially under the power of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

The internal nature of the Atonement cannot be fully known to us since we have no equal precedent of the Cross, nor do we know how to suffer for sins with a pure conscience. These alone belong to the inner experience of Christ himself. Nevertheless the Spirit gives us that degree of revelation we need in order to understand the Cross-Resurrection event, and then of course applies the actual truth to the heart and personality of the sinner so that he is brought to repentance and faith. and so is saved.

It is not a theory of the Cross which saves, but the actual work of the Cross. One is saved by what Christ has done, that is by faith in that work, and submission to it.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is Salvation?
2. What is meant by 'the Atonement'?
3. What does God do in Christ that saves us?

STUDY SIX

Man is saved by the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ

INTRODUCTION: THE WORK OF CHRIST IS ONE WHOLE

What we must understand is that not one part of Christ's work is what saves, eg. the work of the Cross. It is clear that there could be no Cross without the ministry of Christ, nor would the Cross be effective in salvation without the Resurrection. Likewise the work of Christ does not cease at the Resurrection, but rather presupposes the work of the Ascension, and the Session Christ has forever at the right hand of God. We seek then to evaluate the significance of each aspect of Christ's work and to show its interrelationship with every other aspect.

THE WORK OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The prophets spoke of the one who was to come, namely the one who would be Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, the

Righteous Branch, the Davidic King, and the Suffering Servant, amongst other things. We cannot here enlarge on these elements, but simply say that they are clearly stated in the New Testament as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. They all come together in the person of the man Jesus, and in a way which would not have been possible to envisage simply from a scanning of the Old Testament prophecies.

It is at the birth of Jesus that the angels speak of him as saving the people from their sins, of him having been born a Saviour. The Incarnation, then, is significant. The Word becomes flesh. Jesus is made in the likeness of sinful flesh. And so on.

The baptism of Jesus is greatly significant, for it links with Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42:1, as also Isaiah 61:1. The Father witnesses to Jesus as His Son. He then is attested to for the ministry he will have. The ministry is greatly significant, seeing it is that of Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Suffering Servant. Primarily it is the announcing and progress of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 12:2:8). It is the declaring to all Israel of Messiah's coming, the forgiveness of sins, the Kingdom, and the outpouring of the Spirit. This Kingdom is demonstrated, for it is the very same Kingdom which is to be secured by the Cross. The Gospel of the Kingdom must become the Gospel of redemption. Hence Jesus speaks of the fact of the coming Cross and Resurrection as being indispensable to the work of salvation.

It must never be thought that Jesus had an idea that he would precipitate the Kingdom immediately in the sense of its universal proclamation and triumph. When the events of the Cross happened, it must not be thought that this was unfortunate, or a failure to handle matters adroitly. To the

contrary, it was the predetermined plan of God. The Cross, then, was necessary to make the Gospel of the Kingdom fully secure, or—to put it another way—was essential so that man's redemption could come through the efficacious suffering of the Cross.

THE WORK OF THE CROSS

Our former study (Study 5, 'Salvation and the Nature of the Atonement') has shown us the nature, significance and fruits of the Cross. We do not need to go over this ground again. It is sufficient to say that man was saved from his many enemies by the removal of his guilt through the death of Christ. Satan, the world powers, the world system, death, the flesh, and sin were all defeated by that removal of guilt. Man in his being was also delivered from the wrath of God, the judgement of the law, and the tyranny of his conscience by that removal of guilt. Man was thus saved.

THE WORK OF THE RESURRECTION

It is clear from the teaching of the New Testament that the Resurrection is indispensable to the fact of salvation. The thrust of the Resurrection in this regard is as follows:

- (a) Jesus is Lord by rising from the dead. Death has no dominion over him.
- (b) If he is Lord over death then he is Lord of life.
- (c) Being stronger than death he is stronger than sin, and so has defeated sin. and thus man is free. In I Corin-

thians 15:17 Paul makes it clear that man cannot be forgiven sins if Christ did not rise from the dead.

- (d) He who rose from the dead is then more powerful than all other principalities and authorities. His Lordship extends over all things.
- (e) The ultimate resurrection of man is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ. Man, now, in the liberation and power of Christ, can rise from the dead.

We see then that the Cross would have been insufficient without the resurrection of Christ. Other Scriptures show that the Resurrection is God's attestation to His Son, as also it is the proof of his holiness—the triumph over the sin and corruption of other men.

THE WORK OF THE ASCENSION

The work of the Ascension has a number of elements. In John 16:7-11 Jesus says that the Spirit will convict the world of righteousness because he is going to the Father. This must mean that Jesus is accepted as (innately) righteous, and his work that of righteousness, because he is accepted by the Father. That is, he is going to the Father. No one has the right to go to the Father but the Son, and that only when he is righteous.

Psalm 110:1 is important in regard to the fact of Lordship. 'The Lord said unto my Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool." This is quoted some twenty-one times in the New Testament, and is significant. For Jesus to rise from the dead is one thing. To be seated at the right hand of God is another. Hebrews

quotes twice the fact that Jesus is exalted at the right hand for the purpose of defeating the enemies (1:3 13; 10:12-13). It also links Psalm 2 with Psalm 110 (1:3-5; 5:5-6). That is, it is the Son-King of Psalm 2 who is exalted in Psalm 110.

The New Testament speaks of the fruits of the Cross and Resurrection in the Ascension. Ephesians 4:7-11 says he descended in order to ascend, and when he ascended, his purpose was to fill all things and to give gifts to men. This principle is borne out in the following way:

(a) Acts 2:33 says he was exalted to pour out the gift of the Spirit.

(b) Acts 5:31 says he was exalted to give the gifts of repentance and remission of sins to Israel. Acts 10:42-11:18 shows the same gifts are given to the Gentiles.

(c) Ephesians 4:7-11 shows that the gifts of ministry are given out of his ascension, namely, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Since some of these are quoted in 1 Corinthians 12:28, we assume that the other *charismata* were also given from the throne.

(d) Romans 8:31-39 indicates that Christ operates from his position of authority *in order to intervene for man against elements hostile to him*. This is undoubtedly something of what Paul means when he says in Romans 5:10: ' For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life'. If he has not risen, if he is not seated in authority, and if he does not intervene, then we are exposed to powerful enemies who might otherwise destroy us.

(e) Ephesians 2:4-6 shows that death and resurrection with Christ also give ascension with him. We are seated in heavenly places with him in his ascension. Whilst we must

be very careful in our interpretation and application of this fact, we must recognise that *it is a fact!* The new life we live is in the power and person of the exalted Lord.

(f) It is clear from passages such as Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:16-19 that the authority of Christ is that of his ascension and session at the right hand of the Father. This authority he delegates to his servants. They fight against evil under that authority. They are in fact given spiritual weapons in order to do this (cf. Eph. 6:10ff.; II Cor. 10:3).

We conclude then that the work of the Ascension is vitally linked with that of the Ministry, the Death and Resurrection of the Son.

Our general conclusion is what we formerly claimed, namely that all these elements are integral parts of the whole, the true plan of God to save man, and the true work of Christ to effect that.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why do we say the work of Christ is 'one whole'? How do all the elements come together as the work of saving man?
2. Why would the work of the Cross not be complete without (a) the Resurrection; (b) the Ascension?

STUDY SEVEN

Salvation is a continuous, ongoing action

INTRODUCTION: ASSURANCE BUT NOT PRESUMPTION

We have seen that salvation is in three tenses. Ephesians 2:8-10 assures we are saved. I Corinthians 1:18 assures us this is a present, continuing action. Romans 8:23 and related Scriptures (eg. Phil. 3:21) show us that salvation has a future tense. Hence we conclude that salvation begins with a *crisis*, continues with a *process*, and consummates with a *climax*. This climax is the theme of our next study.

The believer may have salvation without assurance, i.e. he is saved but cannot be sure it will continue and come to a climax. Nevertheless assurance is a most helpful element in living the Christian life. Some Scriptures which aid in assurance are John 10:27-29; 1 John 5:12; Romans 6:5; Acts 13:48. When Paul says, 'I am sure that he who has begun a good work in you shall complete it right up until the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 1:6; cf. I Thess. 5:23-24), he shares the assurance he himself knows. At the same time he warns against presumption: 'Let him who thinks he stands [i.e. in

and of himself] take heed lest he fall' (I Cor. 10:12), and he has many injunctions against spiritual presumption. With other New Testament writers he urges constant vigilance against evil, and continuing humility against the pride which destroys. Redeemed man, then, has assurance that God has worked in salvation, but he must not in any way presume upon that work of salvation. Passages in Hebrews (eg. 2:1-4; 6:1-8; 10:26-31) urge constant attention to the processes of salvation.

WHAT GOD DOES FOR US IN THE PROCESSES OF SALVATION

We have seen that salvation is based upon the work of Christ on the Cross to effect the forgiveness of sins, cleansing from the pollution of sins, and justification of the person before the (condemning) law. We saw also that the work of the Cross effects the liberation of the believer from his enemies which worked their holds over him through the guilt of (his) sin(s).

Secondly, we saw that Christ, having risen and ascended, poured out the gifts of repentance, faith and forgiveness, with the gift also of the Holy Spirit. We noted that these gifts enrich the church as a whole, and make the context in which the believer can know daily victory over evil.

Thirdly, we saw that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. the place where he continues his reign and rule over evil, thus protecting the believer, and intervening for him. It is in this situation that the word of the Cross continues to be the power of salvation to those who are in its

(salvation's) process (I Cor. 1:18; cf. Gal. 6:14).

WHAT IS INCUMBENT ON US TO DO WHILST IN THESE PROCESSES

The present process of salvation must be seen in its various elements. We should speak not so much of the perseverance of the believers as we should of their preservation by the Father, the Spirit and the Son. We should speak not so much of them protecting themselves, as of being protected, especially by the reigning Son. We should speak not so much of what the believer does, i.e. 'works out [his] own [present] salvation with fear and trembling', as we should of 'God who is working in [them] both to will and to do of his good pleasure'. That is, the believer is still dependent upon God who is working towards him (Eph, 1:19; 3:20; Phil. 2:12-13).

Even so. the believer is to respond to these workings of God. He has been made a moral agent. and he must decide on these matters. For example, in Galatians 5: 16-26 he is admonished to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. In Ephesians 5 he is admonished to walk in love, and to walk in light. *He then must walk!* This same principle goes for all the commands given in the New Testament. The believer is at once under the Lordship of the Father, of the Son and of the Spirit. He is a son who is responsive and obedient to the Father. Hence he prays, 'Thy will be done.' As he has received Christ Jesus as Lord so he walks in him (Col. 2:6: cf. II Cor. 4:5). The Spirit is also the Lord (II Cor. 3: 18), and as the Son was led by the Spirit (cf. Luke 4:1), so the believer must be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16ff.).

All of these elements show us that the believer, in his processes of salvation, is dependent upon the completed work of Christ, upon the leadership of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and he is expected to obey the commands given, and live in them.

THE PRESENT PROCESS IS A MATURATIVE ONE

We must not think of current salvation as merely a matter of being kept, and of constant obedience, as though we are trying to obey a set of rules. The present process of salvation is a way of life which is bringing us to maturity. It has been called 'life with Christ', or 'living in the Spirit', or 'the life of sonship with the Father', and these are good terms and facts. However, it is what salvation will climax in (see Study 8) which is what matters. What then are the elements of current salvation which help to mature us?

Ultimate maturity is glorification which is now worked in stages

I Corinthians 226-10; cf. Colossians 1228; Hebrews 521 1-6:3; I Corinthians 321-3; Galatians 32 1-5, all show us that God has planned ultimate glorification, and that maturity is what life is now about. Note that maturity is in stages (II Cor. 32:18), so that one can be said to be mature (or perfect) at any stage, yet not fully mature until the ultimate.

Maturity can be retarded by certain factors

'The factors which encourage and enable maturity are:

- (a) *Obedience to God* and His commands, including obedience to proclaim the Gospel, as also to live rightly within the creation, the people of God, and the world outside the people of God.
- (b) *Full relationships* with the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and fellow man, especially those of the household of God. Life is a relational thing, and true relationships aid true growth.
- (c) *Loving of all men*, including those outside the people of God. Obedience, relational living, and loving, are all of the one piece. Love builds up (1 Cor 8:1; Rein. 14:19; Eph. 4: 11 - 16). *It is not as we are loved that we mature. but as we love.*

The *actions*, then of obedience, relationships and love are what mature a person so that the present processes of salvation are the elements which enrich and mature us.

The factors, then, which retard growth are the opposites of the elements we have just nominated. Hebrews 5:14-6:3, I Corinthians 3:1-3 and Galatians 3:1-5 show us that growth is not made where we walk in the flesh rather than the Spirit, where we confine ourselves to parties and party thinking and action, and where we refuse to leave the initial use of the milk of the Word, not going on to eat the very meat of the Word.

THERE ARE MANY MEANS TO MATURITY MADE AVAILABLE TO US

Sometimes these are called 'the means of grace'. The basic ones are of course the *sacraments*. We do not mean the mere celebration of them, but the grace they entail. Both *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* speak of total forgiveness, cleansing

and justification. They incorporate us in the people of God, and the powers that lie within this community. We are encouraged and kept by them.

There are simple means of growth such as the *study and understanding of the Scriptures*, the principle of daily fellowship which is supportive and to which we contribute. Indeed the people of God live together in harmony, and are enabled by the gifts given to the Body. *Prayer* is a great means for the enlargement of life in the believer. It is the power needed to support the actions of obedience. With prayer always goes *praise and worship*. Worship is essentially service (Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 7:15). The action of obedience requires the elements of service, of proclamation of the Gospel, of loving care. It also entails fighting the battle of faith against evil.

The conclusion we reach is that when believing man is in the rough-and-tumble of life, of obedience, and of faithful, loving action, then he will grow. Without moral exercise there can be no growth.

GENERAL CONCLUSION TO CURRENT SALVATION

What we have called 'current salvation' is the process by which we live the life of holiness by faith. True as it is that we are new creations, we have to learn to battle against the old man, i.e. Adamic humanity. Paul, in Romans 7, talks of *indwelling* sin. What we have to remember is that the spiritual battle against the enemies that beset us, as also against the enemies of the Kingdom, is the exercise which strengthens us, and makes us mature. Yes, but none of this

happens without the continuous saving life of Christ, the power of the indwelling Spirit, and the God and Father of us all, who is above all, and in all, and through all. He *is for all* we need. In this sense, Father, Son and Spirit are saving us all the time from the enemies, and for the works prepared for us to do.

Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not (Gal. 6:9).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. It is sometimes said, 'Salvation is in three tenses.' What would this mean?
2. What are 'the processes of salvation', and what part do we play in what God is doing in us?
3. What is the climax of glorification?

STUDY EIGHT

Salvation issues in an ultimate climax

INTRODUCTION: THE END IS NEEDED

Romans 8:18-25 depicts the waiting of creation for its brilliant climax, its ultimate release. This we will see more fully in our next study. However, verse 21 speaks of the ultimate glorious liberty of the children of God, which accords with verse 23 which speaks of the believer groaning inwardly as he waits for the 'adoption of sons, the redemption of the body'. It has been made known to the believer that this will be the end happening, and that it will be one of glorious relief.

ULTIMATE REDEMPTION IS FULL GLORIFICATION

That the redemption of the elect has been planned before time is clearly shown in such Scriptures as the following: II Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:3-7; Romans 8:28-29. One of the favourite themes of Scripture is that of the Book of Life, i.e.

that God has written certain names within this, and these will be saved. In Revelation 13:8 it is inferred that this book was written before time. Also in the same passage and in 1 Peter 1:19-20 it is shown that Christ's death was purposed before time.

We have already seen that salvation has the three tenses relating to it, i.e. past, present, and future. Salvation, then, is a crisis, a process, and a climax. The climax of salvation is glorification. In I Corinthians 2:6ff. Paul points to God's special wisdom for glorification as being extant before the foundation of the world. He means that God pre-planned this glorification and the wisdom which would effect it. This glorification is both the fruit and climax of redemption, i.e. of Christ's saving work. Philippians 1:6 says, 'And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.'

We need, then, to see this whole matter of glorification (ultimate redemption) from beginning to end, for it too is constituted of crisis, process, and climax.

GLORIFICATION IN HISTORY AND ETERNITY

Man was created in glory, and for glory

The following references speak of man being created in glory: Genesis 1:26f. (cf. 9:6); Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:29; Psalm 8:3ff.; Hebrews 2:5ff.; I Corinthians 11:7. Man was intended to reflect the glory of God in all His Being and actions by following His will, and being truly man. We have seen that man correlates with God's being, as son to Father, creature to Creator, subject to King. This glory man knew was a

contingent one. He has true glory inasmuch and insofar as he is dependent upon God. He can have no innate autonomous glory.

Man has fallen short of the glory

The Scriptures stop short of saying man has lost the glory, for man did not cease *essentially* to be man, but in practice he does *not fully* show the glory of God. Romans 3:23 says, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. 'That is, man has fallen short of his own glory because he has fallen short of God's glory. He is both *deprived and depraved* See Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 25:26; Mark 7:21 ff.; Ecclesiastes 7:29b.

There is no way that man, of himself, can regain glory

Romans 5:6 says we were too weak to do anything. We were helpless. Ephesians 2:8-10 says it could not be of works of man (cf. II Tim. 1:9). In fact man is defiled so that his hands are not clean. Hebrews 9:14 says his conscience is laden with dead works. Man is doomed to be inglorious apart from the saving work of Christ.

Glorification begins with a crisis

From John 17 we see that Jesus desires his disciples to know his glory and to come to glory. He says, 'The glory thou hast given to me. I have given to them'. This must mean they are now glorified. John 17:5, linked with Hebrews 2:9-10, shows that the Son was crowned with glory in order that he might suffer effectively and so bring 'many

sons into glory'. There is the work of the Cross which rehabilitates man from having fallen short of the glory. This is the basis of the crisis of glory man experiences. So he is a new creation (II Cor. 5: 17), he is filled full (Col. 2: 10), he is purified (Titus 3:3-7; I Cor. 6:11), he is given all gifts (Eph. 1:3; I Cor. 1:7), and all of this in the context of forgiveness, justification and sanctification.

Current glorification is a fact and a process

II Corinthians 3:18 says, 'And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.' This shows that redeemed man is being changed from one stage of glory to another. Passages such as Ephesians 1:9-10, 4:10 and I Corinthians 13:8-10 show that the time of history between Pentecost and the Parousia is a process, and that God's plan makes progress as it moves towards climax. Likewise is the case of the believer. We saw in Philippians 1:6 that the work goes on being completed right up until the day of Jesus Christ. II Corinthians 3:18 infers there are processive and progressive stages of glorification. This is not merely automatic or mechanistic. It requires not only the *input* of God but the (love-motivated) *output* of man. Man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

Current glorification is a process dependent upon God's energising and man's (obedient) response

Philippians 2:12-13 shows that man must work, but God *is energising within him* to complete His own will, ie. for

man and for His own purposes. Colossians 1:27 speaks of 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. Christ will bring man to his own glory and also *energises within him* for that purpose. Romans 8:22-30 shows that the Spirit is the Spirit of hope (cf. I Pet. 4: 14) and glory, and assists man to that glory. He then *energises within man* (Acts 1:8; cf. Rom. 8:9-11). So man is enabled for the process.

Current glorification is of faith: man is in the Perfect-imperfect tension

Paul says of man's present life that it is not walked by sight, but by faith (II Cor. 5:7). In fact the just(ified) go living by faith (Rom. 1:17). All that we have said above about the energising of the Godhead, and above that again of the crisis that takes place at conversion by which man is restored to lost glory, has to be seen by faith, for there is no way it can be seen by sight. In both I Corinthians 13:8-10 and Philippians 3: 10-16 Paul makes these points:

- (a) we are being matured, and can be said to be mature at each stage of our experience if we are truly pressing forwards in obedience and love, and
- (b) we are imperfect in the sense that we have not yet reached the goal; we are not yet glorified.

So we can be at one and the same time both perfect (i.e. mature for our current stage) and imperfect (i.e. we are not yet glorified). We have, then, to see *by faith* what we are. i.e. new creations, filled unto all fullness, energised by God, and so *act in that faith* that we refuse the accusations and doubts that would imply we are not.

This processive, progressive glorification will culminate in final glorification

This is what Paul calls 'the sonship, that is the redemption of the body'. In Romans 7:24 Paul calls the body 'the body of this death', i.e. 'death-body'. He means that even in the saved there is indwelling sin. Whilst it is no match for the indwelling power and energising of the Godhead, yet it can more than match man *on his own!* Each day redeemed man is required to be alert and to walk in the Spirit and in faith, and to put on the armour of God. Such a man longs for liberation from (a) the literal corrupting of the body in death, and (b) the perpetual conflict against evil. He looks for the fullness of his sonship, i.e. glorification of the body and the whole person.

In I Corinthians 15:50 Paul says clearly that humanity in its present form cannot *inherit* the Kingdom of God, i.e. have the Kingdom forever in the fleshly form in which we now live. We can be *in* this Kingdom (Col. 1:13) but not *inherit* it until our bodies are changed, i.e. are redeemed. In his writings he says that all will have to go through resurrection to be glorified, although those who are alive at Christ's coming will be transformed in a flash (1 Cor. 15:51ff.; I Thess. 4:13-18).

In Philippians 3:21 he says we are waiting for that appearing so that these bodies of our humiliation may be made like his body of glory (glorified body) by his (Christ's) mighty working by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself. This is the 'wisdom of God' of which Paul has spoken in I Corinthians 2:6-7. The actual glorification will surpass anything ever seen or heard or imagined by a human being. I John 3:13 and Romans 8:28 30 make it

clear that redeemed man will be in the full image of the Son. From that point onwards man will not know corruption, temptation, and the like. His conditions will be marvellously changed, for there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death (Rev. 21:1-5; cf. 7:15-17).

The New Testament Epistles constantly emphasise that we do not yet appear outwardly to be that which we will be, and hence this truth of glorification, even current glorification, is a mystery.

THE PURPOSES OF GLORIFICATION

Ephesians I: 12-14, Isaiah 43:6- 7 and similar passages show that God glorifies man for His own glory. This may seem egotistical from a human point of view. but since God's glory is dynamic for man and all creation, all creation profits by such a revelation. Man can only know his own glory when he sees fully (as a man) the glory of God, for he is the image and glory of God. Also, man cannot sustain such sight of God's glory now. He cannot look upon God and live (Ex.33:20). However, when fully glorified. he will be able to look upon the full glory (Rev. 22:4 5; I John 3:3).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

- I. When was man's glorification planned and when does it commence in the person who is redeemed?
2. What is the crisis and process of glorification'?
3. What is the climax of glorification?

STUDY NINE

Christ saves the whole creation

INTRODUCTION: UNIVERSAL OR UNIVERSALISTIC?

The adjective 'universal' (Gk. *katholikos*) means 'tends to be universal'. That is, it is not wholly universal. Because some theologians believe nothing of mankind—or even of rebellious celestial powers—will be lost, the doctrine of *universalism* has been projected. There seem to be certain vindications of this idea, eg. 'he will reconcile all things', 'all things will be united in him'. The problem here is that many other Scriptures point to persons and fallen celestial powers being judged, and the judgement executed, and some Scriptures speak of *eternal* punishment. This eternal punishment is in contrast to *eternal* life. Some, of course, argue extra-biblically, saying God is love, and He will allow nothing to perish. It has yet to be proven that love can and does cover the ultimate impenitence of any creature. i.e. gives redemption where it is finally rejected.

When then, we use the term 'all things', we will be meaning, 'all things which are in Christ and the Father'. This is universal in nature, but not universalistic.

CREATION BELONGS TO GOD THE CREATOR

I Corinthians 10:26 says, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'. This is a quote from Psalm 24:1-2, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein; for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers'. The same principle is stated time and again, eg. Psalm 89:11: 'The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine; the world and all that is in it, thou hast founded them'. It stands to reason that if God created, then what He creates is His to command, govern, and foster.

In addition to this right to rule, God observes that His creation is 'very good' (Gen. 1:31). This is confirmed by statements such as Ecclesiastes 3:11, I Timothy 4:4 and 6:17. This means that God cannot lose creation because He has created imperfectly. I Peter 4:19 declares Him to be 'faithful Creator'.

When we read the full story of the Bible, we discover that God not only created His creation, but also that He has redeemed it. 'God so loved the *world*', must mean that His love is not only for human beings but for His entire creation. In I Corinthians 6:19-20 Paul says, '...you are not your own; you were bought with a price'. In I Peter 1:18-19 the writer says, 'You... were redeemed from your futile ways ... with the precious blood of Christ'. God, then, as we shall see, not only creates His creation, but also redeems it.

ALL MANKIND WILL BE SAVED

In 1 Corinthians 15:22 Paul says, 'For as in Adam *all die*, so also in Christ shall *all* be made alive'. This appears to say,

'All men were born in Adam and as such, through his sin (Rom. 5:12), are doomed to death. However, all men, through the coming and death of Christ, have been freed from death and are made alive'. This appears also to be the meaning of Romans 5:18: 'Then as one man's trespass led to *condemnation for all men*, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life *for all men*'. This appears to vindicate the teaching of universalism.

However, when we look more closely we see the teaching of '*in Christ*' of the New Testament. 'In Adam all die', is really saying, 'All who are in Adam, and remain in him, are doomed to death'. It is all in Adam who will die. It is all in Christ who will live. This of course has to be shown, and it can be shown in two ways:

(a) *The biblical teaching concerning God's elect*. This is not a doctrine which men easily accept, for it seems to speak of partiality on God's part. God has the right to choose whom He will; that must be fundamental to His being as God. Ephesians 1:3-14 develops the idea of God electing His people before the foundation of the world. The theme is repeated in I Corinthians 2:6ff., as also in II Timothy 1:9: 'God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our own works, but in virtue of his own purpose which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago [i.e. from eternity]'. Acts 13:48 says, 'And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of God; and *as many as were ordained to eternal life* believed'.

The doctrine of election has been notoriously difficult to understand and accept, primarily because men oppose God doing as He wishes! However, it is in Scripture, and if all are elected to eternal life then there is no election. The term is superfluous. *When all are elected, none is elected*.

(b) The *biblical teaching concerning the principle 'in Christ'*. There is no doubt that some people remain *in Adam* and some come to be *in Christ*. In Romans 6:3 Paul says, 'Do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?' This makes it clear that there are those who were baptised into Christ, and those who were not. Thus the term 'in Christ' is a key term, especially in the Epistles. In the Acts we read of those who were baptised 'in the name of Jesus', i.e. into Jesus. Romans 6:1-14 (cf. Col. 3:1-5; Gal. 2:20) is a powerful passage, showing that those who were baptised into Christ have the remission of their sin-penalty (6:7), and, having died to this through Christ, are now freed from sin. Being *in Christ* is not merely a *positional*, but a *dynamic* matter. Hence Paul uses the passages just quoted to urge his believing readers to live a life of powerful holiness.

In Colossians 3:3-4 Paul says, 'For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory'. This must mean that only those who have died with Christ are hid with him. Only those will appear in (ultimate) glory when he appears in glory.

In Matthew 25:31ff. Jesus speaks of the nations who will be sheep, and those who will be goats. Here it is made clear that the sheep will be those who will enter the Kingdom of the Father, and the goats those who will not. The first will experience everlasting life and the second everlasting punishment. If we find this teaching galling, then it may well be we have not begun to understand the nature of sin, evil and darkness. We have not understood the holiness of God and the righteousness of His law. We have not understood Him as the One who is wrathful when men seek to foul His

creation (cf. Rom. 1: 18). We would thus be unaware that for His eternal creation to encompass sin and evil would make that creation wholly undesirable, and a contradiction of the nature of God.

THE SALVATION AND GLORIFICATION OF THE ELECT

I Corinthians 2:6ff. (amongst many passages) speaks of the glorification of the elect. This is the basis of the dynamic of hope in the Scriptures. Such glorification is not limited to the New Testament. Isaiah 43:6-7 (amongst other passages) speaks of such glorification, as also Isaiah 65 and 66 speak of the regeneration of the creation, both heaven and earth.

The personal glorification of the believer is well expounded in the following passages: I Corinthians 15:35-56; Romans 8:17-30; I John 3:1-3; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:4; I Thessalonians 4: 13-18. In Romans 8:22 Paul sees the ultimate of salvation in the sonship, that is the redemption of the body. He obviously means that the sonship described in verses 29-30 is not complete until we also have bodies of glory (glorified bodies) similar to that of the Son himself. What we need to see is that *none who is elect will fail to be saved* in the ultimate, even if his works are tried by fire and found to be worthless (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-15).

What we must keep seeing is that God continually works in the believer to fulfil His will for that one. See, then, Philippians 1:6 and 2:12-13. God's plan has been shown in Ephesians 1:3-14 to present His elect holy, blameless and as sons, before Himself.

THE UNIFICATION OF ALL THINGS

Ephesians 1:9-10 says, 'For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth'. This means that in the ultimate *all things* will be united, unified, made one, and headed up in Christ. In one way this is not surprising because *all things* were created in him. This is seen in Colossians 1:16:

For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him.

In the next verse Paul says, 'He is before *all things*, and in him *all things hold together*'. This is much the same thought as in Hebrews 1:3: 'He... upholds the universe by the word of his power [his powerful word]'. Thus we see that all things were created in him, and all things are being sustained by him. Ultimately they will be unified in him.

Ephesians 4:10 speaks of his ascending after the Atonement and Resurrection, 'that he *might fill all things*'. 'To fill them must mean that they are in some way wholly or partially empty. With what, then, does he fill things? 'The answer must be, 'with his plenitude', that is, 'with his personal fullness' Ephesians 1:19ff. shows that he has been raised above all things through the victory of redemption to reign over such things, not only in this age, but the age to come. That means he is over all things, not only by his act of creating them but also by redeeming them.

In Colossians 1:19-22 Paul shows that the fullness of God dwells in the Son, that God has reconciled all things by the

death of the Cross, and that this reconciliation will mean the ultimate presentation before God of things reconciled. Colossians 3:14 says, 'And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony'. This 'pronounces a great and universal principle, namely that 'love is that which binds all things together in harmony'. This is exactly the point of Jesus' prayer for the church in John 17:20-24. His love unifies his people.

We see then that creation produces an innate functional unity of all things. Providence, or the sustaining of all things, is the way God maintains the *essential* unity of all things, although sin and rebellion militate against that functional unity, and try to pervert it. Redemption removes the hostility and opposition, or rather first counters it in time, and ultimately defeats it for eternity, at which point the process (and progress) of God's work in history comes to consummation.]'he moment of glorification has arrived. II Corinthians 3:18 reveals that the process is now current. Various Scriptures speak of the current 'building up' work of love, eg. I Corinthians 8: 1; Ephesians 4:10-16; Romans 14:15-19; I Corinthians 13:8-13.

THE CONSUMMATION, THAT IS, THE SAVING, OF ALL CREATION

What puzzles the human mind is, 'How can all things be said to be saved (reconciled, filled up, united, harmonised) when patently the Bible says there are things-human beings, and fallen celestial creatures-which shall not be saved?' The answer is that the *all things* which are in Christ shall be saved. For example, the creation, apart from men

and angels, has not rebelled against God. Romans 8:18-25 shows that the creation was subjected to futility (i.e. emptiness, pointlessness) and so to frustration, not because of its own sin, but, we suppose, because of man's sin (cf. Gen. 3:17-19). Yet it was 'subjected in hope', i.e. it had the promise that it would one day be delivered from corruption into the liberty of glory which the sons of God know. The point at which this deliverance will take place is where the sons of God are glorified.

What then is the answer to *all things*? Partly the answer is that the *all things* are those things that are in Christ. Only those will be significant, will have part in the new creation. The other part of the answer is that *everything which is not in Christ is not*. We mean all outside of Christ is not part of the *essential* order, since it has denied that order, and since it refuses to be part of it. It is then *unredeemed*, but unredeemed because it insists upon being incorrigible. Revelation 20:11-21:8 shows that nothing that is evil is in the book of life, and is therefore judged and condemned. Revelation 21:8 speaks of such elements in strong terms.

C. S. Lewis in his book *The Great Divorce* powerfully shows the unreality of lost persons. Lewis depicts them as insubstantial, ghosts having no basic or essential reality. This surely must accord with all things which are outside the Creator-Mediator, the Redeemer-Mediator, the Renewer-Mediator, Christ. It may well be that much is hidden from us in regard to these matters, for the question is, 'Was there ever reality in that which is incorrigibly rebellious and which refuses to respond to love and grace?'

Having dealt with this negative side of things, we may now turn to the grandeur and the splendour of the Great Consummation of creation. There are passages in the Old

Testament which deal with this, eg. Isaiah 11, 65 and 66. There are other passages which deal with the Messianic age and Kingdom. Many of these point to the Day of the Lord, and the ensuing righteousness of Israel and the nations. However, a passage such as Ezekiel 37 speaks of Israel being regenerated, and then the ultimate destiny of the people to be the very sanctuary of God.

These passages lay the basis for the New Testament passages on glorification, unification and the regeneration of the world, the earth and the heavens. Jesus refers to this regeneration in Matthew 19:28. Paul refers to it in Romans 8: 18-30, and in other passages relating to glorification. II Peter 3: 10ff. speaks of this regeneration, almost as though it were a wholly physical matter. Revelation chapters 21 and 22 describe the renewal of all things, the heavenly City, and the healing of the nations.

Thus the ultimate picture we have of the salvation of all things is that of the renewed heavens and earth. In Revelation 21:1-7 it is God who renews all things. Nevertheless this ultimate salvation is dependent upon the Cross and its dynamic. This is clear from Revelation 5:1ff. In this chapter it is the crucified Christ who controls the destinies of nations and history. Hence it is quite correct for us to conclude with this wonderful truth: *Christ saves the whole creation.*

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Will all mankind be saved? If not, who will be saved?
2. Discuss creation as it was made, the effects of the Fall, and the ultimate unification of all things.

STUDY TEN

Living in life with Christ as Saviour

INTRODUCTION: CHRIST FOR US

We have seen in our previous studies that God—Father, Son and Spirit—has worked in the whole creation of man from the initial creating of all things to and through the redemption of man, and that the intention is to bring creation—through salvation—to its final goal and climax. Our studies have been primarily concerned with the person and work of Christ.

In creation (Col. 1:15-17; John 1:1-3) we have seen that the Son brought us into being. In salvation he saved us from the consequences and effects of sin into which we had come through the Fall. In salvation he has also saved us from the tyranny of strong and evil enemies. All of this was because of what he *did for* us on the Cross. In destroying guilt he liberated man to live, to grow in holiness of life, and to move onwards in a maturing process, the goal of which is man's glorification.

Many of the Scriptures which speak of the Cross indicate an identification Christ had with man. Romans 6:1 –6, Gal-

atians 2:20, II Corinthians 5:14, and others speak of the oneness of man with Christ in his death. Christ, then, died *for* us, and in another sense we died *with* him. All he did for us was done in identification with him. Briefly put, it means that his *death for* the penalty of our sin is our death *to* that penalty. We are now free to live as those who have died (penally) to sin. Freed from guilt we live a life in which the basic power of sin has been broken.

We must not underrate the continuing effects of that death. For example, 'He *is* the propitiation for our sins', and his 'blood goes on cleansing us from all sins'. The death is a dynamic to overcoming, for 'we are more than conquerors through him who *loved* us'. And so on. However, that is not all, as we now proceed to see.

CHRIST'S LIFE IN US

Romans 8:34 (cf. Heb. 7:25) indicates that Christ is still for us in action, in that he reigns over us, and in particular preserves from the enemies who would here attack us. His intercession is primarily to defend us from evil. He has been made to be Head over all *things for* the church, which is his Body. Because he is Head of the church he is still *with* it (Matt. 28:20; Acts 18:9-10; cf. 14:3; Mark 16:20; etc.). In this sense every believer can know that Christ is personally present to him as a member of his church, just as all together are incorporate in him.

Galatians 2:20 says, 'Christ lives in me'. Colossians 1:27 says, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. In Ephesians 3: 14-17 Paul prays for believers to be strengthened inwardly so that Christ may dwell in their hearts, by faith. In Galatians 2:20

Paul sees the life lived by each believer is by personal trust in the Son who indwells him. In Philippians 1:21 Paul makes the simple statement, 'For me to live *is* Christ'. Life is living in Christ, as also it is having Christ live in him.

All of this, as it is set in verses and references, sounds very orthodox and very correct. It may even sound dull and prosaic. However, for a human being to have Christ living in him is so amazing as to be incredible. Such indwelling makes the life of the believer to be dynamic. In Galatians 2:20 Paul is saying that *he is not him self as once he had been*. He is, so to speak, *another person*. At the same time he is another person and yet basically the person, at core, which he always had been. However, the coming of Christ to him, and living in him, has altered everything. We will see (below) that the person who has received salvation not only has Christ living in him, but he also lives in Christ. This means in fact that *he is in union with Christ*. Once he lived on his own. Now his life has been—so to speak—invaded by Christ.

The coming of Christ means he is no longer alone. He is no longer powerless or rudderless. Jeremiah 10:23 says, 'The way of man is not in himself. It is not in a man to direct his own footsteps'. The one who calls himself 'The Way' now lives in the true believer. All Christ's powers have come to the new person. Christ is, for him, 'the hope of glory'. i.e. Christ living in him is shaping him up to full glorification.

This indwelling of Christ also brings internal experience of sonship. When the Spirit comes, then Christ comes. This is seen in Galatians 4:6 and Ephesians 3: 16, as also Romans 8:9-11. The Spirit communicates this life of Christ to the believer, and so causes him to recognise that, having the Son in him, he participates in that Sonship and can thus cry

'Abba!', i.e. 'Father!' This living sense of sonship brings warmth, security, and a spirit of filial relationship with the Father, as also constraint to loving obedience. Thus when we live life with Christ, it is having Christ's life in us.

OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

When we come to the term 'in Christ' in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles where it is used profusely, then we see how significant it is. The term is sometimes translated 'through Christ' (eg. Phil. 4:13 in AV, 'I can do all things *through* Christ), when it is really *in* Christ. This teaching came directly from Christ himself. In John chapters 14-16 he uses the term 'in my name', or, 'in me'. They are the same. To pray in his name is to be in him, and so to have his mind, as Paul sometimes says (i.e. 'We have the mind of Christ). Jesus said, 'Without me you can do nothing'. John 15:11 needs very close study.

Often Jesus says he does nothing but what the Father shows him. He means he is in the Father, and knows the mind and will of the Father. In John 14:10-13 he poses the proposition that as he abides in the Father, and they (the disciples) abide in the Son, so the Father will work. That is, He will work through the Son, and so the Son through the sons (the disciples). In John 17:20-26 he speaks of himself being in the Father, and the Father in him. He prays that those who believe will be one amongst themselves (total unity) and that as the Father and the Son are in each other, so they (the disciples) will also be in the Father and the Son. Thus unity and love will obtain.

In the Epistles the reasoning is similar, but there are also

differences. In Colossians 3:3-4 Paul speaks of their dying in his death, and becoming one with him: 'For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory'. Thus the believer is shown to have *no life outside of Christ*. At the same time we must beware of mysticism, and the demand for emotional feeling of such a relationship. It is a fact whether we feel it or not. The following Scriptures will enable us to see how much the 'in Christ' principle is used, and what it involves.

EPHESIANS 1:3-4	Blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing. Chosen in him to be holy and blameless.
EPHESIANS 1:7	In him we have redemption through his blood, i.e. forgiveness of sins.
EPHESIANS 1:11-14	In him both Jews and Gentiles are to be to the praise of His glory.
EPHESIANS 2:4-6	Has raised us in Christ and seated us in him in heavenly places.
EPHESIANS 2:7	God's purposes for the ages realised in Christ.
EPHESIANS 2:10-11	We are created in Christ for good works, before planned for us to do.
EPHESIANS 2:13	In Christ, Gentiles once far off are brought near, i.e. to the Father.
EPHESIANS 4:20-21	We are taught the truth in Christ Jesus. I
	CORINTHIANS 15:22 In Adam all die. In Christ shall all be made alive, i.e. resurrected.
II CORINTHIANS 5:17	If any man is in Christ he is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come.
PHILIPPIANS 3:9	'That I may be found in him'

I TIMOTHY 2:7 'I speak the truth in Christ'.

COLOSSIANS 2:6 'As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him'.

These are only a few of the statements concerning the believer's being in Christ, but they indicate that from the moment a person believes, he is in Christ, and everything which is Christ's is his, and everything which is his is Christ's. This means that the whole 'history' of Christ belongs to him, and his to Christ. Thus the Incarnation, Baptism, Ministry, Death, Resurrection and Ascension belong—so-to-speak—to him. What we mean is that all these resources are for him, on the basis and assumption that he abides in Christ. In fact they are what assist him to live in Christ.

WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE

In Romans 5:10 Paul says, 'For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life'. "What then does this mean? It may well mean, as in Romans 4:25, that he was delivered up for our sins, and raised for our justification. Without his resurrection we would have no life (cf. Rom. 6:1-6). However, Paul does not say 'resurrection' but 'his life'. He must mean the life of the risen Lord. How are we *saved* by such? The answer is: 'Having been saved (reconciled and justified) by his death and resurrection, we now have the living Christ, the Lord of all, who battles for us in intercession against evil (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). He reigns over all things in order to battle against hostile powers. He also leads his people, the church. He places his life

within every believer. He places every believer within himself. He has been raised above every power (good or evil), and has been made to be Head over all things. *for* the church. It is by his power that God works in the people of God. They grow up into him, and mature in him, both personally and corporately (Eph. 4:11-16). By him they are enabled to work the will of God. In him and by him they come to maturity, and ultimately to glorification. *Without this life, his people have no true life*'.

Ephesians 2: 11-18 shows us that all Gentiles were outside of grace, outside of the covenant, but through Christ the way has been opened for them to come to the Father. The Old Man is Adam, and in Adam all die. The New Man is Christ, and in him all are alive, now, and will be raised in him in the resurrection from the dead. There is no sense in which the life of the risen Lord saves a person, so much as that life saves by what it has done in the Cross and Resurrection (and Ascension). Nevertheless, a person who has been saved goes on being saved from evil every day by the life of the risen Lord. Evil is constantly defeated. The believer is protected. He becomes strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10). Greater is he that is in him, than he that is in the world, for Satan is in the world, and Christ is in the believer.

However, it is not merely protection which comes from the risen Lord, *but his very own life*. That is what Paul means when he says, 'Not I, but Christ who lives in me'. That is, that we are alive in Christ. His resources are what we have. Hence Paul in Colossians 2:9-15 speaks of what *happened* to the believer in Christ through the Cross and Resurrection, and as a result the present nature of the believer. He says, 'You are complete [filled full] in him'. Previously he had said. 'in him all the fullness of God was

pleased to dwell', and, 'in him are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 1:19; 2:3). That is why he says. 'So live in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith'. To be saved by his life, then, means to draw upon all those resources in a faith-union with him.

LIVING OUT THE LIFE

Living in the saving life of Christ is really living in union with him. This union is not merely a mystical union but a practical faith-union. As Paul points out, 'We walk by faith and not by sight'. Life then is by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20). His indwelling is also by faith (Eph. 3:16-17), and we have also seen that abiding in Christ is a matter of faith-union and faith-obedience (John 15:1-11). Such union is aided by the means of grace such as prayer, reading of the Word, continuing forgiveness, cleansing, and the like. Such union is not only personal but corporate in that all believers together share this life of Christ.

As we receive the Holy Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:2, 14), so also Christ indwells us by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11) and indwells us by faith (Eph. 3:16-17). Our participation in Christ's Sonship (Gal. 3:26-29) is also by the Spirit (Gal. 4:6). We are not then left—so to speak—to a cold and colourless faith, but indeed are aided by the Spirit to a living and dynamic faith. Hence on the one hand we are told of the power of God at work in such a union (Eph. 1: 19: 3:20), and also of the rich love which fills us (Rom. 5:5: Eph. 3:16-19). Thus faith, love, hope and power are all present and operative by the Holy Spirit, who effects the faith-union and helps to maintain it.

CONCLUSION: LIFE IN CHRIST-ITS ACTION AND GOALS

Life in Christ is not only to be saved and secured by him, protected by him, and aided in growth to maturity. but it is to work with him. Deliverance from evil, power to live free from sin's bondage, are all very well, but one must not be totally occupied in such pursuits. Life in Christ is not only moral obedience, but obedience in sharing Christ's own life of Sonship with the Father, i.e. that commission to do the Father's will by which men and women shall hear the Gospel, be saved, brought to the Father by the new and living way, and made to be fellow heirs with those of Israel.

It is obvious that Christ's life on earth was not merely defeating evil, and maintaining a life of purity. It was also attacking evil, liberating those under Satan's power, and releasing them into fellowship with the Father. In fact it was doing all this in love, so that power became no goal, but only doing the will of the Father. Likewise the believer who is in Christ and in whom Christ is, will carry on the work of the Son. Holiness, maturing, and the elements of developing glorification, will all be the natural result of doing the will of the Father in the proclamation of the Gospel, and promoting the growth of the Christian community by ministry. This is what Christ is about doing, currently, and so this is what we must be about. Not to do what he is doing is to go against his life. and of course our own life in Christ as it should be.

We conclude, then, with the great cry of Paul, 'For me to live is Christ!' For him all his life is Christ. This includes not only power and love, but suffering. It is not only what we are saved from that enriches our living, but what we are saved

to, i.e. to live the life of Christ here, in this world, and then, ultimately, to live with him in glory.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What do we mean by (a) 'Christ for us', and (b) 'Christ *in us*'? How does this affect our Christian living'?
2. If Christ is *in us*, then what does it mean for us to live our life *in him*'?
3. Describe our union with Christ. What is the difference between a 'mystical' union and a 'faith' union'?

STUDY ELEVEN

Sharing salvation with the unsaved

INTRODUCTION

True evangelism is the overspill of a heart too full to contain it. By 'it', we mean the evangel, the Good News, the Gospel. The basic constraint for all evangelism should be the obligation of love. This is shown by Paul in Romans 1:14-15: 'I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: so I am eager to preach the gospel to you'. He repeats the thought in I Corinthians 9:16-18:

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? Just this: that in my preaching I may make the gospel free of charge, not making full use of my right in the gospel.

THE CONSTRAINT FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is itself the good news for mankind. We have seen that in previous studies. It seems strange that one

human being would not tell another of good news, when we are all members of the same (human) race. However, the Gospel is *the* Good News, and we cannot refrain from telling it. In I Corinthians 4: 1-15 Paul shows what it costs to share the news, namely persecution and terrible pressures. But then the Word of the Cross (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 18, 21) is the power of God. It, so to speak, exercises its power in its 'own rights. One has to fight to desist from telling the message. When one does so, the very power that is generated (or, liberated) carries the momentum required for proclamation. So Paul goes on preaching.

In II Corinthians 5:8-14 Paul speaks of two other elements of constraint. The first is fear, i.e. 'fear of the Lord', and the second love, i.e. the love of Christ to us. The first is not a slavish but a reverent fear. Paul does not tell us whether the fear resides in the one who is yet to be evangelised or in the evangelist himself. It does not matter. Sober (reverent) fear of God is a great incentive for wholesome obedience. Love is the great power to get us moving. Jesus said, 'if you love me, you will keep my commandments' (John 14:15). John says, 'His commandments are not heavy' (1 John 5:3). In fact they are, of themselves, when obeyed, obedience-inducing.

REASONS FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

These are many if we accept the biblical dilemma of man. Man, created by God and fallen into sin, is neither desirous nor able to extricate himself from his sinful attitude or his sins, i.e. their guilts, pollution, penalty, etc. There is no human way of resolving his dilemma. God is a holy God. He

judges sin without mercy. He cannot humiliate His law and His own holiness by passing over sin. In the Cross He pours out His judgement upon sin, but this is in the suffering of His Son. His Son voluntarily obeys. God is not pacified by His Son, but the Father and the Son work together to destroy the power of sin over man which has been exerted by the factors of sin's penalty and sin's pollution.

The Gospel alone meets the needs of man. Someone has said, 'Nothing will satisfy the conscience of man which does not first satisfy the conscience of God'. Passages such as Romans 3:19-24; 5:5-10; II Corinthians 5:19-21; I Peter 2:22-24; 3:18; 1 John 4:7-10 (amongst many others) show that God had planned the deliverance of man, and at the Cross—as in and by the Resurrection—God had purposed to liberate man from sin's power.

Another way of saying this is that that which meets the needs of conscience, and sets man free in his conscience, is that alone which can meet the need of man, universally. 'That which goes deepest to the conscience goes widest to the world' (P. T. Forsyth).

How then can a man who has had his conscience truly quietened, who has been reconciled with God, as also relieved of his sins, how can such a man *not* share that marvellous news with others of the human race? His love-response to God must express and declare itself in sharing the Gospel with others. This must be his response: none other is admissible.

OBEDIENCE IN PROCLAMATION A PRESUPPOSITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we read the passages in which Christ sent his disciples to proclaim the Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16f.; Luke

24:44-47; John 20: 19-23; Acts 1:8), the instructions are not so much direct commands as they presuppose the apostles will go. Hence the use of the participles in Matthew and Mark. i.e. '*going..* to do such and such'. The response of love and gratitude is presupposed, as indeed the compassion which should seek to meet the needs of others, knowing that the supply of those needs is innate in the good news of the Gospel. Romans 5:5 and Acts 1:8 should be read in parallel. *Love* and *witness* are the one thing. At the same time, both love and witness proceed from the Spirit. The Spirit comes in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed in power (cf. Acts 1:8; I Cor. 2:4-5; I Thess. 1:5; I Pet. 1:12). Actually the command to proclaim was given through the Spirit (Acts 1:2-3). Hence it was fully understood. The power to communicate resides in the Spirit, who seeks to have the saving and faith-evoking Word proclaimed.

We conclude, then, as we see in I John 5:1-3 (cf. I John 2:3-6) that love and obedience are one together. Anything which diminishes love diminishes obedience. For the things that diminish love, see Matthew 24:12; I John 2:15-17; cf. II Timothy 4: 10. Jude 20-23 shows us we must *keep ourselves in the love of God*, and part of this keeping is sharing the love with others. Revelation 2:1-7 shows us a church which has left its first love. The principle of forgetting forgiveness is mainly responsible (see II Pet. 1:9). We need all the time to stir one another up to love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

The best way, then, to keep the spirit of proclamation alive is to continue to see the love of God in the Cross of Christ, and to live deliberately and increasingly in that salvation. Living in the principle of the Cross daily (i.e. in grace-dependence), as in 1 Corinthians 1:18, will keep us fresh in the love of God.

THE MESSAGE WE PROCLAIM

If we go back over our past studies we will see that salvation was planned prior to creation (Eph. 1:3ff.; II Tim. 1:9; I Cor. 2:6f.). In Isaiah 63:16 God is called 'our Father, our Redeemer from eternity'. If we understand 'salvation history'. we see that God has been about man's salvation from the beginning of time. The prophets bear witness to this (Luke 24:27; I Pet. 1:10-11; etc.). Christ effects this salvation through his incarnation and ministry, all of which culminated in the Cross and Resurrection (Rom. 4:25).

This salvation, in eradicating man's (objective) guilt, spells doom to all forms of evil and enmity which dominate man. Forgiveness and justification relieve him of his past and assure him of his future. At the same time they liberate him from his various enemies. This Gospel is received through the initial conviction of sin, righteousness and judgement by the Spirit (John 16:7-11). Man must exercise the gifts of repentance and faith in order to appropriate salvation.

The message is linked with the Kingdom, i.e. 'Jesus is Lord!' It is linked with the Father in that He initiated the work of salvation, and has drawn His sons to Himself, through the Son. Thus the Kingdom, the Church, and the Family (the household of God, cf. Gal. 6:10; I Tim. 3:15) are linked when proclaiming the message.

One must understand something of creation and covenant to see how related is the Gospel to the needs of man. Thus when he preaches, his message is not merely *doctrinaire* but is living, related, warm and real.

THE JOY OF PROCLAMATION

A quick trip through the Acts of the Apostles shows how joyful the early preachers were in proclaiming the Gospel.

They rejoiced to see great responses. They also had anguish when the response was small, or when they were rejected. Nevertheless 'they counted it great joy to be permitted to suffer for his sake'.

Joy then is not our primary motivation for evangelising the needy sinners of this world, but it grows alongside love and reverent fear. In fact it is the love, fear and joy seen in the proclaimers which attracts (or repels) those outside the church. The church has a powerful opportunity to speak to the needs and requirements of man.

THE GOAL OF PROCLAMATION

This must be understood in terms of:

- (a) the glorification of God as trustworthy Creator (I Peter 4:19), graceful Redeemer, loving Regenerator of fallen humans, and purposeful Glorifier of His elect;
- (b) the triumph of the Kingdom of God which is the primary theme in Scripture;
- (c) the fulfilment of the people of God, for God desires to be their God, and they to be His people, and they-God and people-all to dwell together. This is much the same as
- (d) the family or household of God.

God then is saving His people in order to make them holy and blameless before Him. and also to shape or conform them to the image of His Son, so that all sons will be as *the* Son.

This, then, is the goal of the proclamation, i.e. a great

multitude which no man can number, out of every tribe and people and nation and tongue, coming to their Father-God, as also to their ultimate home and eternal destiny.

Seeing this hope of glorification and the revealed glory of God in the multiplicity of His children is our basic drive in sharing salvation. This desire to glorify Him will be fulfilled one day—the day of rewards and losses: ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’; ‘Come, beloved of my Father; enter the kingdom prepared for you from the very beginning of creation’. These are the rewards for sharing the saving life of Christ.

The great reward will be that we shall be like Him, a nation of priests and kings, reigning on the earth, for we will have seen Him, face to face.

This, in itself, constitutes a most powerful constraint.

How, then, at this point in time, do we find ourselves in regard to constraint?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is evangelism? Are all believers called to be evangelists? Support your answer by some Scripture references.
2. Study I Corinthians 5:14 and see if there is any difference between the word ‘motivation’ which we often use, and the word ‘constraint’ which we have used in our second heading.
3. What do we mean by ‘proclamation’? What are its elements?

CONCLUSION TO THE WHOLE SERIES

It would be good now for us to look back at the index to our studies. A rough glance will show the ground we have covered—and what a wide scope it entertains! It ranges from the fall of man, following creation, to the ultimate redemption of man in the New Creation. This is not only a range of time, but it is a range in the experiences of man as created, fallen, redeemed, as also man as he is brought through the processes of sanctification and glorification.

We were drawn to see man’s dilemma when he sinned against his holy Creator, and deserved nothing but the death which rightly came upon him. However, because God is the God of all grace, we saw He had—before creation—designed salvation for man through His Son, the Word, the Mediator of creation. God’s holiness explains His wrath upon sin. Such wrath is reasonable and necessary. Man who is weak (helpless), ungodly, at enmity with God, does not even desire to solve his dilemma, much less attempt the impossible.

We saw that the Triune God worked in creation and determined to work in salvation. The Son was the Mediator of this creation, and was designed to be the Mediator of salvation. The Father, because He loved His creation, purposed to redeem it. The Spirit, who is the Spirit of life, worked to bring man to salvation. This Triune work was expressed and executed through the Mediator, Jesus Christ,

the Word-become-flesh, the Son incarnate.

We saw what had to be done to save man. His whole attitude to God needed to be brought to a dynamic and radical change. In man there is no such cause, and man lacks the power to execute this radical change. The sin which is in him, the attitude of sin which is his, the guilts, pollutions, and bondages of evil, prevent any hope of his turning to God or seeking Him. Christ removes the impediment by bearing it to exhaustion and extinction upon the Cross. When the guilt and pollution of sin are removed, it is evident that there is no more need to atone. The Atonement is full. It is complete. It is sufficient. Man then does not see God as his enemy but as his Friend, his Redeemer, and so, his Father.

It is the work of Jesus which saves man. We saw that he becomes man in order to bear the sin of man. So deep is his love for his creation. The saving work of the Cross not only saves man from the desperate consequences of his sin. It also saves man from himself, his God-hating, self-preserving self. It changes him into a new creature, and he becomes a lover of God.

In saving man from his sins, and his sin, God also saves man from his enemies. These are sin, Satan, the world powers, the world system, the flesh, death, the wrath of God, the law, and conscience. Every day man is confronted by these enemies. In his misery he seeks comfort from the idols, but these become a tyranny to him. When Christ removes the guilt of man he liberates him from the bondage and fear of these many enemies. The love that flows from the Cross so grips his heart that the idols lose their grip and are pale things when viewed in the full love of God.

We saw that whilst salvation is in fact a very simple thing,

yet the processes by which Christ defeated evil are profound. They require all the powers given to him as man, of holiness and love, to destroy the venom and strength of evil. So Christ must become man-for-men and bear all their sins in his body on the Tree. He must take into his holy self all the impurity of mankind. His titanic struggle with all evil cannot be understood in any degree but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. However, since God has ordained it, and has Himself set forth His Son to be a propitiation, then it must be sufficient.

Were there no resurrection the Cross would be useless. In fact both events are really one event. By destroying the power of death in taking sin's guilt, Christ could not be held by death. His death was the springboard to his resurrection. His resurrection proved, as well as executed, his power over sin and death. Even so that death and resurrection, so to speak, were further sealed by Christ's ascension, the sign that the Father loved and accepted him, and the place from which he was to reign. Reigning in this place he exercises authority over all the universe, over all time and eternity. From his place of reigning Christ has sent the Holy Spirit, the gifts of repentance and faith and the forgiveness of sins. He has also formed his church, the body in which his people are not only protected but governed, and it is in this that they grow. From his place of reigning he intercedes for the people of God against all the wiles and actions of evil which would seek to destroy them.

In that sense, then, salvation is an ongoing thing. Having been saved we are in the processes of being saved, being indwelt by Christ's saving life. This is the very life of the Cross-Resurrection-Ascension—none other! *He who has begun the good work in us will go on completing it right up*

unto and until the day of Christ. Then we will be saved completely in that the body will be glorified and we will live eternally.

We saw, then, that Christ is about saving persons, not merely as individuals, but as those who are his people together. The very physical universe has been affected by the sin and fall of man. Its regeneration is contingent upon the glorification of man, when it will be restored to full functionality and be saved from corruption. It too will fully show the glory of God.

Meanwhile we live in faith, hope and love. Love is the greatest because it is all of the life, the mode and the goal. But it is with Christ we live. We see that he lives in us, and we live in him. This is at once a personal matter for each member of his body, and then a corporate matter for the whole of the people of God. In Christ are immense resources, and these are both current and present, i.e. within us. Hence without him we cannot live the saved life, or the life that is in salvation's processes.

CONCLUSION TO OUR CONCLUSION

We conclude then that we cannot possibly live in the powers and facts of salvation and keep silent about salvation itself. Man is in dire need of this. Without salvation he is lost. As human beings born of one blood (i.e. one man, Adam) we are all brethren. How could we know and receive the gift of salvation, and the gifts contained within it, and not share with our brethren?

The sharing of the salvation we have received means also a freshening knowledge and experience of it ourselves. The

redemption of others is one of the most beautiful events we can witness. The expression of our love and gratitude to God for His gift of life is the telling of that love to others. It is witnessing to what God has done in Christ. If salvation means little to us, we will tell it little to others.

We are left, then, with the very personal question: 'What does His salvation mean to me? How highly do I prize it? Could I possibly refrain from sharing it with others?'