

Against Hypothetical Universalism

# Preaching the True Gospel Properly.

Dr. John Kennedy (Dingwall)

1819 - 1884

"He being dead, yet speaketh" Heb. 11:4

## Editor's Introduction.

In the January 1995 issue of the "Evangelical Times" published in England, there appeared an article by Mr. John Legg under the title: *Preaching the Gospel Properly*. The article was an undisguised attack on the book *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel* by David Engelsma, and by association, an attack on the *British Reformed Fellowship*. It was gratifying, however, to see in the February issue of the same paper two most pertinent letters effectively rebutting Mr. Legg's charges. As to a response from this editorial office, however, it has been deemed apposite, for the moment at least, to begin reprinting a series of expository and exegetical work done by that great "Spurgeon of the North", as he was hailed in his time, Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall, the peerless preacher and leader in the Free Kirk of Scotland's Highlands in the last century. This present article is the first of what will (DV) be a series, and is an excerpt from a longer work "Man's Relations to God" published in 1869. This excerpt is part of Dr. Kennedy's excellent exposition of Gospel Preaching as contained in that volume. It indicates just how faithful Scottish Calvinists considered these matters in the halcyon days of the old Free Kirk, and shows how Mr. Legg and all those who think with him are out of step with Historic Calvinism and the Westminster Standards. It is also a vindication of David Engelsma, for one is able to see how the Protestant Reformed position on Gospel Preaching is consonant with that of the great leaders of the Free Kirk in days of yore, and with all the Reformed Creeds of Westminster, and the Three Forms of Unity. Accordingly, we have taken the liberty to entitle this excerpt as "Preaching the TRUE Gospel Properly"

"The Gospel of God" is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ." The Person, who is the Christ and the Son of God, is presented to us in the Gospel. It is a personal Saviour - a saving Person - the gospel reveals to us. He Himself must be realized, received, and trusted. True, it is by faith. It is as exhibited in the truth, He is to be known; and it is by faith in the truth He is to be received. The soul's act of trust cannot immediately reach the person of Christ. It is through the truth alone He is

approached. But it is the part of God to see to it, that in connection with the act of faith, there is a vital union formed between the person of the believer and the Person of Christ. It must be so; for I cannot be "in Christ", so as to be regarded by God as standing in His right as Surety, unless I am in Christ, as a member is in union with the Head, or as its living branch is in union with the vine,- so "joined to the Lord" as to be "one spirit with Him". And there can be no exercise of living faith unless the living Christ is realized. It is in Him I must trust. I must be persuaded that He can save me. I require not merely a promise from God assuring me of salvation; I must, in the light of His doctrine, recognize in the flesh Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. An assurance of salvation by promise would not satisfy me, unless I so knew Him in whom that promise is given, as to be assured that He was worthy of my confidence. (**John 6:69**).

How vain is all faith that reaches not the living Christ of God! And does not that faith stop short of Him which merely grasps a statement regarding the love of God or the death of Christ, and on that warrant appropriates the promise of salvation? There are those whose faith is a mere assent to the statements that God loves, and that Christ died for, sinners. These have but the swaddling-clothes.....they find not the "child born" and the "Son given". They have the grave-clothes instead of the risen Christ Himself. How much passes, in these days of child's play with the work of God, under the name of conversion, that terminates in no more fruitful result. The gospel is perverted to suit the sinner's convenience, that he may have the joy of hope and the fervour of feeling which this excites, while Christ Himself is ignored, and the soul unrenewed remains apart from Him, and far off from God.

But there is another snare for anxious souls laid by the tempter's hand. They may be urged to attempt to lay hold of Christ apart from the truth, when they discover the error of taking hold of the truth apart from Christ. A picture of Christ in their imagination, is substituted for Christ as revealed in the Word, and to this self-created thing they direct their hope. This is just as fatal a mistake as the other. To sever "what the Lord hath joined" is in either case a deadly blunder. The truth revealing Christ is the only warrant of faith; Christ as revealed in the truth, is the only object of faith. **I can reach Christ only by means of the Word; and I find nothing there if I reach not Christ Himself.**

And it is Christ, *as a Saviour*, who is preached to me in the gospel. He is the only one invested with that office by God. He is the Saviour of the *elect*, and therefore the Saviour of *sinners*. It is as the Saviour of sinners He is presented to me. He is not *officially* or *designedly* the Saviour of the world; but He is engaged to be the Saviour of every sinner who believes. He holds Himself in readiness to save every sinner who comes to Him at the call of God. (**John 6:37; 40**)

It is "Christ crucified" that is preached in the gospel. His death stands out prominently in gospel light. This is the outstanding fact connected with the name of

## Preaching the True Gospel Properly.

35

Christ. This is fitting, because of the place which His atoning death occupies in the scheme of redemption, and its bearing on the glory of God, and on the salvation of His people. In His death He finished a work by which God's justice was satisfied, His law magnified, and His name glorified on earth. By His death He sealed the everlasting Covenant of Grace, and procured a right to all its blessings for those whom the Father gave Him. It is on the ground of the work finished on the cross, and on that ground alone, that a sinner can attain in Christ, a right to salvation. This is all I can find even in Him on which to rest my hope of peace, and to claim a right to everlasting life.

The place which His death occupies in the gospel, and its important bearing on the destinies of men, tends to induce special attention to our relation to the atonement, and to beget a desire to enjoy the hope of an interest in it. There is in every soul, in whom conscience is active, a feeling of insecurity. There is in every mind, containing any acquaintance with gospel truth, the idea that an interest in Christ's death is essential to safety. There is in every unrenewed heart a desire to avoid the necessity of dealing with a personal Saviour, and to attain to hope, through the gospel, without being "born again". The figment of a universal atonement has been produced to meet this craving. It is just the gospel perverted to suit the taste of proud carnal man. "Christ died for all, and therefore for me; I believe this, and therefore I shall be saved", are the short stages of an easy journey to the hope of peace. But there is a triple error here - the personal reference is separated from the gracious design of the death of Christ; the death is dissociated from the person of Christ; and the work of the Holy Ghost is ignored.

(1.) *The personal reference is separated from the gracious design of the death of Christ.* If Christ died, He died as a surety. If He died as surety He must have been substituted for those for whom He died. If He died as their substitute, He died so that they all died in Him. Their death is past in His for them. (2 Cor.5:14). He died that they might live. This was the design of Christ in reference to those for whom He died. This design must have been in His view, in connection with all who were represented by Him. But to say that there are those for whom Christ died, who shall themselves die for ever, is to separate the reference from the design of His death, and to presume to know the purpose of God in another way than that in which alone He is pleased to discover it; for surely it is only as the gracious design takes effect that the personal reference can possibly be made known. It is along the line of divine intention the current of saving grace flows forth to men through Jesus Christ. It is along the wire that the electric (telegraph) passes through the ocean; but the wire must be hid ere it can conduct the subtle stream. It must be carefully covered, and all the wrapping which conceals it, must extend to the further shore. The current is stopped when the covering is pierced. It is when the section of the whole cable has reached, that the message can be carried to the further shore; and only then can the wire be denuded and exposed to view. Thus is

the chain of love from heaven to earth covered with the design of salvation to sinners. It is when the saving benefit of Christ's death has reached a sinner, that the reference is discovered to him; and then only can the hand of faith grasp the love itself, from which all salvation flows.

To attempt to determine the reference, so as to ascertain the parties for whom Christ died, till this is discovered by the application of redemption, and to use that supposed reference as a rule of faith, is to pry presumptuously into divine secrets, and to substitute the decreative for the revealed will of God. This error, so often charged against Calvinists, is committed rather by those who charge them with it.

(2.) *The death is dissociated from the person of Christ.* To believe that Christ died for me, because He died for all, is to "believe a lie;" but even were it true, of what advantage could this faith be of to me? His dying for me, because for all, secures nothing to me. And to believe this, is something else than to believe in Christ Himself. It is in effect, making His death a substitute for Himself. But instead of looking on the death of Christ as it refers to you, look, in the first instance, on its bearing on His own fitness to save, and on the prospects of all who are one with Him. To view it thus, is to see Christ commended instead of superseded by His death. The first thing, I require to be assured of, is Christ's fitness to save me, a sinner. It is in Him I am called to trust. Ere I can do so, I must be persuaded that He is worthy of my confidence. This I cannot be assured of, unless I know Him as a sacrifice for sin. (**Heb. 9: 14**). The merit of His sacrifice I cannot appreciate, but in the light of His personal glory; (**Eph. 1:7**) and I cannot appropriate the benefits secured by it, till I have first taken hold of Himself by faith. What I discover in the light of the cross is, that He can save me in a way that shall be to the glory of God. This is His grand recommendation as a Saviour to me. If this were not true regarding Him, I never could confide in Him. And in the light in which I realise the infinite merit of His sacrifice, I know His love to be such as "passeth knowledge." To connect that love, and the death by which it was commended, with those whom the Father gave to Him, does not deprive me of hope. It only assures me of how certain, and therefore how desirable the redemption is, which was purchased by His blood. The Person, in all His power and love, is presented to me; and the authority of God shuts me up to the acceptance of Him, in order to my own salvation. It is light revealing the glorious person, the infinite merit, and the ineffable love of Christ, and a call requiring me to come to Him, and not any supposed reference of His death to me, that encourages me to receive Him that I may be saved.

(3.) *The Spirit's work is practically ignored.* There is nothing in the exercise of an Arminian's faith opposed to the tendencies of man unrenewed. A sense of danger is excited in his breast by a guilty conscience. His very selfishness inclines him to grasp some object of hope. He cannot expect to be safe apart from the hope of the Gospel. But the carnal mind recoils from dealing with a divine person, and

the pride of the old heart rebels against being the subject of a work of grace. Thence arises the desire for a hope, that seems connected with the gospel, while ignoring the person of Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost. A recognition of the Spirit's work cannot find a place in such a system, and that work is not required in order to the production of such a faith.

There are some who, Calvinists in their vows and Arminians in their tendencies, teach the doctrine of a **double reference** of the atonement; representing the atonement as offered in one sense for the elect, and in another sense for all. These maintain that there was a special atonement securing a certainty of salvation to some, and a universal atonement securing a possibility of salvation to all.

(Such) subscribers of the Confession of Faith, who advocate the double reference of the atonement, profess to believe that Christ died in a sense for the elect, in which He died for none besides - that He died because He was their surety - that their sins alone were imputed to Him - that it is His relation to the elect which accounts for His death - that for them alone redemption was purchased - and that to no-one besides shall redemption be applied. How can they consistently hold that Christ died for all? There are two ways in which a reconciliation of the two references may be attempted: - (i) It may be said that the call of the gospel must involve the salvability of those to whom it is addressed. This is traced to the death of Christ as an atonement of infinite value; and on that ground and to that effect it may be insisted that Christ died for all. But how can this consist with this other doctrine, which they profess to believe - that no one is salvable without atonement? No atonement can make my salvation possible if it did not satisfy divine justice for my sins. How can the possibility of my salvation be before the mind of God, unless He sees my sins atoned for in the death of Christ? How could they be atoned for unless they were imputed to Him? And how could they be imputed to Him unless He was my surety? Thus, and thus alone, could He make possible the salvation of any. If it be objected, that unless the salvation of all who are called is possible there is no hope for them, it is enough to reply, that just as surely as salvation is not possible without atonement, neither is it so without faith; and that instead of tracing the possibility of a universal salvation to a universal reference of the atonement, the wise and the right thing would be, to insist on the ability of Christ to save *all* who come to Him; on the certainty of salvation through faith; and on the impossibility of salvation without it. But this universal reference, of which so much is made, is after all no reference of *the atonement*. There is no atonement that does not imply satisfaction to divine justice. There was no satisfaction of justice that did not avail to the purchase of redemption. Is there a universal reference of such an atonement to all? If not, of what atonement? And if of another, how can it avail to make salvation possible? To say that the atonement, being of infinite value is sufficient for all, is beside the mark, for the question is as to the divine intention. To say, that, if the atonement was of infinite

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value, it was intended to be so, is to rhapsodize considerably; for, surely, the value of the atonement does not flow from the intention of God the Father, but from the infinite dignity of God the Son, who offered it. (ii). It may be said, that there are many mercies, of which all partake, which they owe to the death of Christ, and that, to this effect, He may be said to have died for all;- that He died to procure some good for all, as well as to procure all good for some. It is quite true, that, because of the purpose of God bearing on the elect, many mercies are bestowed on others; and that it is the death of Christ which has secured the honourable fulfilment of that purpose. But this is the only connection between the good, given to all, and the death of Christ. **It is merely an accident of the process by which all good is conveyed to some.**(Emph. mine Ed.). Christ hath "power over all flesh", but this was given Him "that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him". (John 17:2). This power He hath in reward of His death, but He hath it for the salvation of His chosen. **He died to procure all good for them; and if, in the exercise of His Sovereign power, He showers some good on all, He does it with a view to the preservation of our race, and to its development in successive generations, till He shall have gathered His chosen out of it.**(Emph. mine Ed. NB, *pace* purveyors of modern "common grace" theories! ).

The doctrine of the double reference is an oil and water mixture;- it is opposed to Scripture;- no one who has subscribed the Confession of Faith can consistently hold it;- it adopts the practical bearing of Arminianism;- it endangers the doctrine of the atonement;- and it is quite unavailing for the purpose to which it is applied.

**Firstly**, those who hold it are in a transition state, and occupy no fixed dogmatic ground. Sometimes they seem staunch Calvinists, and at other times utter Arminians. They try to move on the boundary line between the two systems and would fain keep a foot on either side. But the fence is too high to admit of this. They therefore display their agility in leaps from side to side. But this is very fatiguing work; and must soon be given up. They will find that they must walk on one side or the other. As it was an Arminian bias that moved them to these gambols, the most probable finale is, that they shall utterly abandon the Calvinistic side.

**Secondly**, it is opposed to Scripture. As seen in Bible light, the death of Christ is indissolubly connected with (a) the covenant love of God, of which it was the gift that it might be the channel; (b) with imputed sin as its procuring cause; and (c) with redemption as its infallible result. To insist on a reference of the death of Christ to any who were not loved by God, whose sins were not imputed to, and atoned by, Christ, and who shall not be saved, is therefore utterly opposed to Scripture. (John 3:16; 2 Cor.5:21; Rom.8:32). The way to conceal the manifest unscripturalness of this position is, to raise the dust of a double reference around it, by saying that it is not in the same sense Christ died for the elect, as for others.

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The special reference is not denied; it is so plainly taught in Scripture. But where in Scripture is the other? A reference to 1 John 2:2 has been given as an answer to this question. But if there is a passage more conclusive than any other against the doctrine of a double reference it is that very one. It plainly teaches that in the self-same sense in which Christ is the propitiation for the sins of those whose cause He pleads as Advocate, He is so "for the sins of the whole world" - of all to whom His atonement refers. In all those passages, which seem to some to teach the doctrine of a universal reference of the death of Christ, it is seen connected either with love, or suretyship, or redemption, and if with either, it cannot possibly be a death for all. Calvinistic Universalists are challenged to produce a passage from the Word of God which seems to support their view, not containing in itself, or in its context, one of these limitations.

**Thirdly**, no subscriber of the Confession can both intelligently and honestly maintain the doctrine of the double reference of the atonement. It is not in the Confession; it is inconsistent with several of its statements; and a view of the question as to the reference of the atonement was present to the minds of the Westminster divines, utterly incompatible with any such doctrine.

∨ *The doctrine of "the double reference" is not in the Confession of Faith.* The only attempts made to try and find it there have resulted in utter failure. All that can be said by its advocates is, that there is one sentence in the Confession, with which it ( the double reference) is not inconsistent. That sentence is, "the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the Eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of the Father". (Confession: VIII para.5). All that can be maintained is, that the new doctrine does not contradict that statement, because it indicates no reference at all, and connects no result with the satisfaction of justice. But why did Christ require to satisfy the justice of the Father? Was it not because sin was charged to His account? And why was He thus chargeable, but because He was "the Just for the unjust" ? (1 Peter 3:18). The idea of Christ satisfying justice, except as the Surety of His people, and to the effect of purchasing redemption for them, is utterly opposed to the whole teaching of the Confession, and cannot therefore be in the passage quoted. And why are these words dis severed from what follows? Are not the obedience and the sacrifice of Christ declared to avail, not merely for satisfaction, but for purchasing, "not only reconciliation, but an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him" ? (Confession : VIII para 5, continued). His work, finished on the cross, had all this efficacy in it for behoof of those for whom He died. To maintain that it availed to a certain extent for all, and to the full extent for some, is a doctrine utterly unwarranted by the passage referred to. If Christ died, He died with that whole design; and to that full effect He died for them, for whom He died at all.

∨ *But the doctrine of the double reference is utterly opposed to some of the state-*

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-ments of the Confession of Faith. The doctrine of the Confession is, that Christ is "the Mediator and Surety" (Confession VIII para.1) in order to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify a people whom the Father gave Him from all eternity; that in order "that he might discharge" that office; (Confession VIII para.4) "He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it; .....was crucified and died;" that "Christ by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all who are justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf." (Confession XI para.3). In all these passages, the mediation of Christ, in its design, in the reference of its fundamental act, and in its gracious results, is restricted to the elect. What Westminster divine could say, Christ died for "the rest of mankind" whom "God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice?" (Confession III para.7).

3, There was a view of the question before the minds of the Westminster divines utterly incompatible with the doctrine of the double reference. The statements in the Confession, bearing on the atonement, were adapted to the state of the question of the extent of the atonement, as discussed between Calvinists and the French Universalists. Both parties held, that Christ redeemed all for whom He died, and neither therefore could hold the double reference. The difference between them is indicated in the words, "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually communicate the same." (Confession VIII para.8). The difference between the views of the French Universalists and the doctrine of the double reference is, that according to the former, Christ died for all indiscriminately, and did by His death redeem them; while according to the latter, election determined a special reference of the atonement to the elect, in order to their redemption, but not excluding a reference to all, in order to something not very easily defined.

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Fourthly, it adopts the practical bearing of Arminianism. It must have been originally invented by some weak Calvinist, who thought that the Arminian had an advantage which he lacked, in plying sinners with the gospel call. The suasion of universal grace seemed, in his view, to give the other an immense practical power. He therefore stole from him as much as would place him on an equal footing, in the practical use of doctrine. He remained, ex professo, a Calvinist, that he might keep hold of his creed, and became, de facto, an Arminian, that he might get hold of his hearers. And there are preachers not a few, who seem to think that, though their speculations must be conformed to the system of Calvinism, as the only scientific arrangement of "the things of God", they must be Arminians when they deal with the consciences of sinners. The consequence is, that so far as a practical presentation of doctrine is concerned, they are Arminians if they are anything. To tell men that Christ died for all, and that this is the basis on which the call to all is

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founded, is to quit hold of all that is distinctive in Calvinism in order to command the sympathies of a heart unrenewed. By such a form of doctrine many teach more than they intend. Its phrases suggest to many minds the idea of universal grace, and encourage them in a Christless hope. Any protest against universal grace which may be mingled with such utterances can be easily separated. The two elements are so incongruous that they will not combine; and in the hands of unconverted men it is not difficult to tell which shall be removed.

**Fifthly**, it endangers the whole doctrine of the atonement. It is impossible to account satisfactorily for the death of Christ, except by ascribing it to His bearing imputed sin, with a view to His making atonement for it. It is impossible to account for His being "made sin", (2 Cor. 5:21) but by His substitution for a guilty people. But if men believe that Christ died for many whose sin He did not bear, whose surety He was not, and whose redemption He did not purchase, they are adrift on a current which may carry them down to Socinianism. (Note: Socinianism is a virulent heresy worse than Arminianism. Ed.). An Arminian, with his single universal reference, may in a vague indefinite form hold by the doctrine of substitution, as he thinks of Christ as the representative of mankind, and may have some steadfast idea of atonement for sin in his mind. But believers in a double reference can have no clear view, and no firm hold of the doctrine of substitution at all. **They are more in danger therefore of moving towards Socinianism than even the undisguised Arminian.** Generations may pass before that tendency is fully developed in ecclesiastical formulas, but the dangerous tendency is there, and the sooner it is eliminated the better. (Emph. mine. Ed. NB Dr. Kennedy's warning here that effectively tells us that the trends emergent in our present day Calvinism are *more dangerous than Arminianism in that they drive toward Socinianism*. On the dreadful nature of Socinianism see: Owen: Works Vol XII, the treatise "Vindiciae Evangelicae", where he likens Socinianism's effect to be "endeavouring to put fire to the house of God". p.11).

**Sixthly**, (the double reference) is quite unavailing for the purpose to which it is applied. It doubtless, sprung out of a desire to find a basis for **the offer of Christ to all**. (Emph. mine Ed.). To search for it, in a universal reference of the atonement, indicated a suspicion that the Calvinistic system did not afford it. What helpless ignorance such a suspicion indicates! How sad it is, to hear men, sworn to Calvinism, declare that without this theft from the Arminian stores they could not preach the gospel at all! (*pace* Mr. Gay in the Aug-Sept 1994 Ban. of Truth pp.44-45. Emph. mine Ed.). Do they believe that "Christ is all in all;" that God's testimony regarding Him is true; and that they are commanded to preach "the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ" to every creature? If so, what can they desiderate in order that they may say to every sinner to whom they preach "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"?

This is indeed the Scripture version of the Gospel Call; and I can never hesitate to proclaim it till I conclude that Christ is unworthy of being trusted, and God unworthy of being believed. **The idea of the call being THE OFFER OF A GIFT has driven the Scriptural form of it out of the minds of many men altogether.** (Emph. mine Ed., and *pace* Mr. Legg in the Evangelical Times, Jan. 1994 !). This other was the form it alone assumed in the thinking and teaching of "the Marrow-men". To their successors it suggested more than these fathers meant. They began to regard it as necessarily an expression of love to the individual to whom it is addressed. They desiderated some sort of interest of all in Christ before the call is accepted, in order to justify its being given. Extending the idea of the Marrow-men's "deed of gift and grant," they reached at last the universal reference of the atonement, while still stretching a long arm to keep a weak hold of the Calvinism of the Confession. They hesitate not to say that without the universal reference they could not preach the gospel at all - in other words, that this is the only basis they find for the call of the gospel. And what do they find there on which to base the offer? A reference that avails for no definite end; that secures no redemption; and that leaves those whom it connects with the death of Christ to perish in their sins. This and no more they can find; and on this they base the offer of the gospel ! Verily, if men cannot preach the gospel without this, it is difficult to see how this can help them. There is some carnal sense in the Arminian view, but this lacks even that. If Christ died to redeem all men, there seems something like a basis for a call to believe in Him to the saving of the soul. But this reference, outside that which election is held to have defined, and which connects the chosen exclusively with redemption, is a palpably unsatisfactory thing. Does it even avail to secure an offer of salvation to all? No one can say it does, when millions have perished, and there are millions still on earth, who never heard the gospel. To what effect then does it avail? To secure the extension to all of God's providential goodness. And on what avails only to that extent the offer of salvation is based! What to me, an immortal and sinful soul, on the brink of Eternity, is a message telling me that "bread which perisheth" was procured for me by the death of Christ! It is salvation I require - it is for that I agonize. I care not for vague references. Give me a living Saviour, to whom I may commit my soul; give me a "sure word of prophecy" regarding Him; give me a divine command to believe in His name. Then and thus, and only then and thus, can my wearied soul find aught to lean on; and I shall count it both my privilege and my duty, to yield my homage to divine authority, my faith to divine testimony, and my trust to a divine Redeemer.

In thinking of the salvation revealed in the gospel, there are two extremes, between which the Spirit of God alone can guide us. It must not be regarded, either as something so reserved for the elect, as to preclude the offer of it by God to sinners, as such; or as something which any sinner can claim, as intended for him, and

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because it meets his case. It is possible to look on salvation exclusively in its relation to God and to the covenant; and while careful not to cherish such views of it as remove it from divine control, and ignore its bearing on the divine glory, to neglect its relation to men and its adaption to their state as sinners. And it is also possible so to conceive of it, in its relation to man, as suitable to his case and near to his hand, as to ignore its connection with the covenant of grace, and its bearing on the glory of the name of God. From both these extremes our minds would be preserved, if we viewed salvation as embodied in the Christ whom the gospel reveals, and as embosomed in the promise given to all who believe in His name. To me, a sinner, to whom the gospel is preached, Christ Himself is presented, as the "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. 1:30) which make up "the great salvation" of the Lord. I cannot appropriate that salvation but by the hand that has grasped "the Christ of God" Himself. As I look to Him with the eye of faith, how suitable, how gracious, how holy, how perfect, how divine seems the salvation which is brought nigh to me. If I at all appreciate it I would fain enjoy it. But I must not try to conceive of it as in some sense mine before I have believed. As embosomed in the promise, it belongs only to them that believe.

The doctrine that God has in the Gospel published, "a deed of gift and grant" constituting Christ, in some sense, the property of all to whom "the word of salvation" is sent, might in some minds be no deadly poison, and might in some hands do no deadly work, because regarded and explained as meaning, that Christ might warrantably be received by faith; but *it has dangerous tendencies* (Emph. mine Ed.). It ministers to the prevalent craving for a hope, not resulting from actual faith in the living Christ of God.

Our relation to the salvation of the gospel is such, that it cannot be ours till we are in Christ through faith; that we are required by God to accept of it in Him; and that it shall infallibly be ours if we believe in His name.

*To be continued (DV).*

Take courage and devote yourselves wholly to God, who has PURCHASED US SO DEARLY BY HIS OWN SON, and yield to Him the homage of body and soul, showing that you account His glory more precious than all besides; and that you set a higher value upon the eternal salvation which is prepared for you in heaven, than you do on this transitory life.

*John Calvin: Letter to the believers in the Isles. 12 th Oct. 1553 .*

Exercise yourself continually in the doctrine of renouncing the world yet more and more, in order to come nearer to our Lord Jesus, who has ONCE FOR ALL PURCHASED US to separate us unto Himself.

*John Calvin: Letter to Mme De Cany. 8th January 1549.*