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A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php

LATIMER'S CANDLE

by G. J. C. MARCHANT

THE four hundredth anniversary of the Marian Martyrs is an occasion which THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY could not possibly ignore ; unfortunately, it was not possible to include a commemorative article in our issue of last October. But now it gives us very decided pleasure to print the Callaghan Lecture delivered in St. Nicholas' Church, Durham, last year, by the Vicar, the Rev. G. J. C. Marchant, M.A. This lecture sets forth Latimer and Ridley's theological development towards a fully Reformed position, with more especial reference to the doctrine of justification by faith, and its relation to sacramental issues. It is much more than a panegyric of the Reformers ; its contemporary relevance needs no underlining.

THE burning of Bishops Latimer and Ridley in Oxford on October 16, 1555, occurred well within the series of Reformation martyrdoms that took place in Queen Mary's reign. On February 4 of that year John Rogers, Prebendary of St. Paul's, Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, and of importance in the history of the English Bible through his participation in the version known as "Matthew's Bible", died at Smithfield. The stern Bishop Hooper of Gloucester was burned in sight of his own Cathedral on February 9, and on the same day Rowland Taylor, friend of Cranmer, died near to his own parish of Hadleigh, Suffolk. So the list goes on through the year. But apart from the death of Cranmer in March, 1556, the spectacle of Latimer and Ridley has caught the imagination and has summarized the witness of the Anglican Reformers as none other. Not the least contribution to this eminence are, of course, the well-known words of Latimer to Ridley as they stood at the stake:

Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.

There may have been the firm hope behind these words of a restoration of reformed religion when the princess Elizabeth would become queen ; for, as his manservant, Bernher, records, the subject constantly in his prayers was "the establishment and restoration

of the true Gospel in England", and that Princess Elizabeth, whom he was wont to mention by name, "might be a comfort to the comfortless realm of England". Nevertheless, there was also surely the thrust of the whole Reformation consciousness, that as they were witnessing for the restoration of a true and pure form of the Catholic faith, so they could hope for the fulfilment of divine promise to the Church of Jesus Christ. Consequently, the words of Latimer have a more general implication than their immediate reference to the witness of himself and Ridley, and it can hardly be doubted that he himself in this grimly humorous way, intended more to be understood than that the memory of their death should be undying. Others were lighting similar "candles" to reformed religion in England and many more were to follow. But in a peculiar way the theological and practical attack of the Reformation, both within and without the Church of England, was summed up in Latimer and Ridley.

It used to be said at the time (as Ridley was reminded at his trial before the Bishop of Lincoln) that "Latimer leaneth to Cranmer, Cranmer to Ridley and Ridley to the singularity of his own wit". There was a certain truth in this, for Latimer, especially in his latter years, relied considerably upon the theological scholarship of Cranmer, taking his stand at his trial before Weston on "My lord of Canterbury's book" to the exasperation of his judges, who contemptuously remarked: "Your learning is let out to farm and shut up in my lord of Canterbury's book". Cranmer had also been indebted to Ridley's theological assistance. But the one deeper truth that this popular saying revealed was the way in which the practical reforms and pointed popular preaching, so well exemplified in Latimer, were rooted in a radical theological reform represented by the more academic Ridley. Together they represent that dominant theme in Reformation teaching, that the Church's teaching and preaching, practice and order must at all times be subject to the Word of God in Holy Scripture. Very clearly is this principle manifested in themselves and their experience, and here the popular witticism about them, mentioned by their judges, really misses the point. We may start with the assertion as to Ridley's individualism. Unlike Latimer, he lifts nothing of the veil that hangs over the early days of his reformed thinking. There is no certain evidence that he gave much attention to the interest in Luther while an undergraduate at Cambridge, nor that he mingled his scholastic studies with the subjects discussed in "little Germany"—the White Horse Inn. But Reformation ideas had progressed sufficiently at the time for Sir Thomas More, as High Steward of Cambridge, to

take strong measures against them in 1525. Possibly he was deterred by his uncle, a Fellow of Queens', who had been a commissioner to inspect Luther's writings and had joined in their condemnation in 1520. Ridley was sent to read divinity in Louvain and at the Sorbonne; yet even here the ferment of the Reformation could not be escaped and the martyrdom of De Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, must have come to his notice in Paris. But he was not favourably impressed with the Sorbonne and its noisy disputations, and returned to Cambridge soon after. Here the march of events like the death of Bilney in 1531, his signing the decree against Papal supremacy as Proctor in 1534, and the visitation of the monasteries in 1536, must have taken him up into their stream of influence. His nomination as chaplain to Cranmer in 1537 contains a firm hint as to his developing position; and he must have been well aware of the struggle for the Bible in English which culminated with the issue in 1539. His own reaction to this shows him well on in Reformation thinking, for he tells of his determination to read the Bible for himself and to test the contested views in its light.

I learned without book almost all Paul's epistles, yea and I ween all the canonical epistles save only the Apocalypse. Of which study, although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof, I trust, I shall carry with me to heaven; for the profit thereof I think I have felt all my lifetime ever after.

But there is one further influence in Ridley beside the Lutheran disputes and the study of the Scriptures. In 1538 he became incumbent of Herne in Kent, where he showed evidence of being generally for reform, though in a mild way. In 1545 the Lutheran-Swiss controversy over the Lord's Supper evoked the Swiss *Apologia* on the subject, which caused Ridley to spend the summer studying afresh the whole issue at Herne. As long before as 1534 (according to Dix), Ridley had read Ratramnus's answer to Paschasius Radbertus on the nature of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, a work originally produced in the ninth century for the Emperor Charles the Bold. The book had then been almost lost to knowledge, apart from a reference by Trithemius in 1494; but in the discussions on the subject in Germany and Switzerland it had been brought forth again and reprinted under the influence of Oecolampadius at Cologne in 1532. The edition Ridley appears to have read was the 1534 Zurich edition which had Swiss annotations. Paschasius Radbertus had been one of the first to give clear expression to the doctrine of the Eucharist which later became established in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Ratramnus' answer, by showing that the words of institution were

figurative not literal, embodied in his book *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, had the authority of a Catholic doctor to whom Pope and Emperor turned. Thus Ridley refers to the influence of this book on his theology at the Disputation at Oxford in 1554 (the year before he died); that Bertram (or Ratramnus)

ever counted a Catholic for these seven hundred years until this our age. . . . This Bertram was the first that pulled me by the ear and that first brought me from the common error of the Romish church, and caused me to search more diligently and exactly both the Scriptures and the writings of the old Ecclesiastical Fathers in this matter.

Out of this he became so convinced that the Roman doctrine was neither Scriptural nor Patristic, that he pressed the study of the book upon Bishop Brooks of Lincoln right up to the end.

Ridley therefore stands out as no mere individualist arriving at ill-digested conclusions of his own. He found himself bound to make a far-reaching decision in the times in which he lived, but in this there was no mere leaning to a "singular wit". All these men who figure so prominently in this period are noteworthy for the slow, even laborious, progress of their spiritual pilgrimage. They had too much to lose, not only in material things and in physical suffering, but still more in that which counted supremely with them, in spiritual certainty, in the hope of final salvation, to be easy and light in their departure from what they had been brought up to believe was the way of salvation in the true Church. Every step is tested, prayed and pondered over and if they, like Luther, have to stand alone saying, "Here I stand, I can do no other", their decision is just that inescapable and critical implication of responsibility, which even the passive subscribers to the dominant régime were in fact tacitly facing and resolving, with probably less care, themselves.

Ridley was about forty-five years of age when he finally decided against the doctrine of transubstantiation, the real test of his orthodoxy in the eyes of the final judges. Latimer was over sixty when he came to the same conclusion. But even here, Latimer must be seen in a different light than as a mere dependent upon Cranmer. For twenty years he had been a castigator of the practical abuses of the Church; during that time in a short episcopate of Worcester of under four years, he had attempted to put into effect the reforms he had called for from the pulpit. At the age of forty he had been a storm centre in Cambridge and had had to appear before Wolsey to answer for his sermons; Convocation later, when he was incumbent of West Kington, had taken him to task again for his preaching. It compelled him to subscribe to doctrines of purgatory, masses for the dead, the invocation and

mediation of saints in heaven, the meritorious nature of pilgrimages and offerings to relics, the power of the keys invested in the Popes, the seven sacraments, the worship of images, amongst other things. Many of these Latimer had been used to calling "voluntary", which each man could perform if he wished, as distinct from necessary duties to God incumbent on all. He was not disposed yet to denounce them simply in themselves although he opposed the abuses attached to them. Nevertheless, he subscribed to all the articles required, having to make the ignominious admission in his final apology on his knees: "He doth acknowledge that he hath erred not only in discretion but also in doctrine and that he was not called before the said lords but upon good and just grounds". In this Latimer is not to be estimated in the same way as the recanting Cranmer at a later date, for he was still here the practical Reformer without the complete conviction resting on clearly held doctrine. He is still honestly holding almost all the doctrines of the papal Church. But an enforced recantation of this sort probably stimulated rather than suppressed the agitated sense of multiplied abuse that oppressed him. Soon after, when in 1533 a considerable controversy rose out of further preaching in Bristol, more of the old bonds no doubt loosened.

No man was more averse to extreme measures, all through, than Latimer. He was not one to sweep away incontinently all that attached to abuse, the good with the bad. Nobody was more ready to retain every belief and practice which could be called primitive, nor more careful to uphold the legitimate uses of customs without their abuses. But the vested interest in superstition was more than superficial in the life of the Church and the increased bitterness in controversy and the opposition from so many of the clergy increasingly informed him of the insufficiency of his own moderate programme. Thus at this time, as Cranmer came to be Archbishop, Latimer came into closer association with him and also with Cromwell the Chancellor. Out of this came the promotion to the see of Worcester, which the French ambassador Chapuys noted to the Emperor Charles V as a strong blow to the party of the old religion. His short episcopate opened his eyes still more to clerical charlatantry, but it does not reveal much significant change in his position as a Reformer. Theologically he could sign happily and most carefully the Ten Articles of 1536 affirming the doctrine of transubstantiation and a moderate attitude to many of the popular religious ceremonies and beliefs. He would know that these articles reflected the 1536 Wittenberg Articles which had resulted from discussions between German and English theologians, after Henry

VIII had found the Lutheran Augsburg Confession more than he could tolerate. The Ten Articles thus represent a certain moderate infiltration of Lutheran doctrine which was a step in the right direction. But the Six Articles of 1539 brought about Latimer's resignation from the bishopric. They did not cover quite the same ground as the Ten Articles; transubstantiation was first fully asserted, but with it went articles on clerical celibacy, the binding of vows of chastity, the value of private masses, auricular confession, and the withdrawing of communion in both kinds. Latimer still held to the first of these, but the others, particularly with their harsh penalties attached, were a blow to thought and action involving his relationship with other Reformers. As a private person Latimer would not have found them too severe; but as bishop with the task of enforcing them, his position was impossible.

The short reign of Edward VI brought about considerable development in Latimer and also in Cranmer and Ridley. At this time Latimer was living with the Archbishop, having no settled office, and met at his house many of the Swiss theologians to whose discussions he gave careful attention. Bucer, Peter Martyr, Paul Fagius, John à Lasco were at Lambeth at this time, and an important change took place in the movement for reform in England. Hitherto the major concern had been with Lutheranism as the only "live option" (if that!) under Henry, but now the greater influence was from the Calvinist-Reformed. The path henceforth to be taken by the reformed Church of England would be an insular one, profiting by both but adhering to neither. The *via media*—if such it is to be called—is to be sought in what was traced between the two Continental Reformations rather than the mediation between Geneva and Rome. That question hardly arose until a hundred years ago. It was noted by the Swiss how carefully Latimer listened to discussions on Eucharistic doctrine—"as one who is beyond measure desirous that the whole truth may be laid open to him and even that he may be thoroughly convinced", as Traheron told Bullinger in August, 1548. Latimer did not wait long on this issue. The same writer told Bullinger again in September, 1548: "That you may add yet more to the praises of God, you must know that Latimer has come over to our opinion respecting the true doctrine of the Eucharist, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury". In actual fact, according to Sir John Cheke's Preface to the Embden Edition of Cranmer's *Defence of the True and Catholick Doctrine of the Sacrament*, the Archbishop abandoned not only the doctrine of transubstantiation but also belief in "the real presence" in 1546 under the instruction of Ridley, after

having been for a long time a close reader of Continental Reformation literature. But it is true of Latimer and accords with his own confession at his trial that he had rejected transubstantiation for the previous seven years. Unlike Cranmer and Ridley, Latimer was not one to think deeply theologically and there was that devout streak in his make-up that distrusted somewhat the influence of a predominantly theological approach. His concern all along had been for the practical effects of the Reformation, the putting down of superstition, abuse and the clerical charlatany which was almost a "big business".

But this late doctrinal step, with its obvious readiness to welcome the teaching, reveals the final issue of a stream of influence that had been at work ever since the day when "little Bilney", the pioneer of the Reformation in England, had brought confusion to his violent, dogmatic opposition to Lutheranism back in the early part of 1524. The occasion then had been an oration by Latimer against Melancthon at his graduation to the Bachelor of Divinity degree. He was then about forty years old. It was apparent to the listening Bilney that the vast amount of violent denunciation covered up a considerable misunderstanding of the actual issues involved. Bilney himself, like Luther, had failed to find peace of heart, under a sense of guilt, by means of the medieval penitential system. He was also a spiritual product of Erasmus' diglot New Testament, the *Novum Instrumentum*, printed in parallel columns of Latin and Greek, which he first read for the beauty of the Latin rather than for the Word of God (as he says). The story should be well-known of how he sought out the firebrand Latimer in his rooms in Cambridge, timidly approaching one whose rigid orthodoxy had earned him the honour of carrying the university silver cross, and asked permission to confess to him. This simple occurrence gave him the opportunity to tell of his spiritual pilgrimage, the fruitlessness of his search through the Church's normal channels of forgiveness, and even to produce the denounced New Testament. "By his confession", said Latimer later, "I learned more than before in many years"; and it was not long before Latimer himself was studying the New Testament and also joining in the clandestine gatherings in the White Horse Inn, where Bilney had originated the group of men influenced first by the Renaissance and then by Luther. Among these, we may note, were Stafford, Reader in Divinity, Matthew Parker, later first Elizabethan Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Barnes, Master and Prior of the Augustines, John Rogers, William Tyndale, John Frith, Miles Coverdale,

Edward Crome, and Nicholas Shaxton—all later to become prominent in the movement for reform.

Like Ridley, Latimer was thus brought under the influence of the New Testament and the current discussions on Church reform, all in the light of the growing interest in Luther's message. Behind all the denunciation of popular abuses that followed in his preaching, and the discussions, agreements and articles on matters that might seem trivial, there was working the same ferment which in Germany began with Luther's purely academic theses on the stupid vulgarities of Tetzels sale of indulgences. It will be remembered how quickly Luther rejected one thing after another as the medieval church polity was subjected to the light of his hardly-won experimental and theological position of justification by faith alone. In England, independently, Bilney had by similar paths come to a similar experience, but there was no similar strong theological definition yet, no principle that would be applied to the whole situation, except "what is true to Holy Scripture". The theological result from this was not so quickly apparent as the practical, hence the greater preoccupation with the reform of those superstitious misdirections of the people which obscured the Scriptural terms of forgiveness and Christian duty. Even in this, of course, the teaching of the early Reformers "smelt of the pan" (i.e. Lutheranism), as said Bishop West of Ely when Latimer refused to attack Luther, on the excuse that he had not been allowed to read his books. Thus he was accused before Wolsey of being a Lutheran, while Bilney at the same time had to swear not to preach any of Luther's opinions. But this label stuck all through and in the dispute on April 18, 1554, he was accused of being a Lutheran once, but replied: "No, I was a papist; for I never could perceive how Luther could defend his opinion [i.e. consubstantiation] without transubstantiation".

It may be seen in his later sermons how the doctrine of justification by faith did have a firm place, devotionally at least, in his thinking.

Christ only and no man else merited remission, justification and eternal felicity, for as many as will believe the same. They that will not believe it shall not have it; for it is no more but "believe and have".

Preaching at Grimthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire, before the Duchess of Suffolk, in 1550, Latimer says plainly:

Christ reputeth all those for just, holy, acceptable before God which put their trust, hope and confidence in Him. By His passion which He suffered, He merited that as many as believe in Him shall be as well

justified by Him as though they had fulfilled the law to the uttermost. Again:

He purchased our salvation through His painful death and we receive the same through believing on Him as St. Paul teacheth us, saying, "Freely ye are justified through faith". In these words of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and clean taken away. For if it were for our works' sake then it were not freely, but St. Paul saith "Freely".

The famous sermon on the Plough in Edward VI's reign castigated the secularized clergy for their non-preaching:

And now I would ask a strange question; who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? . . . I will tell you. It is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him out of the way . . . and his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of popery. . . . Where the devil is resident and hath his plough going, there away with books and up with candles; away with bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the gospel and up with the light of candles, yea at noondays. Where the devil is resident that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry; censuring, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water and new service of men's inventing. . . . Down with Christ's cross, up with purgatory pickpurse. . . .

—and so on.

In this Latimer takes the criticism further along the line than he had hitherto done. But although the later Elizabethan settlement was not entirely to endorse this view of things (and it is probable that Latimer himself would not desire to abolish all the externals of worship as this might suggest but simply stressed the apparent alternatives then available), the later period of reform did attempt to clarify the theological issues which lay behind Latimer's trenchant preaching. While Henry VIII was busy in the political and theological fields, the only opening towards reform was along Lutheran lines, and even here progress was at snail's pace. The short reign of Edward VI allowed for a freer atmosphere for discussion and it was then that the English Reformers could go farther than just reading the works of the Continental theologians; they could meet them and discuss the issues involved. Thus it was only at the end of his life, after such new opportunities, that Latimer arrived at something like a consistent outlook.

As with most Anglicans at the time, no one doctrine, like justification by faith, became the criterion of reform; rather it was in relation to one of its implicates, the rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the mass, that their main attack was felt. While the Continentals could cut the ground away under every controversy by means of the recovered understanding of justifica-

tion by faith alone (the metaphysic of the gospel, so to speak), the Anglicans, especially Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer, discussed doctrinal and practical issues with the Roman Church, with the doctrine of justification referred to more by implication. First of all, in the Ten Articles, the doctrine is loosely stated but hardly defined. In the times of their trials, in disputes on Christ's presence in the Eucharist and on the doctrine of the Mass, they based their position Scripturally upon the affirmations of Christ's finished sacrifice on the cross, and the inconsistency between the Bible declarations on Christ's redemptive work and the claims of the propitiatory aspects of the Mass. Foxe's account shows considerable patristic and conciliar discussion, but when Ridley and Latimer were faced with the test statement—"In the Mass, there is the lively sacrifice of the church, which is propitiable as well for the sins of the quick as for the dead"—they answered in similar terms: the high-priesthood of Christ in His offering on the cross and His sacrifice being once for all leaves no room for a repetition in any terms. By this time Ridley's book, *A Brief Declaration of the Lord's Supper*, was in preparation, in which he showed a clear identification with the Swiss Reformers, a doctrine which had been embodied in the 1552 Communion rite and expressed as never before or since the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Of course a number of different variants of Eucharistic theology can and did relate themselves to the fundamental theme of justification by faith alone, and it is not the place here to take up the discussion of Gregory Dix as to what view Ridley took. But it remains a permanent gift from him through Cranmer that the doctrine of justification by faith must be given a fitting liturgical expression in relation to the sacraments.

A more open exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith alone had been given in the *Homily of Salvation* issued in 1547 from Cranmer's pen. Its statement echoes Melancthon: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith and not for our own works and deservings". It is "the forgiveness of sins"; a "righteousness which we receive of God's mercy and Christ's merits embraced by faith [is] taken, allowed, and accepted for our perfect and full justification". The doctrine of the atonement linked to this is Anselmic, expressed in terms of satisfaction—"or (as it may be called) amends to His Father for our sins to assuage His wrath and indignation". It was a decision of forgiveness that applied to infants by their baptism and which availed to all as in growing years they fell into sin but sought forgiveness again in turning to

God unfeignedly. Three things take part in our justification—the mercy of God ; Christ's satisfaction of God's justice ; our faith in Christ's merits which itself is not our faith but God's work in us. Repentance, love, hope, dread of God, operate in the justified man but have no place in the actual justifying relation. They accompany faith, as do the following good works, but they do not enter into the relation of the sinner to God in justification. The homily warns against attributing to our faith any justifying merit, any more than to other Christian characteristics. The ground of justification is in God's mercy and the sacrifice of "our High Priest and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism as of all actual sins committed by us after baptism, if we truly repent and unfeignedly turn to Him again".

Compare with this the rather ribald imaginative description by Gregory Dix of Cranmer's thoughts on the way to the stake: "And the sturdy decent Latimer—and Nicholas Ridley who had showed him, Thomas, how the truth lay about the sacrament . . . they had all died, almost every one he had known . . . in these quarrels about the bread and the Body. . . . This is what it all came to in the end—the bread had nothing to do with the Body—that was what he was dying for . . ." Nothing needs more emphasis, apparently, than that behind all the sacramental and ecclesiastical arguments and disputes lay convictions about the gospel, about man's salvation, related to the nature of the historical atoning deed of the cross, and the eternal purpose and decision enshrined in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was that gospel for the restoration of which Latimer prayed so constantly in prison that at times he could not rise from his knees without assistance. It was because they saw every major question and many trivial ones as finally turning on this Biblical and Christological heart of the gospel that they were prepared to go to the stake rather than recant.

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That was in 1555 ; now it is 1955. Yet it cannot be said that the issues at stake then have passed away into theological museum pieces. When Dr. B. J. Kidd produced his two little books on the Thirty-nine Articles in 1901 he suggested that the Reformers had mistaken their object, having simply attacked a crass notion of material change in the elements—thereby involving us in the unlikely supposition that they were executed for condemning a doctrine which their judges would themselves condemn and did

condemn at the Council of Trent. A competent knowledge of the subject would soon reveal that these Reformers knew the controversy intimately and opposed not only the doctrine of transubstantiation but also that of the "real presence". Hence the issues involved cannot be thus dismissed as irrelevant to our later theological debates, a conviction indeed which has been happily growing in recent years. Nevertheless, the doctrine of justification by faith alone finds a somewhat faint interest among Anglicans, and the more valuable contributions in recent years have come from others, such as *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* by Dr. Vincent Taylor, or Dr. H. R. Mackintosh's *Christian Doctrine of Forgiveness*. Only recently a small but valuable symposium by Anglicans¹ has lifted it from obscurity, yet with the sense that it has been treated as of little significance. Instead of seeing it as the rock upon which both medieval and revised Romanism shipwrecks, it has been regarded as mere hairsplitting which a wider understanding will easily reconcile.

The S.P.C.K. compendium *Anglicanism* devotes most of its meagre section on this topic, not to any quotation of Hooker's great sermon, which laid down the theme for much seventeenth-century teaching; nor yet to the noble words of Bishop Hall who in *The Old Religion* says: "It must be only under the garment of our Elder Brother that we dare to come in for a blessing; His righteousness is made ours by faith, is that whereby we are justified in the sight of God"—and goes on to show the need of a righteousness which is ours by faith, not by inherent working. Nor does this compendium give a place to Bishop Davenant whose *Disputatio de Iustitia* (1631) made a contribution upon the subject of imputed righteousness, which the Romans, as well as some modern Protestants, misunderstood, regarding it as an ethical fiction but which, Davenant shows, expresses the implication of the union of the sinner with Christ; his being accepted in the Beloved, just as Luther had described the same in terms of marriage, in which Christ and the soul "have all things in common, be they good or ill, so that what belongs to Christ now belongs to the believing soul and what belongs to the soul now belongs to Christ. Since Christ possesses every good and blessedness these now belong to the soul. Since the soul is burdened with sin and wretchedness these now become Christ's" (on the cross where they are destroyed). But the fulminations of Bishop Bull find a large place; as an important example of seventeenth-century Anglican misunder-

¹ *Justification by Faith*, edited by F. J. Taylor (Mowbrays).

standing, no doubt something of his work should be ; and indeed Bishop Jeremy Taylor could have been added as further confused thinking on justification, regeneration and sanctification. The bridge between their blunders on the nature of faith also and the moralism of William Law and other eighteenth-century writers would have been clearly marked. We would then be able to see how short a distance Newman had to go in reviving the doctrine of the Council of Trent (and before that, of Osiander the Lutheran) that we are justified by Christ our righteousness dwelling in us by the Spirit, by participating in His essence.

Here we are in the constant muddle between justification and regeneration which Anglicans, with their earnest desire to be spiritually and devotionally practical, so frequently fall into. But it is of the highest importance to separate in doctrine the experimental from the transcendental aspect or reference of salvation. In experience no doubt it is difficult to separate them ; but in theological understanding of the Gospel and its implications they cannot be too clearly discriminated. As Ridley, Cranmer and Latimer saw, nowhere is this necessity more apparent than in sacramental doctrine. They witnessed against a misunderstanding of the whole Biblical message of God and His redeeming revelation of Himself in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ: thus, that the Son was eternally offering His propitiatory sacrifice of Himself to a remote and wrathful God the Father, and the Church on earth with the Church in heaven joined in pleading this sacrifice and re-offering it in the Mass. There had been, it is true, a stronger emphasis, even before the Reformation, upon the feeding side of the sacrament, but this turned against the understanding of Christ's atonement as a finished work inasmuch as the reception of the veritable Body and Blood increased justification, in the current teaching. By this life, of religious good works as well as moral ones, the soul would be drawn up to God and the period of purgatorial discipline diminished. The revised Romanism of the Council of Trent made no departure from this religious programme, as can be seen from the Creed of Pope Pius IV of 1564.

For unreformed theology the heavenly reality behind the Church's hope and its liturgical expression was the heavenly altar with its eternally offered Lamb. There was involved in this view the concept, that what was effected in history was now and for ever continued in the eternal realm in identical action. This the Reformers attacked. For them, what was done in history was indeed the revelation of a truly eternal reality, in the will and purpose of God, namely, His merciful and gracious decision to forgive. They

thought of the Old Testament saints as by faith anticipating the full atoning deed of the cross and receiving its sacramental anticipations in circumcision and passover. The whole conception of God, His self-revelation and redemption in Christ, was wholly different. God Himself was seen to be far more *in* the work of salvation—"in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself". The coming and the saving work of Christ was the final revelation of the Triune God as Reconciler and Redeemer, One who had now revealed Himself in the fulness of His grace, mercifully providing that perfect means whereby the sinner under His wrath and judgment may yet be acquitted, accepted as fully a child of God and made to stand complete in a salvation perfect in all its aspects—yet a salvation of which he must and will, because of his regeneration, explore the boundless riches and blessings throughout his life in advancing holiness, until the final resurrection ushers him into the full glories. It is through this eternal purpose, this will and work of a gracious yet holy God to justify the sinner apart from his works and deservings, through Christ, that God reveals Himself as who He is in a reconciling relation made possible by His loving work in Christ and actual as the sinner is brought to know Him through the inner work of the Holy Spirit; so that by faith there is received the promise of the whole, the complete gift in pledge and foretaste.

Here we have a thorough and adequate grasp, not only of the theology of St. Paul, but of the whole Biblical message, presenting to us the self-revelation of God always in dynamic and redemptive terms; always with the fulness of ultimate realities latent in the present experience and promise; and both revealed and made available to man in Christ. The more recent studies in eschatology have helped to clarify this dimension of Biblical teaching and to give insight and support to the Reformers' witness. Again, when the reformed emphasis is that this justifying mercy is known and received by faith *alone*, it is to separate and cut off from the transcendent ground of the sinner's salvation any suggestion that he can contribute anything to what God in grace has provided, either by his own works before faith or afterwards. Anglicans have always looked askance at this part of the affirmation—in earlier days through considerations of moral living, and in later days in consideration for sacramental means. The earlier objection still arises through a permanent aspect of English temperament, the tendency to interpret religion in terms of good behaviour and to interpret God's grace as assistance to our own efforts. And, of course, it is true that "by faith alone" has produced some queer aberrations.

The other objection is founded on a complete misunderstanding. None were more ready to integrate the doctrine with the sacramental life than the Reformers, and none, according to Dix, were more successful so far as the Lord's Supper was concerned. In justification by faith alone, there is pre-eminently declared that movement of God to man which has been described as the "descent of the perpendicular upon the horizontal". God reveals this eternal decision in His Word, in Christ, in a focal way in which all His attributes of love, mercy, holiness, wisdom, wrath, justice and power find their exemplification in a wonderful unity, and all His works in creation, preservation, redemption, reconciliation and glorification find their explanation in a new clarity.

It is not therefore surprising that Luther described the doctrine of justification by faith alone as the critical point of a standing or falling church. There is good reason to believe that in their own way Ridley, Cranmer and Latimer believed so too, and had they had the opportunity it would have been more clearly expressed in Anglicanism. But Edward died in his minority after a short six years' reign, and it is impossible to say how matters would have gone had he reigned as long as his father. Under Elizabeth, though Anglicans held very similar theological outlooks with the new Presbyterians and Dissenters, they left them to work out the doctrine of justification alone, and with all their faults these people did see its high importance within the life of the Church.

The Elizabethans and their successors sent the Church on its way for three hundred years more concerned with its "happy establishment" as its constructive principle. Now once again, it is faced with a "drastic reconstruction" (as Dr. E. L. Mascall has recently referred to it) in the life of Anglicanism in which it is called to a high sense of Church consciousness centred round a revived and refined sacramentalism that finds its transcendent reference in a continued, an eternal offering within the heavenly sphere. That offering may be defined as of "divine-human obedience", the offering which Christ offered in His whole incarnate life up to the ascension. Although now the terms of this approach have many differences from the medieval or Tridentine Roman writings it has been anticipated by modern Romans like Masure, Vonier and Mersch. However refined and safeguarded, to set the mind of the worshipping Church on an eternally self-offering Christ as the transcendent reference for our hope of salvation is to change the estimate of His work in relation to the Godhead, to remove the assurance from One Who is "just and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus" to One before whom we

must approve ourselves by an offering that, however much it is through and in co-operation with Christ's, still is ours and contributes to our justification. Consistently, the liturgical practice is changed to suggest the historical re-presentation of what is eternally going on, thus to enable the Church to participate in a sacrificial offering which because it is linked with His, can only be described as reconciling or justifying. The Church, then, is not just offering its life in obedience and thanksgiving; it takes on a reconciling attribute rather than reconciled, redemptrix rather than redeemed.

Strangely enough, when the worship is thus "God-centred" (as it is said), in accentuating man's offering it really becomes man-centred in concern for the nature of the action; when it appears to be man-centred in concentration on reception, it really becomes God-centred in honouring His gifts and blessings—His divine action in the encounter of worship. The crucial issue continues to be how we understand the eternal reality behind the historical terms of our salvation, those terms focussed in the work of our Lord in His incarnate life, death and resurrection, and continued in the life of the Church in the sacramental action.

If the cross (as some suggest) is merely instrumental, a doorway whereby the divine-human obedience is taken up into the heavenly sphere, it must be replied that such an obedience, although an important aspect of atonement, cannot be the interpretation of the whole, otherwise we are faced with all the theological and experimental inadequacies of exemplarist theories. If the "divine-human" obedience is the expression in historical terms of that eternal relation within the Triune life (as indeed it is), this involves for the Church its own obedient self-offering; but it then becomes a theme which cannot be focal in sacraments which are "of the gospel"; and to interpret them or the Eucharist alone, in its terms is to suggest that the gospel is simply an offering of obedience to the Father. Here again we are in an atmosphere of exemplarist atonement theology and in justification by our works. The cross and resurrection are at the heart of the gospel, and although they are the *outcome* of the Son's obedience there is unquestionably more in their message than just that. Redemptive terms, sacrificial, expiatory, of sin-offering are the Biblical affirmations, and any suggested self-offering of Christ in heaven cannot but partake of that content either in terms of continued offering or "pleading" the sacrifice.

This assumes that the offering motif in a sacrificial sense, which is the true action in the historical terms of our salvation, is one that must be taken over into the eternal realm. The Reformers

denied this, not only from the Biblical witness that there is no more offering for sin, but even more because of the Biblical theme, that the revelation of God made in Christ is not of a God needing to be eternally propitiated in any sense that would involve His redeemed people having to plead an offering in a liturgical action that differed little from the Jewish multiplicity of sacrifice, except for the fact that the Christian sacrificial action was continuous, and not repetitive. This completely conceals the eternal reality that God Himself initiated the work of reconciliation because of His gracious decision to forgive and receive the sinner as a son, and that this is both revealed and fulfilled in the historical order by the atoning work of Christ in the cross. The sacraments, then, as "of the gospel", refer to the cross, and beyond that to the justifying grace of God which is the transcendent, eternal reference of the whole gospel message. In this, there is probably a development from the sixteenth-century interpretation of justification, which was more in terms of forgiveness and remission of penalties of original sin, and of acceptance of the repentant and baptized believer; though, as we have seen, Latimer did speak of justification as of God's accounting the sinner as though he had never sinned but had fulfilled all the righteousness of the law.

Dr. Vincent Taylor has summed up a valuable discussion of development since then by saying: "It is the divine activity in which God gives effect to His redeeming work in Christ by making possible that righteous mind necessary to communion with Himself". There may however be here an ignoring of the two aspects of justification, the one linked to the phrase "by grace" and the other to "by faith". "By grace" reminds us that justification is a decision and work of God, the eternal purpose to forgive and receive through Christ. It draws together all the related themes of revelation and reconciliation as their inherent rationale. "By faith" reminds us that this enters the sinner's experience as a beginning, a first step, in a fundamental standing with God in Christ, which, because it is accompanied by regenerating grace, will reveal itself in sanctified life. But notwithstanding this view from the human experience, justification still remains primarily a deed and work of God's eternal purpose into which the sinner is brought through faith in Christ. It tells of a complete salvation which, while it will express itself in time in an unfolding in the believer's life and final glory of the complete acceptance in the Saviour, is indeed all his in promise, purpose and declaration at the outset. In God's purpose it is not piecemeal or in stages or in partial giving; it is a whole. Consequently, in an important degree, the life

of developing sanctification, or inherent righteousness, is the exploration of the sinner's complete salvation in terms of current experience. Glorification is to know in completeness what was promised as a whole from the outset and entered into from the first step of faith. It is this eternal reality, perfect and complete in the purpose of God, which gives significance to the Old Testament preparation for the historical fulfilment in Christ. Justification, then, "by grace" is allied closely with what is meant by "salvation"; from the human side, "by faith", it would seem to be the "first step" in it. Hence Dr. Taylor's definition could be well amended thus: "It is the divine activity to which God gives effect *in* His redeeming work in Christ and thereby makes possible a *right* mind for communion with Himself". This, with its implications for atonement doctrine, involves a theme of cardinal importance for the modern Church: misdirection here means not just an error in one doctrine, but a parting of the ways wherein the whole Christian message can misrepresent the very nature of God Himself and His will and work in Christ.

Our day and social circumstances are very different from the sixteenth century. Yet, despite the attempts to interpret the Reformation politically or sociologically, it still stands out as a fundamentally and predominantly religious movement which determined, rather than was determined by, the conditions of the time. We may do well to remember this is in all the problems of our society. Important as sociological considerations may be, there is a tough resilience in the gospel that makes it relevant to changing circumstances, simply because it finds men at that deeper level of experience where the passing centuries leave little mark. Just as Luther in his monastery found himself standing with St. Paul, John Wesley in Aldersgate Street with Luther, so the great truths for which Ridley and Latimer died still meet modern man in that spiritual situation wherein the whole world is kin. But the last word will be with Ridley, that notable Tynesider and almost Bishop of Durham; he would remind us with nearly his last words, that it was not just for effect upon men that he and Latimer stood for this truth. "My lord", he said to Bishop Brooks of Gloucester, who offered him the royal pardon for a recantation, "you know my mind herein; and as for the doctrine which I have taught, my conscience assureth me that it was sound and according to God's word (to His glory be it spoken); the which doctrine, the Lord being my helper, I will maintain as long as my tongue shall wag and breath is in within my body, and in confirmation thereof seal the same with my blood".

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