

AMYRAUT AND HIS 'FRIENDS'

Advocates of the 'limited atonement' doctrine of the *Westminster Confession* really reflect an 'ultra-reformed' mindset. While the Amyraldians taught the truths of predestination and divine election, they also maintained - as the Bible does - that the death of Christ has a universal availability. Notwithstanding the paradox involved in such a view, we are able to cite numerous authors from previous and subsequent centuries who believed and taught the same.

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

'For it is good for all men to hear [Christ's] voice and live, by passing to the life of godliness from the death of ungodliness. Of this death the Apostle Paul says, "Therefore all are dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Thus all, without one exception, were dead in sins, whether original or voluntary sins, sins of ignorance, or sins committed against knowledge; and for all the dead there died the only one person who lived, that is, who had no sin whatever, in order that they who live by the remission of their sins should live, not to themselves, but to Him who died for all, for our sins, and rose again for our justification...' (*The City of God*).

MARTIN LUTHER

'It is certain that you are a part of the world. Do not let your heart deceive you by saying: "The Lord died for Peter and Paul; He rendered satisfaction for them, not for me." Therefore let every one who has sin be summoned here, for He has made the expiation for the sins of the whole world and bore the sins of the whole world' (*Comment on 1 John 2:2*).

JOHN CALVIN

'True it is that the effect of [Christ's] death comes not to the whole world. Nevertheless, forasmuch as it is not in us to discern between the righteous and the sinners that go to destruction, but that Jesus Christ has suffered his death and passion as well for them as for us, therefore it behoves us to labour to bring every man to salvation, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be available to them' (*Sermons on Job*).

'Paul makes grace common to all men, not because it in fact extends to all, but because it is offered to all. Although Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all men, yet not all receive him' (*Comment on Romans 5:18*).

'God commends to us the salvation of all men without exception, even as Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world' (*Comment on Galatians 5:12*).

'This is His wondrous love towards the human race, that He desires all men to be saved, and is prepared to bring even the perishing to safety...It could be asked here, if God does not want any to perish, why do so many in fact perish? My reply is that no mention is made here of the secret decree of God by which the wicked are doomed to their own ruin, but only of His loving-kindness as it is made known to us in the Gospel. There God stretches out His hand to all alike, but He only grasps those (in such a way as to lead to Himself) whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world' (*Comment on 2 Peter 3:9*).

THE ANGLICAN REFORMERS

Archbishop **Thomas Cranmer** stated that Christ 'by His own oblation ... satisfied His Father for all men's sins and reconciled mankind unto His grace and favour'. Bishop **John Hooper** affirmed that Christ died 'for the love of us poor and miserable sinners, whose place he occupied upon the cross, as a pledge, or one that represented the person of all the sinners that ever were, be now, or shall be unto the world's end'. Bishop **Nicholas Ridley** declared that the sacrifice of Christ 'was, is, and shall be forever the propitiation for the sins of the whole world'. Bishop **Hugh Latimer** preached that 'Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as he did for Peter: Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved; Judas would not believe, and therefore he was condemned'. Even particularist **John Bradford** admitted that 'Christ's death is sufficient for all, but effectual for the elect only'. The Elizabethan Anglicans were no different in their understanding. Bishop **John Jewel** wrote that, on the cross, Christ declared "It is finished" to signify 'that the price and ransom was now full paid for the sin of all mankind'. Elsewhere, he made clear that 'The death of Christ is available for the redemption of all the world'. **Richard Hooker** stated an identical view when he said that Christ's 'precious and propitiatory sacrifice' was 'offered for the sins of all the world' (*All extracts from the Parker Society Volumes*).

THE CANONS OF DORDT

'The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin; and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. ... That, however, many who have been called by the gospel neither repent nor believe in Christ but perish in unbelief does not happen because of any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, but through their own fault. ... [This] was the most free counsel of God the Father, that the life-giving and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect' (*The Second Canon*).

MOISE AMYRAUT (*French Reformed theologian*)

'Jesus Christ died for all men sufficiently, but for the elect only effectually: and that consequentially his intention was to die for all men in respect of the sufficiency of his satisfaction, but for the elect only in respect of its quickening

and saving virtue and efficacy; which is to say, that Christ's will was that the sacrifice of his cross should be of an infinite price and value, and most abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world; yet nevertheless the efficacy of his death appertains only unto the elect; ... for this was the most free counsel and gracious purpose both of God the Father, in giving his Son for the salvation of mankind, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, in suffering the pains of death, that the efficacy thereof should particularly belong unto all the elect, and to them only' (John Quick's *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*).

RICHARD BAXTER

'When God saith so expressly that Christ died for all [2 Cor. 5:14-15], and tasted death for every man [Heb. 2:9], and is the ransom for all [1 Tim. 2:6], and the propitiation for the sins of the whole world [1 Jn. 2:2], it bessems every Christian rather to explain in what sense Christ died for all, than flatly to deny it' (*Universal Redemption*).

WILLIAM TWISSE (*first prolocutor (or chairman) of the Westminster Assembly*)

'I am ready to profess ... that every one who hears the gospel, (without distinction between elect or reprobate) is bound to believe that Christ died for him, so far as to procure both the pardon of his sins and the salvation of his soul, in case he believes and repent' (*Works*).

EDMUND CALAMY (*member of the Westminster Assembly*)

'I am far from universal redemption in the Arminian sense; but that that I hold is in the sense of our divines (e.g. Bishop Davenant) in the Synod of Dordt, that Christ did pay a price for all ... that Jesus Christ did not only die sufficiently for all, but God did intend, in giving Christ, and Christ in giving himself, did intend to put all men in a state of salvation in case they do believe' (*Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*).

THOMAS BOSTON (*Scottish Presbyterian*)

When he published *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1726), he was clearly happy to endorse the words (of John Preston): 'Go and tell everyman without exception that here is good news for him, Christ is dead for him'. In his own book *A View of the Covenant of Grace* (1734), Boston himself stated, '... the extent of the administration [of the covenant] is not founded on election, but on the sufficiency of Christ's obedience and death for the salvation of all'.

THOMAS CHALMERS (*first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland*)

'If Christ died only for the elect, and not for all', then ministers 'are puzzled to understand how they should proceed with the calls and invitations of the gospel. ... Now for the specific end of conversion, the available scripture is not that Christ laid down His life for the sheep, but that Christ is set forth a propitiation for the sins of the world. It is not because I know myself to be one of the sheep, or one of the elect, but because I know myself to be one of the world, that I take to myself the calls and promises of the New Testament'

(Institutes of Theology)

J. C. RYLE (*first Bishop of Liverpool*)

Commenting on John 1:29, he wrote that 'Christ's death is profitable to none but to the elect who believe on His name. ... But ... I dare not say that no atonement has been made, in any sense, except for the elect. ... When I read that the wicked who are lost, "deny the Lord that bought them," (2 Pet. 2:1) and that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," (2 Cor. 5:19), I dare not confine the intention of redemption to the saints alone. Christ is for every man'. Commenting on John 3:16 and appealing to Bishop John Davenant, Calvin and others, he concludes: 'Those who confine God's love exclusively to the elect appear to me to take a narrow and contracted view of God's character and attributes. ... I have long come to the conclusion that men may be more systematic in their statements than the Bible, and may be led into grave error by idolatrous veneration of a system' (*Expository Thoughts on John's Gospel*, Vol. 1).

CHARLES HODGE (*American Presbyterian*)

'There is a sense ... in which Christ did die for all men. His death had the effect of justifying the offer of salvation to everyman; and of course was designed to have that effect. He therefore died sufficiently for all' (*Systematic Theology*)

R. L. DABNEY (*American Presbyterian*)

He criticised Scottish theologian William Cunningham for taking a narrow view of the atonement's design. Dabney also distanced himself from John Owen's particularism: 'I have already stated one ground for rejecting that interpretation of John 3:16, which makes 'the world' which God so loved, the elect world. ... Christ's mission to make expiation for sin is a manifestation of unspeakable benevolence to the whole world' (*Systematic Theology*).

D. M. LLOYD-JONES (*Welsh Presbyterian/London Congregationalist*)

'But look at [Christ's] death for a moment and consider it as an expiation for the sin of the whole world. What are we told about it? Well, those sufferings were enough, according to John, for all. Listen! 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 Jn. 2: 2). The whole world! ... The sins of the whole world he had borne upon Himself'.

'[If] ever you feel utterly helpless and hopeless, then turn back to Him, the Christ of the cross, with His arms outstretched, who still says: 'Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth'. It is there that the whole of humanity is focused. He is the representative of the whole of mankind. He died for all' (*Aberavon Sermons*).

Selected by Dr Alan C. Clifford