

# Who am I?

Charles Dickens, in his novel 'Bleak House', writes of Sir Leicester Dedlock: who "when he has nothing else to do, he can always contemplate his own greatness. It is of considerable advantage to a man to have so inexhaustible a subject. After reading his letters, he leans back in his corner of the carriage and generally reviews his importance to society". It is a long epic and this reader has not yet reached the end of the book but from the way the plot is unfolding he is not going to be able to stay in that self-congratulatory state. Perhaps the Baronet will be forced to think, "Who am I---?"

Visiting recently an old lady of whom we are particularly fond, we found her propped up in a chair in her room at the home where she now resides. Her memory often failing and with a series of minor strokes causing some confusion, she nevertheless came out with the same thought but this time as a statement. She said, "I don't know who I am"? Many an elderly person will say, "I am still young inside", and indeed they are. But their inner picture of who they are is in conflict with their aging body and what everyone else sees

We met a man who had suddenly been made redundant. Instead of the promotion that he expected he faced an uncertain future. His pride had suffered severely. His self-worth plummeted when numerous job applications proved futile. There was a sense of not being wanted, a failure. Not many of us could face circumstances like that with equanimity and the Lord does not expect this from us. Having met many Christians who feel that they have to be strong and without fear in every circumstance and who underneath are falling apart we can write with conviction that it is better to be honest with the heavenly Father. There is a bookmark written by M. Basilea, of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, which reads, "A child in tears belongs in the Father's arms." Those arms are always open. But silently



*With arms open wide, He welcomes  
us as His children*

beckoning is that question, "Who am I?" This man discovered through his circumstances that he was not who he thought he was, a needed and appreciated employee.\*

The hymn writers too have found themselves confronting this question. In the lovely hymn, 'How shall I sing that majesty which angels do admire?', written by John Mason in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, one verse ends, "Ten thousand times ten thousand sound Thy praise; but who am I?". Who indeed? Here the perspective changes. It is who I am in relation to God. The answer in this hymn is that we are very insignificant. Another hymn writer, Samuel Crossman, in the same century, also reached the question, "Who am I?" He writes, "Oh who am I that for my sake, my Lord should take frail flesh and die?". Again it is who

am I in relationship to God. This time it is not the majesty of God that produces the question but the love of God.

This cuts right across finding our identity according to the roles that we have. Those roles may be God-given such as being a vicar or indeed a Sister but if we fall into the trap of thinking that is who we are, then we are living dangerously. The place to begin to answer the question, "who am I?" is to look away from ourselves to God. In Him, and Him alone is the answer. Before Him the outward trappings fall away. I am quite pitiful until the God of love rescues me and adopts me into His family. Then I can hold my head high whatever circumstances do to me in life.

Who am I? I am the child of a King bearing his likeness. "See what great love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God." 1 John 3:1 NIV