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SELECTIONS
**SELECTED
WRITINGS**

OF J. GRESHAM MACHEN

EDITED BY JOHN HENDRYX

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History and Faith

The Importance of History for Christianity

The student of the New Testament should be primarily an historian. The centre and core of all the Bible is history. Everything else that the Bible contains is fitted into an historical framework and leads up to an historical climax. The Bible is primarily a record of events.

The Liberal Response

That assertion will not pass unchallenged. The modern Church is impatient of history. History, we are told, is a dead thing. Let us forget the Amalekites, and fight the enemies that are at our doors. The true essence of the Bible is to be found in eternal ideas; history is merely the form in which those ideas are expressed.

They say that it makes no difference whether the history is real or fictitious; in either case, the ideas are the same. It makes no difference whether Abraham was an historical personage or a myth; in either case his life is an inspiring example of faith. It makes no difference whether Moses was really a mediator between God and Israel; in any case the record of Sinai embodies the idea of a covenant between God and His people. It makes no difference whether Jesus really lived and died and rose again as He is declared to have done in the Gospels; in any case the Gospel picture, be it ideal or be it history, is an encouragement to filial piety.

In this way, religion has been made independent, as is thought, of the uncertainties of historical research. The separation of Christianity from history has been a great concern of modern theology. It has been an inspiring attempt. But it has been a failure.

The Conservative Reply

Give up history and you can retain some things. You can retain a belief in God. But philosophical theism has never been a powerful force in the world. You can retain a lofty ethical ideal. But be perfectly clear about one point you can never retain a gospel.

For gospel means 'good news', tidings, information about something that has happened. In other words, it means history. A gospel independent of history is simply a contradiction in terms.

We are shut up in this world as in a beleaguered camp. Dismayed by the stern facts of life, we are urged by the modern preacher to have courage. Let us treat God as our Father; they say, let us continue bravely in the battle of life.

But alas, the facts are too plain; those facts which are always with us. The fact of suffering! How do you know that God is all love and kindness? Nature is full of horrors. Human suffering may be unpleasant, but it is real, and God must have something to do with it.

The fact of death! No matter how satisfying the joys of earth, it cannot be denied at least that they will soon depart, and of what use are joys that last but for a day? A span of life; and then, for all of us, blank, unfathomed mystery!

The fact of guilt! What if the condemnation of conscience should be but the foretaste of judgment? What if contact with the infinite should be contact with a dreadful infinity of holiness? What if the inscrutable cause of all things should turn out to be a righteous God?

The fact of sin! The thralldom of habit! This strange subjection to a mysterious power of evil that is leading resistlessly into some unknown abyss!

To these facts the modern preacher responds with exhortation. Make the best of the situation, he says, look on the bright side of life.

Very eloquent, my friend! But alas, you cannot change the facts. The modern preacher offers reflection. The Bible offers more. The Bible offers news. Not reflection on the old, but tidings of something new; not something that can be deduced or something that can be discovered, but something that has happened; not philosophy, but history; not exhortation, but a gospel.

The Bible contains a record of something that has happened, something that puts a new face upon life. What that something is, is told us in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The authority of the Bible should be tested here at the central point. Is the Bible right about Jesus?

The Bible account of Jesus contains mysteries, but the essence of it can be put almost in a word. Jesus of Nazareth was not a product of the world, but a Saviour come from outside the world.

His birth was a mystery. His life was a life of perfect purity, of awful righteousness, and of gracious, sovereign power. His death was no mere holy martyrdom, but a sacrifice for the sins of the world. His resurrection was not an aspiration in the hearts of His disciples, but a mighty act of God.

He is alive, and present at this hour to help us if we will turn to Him. He is more than one of the sons of men; He is in mysterious union with the eternal God.

That is the Bible account of Jesus.

The Liberal Position

It is opposed today by another account. That account appears in many forms, but the essence of it is simple. Jesus of Nazareth, it maintains, was the fairest flower of humanity. He lived a life of remarkable purity and unselfishness. So deep was His filial piety, so profound His consciousness of a mission, that He came to regard himself, not merely as a prophet, but as the Messiah.

They maintain that by opposing the hypocrisy of the Jews, or by imprudent obtrusion of His lofty claims, He suffered martyrdom. He died on the cross.

They maintain that after His death, His followers were discouraged. But His cause was not lost; the memory of Him was too strong. The disciples simply could not believe that He had perished. Predisposed psychologically in this way, they had visionary experiences; they thought they saw Him. These visions were hallucinations. But they were the means by which the personality of Jesus retained its power; they were the foundation of the Christian Church.

There, in a word, is the issue. Jesus a product of the world, or a heavenly being come from without? A teacher and example, or a Saviour?

Considering the Problem

The issue is sharp; the Bible against the modern preacher. Here is the real test of Bible authority. If the Bible is right here, at the decisive point, probably it is right elsewhere. If it is wrong here, then its authority is gone. The question must be faced. What shall we think about Jesus of Nazareth?

From the middle of the first century, certain interesting documents have been preserved. They are the epistles of Paul. The genuineness of them, the chief of them at any rate, is not seriously doubted, and they can be dated with approximate accuracy. They form, therefore, a fixed starting-point in controversy.

These epistles were written by a remarkable man. Paul cannot be brushed lightly aside. He was certainly, to say the least, one of the most influential men that ever lived. His influence was a mighty building. It must be doubted that it was erected on the sand.

In his letters, Paul has revealed the very depths of a tremendous religious experience. That experience was founded, not upon a

profound philosophy or daring speculation, but upon a Palestinian Jew who had lived but a few years before. That Jew was Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul had a strange view of Jesus; he separated Him sharply from man and placed Him clearly on the side of God. 'Not by man, but by Jesus Christ', he says at the beginning of Galatians, and he implies the same thing on every page of his letters. Jesus Christ, according to Paul, was man, but He was also more.

That is a very strange fact. Only through familiarity have we ceased to wonder at it. Look at the thing a moment as though for the first time. A Jew lives in Palestine, and is executed like a common criminal. Almost immediately after His death He is raised to divine dignity by one of His contemporaries, not by a negligible enthusiast either, but by one of the most commanding figures in the history of the world. So the thing presents itself to the modern historian. There is a problem here. However the problem may be solved, it can be ignored by no one.

The man Jesus deified by Paul; that is a very remarkable fact. The late H. J. Holtzmann, who may be regarded as the typical exponent of modern naturalistic criticism of the New Testament, admitted that for the rapid deification of Jesus as it appears in the epistles of Paul he was able to cite no parallel in the religious history of the race.

The raising of Jesus to superhuman dignity was extraordinarily rapid even if it was due to Paul. But it was most emphatically not due to Paul. It can be traced clearly to the original disciples of Jesus. And that too on the basis of the Pauline Epistles alone.

The epistles show that with regard to the person of Christ Paul was in agreement with those who had been apostles before him. Even the Judaizers had no dispute with Paul's conception of Jesus as a heavenly being. About other things there was debate; about this point there is not a trace of a conflict.

With regard to the supernatural Christ Paul appears everywhere in perfect harmony with all Palestinian Christians. That is a fact of enormous significance. The heavenly Christ of Paul was also the Christ of those who had walked and talked with Jesus of Nazareth.

Think of it! Those men had seen Jesus subject to all the petty limitations of human life. Yet suddenly, almost immediately after His shameful death, they became convinced that He had risen from the tomb and that He was a heavenly being.

There is an historical problem here; for modern naturalism, we venture to think, an unsolved problem. A man Jesus regarded as a heavenly being, not by later generations who could be deceived by the nimbus of distance and mystery, but actually by His intimate friends! A strange hallucination indeed! And upon that hallucination the whole of the modern world was founded!

So much for Paul. A good deal can be learned from him alone; enough to give us pause. But that is not all that we know about Jesus; it is only a beginning.

The Gospels enrich our knowledge; they provide an extended picture. In their picture of Jesus the Gospels agree with Paul. Like Paul, they make of Jesus a supernatural person. Not one of the Gospels, but all of them! The day is past when the divine Christ of John could be confronted with a human Christ of Mark. Historical students of all shades of opinion have now come to see that Mark as well as John (though it is believed in a lesser degree) presents an exalted Christology, Mark as well as John represents Jesus clearly as a supernatural person.

A supernatural person, according to modern historians, never existed. That is the fundamental principle of modern naturalism. The world, it is said, must be explained as an absolutely unbroken development, obeying fixed laws. The supernatural Christ of the Gospels never existed. How then explain the Gospel picture?

You might explain it as fiction; the Gospel account of Jesus throughout a myth. That explanation has been seriously proposed. But it is absurd; it will never convince any body of genuine historians.

The matter is at any rate not so simple as that. The Gospels present a supernatural person, but they also present a real person; a very real, a very concrete, a very inimitable person.

That is not denied by modern liberalism. Indeed it cannot possibly be denied. If the Jesus who spoke the parables, the Jesus who opposed the Pharisees, the Jesus who ate with publicans and sinners, is not a real person, living under real conditions, at a definite point of time, then there is no way of distinguishing history from sham.

On the one hand, then, the Jesus of the Gospels is a supernatural person; on the other hand, He is a real person. But according to modern naturalism, a supernatural person never existed. He is a supernatural person; He is a real person; and yet a supernatural person is never real.

Clearly there is a problem here! What is the solution?

The Argument of Liberalism

Why, says the modern historian, obviously there are two elements in the Gospels. In the first place, there is genuine historical tradition. That has preserved the real Jesus. In the second place, there is myth. That has added the supernatural attributes. The duty of the historian is to separate the two to discover the genuine human traits of the Galilean prophet beneath the gaudy colours which have almost hopelessly defaced His portrait, to disentangle the human Jesus from the tawdry ornamentation which has been hung about Him by naive and unintelligent admirers.

To separate the natural and the supernatural in the Gospel account of Jesus, that has been the task of modern liberalism. But how shall the work be done?

We must admit at least that the myth-making process began very early, says the liberal. It has affected even the very earliest literary sources that we know. But let us not be discouraged. Whenever the mythical elaboration began, it may now be reversed. Let us simply go through the Gospels and separate the wheat from the tares. Let us separate the natural from the supernatural, the human from the divine, the believable from the unbelievable. When we have thus picked out the workable elements, let us combine them into some sort of picture of the historical Jesus.

Such is the method. The result is what is called 'the liberal Jesus'. It has been a splendid effort. I know scarcely any more brilliant chapter in the history of the human spirit than this 'quest of the historical Jesus. The modern world has put its very life and soul into this task. It has been a splendid effort. But it has also been a failure.

The Failure of the Liberal Position

In the first place, there is the initial difficulty of separating the natural from the supernatural in the Gospel narrative. The two are inextricably intertwined. Some of the incidents, you say, are evidently historical. They are so full of local colour; they could never have been invented.

Yes, but unfortunately the miraculous incidents possess exactly the same qualities. You help yourself, then, by admissions. Jesus, you say, was a faith-healer of remarkable power; many of the cures related in the Gospels are real, though they are not really miraculous.

But that does not carry you far. Faith-healing is often a totally inadequate explanation of the cures. And those supposed faith-cures are not a bit more vividly, more concretely, more inimitably related than the most uncompromising of the miracles.

The attempt to separate divine and human in the Gospels leads naturally to a radical scepticism. The wheat is rooted up with the tares. If the supernatural is untrue, then the whole must go, for the supernatural is inseparable from the rest.

This tendency is not merely logical; it is not merely what might naturally be; it is actual. Liberal scholars are rejecting more and more of the Gospels; others are denying that there is any certainly historical element at all.

Such scepticism is absurd. Of it you need have no fear; it will always be corrected by common sense. The Gospel narrative is too inimitably concrete, too absolutely incapable of invention. If elimination of the supernatural leads logically to elimination of the whole, that is simply a refutation of the whole critical process. The supernatural Jesus is the only Jesus that we know.

In the second place, suppose this first task has been accomplished. It is really impossible, but suppose it has been done. You have reconstructed the historical Jesus; a teacher of righteousness, an inspired prophet, a pure worshipper of God. You clothe Him with all the art of modern research. You throw upon Him the warm, deceptive, flood-light of modern sentimentality.

But all to no purpose! The liberal Jesus remains an impossible figure of the stage. There is a contradiction at the very centre of His being. That contradiction arises from His Messianic consciousness. This simple prophet of yours, this humble child of God, thought that He was a heavenly being who was to come on the clouds of heaven and be the instrument in judging the earth. There is a tremendous contradiction here.

A few extremists rid themselves easily of the difficulty; they simply deny that Jesus ever thought He was the Messiah. An heroic measure, which is generally rejected! The Messianic consciousness is rooted far too deep in the sources ever to be removed by a critical

process. That Jesus thought He was the Messiah is nearly as certain as that He lived at all. There is a tremendous problem there.

It would be no problem if Jesus were an ordinary fanatic or unbalanced visionary; He might then have deceived Himself as well as others. But as a matter of fact He was no ordinary fanatic, no megalomaniac. On the contrary, His calmness and unselfishness and strength have produced an indelible impression. Yet it was such an one who thought that He was the Son of Man to come on the clouds of heaven.

A contradiction! Do not think I am exaggerating. The difficulty is felt by all. After all has been done, after the miraculous has carefully been eliminated, there is still, as a recent liberal writer has said, something puzzling, something almost uncanny, about Jesus. He refuses to be forced into the mould of a harmless teacher.

A few men draw the logical conclusion. Jesus, they say, was insane. That is consistent. But it is absurd.

Suppose, however, that all these objections have been overcome. Suppose the critical sifting of the Gospel tradition has been accomplished, suppose the resulting picture of Jesus is comprehensible; even then the work is only half done.

How did this human Jesus come to be regarded as a superhuman Jesus by His intimate friends, and how, upon the foundation of this strange belief was there reared the edifice of the Christian Church? Let us consider the case.

In the early part of the first century, in one of the petty principalities subject to Rome, there lived an interesting man. Until the age of thirty years He led an obscure life in a Galilean family, then began a course of religious and ethical teaching accompanied by a remarkable ministry of healing.

At first His preaching was crowned with a measure of success, but soon the crowds deserted Him, and after three or four years, He fell victim in Jerusalem to the jealousy of His countrymen and the cowardice of the Roman governor. His few faithful disciples were utterly disheartened; His shameful death was the end of all their high ambitions.

After a few days, however, an astonishing thing happened. It is the most astonishing thing in all history. Those same disheartened men suddenly displayed a surprising activity. They began preaching, with remarkable success, in Jerusalem, the very scene of their disgrace. In a few years, the religion that they preached burst the bands of Judaism, and planted itself in the great centres of the Graeco-Roman world. At first despised, then persecuted, it overcame all obstacles; in less than three hundred years it became the dominant religion of the Empire; and it has exerted an incalculable influence upon the modern world.

Jesus, Himself, the Founder, had not succeeded in winning any considerable number of permanent adherents; during His lifetime, the genuine disciples were comparatively few. It is after His death that the origin of Christianity as an influential movement is to be placed.

Now it seems exceedingly unnatural that Jesus' disciples could thus accomplish what He had failed to accomplish. They were evidently far inferior to Him in spiritual discernment and in courage; they had not displayed the slightest trace of originality; they had been abjectly dependent upon the Master; they had not even succeeded in understanding Him.

Furthermore, what little understanding, what little courage they may have had was dissipated by His death. 'Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered'. How could such men succeed where their Master had failed? How could they institute the mightiest religious movement in the history of the world?

Of course, you can amuse yourself by suggesting impossible hypotheses. You might suggest, for instance, that after the death of Jesus His disciples sat quietly down and reflected on His teaching. 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you'. 'Love your enemies'. These are pretty good principles; they are of permanent value. Are they not as good now, the disciples might have said, as they were when Jesus was alive?

'Our Father which art in heaven'. Is not that a good way of addressing God? May not God be our Father even though Jesus is now dead?

The disciples might conceivably have come to such conclusions. But certainly nothing could be more unlikely. These men had not even understood the teachings of Jesus when He was alive, not even under the immediate impact of that tremendous personality. How much less would they understand after He had died, and died in a way that indicated hopeless failure! What hope could such men have, at such a time, of influencing the world?

Furthermore, the hypothesis has not one jot of evidence in its favour. Christianity never was the continuation of the work of a dead teacher.

It is evident, therefore, that in the short interval between the death of Jesus and the first Christian preaching, something had happened. Something must have happened to explain the transformation of those weak, discouraged men into the spiritual conquerors of the world. Whatever that happening was, it is the greatest event in history. An event is measured by its consequences; and that event has transformed the world.

Yet according to modern naturalism, that event, which caused the founding of the Christian Church, was a vision, an hallucination. But according to the New Testament, it was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The former hypothesis has been held in a variety of forms; it has been buttressed by all the learning and all the ingenuity of modern scholarship. But all to no purpose! The visionary hypothesis may be demanded by a naturalistic philosophy; to the historian it must ever remain unsatisfactory. History is relentlessly plain. The foundation of the Church is either inexplicable, or else it is to be explained by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

But if the resurrection be accepted, then the lofty claims of Jesus are substantiated; Jesus was then no mere man, but God and man, God come in the flesh.

We have examined the liberal reconstruction of Jesus. It breaks down, we have seen, at least at three points.

It fails, in the first place, in trying to separate divine and human in the Gospel picture. Such separation is impossible; divine and human are too closely interwoven; reject the divine, and you must reject the human too. Today the conclusion is being drawn. We must reject it all! Jesus never lived!

Are you disturbed by such radicalism? I for my part not a bit. It is to me rather the most hopeful sign of the times. The liberal Jesus never existed, that is all it proves. It proves nothing against the divine Saviour. Jesus was divine, or else we have no certain proof that He ever lived. I am glad to accept the alternative.

In the second place, the liberal Jesus, after he has been reconstructed, despite His limitations is a monstrosity. The Messianic consciousness introduces a contradiction into the very centre of His being. The liberal Jesus is not the sort of man who ever could have thought that He was the Messiah.

A humble teacher who thought He was the Judge of all the earth! Such an one would have been insane. Today men are drawing the conclusion; Jesus is being investigated seriously by the alienists. But

do not be alarmed at their diagnosis. The Jesus they are investigating is not the Jesus of the Bible.

They are investigating a man who thought He was Messiah and was not Messiah. Against one who thought He was Messiah and was Messiah they have obviously nothing to say.

Their diagnosis may be accepted. Perhaps the liberal Jesus, if He ever existed, was insane. But that is not the Jesus whom we love.

In the third place, the liberal Jesus is insufficient to account for the Origin of the Christian Church. The mighty edifice of Christendom was not erected upon a pin-point. Radical thinkers are drawing the conclusion.

Christianity, they say, was not founded upon Jesus of Nazareth. It arose in some other way. It was a syncretistic religion. Jesus was the name of a heathen god. Or it was a social movement that arose in Rome about the middle of the first century. These constructions need no refutation, they are absurd. Hence comes their value. Because they are absurd, they reduce liberalism to an absurdity.

A mild mannered rabbi will not account for the origin of the Church. Liberalism has left a blank at the beginning of Christian history. History abhors a vacuum. These absurd theories are the necessary consequence; they have simply tried to fill the void.

The modern substitute for the Jesus of the Bible has been tried and found wanting. The liberal Jesus. What a world of lofty thinking, what a wealth of noble sentiment was put into His construction! But now there are some indications that He is about to fall. He is beginning to give place to a radical scepticism.

Such scepticism is absurd. Jesus lived, if any history is true. Jesus lived. But what Jesus? Not the Jesus of modern naturalism! But the Jesus of the Bible! In the wonders of the Gospel story, in the character of Jesus, in His mysterious self-consciousness, in the very

origin of the Christian Church, we discover a problem, which defies the best efforts of the naturalistic historian. It pushes us relentlessly off the safe ground of the phenomenal world toward the intellectual abyss of supernaturalism. It forces us, despite the resistance of the modern mind, to recognise a very act of God. It substitutes for the silent God of philosophy the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, having spoken at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

The resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history; it is good news. It is an event that has put a new face upon life. But how can the acceptance of an historical fact satisfy the longing of our souls?

Must we stake our salvation upon the intricacies of historical research? Is the trained historian the modern priest without whose gracious intervention no one can see God? Surely some more immediate certitude is required.

The objection would be valid if history stood alone. But history does not stand alone; it is confirmed by experience. An historical conviction of the resurrection of Jesus is not the end of faith, but only the beginning. If faith stops there, it will probably never stand the fires of criticism.

We are told that Jesus rose from the dead. The message is supported by a singular weight of evidence. But it is not just a message remote from us. It concerns not merely the past. If Jesus rose from the dead, as He is declared to have done in the Gospels, then He is still alive, and if He is still alive, then He may still be found. He is present with us today to help us if we will but turn to Him.

The historical evidence for the resurrection amounted only to probability; probability is the best that history can do. But the probability was at least sufficient for a trial. We accepted the Easter message enough to make trial of it. And making trial of it we found

that it is true. Christian experience cannot do without history, but it adds to history that directness, that immediateness, that intimacy of conviction which delivers us from fear. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The Bible, then, is right at the central point; it is right in its account of Jesus; it has validated its principal claim. Here, however, a curious phenomenon comes into view. Some men are strangely ungrateful. Now that we have Jesus, they say, we can be indifferent to the Bible. We have the present Christ; we care nothing about the dead documents of the past.

You have Christ? But how, pray, did you get Him? There is but one answer; you got Him through the Bible. Without the Bible you would never have known so much as whether there be any Christ.

Yet now that you have Christ you give the Bible up; you are ready to abandon it to its enemies; you are not interested in the findings of criticism. Apparently, then, you have used the Bible as a ladder to scale the dizzy height of Christian experience, but now that you are safe on top you kick the ladder down.

Very natural! But what of the poor souls who are still battling with the flood beneath? They need the ladder too.

But the figure is misleading. The Bible is not a ladder; it is a foundation. It is buttressed, indeed, by experience. If you have the present Christ, then you know that the Bible account is true. But if the Bible were false, your faith would go. You cannot, therefore, be indifferent to Bible criticism.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The Bible is at the foundation of the Church. Undermine that foundation, and the Church will fall. It will fall, and great will be the fall of it.

Two conceptions of Christianity are struggling for the ascendancy today. The question that we have been discussing is part of a still larger problem. The Bible against the modern preacher!

Is Christianity a means to an end, or an end in itself, an improvement of the world, or the creation of a new world?

Is sin a necessary stage in the development of humanity, or a yawning chasm in the very structure of the universe?

Is the world's good sufficient to overcome the world's evil, or is this world lost in sin?

Is communion with God a help toward the betterment of humanity, or itself the one great ultimate goal of human life?

Is God identified with the world, or separated from it by the infinite abyss of sin?

Modern culture is here in conflict with the Bible. The Church is in perplexity. She is trying to compromise. She is saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. And rapidly she is losing her power. The time has come when she must choose. God grant she may choose aright! God grant she may decide for the Bible!

The Bible is despised. To the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness; but the Bible is right. God is not just a name for the totality of things, but an awful, mysterious, holy Person. Not a 'present God', in the modern sense, not a God who is with us by necessity, and has nothing to offer us but what we have already, but a God who from the heaven of His awful holiness has of His own free grace had pity on our bondage, and sent His Son to deliver us from the present evil world and receive us into the glorious freedom of communion with Himself.

My Idea of God

IF my idea of God were really mine, if it were one which I had evolved out of my own inner consciousness, I should attribute very little importance to it myself, and should certainly expect even less importance to be attributed to it by others. If God is merely a fact of human experience, if theology is merely a branch of psychology, then I for my part shall cease to be interested in the subject at all. The only God about whom I can feel concerned is one who has objective existence, an existence independent of man.

But if there be such a really and independently existent Being, it seems extremely unlikely that there can be any knowledge of Him unless He chooses to reveal Himself: a divine Being that could be discovered apart from revelation would be either a mere name for an aspect of man's nature – the feeling of reverence or loyalty or the like – or else, if possessing objective existence, a mere passive thing that would submit to human investigation like the substances that are analyzed in the laboratory. And in either case it would seem absurd to apply to such a Being the name of "God."

A really existent God, then, if He be more than merely passive, if He be a living God, can be known only through His revelation of Himself. And it is extremely unlikely that such revelation should have come to me alone. I reject, therefore, the whole subjectivizing tendency in religion that is so popular at the present time - the whole notion that faith is merely an "adventure" of the individual man. On the contrary, I am on the search for some revelation of God that has come to other men as well as to me, and that has come into human life, not through a mere analysis of human states of consciousness but distinctly from the outside. Such revelation I find in the Christian religion.

The idea of God, therefore, which I shall here endeavor to summarize is simply the Christian idea. I have indeed been enabled to make it my own; I love it with all my heart; but I should not love it if I thought that it had been discovered merely in the depths of my own soul. On the contrary, the very thing that I love about it is that it

comes to me with an external authority which I hold to be the authority of God Himself.

At this point, however, there will no doubt be an objection. We have spoken about the knowledge of God; but in reality the knowledge of God, it is often said, is unnecessary to our contact with Him, or at least it occupies merely a secondary place, as the symbolic and necessarily changing expression of an experience which in itself is ineffable. Such depreciation of knowledge in the sphere of religion has been widely prevalent in the modern world, and at no time has it been more prevalent than now. It underlies the mysticism of Schleiermacher and his many successors; it underlies the Ritschlian rejection of "metaphysics"; it underlies the popular exaltation of "abiding experiences" at the expense of the mental categories in which they are supposed to be expressed; and in general it is at the roots of the entire separation between religion and theology, experience and doctrine, faith and knowledge, which is so marked a characteristic of the religious teaching of the present day.

In opposition to this entire tendency, I for my part must still insist upon the primacy of the intellect. It may seem strange that the intellect should have to be defended by one who has so slight an experimental acquaintance with it as I; but reason in our days has been deposed from her queenly throne by pragmatism the usurper, and, wandering in exile as she does, cannot be too critical of any humble persons who rally to her defense. And, as a matter of fact, the passionate anti-intellectualism of the present age is having its natural fruit in a lamentable intellectual as well as moral decline. Such decadence can be checked - I, for my part, believe - only by a reemphasis upon truth as distinguished from practice, and in particular only by a return from all anti-intellectual mysticism or positivism to the knowledge of God.

Certainly, unless our contact with God is based upon knowledge of Him it ceases to possess any moral quality at all. Pure feeling is non-moral; what makes my affection for a human friend, for example,

such an ennobling thing is the knowledge which I possess of the character of my friend. So it is also with our relation to God: religion is moral and personal only if it is based upon truth.

If then, in order that there may be a moral and personal relation to God, there must be knowledge of Him, how may that knowledge be attained? I have no new ways to suggest: the only ways of knowing God which I can detect are found in nature, in conscience, and in the Bible.

God is revealed, I hold, in the first place through the things that He has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." This revelation of God through nature is commonly called - or used to be commonly called - "natural religion." And natural religion is by no means altogether dead. Modern men of science, if they be thoughtful, admit that there is a mystery in the presence of which the wisdom of the wisest men is dumb; the true man of science stands at length before a curtain that is never lifted, a mystery that rebukes all pride. But this revelation through nature is far richer than many men of science suppose; in reality it presents to us not merely a blank mystery, but the mighty God. The revelation comes to different men in different ways. For example, when I viewed the spectacle of the total eclipse of the sun at New Haven on the twenty-fourth of January 1925, I was confirmed in my theism. Such phenomena make us conscious of the wonderful mechanism of the universe, as we ought to be conscious of it every day; at such moments anything like materialism seems to be but a very pitiful and very unreasonable thing. I am no astronomer, but of one thing I was certain: when the strange, slow-moving shadow was gone, and the world was bathed again in the wholesome light of day, I knew that the sun, despite its vastness, was made for us personal beings and not we for the sun, and that it was made for us personal beings by the living God.

In the second place, God is revealed by His voice within us. I am perfectly well aware that that voice is not always heard. Conscience

has fallen on evil days: it is drowned by a jargon of psychological terms; it is supposed to be rendered unnecessary by an all-embracing network of legislative enactments.

The categories of guilt and retribution are in many quarters thought to be out of date, and scientific sociology is substituted for the distinction between right and wrong. But I for my part am not favorably impressed with the change; self-interest seems to me to be but a feeble substitute for the moral law, and its feebleness, despite bureaucratic regulation of the details of human life and despite scientific study both of individual human behavior and of the phenomena of human society, seems to be becoming evident in an alarming moral decline. The raging sea of passion cannot, I think, be kept back permanently by the flimsy mud embankments of utilitarianism; but recourse may again have to be had to the solid masonry of the law of God.

In the third place, God is revealed in the Bible. He is revealed in the Bible in a way which is entirely distinct from those ways that have just been mentioned. The Bible tells us things about God of which no slightest hint is found either in nature or in conscience. Of those things we shall speak in a moment.

But first it should be observed that, in addition to that fresh information, the Bible also confirms the revelation which has already been given. The confirmation is certainly necessary; for the revelation of God both in nature and in conscience has been sadly obscured. In comparing the fortieth chapter of Isaiah or the first verse of Genesis or the teaching of Jesus with the feeble and hesitant theism which is the highest that philosophy has to offer, and in comparing the unaided voice of conscience with the fifty-first Psalm or the searching law presented in the Sermon on the Mount, one feels that in the Bible a veil has been removed from the eyes of men. The facts were already there, and also the gift of human reason for the apprehension of them; but the light of reason somehow was

obscured until in the Bible men were enabled to see what they ought to have seen before.

Thus, in these three ways there is attained, I hold, a genuine and objective knowledge of God. Certainly that knowledge does not remove the feeling of wonder which is dear to the mystic's heart. Indeed, it ought to accentuate that feeling a thousandfold. There is nothing in the knowledge of God which should stifle, but everything which should awaken, the "numinous" quality in religion of which Otto speaks. God has gently pulled aside the curtain which veils His Being from the gaze of men, but the look thus granted beyond only reveals anew the vastness of the unknown. If a man's knowledge of God removes his sense of wonder in the presence of the Eternal, then he has not yet known as he ought to know.

Yet partial knowledge is not necessarily false, and there are certain things which are known about God.

At the very centre of those things stands that which is most often denied to-day; the very centre and core of Christian belief is found in the awful transcendence of God, the awful separateness between God and the world. That is denied by modern men in the interests of what is called, by a perversion of a great truth, the "immanence" of God. We will have nothing to do – men say – with the far-off God of historic theology; instead we will worship a God who exists only in and with the world, a God whose life is found only in that life which pulsates through the life of every one of us. Pantheism, in other words, is substituted for theism, on the ground that it brings God nearer to man.

But has it really the desired effect? I, for my part, think not. Far from bringing God nearer to man, the pantheism of our day really pushes Him very far off; it brings Him physically near, but at the same time makes Him spiritually remote; it conceives of Him as a sort of blind vital force, but ceases to regard Him as a Person whom a man can love. Destroy the free personality of God and the possibility of

fellowship with Him is gone; we cannot love a God of whom we are parts.

Thus, I for my part cling with all my heart to what are called the metaphysical attributes of God – His infinity and omnipotence and creatorhood. The finite God of Mr. H.G. Wells seems to me to be but a curious product of a modern mythology; He is to my mind not God, but *a* god; and in the presence of all such imaginings I am obliged to turn, very humbly but very resolutely, toward the dread, stupendous mystery of the Infinite, and say with Augustine: “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.”

This devotion to the so-called metaphysical attributes of God is unpopular at the present day. There are many who tell us that we ought to cease to be interested in the question how the world was made, or what will be our fate when we pass through the dark portals of death. Instead, we are told, we ought to worship a God who is not powerful but merely good. Such is the “ethical theism” of Dr. McGiffert and many others; Jesus, it seems, was quite wrong in the stress that He undoubtedly laid upon the doctrine of heaven and hell and the sovereignty of God. We moderns, it seems, can find a higher, disinterested worship - far higher than that of Jesus - in reverence for goodness divested of the vulgar trappings of power.

It sounds noble at first. But consider it for a moment, and its glory turns to ashes and leaves us in despair. What is meant by a goodness that has not physical power? Is not “goodness” in itself the merest abstraction? Is it not altogether without meaning except as belonging to a person? And does not the very notion of a person involve the power to act? Goodness divorced from power is therefore no goodness at all. The truth is that overmuch abstraction has here destroyed even that which is intended to be conserved. Make God good and not powerful, and both God and goodness have been destroyed.

In the presence of all such abstractions, the heart of man turns with new longing to the Living and Holy God, to the God who is revealed in nature, in the dread voice of conscience, and in the Bible. But as one turns to such a God, there is no comfort but only despair; the whole human race is separated from God by an awful abyss. Strange indeed, to us Christians, seems the complacency of the world; the very root of our religion is found in the consciousness of sin.

But at that point, on the basis of such presuppositions, there comes the really distinctive revelation that the Bible contains. It is not a revelation of things that already were true, but the explanation of an act. The Christian religion is based not merely upon permanent truths of religion, but upon things that happened in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago; it is based not merely upon knowledge of what God is, but also on a record of what God did. Into our sinful world – the Christian holds – there came in God's good time a Divine Redeemer.

His coming, marked by a stupendous miracle, was a voluntary act of condescension and love. During the days of His flesh, He proclaimed by His word and example the law of God. He proclaimed it in a new and terrible way that of itself could only deepen our despair. But with His proclamation of the law there went His proclamation of the gospel; with His pronouncement of the Divine judgment upon sin there went His offer of Himself as Saviour. When that offer was received in faith, there was not only cure of bodily ills, but also forgiveness in the presence of God.

At first faith was implicit; men trusted themselves to Jesus without fully knowing how it was that He could save. But even while He was on earth He pointed forward with ever increasing clearness to the redeeming work which He had come into the world to do. And at last, on the cross, that work was done. The Divine Saviour and Lord, for the love wherewith He loved us, bore all the guilt of our sins, made white and clean the dark page of our account, and reconciled us to God. There is the centre of our religion. But how pitiful are my

words! I may perhaps make men understand what we think, yet I can never quite make them sympathize with what we feel. The holy and righteous God, the dreadful guilt and uncleanness of sin, the wonder of God's grace in the gift of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the entrance through Christ into the very house of God, the new birth by the power of God's Spirit, the communion with the risen and ascended Lord through His Holy Spirit present in the Christian's heart – these are the convictions upon which rest our very lives.

If these convictions are false, they must be given up. But so long as we think them true we must act in accord with them, and it is morally wrong to ask us to do otherwise. At this point appears the profoundly unethical character of most of the proposals for Church union that are being made at the present day. The right way to combat us who call ourselves evangelical Christians is to combat honestly and openly our central convictions as to God and sin and redemption, not to ask us to hold those convictions and then act contrary to them. So long as we think as we do, we cannot, if we love our fellow men, allow them, so far as our testimony is concerned, to remain satisfied with the coldness of what we regard as a baseless and fatal optimism. We must endeavor, by the preaching of the law of God and of the gospel of His love, to bring them into the warmth and joy of the household of faith.

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What is Christianity

The Question, "What is Christianity?" has within recent years become one of the questions of popular interest of the day; it has

actually attained a place upon the front pages of the newspapers and in the popular magazines. To many persons, indeed, the raising of the question seems to be a colossal piece of impertinence; the Christian Church, they insist, is a great organization carrying on a useful service to mankind, why should we interfere with its efficiency by asking divisive and embarrassing questions as to what it is all for? But with such persons we cannot possibly bring ourselves to agree. Efficiency, after all, simply means doing things; and it does seem to be important to ask whether the things that are being done by our boasted ecclesiastical efficiency are good or bad. It is not enough to ask whether the Church is moving smoothly, one must also ask the question whether it is moving in the right direction.

The raising of that question, in the past history of the Church, has often been the precursor of great spiritual advance. It has always, indeed, caused disturbance, as in the great upheaval of the Reformation, but without it there would be death. Sad is the condition of the Church when "controversy" is discouraged and men refuse to look beneath the surface in order to discover what, at bottom, the Church is in the world to do. Let us not be afraid, therefore, of the basic question, the question what Christianity really is.

How shall we obtain the answer to that question? The method should surely be quite plain. If we are going to tell what Christianity is, surely we must take a look at Christianity as it has actually existed in the world. To say that Christianity is this or that is very different from saying that it ought to have been this or that, or that the ideal religion, whatever its name, would be this or that. Christianity is an historical phenomenon like the State of Pennsylvania or the United States of America or the Kingdom of Prussia or the Roman Empire, and it must be investigated by historical means. It may turn out to be a good thing or it may turn out to be a bad thing that is another question — but if we are to tell what it is, we must take a look at it as it has actually existed in the world.

No doubt we cannot tell all that it is by any such merely historical method as that, we cannot tell all that it is by looking at it merely from the outside. In order that we should tell all that it is, we must ourselves be Christians; we must know Christianity in our own inner lives. But the Christian religion has never been an esoteric type of mysticism, it has always presented itself in the open air; and there are some things about it which should appear to friend and foe alike.

But how shall we take a look at it? It has existed through some nineteen centuries and in a thousand different forms; how can we possibly obtain a common view of it, so as to include in our definition of it what it is and exclude from our definition what it is not? To what point in the long history of Christianity should we turn in order to discover what it really is? Surely the answer to that question is perfectly plain. If we are going to determine what any great movement is, surely we must turn to the beginnings of the movement. So it is with Christianity. We are not asserting at this point in our argument that the founders of the Christian movement had a right to legislate for all subsequent generations. That is a matter for further investigation. But what we are asserting now is that the founders of the Christian movement, whoever they were, did have an inalienable right to legislate for all those subsequent generations that should choose to bear the name "Christian." Conceivably we may change their program; but if we do change their program, let us use a new name. It is misleading to use the old name to designate a new thing. That is just a matter of common sense. If, therefore, we are going to tell what Christianity at bottom is, we must take a look at the beginnings of Christianity.

Now the beginnings of Christianity constitute a fairly definite historical phenomenon, about which there is a certain measure of agreement even between historians that are themselves Christian and historians that are not. Christianity is a great movement that originated a few days after the death of Jesus of Nazareth. If some one should say that it originated at an earlier time, when Jesus first gathered His disciples about Him in Galilee, we should not be

inclined to quarrel with him; indeed, we might even say that in a sense Christianity originated still farther back, in Old Testament times, when the promise was first given concerning a salvation to come. But if Christianity existed before the death of Jesus, it existed only in a preliminary form. So at least the matter appears to the secular historian, from his superficial and external point of view. Clearly there was a strange new beginning among the disciples of Jesus soon after Jesus' death; and at that time is to be put the beginning of the great world movement which is commonly called Christianity.

What then was Christianity at that time when it began? We can answer the question with more intelligence, perhaps, if we approach it with the fashionable modern answer to it in our mind and ask whether that answer is right or wrong. Christianity, according to that fashionable modern answer, is a life and not a doctrine, it is a life or an experience that has doctrine merely as its symbolic intellectual expression, so that while the life abides the doctrine must necessarily change from age to age.

That answer, of course, involves the most bottomless skepticism that could possibly be conceived; for if everything that we say about God or about Christ or about the future life has value merely for this generation, and if something contradictory to It may have equal value in some future generation, then the thing that we are saying is not true even here and now. A thing that is useful now may cease to be useful in some future generation, but a thing that is true now remains true beyond the end of time. To say, therefore, that doctrine is the necessarily changing expression of religious experience or religious life is simply to give up the search for truth altogether.

Was Christianity at the beginning in that sense a life as distinguished from a doctrine? At this point we desire to be perfectly clear. Christianity at the beginning certainly was a life, about that there can be no manner of doubt. The first Christians led lives very different from the lives of the people about them, and everything that did not

conform to that peculiarly Christian type of life was rigidly excluded from the early Church. Let us be perfectly plain about that.

But how was that Christian type of life produced? There we come to the crux of the whole question. If one thing is clear to the historian it is that that type of life was not produced merely by exhortation or merely by the magic of personal contacts; if one thing is clear to the historian it is that earliest Christian missionaries did not go around the world saying, "We have been living in contact with a wonderful person, Jesus; contact with Him has changed our lives; and we call upon you our hearers, without asking puzzling questions, without settling the meaning of His death, without asking whether He rose from the dead, simply to submit yourselves to the contagion of that wonderful personality." That is, perhaps, what many modern men might have expected the first Christian missionaries to say, but to the historian it is clear that as a matter of fact they said nothing of the kind.

What they did say is summed up in a few words in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where, as is admitted even by historians of the most skeptical kind, Paul is giving nothing less than a summary of what he "received" from the very first disciples of Jesus in the primitive Jerusalem Church. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures- He was buried; He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" — there we have in brief compass what the first Christian missionaries said.

But what is that utterance that we have just quoted? Is it not an account of facts? "Christ died, He was buried, He rose again" — that is a setting forth of things that happened; it is not an exhortation but a rehearsal of events, a piece of news.

The facts that are rehearsed are not, indeed, bare facts, but facts with the meaning of the facts. "Christ died" is a fact; but to know merely that fact never did good to anyone; it never did anyone any good to know that a Jew, who was called Christ, died on a cross in the first

century of our era. But it is not in that jejune [lifeless] way that the fact was rehearsed by the primitive Jerusalem Church; the primitive message was not merely that Christ died, but that Christ died for our sins. That tells not merely that Christ died, but why He died, what He accomplished when He died, but why He died, what He accomplished when He died, it gives not merely the fact but the meaning of the fact.

But when you say "fact with the meaning of the fact" you have said "doctrine." We have already arrived, then, at the answer to our question. Christianity at the beginning, we have discovered, was not a life as distinguished from a doctrine or a life that had doctrine as its changing intellectual expression, but — just the other way around — it was a life founded upon a doctrine.

If that be so, if the Christian religion is founded upon historical facts, then there is something in the Christian message which can never possibly change. There is one good thing about facts — they stay put. If a thing really happened, the passage of years can never possibly make it into a thing that did not happen. If the body of Jesus really emerged from the tomb on the first Easter morning, then no possible advance of science can change the fact one whit. The advance of science may conceivably show that the alleged fact was never a fact at all; it may conceivably show that the earliest Christians were wrong when they said that Christ rose from the dead the third day. But to say that that statement of fact was true in the first century, but that because of the advance of science it is no longer true — that is to say what is plainly absurd. The Christian religion is founded squarely upon a message that sets forth facts; if that message is false, then the religion that is founded on it must of course be abandoned; but if it is true, then the Christian Church must still deliver the message faithfully as it did on the morning of the first Easter Day.

For our part, we adopt the latter alternative. But it is a mistake to think of us merely as "conservatives"; It is a mistake to think of us as though we were holding desperately to something that is old merely

because it is old and we're inhospitable to what is new. As a matter of fact, we are looking not merely to a continuance of conditions that now prevail, but to a burst of new power. The Spirit of God will in God's good time again enable men to see clear, and when they see clear they will be convinced that the Christian message is true. We long for the coming of that time. Now that the Christian message is so generally disbelieved or forgotten, the human race is sinking gradually into bondage; the advance in material things, extraordinary though it is, is being dearly purchased by a widespread loss of human freedom. But when the gospel is brought to light again, there will again be life and liberty for mankind.

Three Lectures on the Doctrine of the Atonement

[*Part I: The Doctrine of the Atonement*](#)

[*Part II: The Active Obedience of Christ*](#)

[*Part III: The Bible and the Cross*](#)

Part I: The Doctrine of the Atonement

THE priestly work of Christ, or at least that part of it in which He offered Himself up as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, is commonly called the atonement, and the doctrine which sets it forth is commonly called the doctrine of the atonement. That doctrine is at the very heart of what is taught in the Word of God.

Before we present that doctrine, we ought to observe that the term by which it is ordinarily designated is not altogether free from objection.

When I say that the term 'atonement' is open to objection, I am not referring to the fact that it occurs only once in the King James Version of the New Testament, and is therefore, so far as New

Testament usage is concerned, not a common Biblical term. A good many other terms which are rare in the Bible are nevertheless admirable terms when one comes to summarise Biblical teaching. As a matter of fact this term is rather common in the Old Testament (though it occurs only that once in the New Testament), but that fact would not be necessary to commend it if it were satisfactory in other ways. Even if it were not common in either Testament it still might be exactly the term for us to use to designate by one word what the Bible teaches in a number of words.

The real objection to it is of an entirely different kind. It is a twofold objection. The word *atonement* in the first place, is ambiguous, and in the second place, it is not broad enough.

The one place where the word occurs in the King James Version of the New Testament is Romans 5:11, where Paul says:

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Here the word is used to translate a Greek word meaning 'reconciliation.' This usage seems to be very close to the etymological meaning of the word, for it does seem to be true that the English word 'atonement' means 'atonement.' It is, therefore, according to its derivation, a natural word to designate the state of reconciliation between two parties formerly at variance.

In the Old Testament, on the other hand, where the word occurs in the King James Version not once, but forty or fifty times, it has a different meaning; it has the meaning of 'propitiation.' Thus we read in Leviticus 1:4, regarding a man who brings a bullock to be killed as a burnt offering:

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

So also the word occurs some eight times in the King James Version in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, where the provisions of the law are set forth regarding the great day of atonement. Take, for example, the following verses in that chapter:

And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house (Lev. 16:6).

Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat:

And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness (Lev. 16:15f.).

In these passages the meaning of the word is clear. God has been offended because of the sins of the people or of individuals among His people. The priest kills the animal which is brought as a sacrifice. God is thereby propitiated, and those who have offended God are forgiven.

I am not now asking whether those Old Testament sacrifices brought forgiveness in themselves, or merely as prophecies of a greater sacrifice to come; I am not now considering the significant limitations which the Old Testament law attributes to their efficacy. We shall try to deal with those matters in some subsequent talk. All that I am here interested in is the use of the word 'atonement' in the English Bible. All that I am saying is that that word in the Old Testament clearly conveys the notion of something that is done to satisfy God in order that the sins of men may be forgiven and their communion with God restored.

Somewhat akin to this Old Testament use of the word ‘atonement’ is the use of it in our everyday parlance where religion is not at all in view. Thus we often say that someone in his youth was guilty of a grievous fault but has fully ‘atoned’ for it or made full ‘atonement’ for it by a long and useful life. We mean by that that the person in question has — if we may use a colloquial phrase — ‘made up for’ his youthful indiscretion by his subsequent life of usefulness and rectitude. Mind you, I am not at all saying that a man can really ‘make up for’ or ‘atone for’ a youthful sin by a subsequent life of usefulness and rectitude; but I am just saying that that indicates the way in which the English word is used. In our ordinary usage the word certainly conveys the idea of something like compensation for some wrong that has been done.

It certainly conveys that notion also in those Old Testament passages. Of course that is not the only notion that it conveys in those passages. There the use of the word is very much more specific. The compensation which is indicated by the word is a compensation rendered to God, and it is a compensation that has become necessary because of an offence committed against God. Still, the notion of compensation or satisfaction is clearly in the word. God is offended because of sin; satisfaction is made to Him in some way by the sacrifice; and so His favour is restored.

Thus in the English Bible the word ‘atonement’ is used in two rather distinct senses. In its one occurrence in the New Testament it designates the particular means by which such reconciliation is effected — namely, the sacrifice which God is pleased to accept in order that man may again be received into favour.

Now of these two uses of the word it is unquestionably the Old Testament use which is followed when we speak of the ‘doctrine of the atonement.’ We mean by the word, when we thus use it in theology, not the reconciliation between God and man, not the ‘atonement’ between God and man, but specifically the means by which that reconciliation is effected — namely, the death of Christ as

something that was necessary in order that sinful man might be received into communion with God.

I do not see any great objection to the use of the word in that way — provided only that we are perfectly clear that we are using it in that way. Certainly it has acquired too firm a place in Christian theology and has gathered around it too many precious associations for us to think, now, of trying to dislodge it.

However, there is another word which would in itself have been much better, and it is really a great pity that it has not come into more general use in this connection. That is the word ‘satisfaction.’ If we only had acquired the habit of saying that Christ made full satisfaction to God for man that would have conveyed a more adequate account of Christ’s priestly work as our Redeemer than the word ‘atonement’ can convey. It designates what the word ‘atonement’ — rightly understood — designates, and it also designates something more. We shall see what that something more is in a subsequent talk.

But it is time now for us to enter definitely into our great subject. Men were estranged from God by sin; Christ as their great high priest has brought them back into communion with God. How has He done so? That is the question with which we shall be dealing in a number of the talks that now follow.

This afternoon all that I can do is to try to state the Scripture doctrine in bare summary (or begin to state it), leaving it to subsequent talks to show how that Scripture doctrine is actually taught in the Scriptures, to defend it against objections, and to distinguish it clearly from various unscriptural theories.

What then in bare outline does the Bible teach about the ‘atonement’? What does it teach — to use a better term — about the satisfaction which Christ presented to God in order that sinful man might be received into God’s favour?

I cannot possibly answer this question even in bare summary unless I call your attention to the Biblical doctrine of sin with which we dealt last winter. You cannot possibly understand what the Bible says about salvation unless you understand what the Bible says about the thing from which we are saved.

If then we ask what is the Biblical doctrine of sin, we observe, in the first place, that according to the Bible all men are sinners.

Well, then, that being so, it becomes important to ask what this sin is which has affected all mankind. Is it just an excusable imperfection; is it something that can be transcended as a man can transcend the immaturity of his youthful years? Or, supposing it to be more than imperfection, supposing it to be something like a definite stain, is it a stain that can easily be removed as writing is erased from a slate?

The Bible leaves us in no doubt as to the answer to these questions. Sin, it tells us, is disobedience to the law of God, and the law of God is entirely irrevocable.

Why is the law of God irrevocable? The Bible makes that plain. Because it is rooted in the nature of God! God is righteous and that is the reason why His law is righteous. Can He then revoke His law or allow it to be disregarded? Well, there is of course no external compulsion upon Him to prevent Him from doing these things. There is none who can say to Him, 'What doest thou?' In that sense He can do all things. But the point is, He cannot revoke His law and still remain God. He cannot, without Himself becoming unrighteous, make His law either forbid righteousness or condone unrighteousness. When the law of God says, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die,' that awful penalty of death is, indeed, imposed by God's will; but God's will is determined by God's nature, and God's nature being unchangeably holy the penalty must run its course. God would be untrue to Himself, in other words, if sin were not punished; and that God should be untrue to Himself is the most impossible thing

that can possibly be conceived.

Under that majestic law of God man was placed in the estate wherein he was created. Man was placed in a probation, which theologians call the covenant of works. If he obeyed the law during a certain limited period, his probation was to be over; he would be given eternal life without any further possibility of loss. If, on the other hand, he disobeyed the law, he would have death — physical death and eternal death in hell.

Man entered into that probation with every advantage. He was created in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He was created not merely neutral with respect to goodness; he was created positively good. Yet he fell. He failed to make his goodness an assured and eternal goodness; he failed to progress from the goodness of innocency to the confirmed goodness which would have been the reward for standing the test. He transgressed the commandment of God, and so came under the awful curse of the law.

Under that curse came all mankind. That covenant of works had been made with the first man, Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity. He had stood, in that probation, in a representative capacity; he had stood — to use a better terminology — as the federal head of the race, having been made the federal head of the race by divine appointment. If he had successfully met the test, all mankind descended from him would have been born in a state of confirmed righteousness and blessedness, without any possibility of falling into sin or of losing eternal life. But as a matter of fact Adam did not successfully meet the test. He transgressed the commandment of God, and since he was the federal head, the divinely appointed representative of the race, all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

Thus all mankind, descended from Adam by ordinary generation, are themselves under the dreadful penalty of the law of God. They are under that penalty at birth, before they have done anything either

good or bad. Part of that penalty is the want of the righteousness with which man was created, and a dreadful corruption which is called original sin. Proceeding from that corruption when men grow to years of discretion come individual acts of transgression.

Can the penalty of sin resting upon all mankind be remitted? Plainly not, if God is to remain God. That penalty of sin was ordained in the law of God, and the law of God was no mere arbitrary and changeable arrangement but an expression of the nature of God Himself. If the penalty of sin were remitted, God would become unrighteous, and that God will not become unrighteous is the most certain thing that can possibly be conceived.

How then can sinful men be saved? In one way only. Only if a substitute is provided who shall pay for them the just penalty of God's law.

The Bible teaches that such a substitute has as a matter of fact been provided. The substitute is Jesus Christ. The law's demands of penalty must be satisfied. There is no escaping that. But Jesus Christ satisfied those demands for us when He died instead of us on the cross.

I have used the word 'satisfied' advisedly. It is very important for us to observe that when Jesus died upon the cross He made a full satisfaction for our sins; He paid the penalty which the law pronounces upon our sin, not in part but in full.

In saying that, there are several misunderstandings which need to be guarded against in the most careful possible way. Only by distinguishing the Scripture doctrine carefully from several distortions of it can we understand clearly what the Scripture doctrine is. I want to point out, therefore, several things that we do not mean when we say that Christ paid the penalty of our sin by dying instead of us on the cross.

In the first place, we do not mean that when Christ took our place He became Himself a sinner. Of course He did not become a sinner. Never was His glorious righteousness and goodness more wonderfully seen than when He bore the curse of God's law upon the cross. He was not deserving of that curse. Far from it! He was deserving of all praise.

What we mean, therefore, when we say that Christ bore our guilt is not that He became guilty, but that He paid the penalty that we so richly deserved.

In the second place, we do not mean that Christ's sufferings were the same as the sufferings that we should have endured if we had paid the penalty of our own sins. Obviously they were not the same. Part of the sufferings that we should have endured would have been the dreadful suffering of remorse. Christ did not endure that suffering, for He had done no wrong. Moreover, our sufferings would have endured to all eternity, whereas Christ's sufferings on the cross endured but a few hours. Plainly then His sufferings were not the same as ours would have been.

In the third place, however, an opposite error must also be warded off. If Christ's sufferings were not the same as ours, it is also quite untrue to say that He paid only a part of the penalty that was due to us because of our sin. Some theologians have fallen into that error. When man incurred the penalty of the law, they have said, God was pleased to take some other and lesser thing — namely, the sufferings of Christ on the cross — instead of exacting the full penalty. Thus, according to these theologians, the demands of the law were not really satisfied by the death of Christ, but God was simply pleased, in arbitrary fashion, to accept something less than full satisfaction.

That is a very serious error indeed. Instead of falling into it we shall, if we are true to the Scriptures, insist that Christ on the cross paid the full and just penalty for our sin.

The error arose because of a confusion between the payment of a debt and the payment of a penalty. In the case of a debt it does not make any difference who pays; all that is essential is that the creditor shall receive what is owed him. What is essential is that just the same thing shall be paid as that which stood in the bond.

But in the case of the payment of a penalty it does make a difference who pays. The law demanded that we should suffer eternal death because of our sin. Christ paid the penalty of the law in our stead. But for Him to suffer was not the same as for us to suffer. He is God, and not merely man. Therefore if He had suffered to all eternity as we should have suffered, that would not have been to pay the just penalty of the sin, but it would have been an unjust exaction of vastly more. In other words, we must get rid of merely quantitative notions in thinking of the sufferings of Christ. What He suffered on the cross was what the law of God truly demanded not of any person but of such a person as Himself when He became our substitute in paying the penalty of sin. He did therefore make full and not merely partial satisfaction for the claims of the law against us.

Finally, it is very important to observe that the Bible's teaching about the cross of Christ does not mean that God waited for someone else to pay the penalty of sin before He would forgive the sinner. So unbelievers constantly represent it, but that representation is radically wrong. No, God Himself paid the penalty of sin — God Himself in the Person of God the Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us, God Himself in the person of God the Father who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, God the Holy Spirit who applies to us the benefits of Christ's death. God's the cost and ours the marvellous gain! Who shall measure the depths of the love of God which was extended to us sinners when the Lord Jesus took our place and died in our stead upon the accursed tree?

Part II: The Active Obedience of Christ

LAST Sunday afternoon, in outlining the Biblical teaching about the work of Christ in satisfying for us the claims of God's law, I said nothing about one very important part of that work. I pointed out that Christ by His death in our stead on the cross paid the just penalty of our sin, but I said nothing of another thing that He did for us. I said nothing about what Christ did for us by His active obedience to God's law. It is very important that we should fill out that part of the outline before we go one step further.

Suppose Christ had done for us merely what we said last Sunday afternoon that He did. Suppose He had merely paid the just penalty of the law that was resting upon us for our sin, and had done nothing more than that; where would we then be? Well, I think we can say — if indeed it is legitimate to separate one part of the work of Christ even in thought from the rest — that if Christ had merely paid the penalty of sin for us and had done nothing more we should be at best back in the situation in which Adam found himself when God placed him under the covenant of works.

That covenant of works was a probation. If Adam kept the law of God for a certain period, he was to have eternal life. If he disobeyed he was to have death. Well, he disobeyed, and the penalty of death was inflicted upon him and his posterity. Then Christ by His death on the cross paid that penalty for those whom God had chosen.

Well and good. But if that were all that Christ did for us, do you not see that we should be back in just the situation in which Adam was before he sinned? The penalty of his sinning would have been removed from us because it had all been paid by Christ. But for the future the attainment of eternal life would have been dependent upon our perfect obedience to the law of God. We should simply have been back in the probation again.

Moreover, we should have been back in that probation in a very much less hopeful way than that in which Adam was originally placed in it. Everything was in Adam's favour when he was placed in

the probation. He had been created in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He had been created positively good. Yet despite all that, he fell. How much more likely would we be to fall — nay, how certain to fall — if all that Christ had done for us were merely to remove from us the guilt of past sin, leaving it then to our own efforts to win the reward which God has pronounced upon perfect obedience!

But I really must decline to speculate any further about what might have been if Christ had done something less for us than that which He has actually done. As a matter of fact, He has not merely paid the penalty of Adam's first sin, and the penalty of the sins which we individually have committed, but also He has positively merited for us eternal life. He was, in other words, our representative both in penalty paying and in probation keeping. He paid the penalty of sin for us, and He stood the probation for us.

That is the reason why those who have been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ are in a far more blessed condition than was Adam before he fell. Adam before he fell was righteous in the sight of God, but he was still under the possibility of becoming unrighteous. Those who have been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ not only are righteous in the sight of God but they are beyond the possibility of becoming unrighteous. In their case, the probation is over. It is not over because they have stood it successfully. It is not over because they have themselves earned the reward of assured blessedness which God promised on condition of perfect obedience. But it is over because Christ has stood it for them; it is over because Christ has merited for them the reward by His perfect obedience to God's law.

I think I can make the matter plain if I imagine a dialogue between the law of God and a sinful man saved by grace.

'Man,' says the law of God, 'have you obeyed my commands?'

'No,' says the sinner saved by grace. 'I have disobeyed them, not only in the person of my representative Adam in his first sin, but also in

that I myself have sinned in thought, word and deed.'

'Well, then, sinner,' says the law of God, 'have you paid the penalty which I pronounced upon disobedience?'

'No,' says the sinner, 'I have not paid the penalty myself; but Christ has paid it for me. He was my representative when He died there on the cross. Hence, so far as the penalty is concerned, I am clear.'

'Well, then, sinner,' says the law of God, 'how about the conditions which God has pronounced for the attainment of assured blessedness? Have you stood the test? Have you merited eternal life by perfect obedience during the period of probation?'

'No,' says the sinner, 'I have not merited eternal life by my own perfect obedience. God knows and my own conscience knows that even after I became a Christian I have sinned in thought, word and deed. But although I have not merited eternal life by any obedience of my own, Christ has merited it for me by His perfect obedience. He was not for Himself subject to the law. No obedience was required of Him for Himself, since He was Lord of all. That obedience, then, which He rendered to the law when He was on earth was rendered by Him as my representative. I have no righteousness of my own, but clad in Christ's perfect righteousness, imputed to me and received by faith alone, I can glory in the fact that so far as I am concerned the probation has been kept and as God is true there awaits me the glorious reward which Christ thus earned for me.'

Such, put in bald, simple form, is the dialogue between every Christian and the law of God. How gloriously complete is the salvation wrought for us by Christ! Christ paid the penalty, and He merited the reward. Those are the two great things that He has done for us.

Theologians are accustomed to distinguish those two parts of the saving work of Christ by calling one of them His passive obedience

and the other of them His active obedience. By His passive obedience — that is, by suffering in our stead — He paid the penalty for us; by His active obedience — that is, by doing what the law of God required — He has merited for us the reward.

I like that terminology well enough. I think it does set forth as well as can be done in human language the two aspects of Christ's work. And yet a danger lurks in it if it leads us to think that one of the two parts of Christ's work can be separated from the other.

How shall we distinguish Christ's active obedience from His passive obedience? Shall we say that He accomplished His active obedience by His life and accomplished His passive obedience by His death? No, that will not do at all. During every moment of His life upon earth Christ was engaged in His passive obedience. It was all for Him humiliation, was it not? It was all suffering. It was all part of His payment of the penalty of sin. On the other hand, we cannot say that His death was passive obedience and not active obedience. On the contrary, His death was the crown of His active obedience. It was the crown of that obedience to the law of God by which He merited eternal life for those whom He came to save.

Do you not see, then, what the true state of the case is? Christ's active obedience and His passive obedience are not two divisions of His work, some of the events of His earthly life being His active obedience and other events of His life being His passive obedience; but every event of His life was both active obedience and passive obedience. Every event of His life was a part of His payment of the penalty of sin, and every event of His life was a part of that glorious keeping of the law of God by which He earned for His people the reward of eternal life. The two aspects of His work, in other words, are inextricably intertwined. Neither was performed apart from the other. Together they constitute the wonderful, full salvation which was wrought for us by Christ our Redeemer.

We can put it briefly by saying that Christ took our place with respect

to the law of God. He paid for us the law's penalty, and He obeyed for us the law's commands. He saved us from hell, and He earned for us our entrance into heaven. All that we have, then, we owe unto Him. There is no blessing that we have in this world or the next for which we should not give Christ thanks.

As I say that, I am fully conscious of the inadequacy of my words. I have tried to summarise the teaching of the Bible about the saving work of Christ; yet how cold and dry seems any mere human summary — even if it were far better than mine — in comparison with the marvellous richness and warmth of the Bible itself. It is to the Bible itself that I am going to ask you to turn with me next Sunday afternoon. Having tried to summarise the Bible's teaching in order that we may take each part of the Bible in proper relation to other parts, I am going to ask you next Sunday to turn with me to the great texts themselves, in order that we may test our summary, and every human summary, by what God Himself has told us in His Word. Ah, when we do that, what refreshment it is to our souls! How infinitely superior is God's Word to all human attempts to summarise its teaching! Those attempts are necessary; we could not do without them; everyone who is really true to the Bible will engage in them. But it is the very words of the Bible that touch the heart, and everything that we — or for the matter of that even the great theologians — say in summary of the Bible must be compared ever anew with the Bible itself.

This afternoon, however, just in order that next Sunday we may begin our searching of the Scriptures in the most intelligent possible way, I am going to ask you to glance with me at one or two of the different views that men have held regarding the cross of Christ.

I have already summarised for you the orthodox view. According to that view, Christ took our place on the cross, paying the penalty of sin that we deserved to pay. That view can be put in very simple language. We deserved eternal death because of sin; Jesus, because He loved us, took our place and died in our stead on the cross. Call

that view repulsive if you will. It is indeed repulsive to the natural man. But do not call it difficult to understand. A little child can understand it, and can receive it to the salvation of his soul.

Rejecting that substitutionary view, many men have advanced other views. Many are the theories of the atonement. Yet I do think that their bewildering variety may be reduced to something like order if we observe that they fall into a very few general divisions.

Most common among them is the theory that Christ's death upon the cross had merely a moral effect upon man. Man is by nature a child of God, say the advocates of that view. But unfortunately he is not making full use of his high privilege. He has fallen into terrible degradation, and having fallen into terrible degradation he has become estranged from God. He no longer lives in that intimate relationship of sonship with God in which he ought to live.

How shall this estrangement between man and God be removed; how shall man be brought back into fellowship with God? Why, say the advocates of the view of which we are now speaking, simply by inducing man to turn from his evil ways and make full use of his high privilege as a child of God. There is certainly no barrier on God's side; the only barrier lies in man's foolish and wicked heart. Once overcome that barrier and all will be well. Once touch man's stony heart so that he will come to see again that God is his Father, once lead him also to overcome any fear of God as though God were not always more ready to forgive than man is to be forgiven; and at once the true relationship between God and man can be restored and man can go forward joyously to the use, in holy living, of his high privilege as a child of the loving heavenly Father.

But how can man's heart be touched, that he may be led to return to his Father's house and live as befits a son of God? By the contemplation of the cross of Christ, say the advocates of the view that we are now presenting. Jesus Christ was truly a son of God. Indeed, He was a son of God in such a unique way that He may be

called in some sort the Son of God. When therefore God gave Him to die upon the cross and when He willingly gave Himself to die, that was a wonderful manifestation of God's love for sinning, erring humanity. In the presence of that love all opposition in man's heart should be broken down. He should recognise at last the fact that God is indeed his Father, and recognising that, he should make use of his high privilege of living the life that befits a child of God.

Such is the so-called 'moral-influence theory' of the atonement. It is held in a thousand different forms, and it is held by thousands of people who have not the slightest notion that they are holding it.

Some of those who have held it have tried to maintain with it something like a real belief in the deity of Christ. If Christ was really the eternal Son of God, then the gift of Him on the cross becomes all the greater evidence of the love of God. But the overwhelming majority of those who hold the moral-influence view of the atonement have given up all real belief in the deity of Christ. These persons hold simply that Jesus on the cross gave us a supreme example of self-sacrifice. By that example we are inspired to do likewise. We are inspired to sacrifice our lives, either in actual martyrdom in some holy cause or in sacrificial service. Sacrificing thus our lives, we discover that we have thereby attained a higher life than ever before. Thus the cross of Christ has been the pathway that leads us to moral heights.

Read most of the popular books on religion of the present day, and then tell me whether you do not think that that is at bottom what they mean. Some of them speak about the cross of Christ. Some of them say that Christ's sufferings were redemptive. But the trouble is they hold that the cross of Christ is not merely Christ's cross but our cross; and that while Christ's sufferings were redemptive our sufferings are redemptive too. All they really mean is that Christ on Calvary pointed out a way that we follow. He hallowed the pathway of self-sacrifice. We follow in that path and thus we obtain a higher life for our souls.

That is the great central and all-pervading vice of most modern books that deal with the cross. They make the cross of Christ merely an example of a general principle of self-sacrifice. And if they talk still of salvation, they tell us that we are saved by walking in the way of the cross. It is thus, according to this view, not Christ's cross but our cross that saves us. The way of the cross leads us to God. Christ may have a great influence in leading us to walk in that way of the cross, that way of self-sacrifice; but it is our walking in it and not Christ's walking in it which really saves us. Thus we are saved by our own efforts, not by Christ's blood after all. It is the same old notion that sinful man can save himself. It is that notion just decked out in new garments and making use of Christian terminology.

Such is the moral-influence theory of the atonement. In addition to it, we find what is sometimes called the governmental theory. What a strange, compromising, tortuous thing that governmental theory is, to be sure!

According to the governmental view, the death of Christ was not necessary in order that any eternal justice of God, rooted in the divine nature, might be satisfied. So far the governmental view goes with the advocates of the moral-influence theory. But, it holds, the death of Christ was necessary in order that good discipline might be maintained in the world. If sinners were allowed to get the notion that sin could go altogether unpunished, there would be no adequate deterrent from sin. Being thus undeterred from sin, men would go on sinning and the world would be thrown into confusion. But if the world were thus thrown into moral confusion that would not be for the best interests of the greatest number. Therefore God held up the death of Christ on the cross as an indication of how serious a thing sin is, so that men may be deterred from sinning and so order in the world may be preserved.

Having thus indicated — so the governmental theory runs — how serious a thing sin is, God proceeded to offer salvation to men on

easier terms than those on which He had originally offered it. He had originally offered it on the basis of perfect obedience. Now He offered it on the basis of faith. He could safely offer it on those easier terms, and He could safely remit the penalty originally pronounced upon sin, because in the awful spectacle of the cross of Christ He had sufficiently indicated to men that sin is a serious offence and that if it is committed something or other has to be done about the matter in order that the good order of the universe may be conserved.

Such is the governmental theory. But do you not see that really at bottom it is just a form of the moral-influence theory? Like the moral-influence theory, it holds that the only obstacle to fellowship between man and God is found in man's will. Like the moral-influence theory it denies that there is any eternal justice of God, rooted in His being, and it denies that the eternal justice of God demands the punishment of sin. Like the moral-influence theory it plays fast and loose with God's holiness, and like the moral-influence theory, we may add, it loses sight of the real depths of God's love. No man who holds the light view of sin that is involved in these man-made theories has the slightest notion of what it cost when the eternal Son of God took our place upon the accursed tree.

People sometimes say, indeed, that it makes little difference what theory of the atonement we may hold. Ah, my friends, it makes all the difference in the world. When you contemplate the cross of Christ, do you say merely, with modern theorists, 'What a noble example of self-sacrifice; I am going to attain favour with God by sacrificing myself as well as He.' Or do you say with the Bible, 'He loved me and gave Himself for me; He took my place; He bore my curse; He bought me with His own most precious blood.' That is the most momentous question that can come to any human soul. I want you all to turn with me next Sunday afternoon to the Word of God in order that we may answer that question aright.

Part III: The Bible and the Cross

HAVING observed last week what are the leading views that have been held regarding the cross of Christ, we turn now to the Bible in order to discover which of these views is right.

Did Jesus on the cross really take our place, paying the penalty of God's law which justly rested upon us? That is the orthodox or substitutionary view of the atonement.

Or did He merely exert a good moral influence upon us by His death, either by giving us an exhibition of the love of God or by inspiring us to sacrifice our lives for the welfare of others as He sacrificed Himself? That is the so-called moral-influence theory of the atonement.

Or did He by His death merely conserve the good discipline of the world by showing that, in the interests of the welfare of the greatest number, God cannot simply allow His law to be transgressed with complete impunity? That is the so-called governmental theory of the atonement.

We shall try to test these three views of the cross of Christ by comparing them with what the Bible actually says. But before we do so, there are two preliminary remarks that we ought to make.

Our first remark is that the three views of the atonement really reduce themselves to two. Both the moral-influence and the governmental view of the atonement really make the work of Christ terminate upon man, rather than upon God. They both proceed on the assumption that, in order that man shall be forgiven, nothing but man's repentance is required. They both of them deny, at least by implication, that there is such a thing as an eternal principle of justice, not based merely upon the interests of the creature but

rooted in the nature of God — an eternal principle of justice demanding that sin shall be punished. They both of them favour the notion that the ethical attributes of God may be summed up in the one attribute — benevolence. They both of them tend to distort the great Scriptural assertion that ‘God is love’ into the very different assertion that God is nothing but love. They both of them tend to find the supreme end of the creation in the happiness or well-being of the creature. They both of them fail utterly to attain to any high notion of the awful holiness of God.

No doubt the governmental theory disguises these tendencies more than the moral-influence theory does. It does show some recognition of the moral chaos which would result if men got the notion that the law of God could be transgressed with complete impunity.

But, after all, even the governmental theory denies that there is any real underlying necessity for the punishment of sin. Punishment, it holds, is merely remedial and deterrent. It is intended merely to prevent future sin, not to expiate past sin. So the tragedy on Calvary, according to the advocates of the governmental view, was intended by God merely to shock sinners out of their complacency; it was intended merely to show what terrible effects sin has so that sinners by observing those terrible effects might be led to stop sinning. The governmental view, therefore, like the moral-influence view, has at its centre the notion that a moral effect exerted upon man was the sole purpose of the cross of Christ.

Very different is the substitutionary view. According to that view, not a mere moral effect upon man but the satisfaction of the eternal justice of God was the primary end for which Christ died. Hence the substitutionary view of the atonement stands sharply over against the other two. The other two belong in one category; the substitutionary view belongs in an entirely different category. That is the first remark that we desire to make before we begin to consider the Biblical teaching in detail.

That remark, however, would be decidedly misleading unless we went on to make a second remark. Our second remark is that the substitutionary view of the atonement, though it makes the work of Christ in dying upon the cross terminate primarily upon God, yet does at the same time most emphatically make it terminate also upon man. What a distortion of the substitutionary view it would be to say that Christ, when He died, did not die to produce a moral effect upon man!

Of course He died to produce a moral effect upon man! If He had not died, man would have continued to lead a life of sin; but as it is, those for whom He died cease to lead a life of sin and begin to lead a life of holiness. They do not lead that life of holiness perfectly in this world, but they will most certainly lead it in the world to come, and it was in order that they might lead that life of holiness that Christ died for them. No man for whom Christ died continues to live in sin as he lived before. All who receive the benefits of the cross of Christ turn from sin unto righteousness. In holding that that is the case, the substitutionary view of the atonement is quite in accord with the moral-influence theory and with the governmental theory.

Well, then, is it correct to say that the moral-influence theory and the governmental theory are correct as far as they go and merely differ from the substitutionary view in being inadequate or incomplete?

No, I do not think that that is correct at all. You see, the heart and core of the moral-influence theory and the governmental theory is found in the denial that Christ on the cross took our place and paid the just penalty of our sins that we might be right with God. Denying that, the moral-influence theory and the exhibit the necessity of some deterrent against sin in the interests of an orderly world, or did He die on the cross in order to pay the penalty of our sin and make us right with the holy God?

Which of these three views is right? That is the question which we shall seek to answer by an examination of the Word of God.

At the beginning of the examination there is one fact which stares us in the face. It has sometimes been strangely neglected. It is the fact of the enormous emphasis which the Bible lays upon the death of Christ.

Have you ever stopped to consider how strange that emphasis is? In the case of other great men, it is the birth that is celebrated and not the death. Washington's birthday is celebrated by a grateful American people on the twenty-second day of February, but who remembers on what day of the year it was that Washington died? Who ever thought of making the day of his death into a national holiday?

Well, there are some men whose death might indeed be celebrated by a national holiday, but they are not good men like George Washington; they are, on the contrary, men whose taking off was a blessing to their people. It would be a small compliment to the father of his country if we celebrated with national rejoicing the day when he was taken from us. Instead of that, we celebrate his birth. Yet in the case of Jesus it is the death and not the birth that we chiefly commemorate in the Christian church.

I do not mean that it is wrong for us to commemorate the birth of Jesus. We have just celebrated Christmas, and it is right for us so to do. Happy at this Christmas season through which we have just passed have been those to whom it has not been just a time of worldly festivity but a time of commemoration of the coming of our blessed Saviour into this world. Happy have been those men and women and little children who have heard, underlying all their Christmas joys, and have heard in simple and childlike faith, the sweet story that is told us in Matthew and Luke. Happy have been those celebrants of Christmas to whom the angels have brought again, in the reading of the Word of God, their good tidings of great joy.

Yes, I say, thank God for the Christmas season; thank God for the softening that it brings to stony hearts; thank God for the recognition that it brings for the little children whom Jesus took into His arms; thank God even for the strange, sweet sadness that it brings to us together with its joys, as we think of the loved ones who are gone. Yes, it is well that we should celebrate the Christmas season; and may God ever give us a childlike heart that we may celebrate it aright.

But after all, my friends, it is not Christmas that is the greatest anniversary in the Christian church. It is not the birth of Jesus that the church chiefly celebrates, but the death.

Did you know that long centuries went by in the history of the church before there is any record of the celebration of Christmas? Jesus was born in the days of Herod the King — that is, at some time before 4 B.C., when Herod died. Not till centuries later do we find evidence that the church celebrated any anniversary regarded as the anniversary of His birth.

Well, then, if that is so with regard to the commemoration of Jesus' birth, how is it with regard to the commemoration of His death? Was the commemoration of that also so long postponed? Well, listen to what is said on that subject by the Apostle Paul. 'For as often as ye eat this bread,' he says, 'and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' That was written only about twenty-five years after the death of Christ and after the founding of the church in Jerusalem. Even in those early days the death of Christ was commemorated by the church in the most solemn service in which it engaged — namely, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Indeed that commemoration of the death of Christ was definitely provided for by Jesus Himself. 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood,' said Jesus: 'this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.' In those words of institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus carefully provided that His church should commemorate His death.

Thus the Bible makes no definite provision for the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, but provides in the most definite and solemn way for the commemoration of His death.

What is the reason for that contrast, which at first sight might seem to be very strange? I think the answer is fairly clear. The birth of Jesus was important not in itself but because it made possible His death. Jesus came into this world to die, and it is to His death that the sinner turns when He seeks salvation for his soul. Truly the familiar hymn is right when it says about the cross of Christ:

All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

The whole Bible centres in the story of the death of Christ. The Old Testament looks forward to it; the New Testament looks back upon it; and the truly Biblical preacher of the gospel says always with Paul: 'I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.'

I ask you, then, which of the theories of the atonement suits this supreme emphasis which the Bible puts upon the cross.

Does the moral-influence theory suit it? I think not, my friends. If Jesus died on the cross merely to give us a good example of self-sacrifice or merely to exhibit, without underlying necessity, the love of God, then the Bible does seem strangely overwrought in the way in which it speaks of the death of Christ. Then indeed all the talk in the Bible about the blood of Christ and the blood of the sacrificial victims that were prophecies of Him becomes just about as distasteful as so many modern men hold it to be. Some very much greater significance must be attributed to the death of Christ than a mere hallowing of some universal law of self-sacrifice or a mere pedagogic exhibition of God's love, if we are to explain the way in which the

Bible makes everything to centre in the event that took place on Calvary.

The case is not essentially different when we consider the governmental theory. It is true, the governmental theory does seek, as over against the moral-influence theory, to do justice to the emphasis which the Bible places just on the death of Christ. It regards the tragic horror of the cross not as merely incidental to the meaning of what Christ did but as essential to it. It regards that tragic horror as being the thing that shocks sinners out of their complacency and makes them recognise the seriousness of sin. Hence it seeks to show why just the death of Christ and not some other exhibition of self-sacrificing love was necessary.

But, after all, what a short way such considerations go towards explaining the Biblical emphasis on the cross of Christ! The truth is that there is just one real explanation of such emphasis. It is found in the fact that Christ on the cross did something absolutely necessary if we sinners are to be forgiven by a righteous God. Once recognise the enormous barrier which sin sets up between the offender and his God, once recognise the fact that that barrier is rooted not merely in the sinner's mind but in the eternal justice of God, and then once recognise that the cross, as the full payment of the penalty of sin, has broken down the barrier and made the sinner right with God — once recognise these things and then only will you understand the strange pre-eminence which the Bible attributes to the cross of Christ.

Thus even the mere prominence of the death of Christ in the Bible, to say nothing of what the Bible says about the death of Christ in detail, is a mighty argument against all minimising theories of the significance of the death of Christ and a mighty argument in favour of the view that Christ on the cross really died in our stead, paying the dread penalty of our sin, that He might present us, saved by grace, before the throne.

In presenting what the Bible says in detail about the death of Christ,

I want to speak first of all of those passages where Christ's death upon the cross is represented as a ransom, then about those passages where it is spoken of as a sacrifice, then about those passages where, without the use of either of these representations, its substitutionary or representative character is plainly brought out.

The first passage that we shall speak of, next Sunday afternoon, is that great passage in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Mark where our Lord says that the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many.

On this last Sunday of the old year, I just want to say to you who have been listening in on these Sunday afternoons how much encouraged I have been by your interest and by your Christian fellowship. I trust that you have had a very joyous Christmas and I trust that the new year which is so soon to begin may be to you a very blessed year under the mercy of God.

The Triune God

The Bible tells us there is a personal God, Creator and Ruler of the World. God, according to the Bible, is not another name for the mighty process of nature, and He is not some one part or aspect of that process, but He is a free and holy person, who created the process of nature by the fiat of His will and who is eternally independent of the universe that He has made.

Now we ask more in detail what the Bible tells us about God. When we ask that, I know we shall be met with an objection. We are seeking to know God. Well, there are many people who tell us that we ought not to seek to know God. Instead of seeking to know God, they tell us, we ought simply to feel Him; putting all theology aside, they say, we ought just to sink ourselves in the boundless ocean of God's being.

Such is the attitude of the mystics ancient and modern. But it is not the attitude of the Christian. The Christian, unlike the mystic, knows Him whom He has believed. What shall be said of a religion that depreciates theology, that depreciates the knowledge of God?

According to the Bible, we love God because He first loved us; and He has told us of His love in His holy Word. We love God, if we obey what the Bible tells us, because God has made Himself known to us and has thus shown Himself to be worthy of our love.

I do not mean to say that the Christian in his communion with God is always rehearsing consciously the things that God has told us about Himself. But underlying that sweet and blessed communion of the Christian with his God there is a true knowledge of God. A communion with God which is independent of that knowledge of God is communion with some other god and not with the living and true God whom the Bible reveals.

Every true man is resentful of slanders against a human friend. Should we not be grieved ten times more by slanders against our God? How can we possibly listen with polite complacency, then, when men break down the distinction between God and man, and drag God down to man's level? How can we possibly say, as in one way or another is so often said, that orthodoxy makes little difference? We should never talk in any such way about a human friend. We should never say with regard to a human friend that it makes no difference whether our view of him is right or wrong. How, then, can we say that absurd thing with regard to God?

The really consistent Christian can have nothing whatever to do with such doctrinal indifferentism. There is nothing so dishonoring to God, he will say, as to be indifferent to the things that God has told us about Himself in His holy Word.

What, then, has God told us about Himself in His Word? In the Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian churches, there is the

following answer to the question, "What is God?": "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." That answer is certainly in accordance with the Bible. I think it will help us a little bit to get straight in our minds what the Bible says about God.

Notice that God is here said to be infinite, eternal and unchangeable. What is meant by saying that He is infinite? Well, the word "infinite" means without an end or a limit. Other beings are limited: God is unlimited. I suppose it is easy for us to fall into our ordinary spatial conceptions in trying to think of God. We may imagine ourselves passing from the earth to the remotest star known to modern astronomy — many, many light-years away. Well, when we have got there, we are not one slightest fraction of an inch nearer to fathoming infinity than we were when we started. We might imagine ourselves traveling ten million times ten million times farther still, and still we should not be any nearer to infinity than when we started. We cannot conceive a limit to space, but neither can we conceive of infinite space. Our mind faints in the presence of infinity.

But we were really wrong in using those spatial conceptions in thinking of infinity, and particularly wrong were we in using spatial conceptions in thinking of the infinite God. It may help us to the threshold of the truth to say that God pervades the whole vast area of the universe known to science, and then infinitely more; it may help us to the threshold of the truth to say that God inhabits infinite space: but when we look a little deeper we see that space itself belongs to finite things and that the notion of infinite space is without meaning. God created space when He created finite things. He Himself is beyond space. There is no near and no far to Him. Everything to Him is equally near.

So it is when we try to think of God as eternal. If the word "infinity" is related, by way of contrast, to the notion of space, so the word "eternity" is related by way of contrast, to the notion of time. When we say that God is eternal, we mean that He had no beginning and

that He will have no end. But we really mean more than that. We mean that time has no meaning for Him, save in connection with the creatures that He has made. He created time when He created finite creatures. He Himself is beyond time. There is no past and no future to Him. The Bible puts that in poetical language when it says: "For a thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." We of course are obliged to think of the actions of God as taking place in time. We are obliged to think of Him as doing one thing after another thing; we are obliged to think of Him as doing this today and that tomorrow. We have a perfect right so to think, and the Bible amply confirms us in that right. To us there is indeed such a thing as past and present and future, and when God deals with us He acts in a truly temporal series. But to God Himself all things are equally present. There is no such thing as "before" or "after" to Him.

It is very important to see clearly that God is thus infinite, eternal and unchangeable. These attributes of God are often denied. Those who have denied them told us that God is a finite God. We must not blame Him, they tell us, if things are not just right in the world. He is doing the best He can, they say; He is trying to bring order out of chaos, but He is faced by a recalcitrant material which He did not create and which He can mold only gradually and imperfectly to His will. It is our business to help Him, and while we may at first sight regret that we have not the all-powerful God that we used to think we had, yet we can comfort ourselves with the inspiring thought that the God that we do have needs our help and indeed cannot do without it.

What shall we say of such a finite God? I will tell you plainly what I think we ought to say about Him. He is not God but a god. He is a product of men's thoughts. Men have made many such little gods. Of the making of gods, as of the making of books, there is no end. But, as for us Christians, with our Bibles before us, we turn from all such little gods of man's making, out towards the dread mystery of the infinite and eternal, and say, as Augustine said, with a holy fear: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds

its rest in thee."

The definition in the Shorter Catechism, which we are taking to give us our outline of what the Bible tells us about God, says not only that God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being and in His power and in His holiness, but also that He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His wisdom and in His justice, goodness and truth.

Does that seem surprising to you in the light of what we have just been saying? Well, perhaps it might seem to be surprising. These qualities — wisdom, justice, goodness and truth — are such startlingly human qualities. Can we ascribe them to that infinite, eternal and unchangeable God of whom we have just been speaking? If we do try to ascribe them to that God, are we not guilty of a naive anthropomorphism? Are we not guilty of the childish error of thinking of God as though He were just a big man up in the sky? Are we not guilty of making a god in our own image?

The answer is: No, we are not guilty of that. If we think of God as having some attributes which we also possess, we may conceivably be doing it for one or the other of two reasons. In the first place, we may be doing it because we are making God in our own image. But, in the second place, we may be doing it because God has made us in His image.

The Bible tells us that this second alternative is correct. God made man in the image of God, and that is the reason why God possesses some attributes which man also possesses, though God possesses them to an infinitely higher degree.

The Bible is not afraid of speaking of God in a startlingly tender and human sort of way. It does so just in passages where the majesty of God is set forth. "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth," says the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, "and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." "All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." But what says that

same fortieth chapter of Isaiah about this same terrible God? Here is what it says: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those who are with young."

How wonderfully the Bible sets forth the tenderness of God! Is that merely figurative? Are we wrong in thinking of God in such childlike fashion? Many philosophers say so. They will not think of God as a person. Oh, no. That would be dragging Him down too much to our level! So they make of Him a pale abstraction. The Bible seems childish to them in the warm, personal way in which it speaks of God.

Are those philosophers right or is the Bible right? Thank God, the Bible is right. The philosophers despise children who think of God as their heavenly Father. But the philosophers are wrong and the children are right. Did not our Lord Jesus say: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

No, God is no pale abstraction. He is a person. That simple truth — precious possession of simple souls — is more profound than all the philosophies of all the ages.

But now we come to a great mystery. God, according to the Bible, is not just one person, but He is three persons in one God. That is the great mystery of the Trinity.

The Trinity is revealed to us only in the Bible. God has revealed some things to us through nature and through conscience. But the Trinity is not among them. This He has revealed to us by supernatural revelation and by supernatural revelation alone.

The New Testament is founded throughout on the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine was really established by the great facts of the incarnation of the Son of God and the work of the Holy Spirit,

even before it was enunciated in words.

What the New Testament ordinarily does is to state parts of the doctrine, so that when we put those parts together, and when we summarize them, we have the great doctrine of the three persons and one God. For example, all passages in the New Testament where the deity of Jesus Christ is set forth are, when taken in connection with passages setting forth the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, passages supporting the doctrine of the Trinity.

But what needs to be observed now is that although by far the larger part of the Biblical teaching about the Trinity is given in that incidental and partial way — presupposing the doctrine rather than formally enunciating it as a whole — yet there are some passages where the doctrine is definitely presented by the mention, together, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The most famous of such passages, I suppose, is found in the great commission, given by the risen Lord to His disciples according to the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." There we have a mention of all three persons of the Trinity in the most complete co-ordination and equality— yet all three persons are plainly not three Gods but one. Here, in this solemn commission by our Lord, the God of all true Christians is forever designated as a triune God.

We think also, for example, of the apostolic benediction at the end of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Here the terminology is a little different from that in the great commission. Paul speaks of the Son as "the Lord." But the word "Lord" in the Pauline Epistles is plainly a designation of deity, like the other Greek word which is translated into English by the word "God." It is the Greek word used to translate the holy name of God, "Jehovah," in the Greek translation of the Old Testament which

Paul used, and Paul does not hesitate to apply to Christ Old Testament passages which speak of Jehovah.

That brings us to something supremely important in the teaching of the whole New Testament about the Trinity. It is this — that the New Testament writers, in presenting God as triune, are never for one moment conscious of saying anything that could by any possibility be regarded as contradicting the Old Testament teaching that there is but one God. That teaching is at the very heart and core of the Old Testament. It is every whit as much at the heart and core of the New Testament. The New Testament is just as much opposed as the Old Testament is to the thought that there are more Gods than one. Yet the New Testament with equal clearness teaches that the Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and that these three are not three aspects of the same person but three persons standing in a truly personal relationship to one another. There we have the great doctrine of the three persons but one God.

That doctrine is a mystery. No human mind can fathom it. Yet what a blessed mystery it is! The Christian's heart melts within him in gratitude and joy when he thinks of the divine love and condescension that has thus lifted the veil and allowed us sinful creatures a look into the very depths of the being of God.

I ask you now to consider one great central part of the doctrine, the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Bible says that Christ is God, it does not ask us to forget a single thing that it has said about the stupendous majesty of God. No, it asks us to remember every one of those things in order that we may apply them all to Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us in the first verse that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. Does it ask us to forget that when it tells us that Jesus Christ is God? No, it asks us to remember that. It says of Jesus Christ: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

The Bible tells us that God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Does it ask us to forget that when it tells us that Christ is God? No, it tells us to remember that. "I am Alpha and Omega," says Christ, "the beginning and the end, the first and the last." "Before Abraham was, I am." "In the beginning was the Word." "He is before all things, and by him all things consist."

The Bible tells us that God is holy. Does it ask us to forget that when it tells us that Christ is God? Let the whole New Testament give the answer.

The Bible tells us that God is mysterious. Does it ask us to forget that when it tells us that Christ is God? No, it tells us that there are mysteries in Christ which only God can know. No one knoweth the Son but the Father, says Jesus, as no one knoweth the Father but the Son.

The Bible tells us that God is the final judge. Does it ask us to forget that when it tells us that Jesus is God? No, Jesus Himself said in the Sermon on the Mount that He would sit upon the judgment throne to judge all the earth.

Everywhere it is the same. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation presents a stupendous view of God, and then it tells us that Jesus Christ is all that God is.

Faith in God

It is impossible to have faith in a person without having knowledge of the person. In the classic treatment of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is a verse that goes to the very root of the matter. "He that cometh to God," the author says, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Religion is here made to depend absolutely upon doctrine; the one who comes to God must not only believe in a person, but he must

also believe that something is true; faith is here declared to involve acceptance of a proposition. It is impossible, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, to have faith in a person without accepting with the mind the facts about the person.

Confidence in a person is more than intellectual assent to a series of propositions about the person, but it always involves those propositions, and becomes impossible the moment they are denied. It is quite impossible to trust a person about whom one assents to propositions that make the person untrustworthy, or fails to assent to propositions that make him trustworthy. Assent to certain propositions is not the whole of faith, but it is an absolutely necessary element in faith. So assent to certain propositions about God is not all of faith in God, but it is necessary to faith in God; and Christian faith, in particular, though it is more than assent to a creed, is absolutely impossible without assent to a creed. One cannot trust a God whom one holds with the mind to be either non-existent or untrustworthy.

According to the New Testament, communion with God or faith in God is dependent upon the doctrine of his existence. But it is dependent upon other doctrines in addition to that. "He that cometh to God," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In this latter part of the sentence, we have, expressed in a concrete way, the great truth of the personality of God. What we have is a presentation of what the Bible elsewhere calls the "living" God. God not only exists, but is a free Person who can act. The same truth appears with even greater clearness in the third verse of the same great chapter. "Through faith we understand," says the author, "that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Here we have, expressed with a clearness that leaves nothing to be desired, the doctrine of creation out of nothing, and that doctrine is said to be received by faith. It is the same doctrine that appears in the first verse of the Bible, "In the

beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and that really is presupposed in the Bible from beginning to the end.

Certain things, according to the Bible, are known about God, and without these things there can be no faith. The Bible teaches plainly that God has given to man a faculty of reason which is capable of apprehending truth, even truth about God. That does not mean that we finite creatures can find out God by our own searching; but it does mean that God has made us capable of receiving the information which He chooses to give. I cannot evolve an account of China out of my own inner consciousness, but I am perfectly capable of understanding the account which comes to me from travelers who have been there themselves. So our reason is certainly insufficient to tell us about God unless He reveals Himself; but it is capable (or would be capable if it were not clouded by sin) of receiving revelation when once it is given. The knowledge that God has graciously given us of Himself is the basis of our confidence in Him; the God of the Bible is One whom it is reasonable to trust.

How then may we attain to this knowledge of God that is so necessary to faith; how may we become acquainted with Him? God is known through the Bible. It presents God in loving action, in the course of history, for the salvation of sinful men. From Genesis to Revelation, from Eden to Calvary, as the covenant God of Israel and as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, all through the varied course of Bible story, God appears in the fulfillment of one loving plan. We see various aspects of His person; He appears in anger as well as in love. But it is plainly the same Person throughout: we rise from the Bible — I think we can say it without irreverence — with a knowledge of the character of God. There is a real analogy here to our relation with an earthly friend. How do we come to know one another? Not all at once, but by years of observation of one another's actions. We have seen a friend in time of danger, and he has been brave; we have gone to him in perplexity, and he has been wise; we have had recourse to him in time of trouble, and he has given us his sympathy. So gradually, with the years, on the basis of

many, many such experiences, we have come to love him and revere him. So it is, somewhat, with the knowledge of God that we obtain from the Bible. In the Bible we see God in action; we see Him in fiery indignation wiping out the foulness of Sodom; we see Him leading Israel like a flock; we see Him giving His only begotten Son for the sins of the world. And by what we see we learn to know Him.

Redemption was accomplished, according to the New Testament, by an event in the external world, at a definite time in the world's history, when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross and rose again. It is Christ, therefore, very naturally, who is ordinarily represented as the object of faith. In the case of our relation to Jesus, we are committing to Him the most precious thing that we possess — our own immortal souls. It is a stupendous act of trust. And it can be justified only by an appeal to facts.

The facts which justify our appeal to Jesus concern not only His goodness but also His power. We might be convinced of His goodness, and yet not trust Him with those eternal concerns of the soul. He might have the will to help and not the power. We might be in the position of the ship-captain's child in the touching story, who, when all on shipboard were in terror because of an awful storm, learned that his father was on the bridge and went peacefully to sleep. The confidence of the child very probably was misplaced; but it was misplaced not because the captain was not faithful and good, but because the best of men has no power to command the wind and the sea that they should obey him. Is our confidence in Jesus equally misplaced? It is misplaced if Jesus was the poor, weak enthusiast that He is represented as being by those who regard Him simply as a Jewish teacher. But very different is the case if He was the Person presented in the Word of God.

It is one thing to hold that the ethical principles which Jesus enunciated will solve the problems of society, and quite a different thing to trust Him as the eternal Son of God, come voluntarily to earth for our redemption, now risen from the dead and holding

communion with those who commit their lives to Him. A man can admire General Washington, for example, and accept the principles of his life; yet one cannot be said to trust him, for the simple reason that he died over a hundred years ago. His soldiers could trust him: for in their day he was alive; but we cannot trust him, because now he is dead.

But the words of Jesus that are recorded in the New Testament make it abundantly plain that the gospel which Jesus proclaimed was, at its very center, a gospel about Him; it did far more than set forth a way of approach to God which Jesus Himself followed, for it presented Jesus as Himself the way. According to the New Testament our Lord presented Himself not merely as Teacher and Example and Leader but also, and primarily, as Savior; He offered Himself to sinful men as One who alone could give them entrance into the Kingdom of God. "The Son of Man," He said, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He invited men not merely to have faith in God like the faith which He had in God, but He invited them to have faith in Him. He clearly regarded Himself as Messiah, not in some lower meaning of the word, but as the heavenly Son of Man who was to come with the clouds of heaven and be the instrument in judging the world.

According to a very widespread way of thinking Jesus was the Founder of the Christian religion because He was the first to live the Christian life, in other words because He was Himself the first Christian. But Jesus stands in a far more fundamental relation to Christianity than that; He was the Founder of our religion not because He was the first Christian, but because He made Christianity possible by His redeeming work. Christianity is a way of getting rid of sin. Our trouble is that our lives do not seem to be like the life of Jesus. Unlike Jesus, we are sinners, and hence, unlike Him, we become Christians; we are sinners, and hence we accept with thankfulness the redeeming love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had pity on us and made us right with God, through no merit of our own, by His atoning death.

The Lord Jesus, then, came into this world not primarily to say something, not even to be something, but to do something; He came not merely to lead men through His example out into a "larger life," but to give life, through His death and resurrection, to those who were dead in trespasses and sins; we are Christians not because we have faith in God like the faith in God which Jesus Himself had, but because we have faith in Him.

One fearful doubt, however, still assails us. It comes from the nothingness of human life, the thought of the infinite abyss which is all about us as we walk upon this earth. It cannot be denied that man is imprisoned on one of the smaller of the planets, that he is enveloped by infinity on all sides, and that he lives but for a day in what seems to be a pitiless procession. The things in which he is interested, the whole of his world, form but an imperceptible oasis in the desert of immensity. It cannot be denied: man is a finite creature. From one point of view he is very much like the beasts that perish.

But that is not the whole truth. Man is not only finite: for he knows that he is finite, and that knowledge brings him into connection with infinity. He lives in a finite world, but he knows, at least, that it is not the totality of things. He lives in a procession of phenomena, but he cannot help searching for a first cause; in the midst of his trivial life, there rises in his mind the thought of God, an inscrutable power. In the presence of it man is helpless, but more unhappy — unhappy because of fear. With what assurance can we meet the infinite power? Its works in nature, despite all nature's beauty, are horrible in the infliction of suffering. And what if physical suffering should not be all; what of the sense of guilt; what if the condemnation of conscience should be but the foretaste of judgment; what if contact with the infinite should be contact with a dreadful infinity of holiness; what if the inscrutable cause of all things should be, after all, a righteous God?

Can Jesus help us? Make Him as great as you will, and still He may seem to be insufficient. Extend the domains of His power far beyond

our ken, and still there may seem to be a shelving brink with the infinite beyond. And still we are subject to fear. The mysterious power that explains the world still, we say, will sweep in and overwhelm us and our Savior alike. We are of all men most miserable; we had trusted in Christ; He carried us a little on our way, and then left us, helpless as before, on the brink of eternity. There is for us no hope; we stand defenseless at length in the presence of unfathomed mystery, unless our Savior were Himself the eternal God.

Then comes the full, rich consolation of God's Word — the mysterious sentence in Philippians: "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:6); the strange cosmology of Colossians: "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15-17); the majestic prologue of the Fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1); the mysterious consciousness of Jesus: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

These things have been despised as idle speculation, but in reality they are the very breath of our Christian lives. They are, indeed, the battle ground of theologians; the church hurled anathemas at those who held that Christ, though great, was less than God. But those anathemas were beneficent and right. That difference of opinion was no trifle; there is no such thing as "almost God." The next thing less than the infinite is infinitely less. If Christ be the greatest of infinite creatures, then still our hearts are restless, still we are mere seekers. But now is Christ, our Savior (the One who says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"), revealed as God. There is now for us no awful

Beyond of mystery and fear. We cannot, indeed, explain the world; to us it is all unknown, but it contains no mysteries for our Savior; He is on the throne; He is at the center; He is ground and explanation of all things; He pervades the remotest bounds; by Him all things consist. The world is full of dread, mysterious powers; they touch us already in a thousand woes. But from all of them we are safe. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39)

Faith and Works

Because of the fundamental nature of faith, as it has been set forth, on the basis of the New Testament teaching, in the last chapter, it is natural to find that in the New Testament faith, as the reception of a free gift, is placed in sharpest contrast with any intrusion of human merit; it is natural to find that faith is sharply contrasted with works. The contrast is really implied by the New Testament throughout, and in one book, the Epistle to the Galatians, it forms the express subject of the argument. That book from the beginning to the end is a mighty polemic in defence of the doctrine of justification by faith alone; and as such it has rightly been called the Magna Charta of Christian liberty. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the world was lying in darkness; but God then raised up a man who read this Epistle with his own eyes, and the Reformation was born. So it may be in our own day. Again, the world is sinking into bondage; the liberty of the sons of God is again giving place to the bondage of a religion of merit: but God still lives, and His Spirit again may bring the charter of our liberty to light.

Meanwhile a strange darkness covers the eyes of men; the message of the great Epistle, so startlingly clear to the man whose eyes have been opened, is hidden by a mass of misinterpretation as absurd in its way as the mediaeval rubbish of the fourfold sense of Scripture which the Reformation brushed aside. Grammatico-historical interpretation is still being favored in theory, but despite is being done to it (by preachers if not by scholars) in practice; and the Apostle is being made to say anything that men wish him to have said. A new Reformation, we think, like the Reformation of the sixteenth century, would be marked, among other things, by a return to plain common sense; and the Apostle would be allowed, despite our likes and dislikes, to say what he really meant to say.

But what did the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Galatians, really mean to say; against what was he writing in that great polemic; and what was he setting up in place of that which he was endeavoring to destroy?

The answer which many modern writers are giving to this question is that the Apostle is arguing merely against an external ceremonial religion in the interests of a religion based on great principles; that he is arguing against a piecemeal conception of morality which makes morality consist in a series of disconnected rules, in the interests of a conception that draws out human conduct naturally from a central root in love; that he is arguing, in other words, against the "letter of the law" in the interests of its "spirit."

This interpretation, we think, involves an error which cuts away the very vitals of the Christian religion. Like other fatal errors, indeed, it does contain an element of truth; in one passage, at least, in the Epistle to the Galatians Paul does seem to point to the external character of the ceremonial law as being inferior to the higher (or to use modern terminology, more "spiritual") stage to which religion, under the new dispensation, had come. But that passage is isolated merely, and certainly does not in itself give the key to the meaning of the Epistle. On the contrary, even in that passage, when it is taken in

its context, the inferiority of the old dispensation as involving ceremonial requirements is really put merely as a sign of an inferiority that is deeper still; and it is that deeper inferiority which the Epistle as a whole is concerned to set forth. The ceremonial character of the Old Testament law, so inferior to the inwardness of the new dispensation, was intended by God to mark the inferiority of any dispensation of law as distinguished from a dispensation of grace.

Of course a word of caution should again at this point be injected. Paul never means to say that the old dispensation was merely a dispensation of law; he always admits, and indeed insists upon, the element of grace which ran through it from beginning to end, the element of grace which appeared in the Promise. But his opponents in Galatia had rejected that element of grace; and their use of the Old Testament law, as distinguished from its right use as a schoolmaster unto Christ, really made of the old dispensation a dispensation of law and nothing more.

What then, according to Paul, was the real, underlying inferiority of that dispensation of law; how was it to be contrasted with the new dispensation which Christ had ushered in? It is hard to see how the answer to this question can really be regarded as obscure: the Apostle has poured forth his very soul to make the matter plain. Most emphatically the contrast was not between a lower law and a higher law; it was not between an external, piecemeal conception of the law and a conception which reduces it to great underlying principles; but it was a contrast between any kind of law, no matter how sublimated, provided only it be conceived of as a way of obtaining merit, and the absolutely free grace of God.

This contrast is entirely missed by the interpretation that prevails popularly in the Modernist Church: the advocates of "salvation by character" have supposed that the polemic of the Apostle was turned merely against certain forgotten ceremonialists of long ago, while in reality it is turned quite as much against them. It is turned, indeed,

against any man who seeks to stand in God's sight on the basis of his own merit instead of on the basis of the sacrifice which Christ offered to satisfy divine justice upon the cross. The truth is that the prevailing Modernist interpretation of Galatians, which is in some respects apparently just the interpretation favored by the Roman Church, makes the Apostle say almost the exact opposite of what he means.

The Modernist return to mediaevalism in the interpretation of Galatians is no isolated thing, but is only one aspect of a misinterpretation of the whole Bible; in particular it is closely akin to a misinterpretation of a great sentence in one of the other Epistles of Paul. The sentence to which we refer is found in II Corinthians iii. 6: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

That sentence is perhaps the most frequently misused utterance in the whole Bible. It has indeed in this respect much competition: many phrases in the New Testament are being used today to mean almost their exact opposite, as for example, when the words, "God in Christ" and the like, are made to be an expression of the vague pantheism so popular just now, or as when the entire gospel of redemption is regarded as a mere symbol of an optimistic view of man against which that doctrine was in reality a stupendous protest, or as when the doctrine of the incarnation is represented as indicating the essential oneness of God and man! One is reminded constantly at the present time of the way in which the Gnostics of the second century used Biblical texts to support their thoroughly unBiblical systems. The historical method of study, in America at least, is very generally being abandoned; and the New Testament writers are being made to say almost anything that twentieth-century readers could have wished them to say.

This abandonment of scientific historical method in exegesis, which is merely one manifestation of the intellectual decadence of our day, appears at countless points in contemporary religious literature; but at no point does it appear with greater clearness than in connection

with the great utterance in II Corinthians to which we have referred, The words: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," are constantly interpreted to mean that we are perfectly justified in taking the law of God with a grain of salt; they are held to indicate that Paul was no "literalist," but a "Liberal," who believed that the Old Testament was not true in detail and the Old Testament law was not valid in detail, but that all God requires is that we should extract the few great principles which the Bible teaches and not insist upon the rest. In short, the words are held to involve a contrast between the letter of the law and "the spirit of the law"; they are held to mean that literalism is deadly, while attention to great principles keeps a man intellectually and spiritually alive.

Thus has one of the greatest utterances in the New Testament been reduced to comparative triviality - a triviality with a kernel of truth in it, to be sure, but triviality all the same. The triviality, indeed, is merely relative; no doubt it is important to observe that attention to the general sense of a book or a law is far better than such a reading of details as that the context in which the details are found is ignored. But all that is quite foreign to the meaning of the Apostle in this passage, and is, though quite true and quite important in its place, trivial in comparison with the tremendous thing that Paul is here endeavoring to say.

What Paul is really doing here is not contrasting the letter of the law with the spirit of the law, but contrasting the law of God with the Spirit of God. When he says, "The letter killeth," he is making no contemptuous reference to a pedantic literalism which shrivels the soul; but he is setting forth the terrible majesty of God's law. The letter, the "thing written," in the law of God, says Paul, pronounces a dread sentence of death upon the transgressor; but the Holy Spirit of God, as distinguished from the law, gives life.

The law of God, Paul means, is, as law, external. It is God's holy will to which we must conform; but it contains in itself no promise of its fulfilment; it is one thing to have the law written, and quite another

thing to have it obeyed. In fact, because of the sinfulness of our hearts, because of the power of the flesh, the recognition of God's law only makes sin take on the definite form of transgression; it only makes sin more exceeding sinful. The law of God was written on tables of stone or on the rolls of the Old Testament books, but it was quite a different thing to get it written in the hearts and lives of the people. So it is today. The text is of very wide application. The law of God, however it comes to us, is "letter"; it is a "thing written." external to the hearts and lives of men. It is written in the Old Testament; it is written in the Sermon on the Mount; it is written in Jesus' stupendous command of love for God and one's neighbor; it is written in whatever way we become conscious of the commands of God. Let no one say that such an extension of the text involves that very anti-historical modernizing which we have just denounced; on the contrary it is amply justified by Paul himself. "When the Gentiles," Paul says, "which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."¹ The Old Testament law is just a clear, authentic presentation of a law of God under which all men stand.

And that law, according to Paul, issues a dreadful sentence of eternal death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; not the hearer of the law is justified but the doer of it. And, alas, none are doers; all have sinned. The law of God is holy and just and good; it is inexorable; and we have fallen under its just condemnation.

That is at bottom what Paul means by the words, "The letter killeth." He does not mean that attention to pedantic details shrivels and deadens the soul. No doubt that is true, at least within certain limits; it is a useful thought. But it is trivial indeed compared with what Paul means. Something far more majestic, far more terrible, is meant by the Pauline phrase. The "letter" that the Apostle means is the same as the curse of God's law that he speaks of in Galatians; it is the dreadful handwriting of ordinances that was against us; and the death with which it kills is the eternal death of those who are forever separated from God.

But that is not all of the text. "The letter killeth," Paul says, "but the Spirit giveth life." There is no doubt about what he means by "the Spirit." He does not mean the "spirit of the law" as contrasted with the letter; he certainly does not mean the lax interpretation of God's commands which is dictated by human lust or pride; he certainly does not mean the spirit of man. No real student of Paul, whatever be his own religious views, can doubt, I think, but that the Apostle means the Spirit of God. God's law brings death because of sin; but God's Spirit, applying to the soul the redemption offered by Christ, brings life. The thing that is written killeth; but the Holy Spirit, in the new birth, or, as Paul says, the new creation, giveth life.

The contrast runs all through the New Testament. Hopelessness under the law is described, for example, in the seventh chapter of Romans. "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"² But this hopelessness is transcended by the gospel. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."³ The law's just sentence of condemnation was borne for us by Christ who suffered in our stead; the handwriting of ordinances which was against us - the dreadful "letter" - was nailed to the cross, and we have a fresh start in the full favor of God. And in addition to this new and right relation to God, the Spirit of God also gives the sinner a new birth and makes him a new creature. The New Testament from beginning to end deals gloriously with this work of grace. The giving of life of which Paul speaks in this text is the new birth, the new creation; it is Christ who liveth in us. Here is the fulfillment of the great prophecy of Jeremiah: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."⁴ The law is no longer for the Christian a command which it is for him by his own strength to obey, but its requirements are fulfilled through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. There is the glorious freedom of the gospel. The gospel does not abrogate God's law, but it makes men love it with all their hearts.

How is it with us? The law of God stands over us; we have offended against it in thought, word and deed; its majestic "letter" pronounces a sentence of death against our sin. Shall we obtain a specious security by ignoring God's law, and by taking refuge in an easier law of our own devising? Or shall the Lord Jesus, as He is offered to us in the gospel, wipe out the sentence of condemnation that was against us, and shall the Holy Spirit write God's law in our heart, and make us doers of the law and not hearers only? So and only so will the great text be applied to us: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

The alternative that underlies this verse, then, and that becomes explicit in Galatians also, is not an alternative between an external or ceremonial religion and what men would now call (by a misuse of the New Testament word) a "spiritual" religion, important though that alternative no doubt is; but it is an alternative between a religion of merit and a religion of grace. The Epistle to the Galatians is directed just as much against the modern notion of "salvation by character" or salvation by "making Christ Master" in the life or salvation by a mere attempt to put into practice "the principles of Jesus," as it is directed against the Jewish ceremonialists of long ago: for what the Apostle is concerned to deny is any intrusion of human merit into the work by which salvation is obtained. That work, according to the Epistle to the Galatians and according to the whole New Testament, is the work of God and of God alone.

At this point appears the full poignancy of the great Epistle with which we have been dealing. Paul is not merely arguing that a man is justified by faith - so much no doubt his opponents, the Judaizers, admitted - but he is arguing that a man is justified by faith *alone*. What the Judaizers said was not that a man is justified by works, but that he is justified by faith *and* works - exactly the thing that is being taught by the Roman Catholic Church today. No doubt they admitted that it was necessary for a man to have faith in Christ in order to be saved: but they held that it was also necessary for him to keep the law the best he could; salvation, according to them, was not by faith

alone and not by works alone but by faith and works together. A man's obedience to the law of God, they held, was not indeed, sufficient for salvation, but it was necessary; and it became sufficient when it was supplemented by Christ.

Against this compromising solution of the problem, the Apostle insists upon a sharp alternative: a man may be saved by works (if he keeps the law perfectly), or he may be saved by faith; but he cannot possibly be saved by faith and works together. Christ, according to Paul, will do everything or nothing; if righteousness is in slightest measure obtained by our obedience to the law, then Christ died in vain; if we trust in slightest measure in our own good works, then we have turned away from grace and Christ profiteth us nothing.

To the world, that may seem to be a hard saying: but it is not a hard saying to the man who has ever been at the foot of the Cross; it is not a hard saying to the man who has first known the bondage of the law, the weary effort at establishment of his own righteousness in the presence of God, and then has come to understand, as in a wondrous flash of light, that Christ has done all, and that the weary bondage was vain. What a great theologian is the Christian heart - the Christian heart that has been touched by redeeming grace! The man who has felt the burden of sin roll away at the sight of the Cross, who has said of the Lord Jesus, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," who has sung with Toplady: "Nothing in *my* hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling" - that man knows in his heart of hearts that the Apostle is right, that to trust Christ only for part is not to trust Him at all, that our own righteousness is insufficient even to bridge the smallest gap which might be left open between us and God, that there is no hope unless we can safely say to the Lord Jesus, without shadow of reservation, without shadow of self-trust: "Thou must save, and Thou alone."

That is the centre of the Christian religion - the absolutely undeserved and sovereign grace of God, saving sinful men by the gift of Christ upon the cross. Condemnation comes by merit; salvation

comes only by grace: condemnation is earned by man; salvation is given by God. The fact of the grace of God runs through the New Testament like a golden thread; indeed for it the New Testament exists. It is found in the words which Jesus spoke in the days of His flesh, as in the parables of the servant coming in from the field and of the laborers in the vineyard; it is found more fully set forth after the redeeming work was done, after the Lord had uttered his triumphant "It is finished" upon the cross. Everywhere the basis of the New Testament is the same - the mysterious, incalculable, wondrous, grace of God, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁵

The reception of that gift is faith: faith means not doing something but receiving something; it means not the earning of a reward but the acceptance of a gift. A man can never be said to obtain a thing for himself if he obtains it by faith; indeed to say that he obtains it by faith is only another way of saying that he does not obtain it for himself but permits another to obtain it for him. Faith, in other words, is not active but passive; and to say that we are saved by faith is to say that we do not save ourselves but are saved only by the one in whom our faith is reposed; the faith of man presupposes the sovereign grace of God.

Even yet, however, we have not sounded the full depths of the New Testament teaching; we have not yet fully set forth the place in salvation which the Bible assigns to the grace of God. A sort of refuge, in what we have said so far, may seem to have been left for the pride of man. Man does not save himself, we have said; God saves him. But man accepts that salvation by faith; and faith, though a negative act, seems to be a kind of act: salvation is freely offered by God; the offer of it does not depend at all upon man; yet a man might seem to obtain a sort of merit by not resisting that offer when once it is given him by God.

But even this last refuge of human pride is searched out and destroyed by the teaching of God's Word; for the Bible represents

even faith itself - little merit as it could in any case involve - as the work of the Spirit of God. The Spirit, according to a true summary of the New Testament, works faith in us and thereby unites us to Christ in our effectual calling; sovereign and resistless is God's grace; and our faith is merely the means which the Spirit uses to apply to us the benefits of Christ's redeeming work.

The means was of God's choosing, not ours; and it is not for us to say, "What doest Thou?" Yet even we, weak and ignorant though we are, can see, I think, why this particular means was chosen to unite us to Christ; why faith was chosen instead of love, for example, as the channel by which salvation could enter into our lives. Love is active; faith is passive; hence faith not love was chosen. If the Bible had said that we are saved by love, then even though our love was altogether the gift of the Spirit, we might have thought that it was our own, and so we might have claimed salvation as our right. But as it is, not only were we saved by grace, but because of the peculiar means which God used to save us, we knew that we were saved by grace; it was of the very nature of faith to make us know that we were not saving ourselves. Even before we could love as we ought to love, even before we could do anything or feel anything aright, we were saved by faith; we were saved by abandoning all confidence in our own thoughts or feelings or actions and by simply allowing ourselves to be saved by God.

In one sense, indeed, we were saved by love; that indeed is an even profounder fact than that we were saved by faith. Yes, we were saved by love, but it was by a greater love than the love in our cold and sinful hearts; we were saved by love, but it was not our love for God but God's love for us, God's love for us by which he gave the Lord Jesus to die *for* us upon the cross. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That love alone is the love that saves. And the means by which it saves is faith.

Thus the beginning of the Christian life is not an achievement but an experience; the soul of the man who is saved is not, at the moment of salvation, active, but passive; salvation is the work of God and God alone. That does not mean that the Christian is unconscious when salvation enters his life; it does not mean that he is placed in a trance, or that his ordinary faculties are in abeyance; on the contrary the great transition often seems to be a very simple thing; overpowering emotional stress is by no means always present; and faith is always a conscious condition of the soul. There is, moreover, a volitional aspect of faith, in which it appears to the man who believes to be induced by a conscious effort of his will, a conscious effort of his will by which he resolves to cease trying to save himself and resolves to accept, instead, the salvation offered by Christ. The preacher of the gospel ought to appeal, we think, in every way in his power, to the conscious life of the man whom he is trying to win; he ought to remove intellectual objections against the truth of Christianity, and adduce positive arguments; he ought to appeal to the emotions; he ought to seek, by exhortation, to move the will. All these means may be used, and have been used countless times, by the Spirit of God; and certainly, we have not intended to disparage them by anything that we have just said. But what we do maintain is that though necessary they are not sufficient; they will never bring a man to faith in Christ unless there is with them the mysterious, regenerating power of the Spirit of God. We are not presuming to treat here the psychology of faith; and certainly we do not think that such a psychology of faith is at all necessary to the man who believes; indeed the less he thinks about his own states of consciousness and the more he thinks about Christ the better it will often be for his soul. But this much at least can be said: even conscious states can be induced in supernatural fashion by the Spirit of God, and such a conscious state is the faith by which a man first accepts Christ as his Saviour from sin.

But if the beginning of the Christian life is thus not an achievement but an experience, if a man is not really active, but passive, when he is saved, if faith is to be placed in sharp contrast with works, what

becomes of the ethical character of the Christian religion, what becomes of the stimulus which it has always given to human individuality and to the sense of human worth, what becomes of the vigorous activity which, in marked contrast with some of the other great religions of the world, it has always encouraged in its adherents? Such questions are perfectly legitimate; and they show that we are very far from having given, up to the present point, any adequate account of the relation, in the Christian religion, between faith and works, or between doctrine and life.

That relation must therefore now be examined, though still briefly, a little more in detail.

The examination may best be begun by a consideration of what has been regarded by some devout readers of the Bible as a serious difficulty, namely the apparent contradiction between the second chapter of Galatians and the second chapter of the Epistle of James. "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but only through faith in Christ Jesus," says Paul;⁷ "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only," says James.⁸ These two verses in their juxtaposition constitute an ancient Biblical difficulty. In the verse from Galatians a man is said to become right with God by faith alone apart from works; in the verse from James he is said to become right with God not by faith alone but by faith and works. If the verses are taken out of their wider context and placed side by side, a contradiction could scarcely seem to be more complete.

The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith alone, which we have just treated at considerable length, is, as we have seen, the very foundation of Christian liberty. It makes our standing with God dependent not at all upon what we have done, but altogether upon what God has done. If our salvation depended upon what we had done, then, according to Paul, we should still be bondslaves; we should still be endeavoring feverishly to keep God's law so well that at the end we might possibly win His favor. It would be a hopeless endeavor because of the deadly guilt of sin; we should be like debtors

endeavoring to pay, but in the very effort getting deeper and deeper into debt. But as it is, in accordance with the gospel, God has granted us His favor as an absolutely free gift; He has brought us into right relation to Himself not on the basis of any merit of ours, but altogether on the basis of the merit of Christ. Great is the guilt of our sins; but Christ took it all upon Himself when He died for us on Calvary. We do not need, then, to make ourselves good before we become God's children; but we can come to God just as we are, all laden with our sins, and be quite certain that the guilt of sin will be removed and that we shall be received. When God looks upon us, to receive us or to cast us off, it is not us that He regards but our great Advocate, Christ Jesus the Lord.

Such is the glorious certainty of the gospel. The salvation of the Christian is certain because it depends altogether upon God; if it depended in slightest measure upon us, the certainty of it would be gone. Hence appears the vital importance of the great Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone; that doctrine is at the very centre of Christianity. It means that acceptance with God is not something that we earn; it is not something that is subject to the wretched uncertainties of human endeavor; but it is a free gift of God. It may seem strange that we should be received by the holy God as His children; but God has chosen to receive us; it has been done on His responsibility not ours; He has a right to receive whom He will into His presence; and in the mystery of His grace He has chosen to receive us.

That central doctrine of the Christian faith is really presupposed in the whole New Testament; but it is made particularly plain in the Epistles of Paul. It is such passages as the eighth chapter of Romans, the second and third chapters of Galatians, and the fifth chapter of II Corinthians, which set forth in plainest fashion the very centre of the gospel.

But in the Epistle of James there seems at first sight to be a discordant note in this great New Testament chorus. "Ye see then,"

says James, "how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." If that means that a man is pronounced righteous before God partly because of the merit of his own works and only partly because of the sacrifice of Christ accepted by faith, then James holds exactly the position of the bitter opponents of Paul who are combated in the Epistle to the Galatians. Those opponents, the "Judaizers" as they are called, held, as we have seen, that faith in Christ is necessary to salvation (in that they agreed with Paul), but they held that the merit of one's own observance of the law of God is also necessary. A man is saved, not by faith alone and not by works alone, but by faith and works together - that was apparently the formula of the Judaizing opponents of Paul. The Apostle rightly saw that that formula meant a return to bondage. If Christ saves us only part way, and leaves a gap to be filled up by our own good works, then we can never be certain that we are saved. The awakened conscience sees clearly that our own obedience to God's law is not the kind of obedience that is really required; it is not that purity of the heart which is demanded by the teaching and example of our Lord. Our obedience to the law is insufficient to bridge even the smallest gap; we are unprofitable servants, and if we ever enter into an account with our Judge we are undone. Christ has done nothing for us or He has done everything; to depend even in smallest measure upon our own merit is the very essence of unbelief; we must trust Christ for nothing or we must trust Him for all. Such is the teaching of the Epistle to the Galatians.

But in the Epistle of James we seem at first sight to be in a different circle of ideas. "Justified by faith alone," says Paul; "Justified not by faith alone," says James. It has been a difficulty to many readers of the Bible. But like other apparent contradictions in the Bible, it proves to be a contradiction merely of form and not of content; and it serves only to lead the devout reader into a deeper and fuller understanding of the truth.

The solution of the difficulty appears in the definition of the word "faith." The apparent contradiction is due simply to the fact that when James in this chapter says that "faith" alone is insufficient, he

means a different thing by the word "faith" from that which Paul means by it when he says that faith is all-sufficient. The kind of faith which James is pronouncing insufficient is made clear in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." The kind of faith which James pronounces insufficient is the faith which the devils also have; it is a mere intellectual apprehension of the facts about God or Christ, and it involves no acceptance of those facts as a gift of God to one's own soul. But it is not that kind of faith which Paul means when he says that a man is saved by faith alone. Faith is indeed intellectual; it involves an apprehension of certain things as facts; and vain is the modern effort to divorce faith from knowledge. But although faith is intellectual, it is not only intellectual. You cannot have faith without having knowledge; but you will not have faith if you have only knowledge. Faith is the acceptance of a gift at the hands of Christ. We cannot accept the gift without knowing certain things about the gift and about the giver. But we might know all those things and still not accept the gift. We might know what the gift is and still not accept it. Knowledge is thus absolutely necessary to faith, but it is not all that is necessary. Christ comes offering us that right relation to God which He wrought for us on the cross. Shall we accept the gift or shall we hold it in disdain? The acceptance of the gift is called faith, It is a very wonderful thing; it involves a change of the whole nature of man; it involves a new hatred of sin and a new hunger and thirst after righteousness. Such a wonderful change is not the work of man; faith itself is given us by the Spirit of God. Christians never make themselves Christians; but they are made Christians by God.

All that is clear from what has already been said. But it is quite inconceivable that a man should be given this faith in Christ, that he should accept this gift which Christ offers, and still go on contentedly in sin. For the very thing which Christ offers us is salvation from sin - not only salvation from the guilt of sin, but also salvation from the power of sin. The very first thing that the Christian does, therefore, is to keep the law of God: he keeps it no longer as a way of earning his

salvation - for salvation has been given him freely by God - but he keeps it joyously as a central part of salvation itself. The faith of which Paul speaks is, as Paul himself says, a faith that works through love; and love is the fulfilling of the whole law. Paul would have agreed fully with James that the faith of which James speaks in our passage is quite insufficient for salvation. The faith that Paul means when he speaks of justification by faith alone is a faith that works.

But if the faith regarded insufficient by James is different from the faith commended by Paul, so also the works commended by James are different from the works regarded inefficacious by Paul. Paul is speaking of works *of the law*, he is speaking of works that are intended to acquire merit in order that God's favor may be earned; James on the other hand is speaking of works like Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac that are the result of faith and show that faith is real faith.

The difference, then, between Paul and James is a difference of terminology, not of meaning. That difference of terminology shows that the Epistle of James was written at a very early time, before the controversy with the Judaizers had arisen and before the terminology had become fixed. If James had been writing after the terminology had become fixed, what he would have said is that although a man is justified by faith alone and not at all by works, yet one must be sure that the faith is real faith and not a mere intellectual assent like that of the demons who believe and tremble. What he actually does is to say just that in different words. James is not correcting Paul, then; he is not even correcting a misinterpretation of Paul; but he is unconsciously preparing for Paul; he is preparing well for the clearer and more glorious teaching of the great Epistles.

The Epistle of James ought to be given its due place in the nurture of the Christian life. It has sometimes been regarded as the Epistle of works. But that does not mean that this Epistle ignores the deeper and more meditative elements in the Christian life. James is no

advocate of a mere "gospel of street-cleaning"; he is no advocate of what is falsely called today a "practical," as distinguished from a doctrinal, Christianity; he is not a man who seeks to drown an inward disquiet by a bustling philanthropy. On the contrary he is a great believer in the power of prayer; he exalts faith and denounces doubt; he humbles man and glorifies God: "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."⁹ The man who wrote these words was no mere advocate of a "practical" religion of this world; he was no mere advocate of what is called today "the social gospel"; but he was a man who viewed this world, as the whole New Testament views it, in the light of eternity.

So the lesson of James may be learned without violence being done to the deepest things of the Christian faith - certainly without violence being done to the gospel which Paul proclaims. It was as clear to Paul as it was to James that men who had been saved by faith could not continue to live unholy lives. "Be not deceived," says Paul: "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . . nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."¹⁰ It is difficult to see how anything could be much plainer than that. Paul just as earnestly as James insists upon the ethical or practical character of Christianity; Paul as well as James insists upon purity and unselfishness in conduct as an absolutely necessary mark of the Christian life. A Christian, according to Paul (as also really according to James), is saved not by himself but by God; but he is saved by God not in order that he may continue in sin, but in order that he may conquer sin and attain unto holiness.

Indeed so earnest is Paul about this matter that at times it looks almost as though he believed Christians even in this life to be altogether sinless, as though he believed that if they were not sinless

they were not Christians at all. Such an interpretation of the Epistles would indeed be incorrect; it is contradicted, in particular, by the loving care with which the Apostle exhorted and encouraged those members of his congregations who had been overtaken in a fault. As a pastor of souls, Paul recognized the presence of sin even in those who were within the household of faith; and dealt with it not only with severity but also with patience and love. Nevertheless, the fact is profoundly significant that in the great doctrinal passages of the Epistles Paul makes very little reference (though such reference is not altogether absent) to the presence of sin in Christian men. How is that fact to be explained? I think it is to be explained by the profound conviction of the Apostle that although sin is actually found in Christians it does not belong there; it is never to be acquiesced in for one single moment, but is to be treated as a terrible anomaly that simply ought not to be.

Thus according to Paul the beginning of the new life is followed by a battle - a battle against sin. In that battle, as is not the case with the beginning of it, the Christian does cooperate with God; he is helped by God's Spirit, but he himself, and not only God's Spirit in him, is active in the fight.

At the beginning of the Christian life there is an act of God and of God alone. It is called in the New Testament the new birth or (as Paul calls it) the new creation. In that act, no part whatever is contributed by the man who is born again. And no wonder I A man who is dead - either dead in physical death or "dead in trespasses and sins" - can do nothing whatever, at least in the sphere in which he is dead. If he could do anything in that sphere, he would not be dead. Such a man who is dead in trespasses and sins is raised to new life in the new birth or the new creation. To that new birth, he himself cannot contribute at all, any more than he contributed to his physical birth. But birth is followed by life; and though a man is not active in his birth he is active in the life that follows. So it is also in the spiritual realm. We did not contribute at all to our new birth; that was an act of God alone. But that new birth is followed by a new life,

and in the new life we have been given by Him who begat us anew the power of action; it is that power of action that is involved in birth. Thus the Christian life is begun by an act of God alone; but it is continued by cooperation between God and man. The possibility of such cooperation is due indeed only to God; it has not been achieved in slightest measure by us; it is the supreme wonder of God's grace. But once given by God it is not withdrawn.

Thus the Christian life in this world is not passive but active; it consists in a mighty battle against sin. That battle is a winning battle, because the man that engages in it has been made alive in the first place by God, and because he has a great Companion to help him in every turn of the fight. But, though a winning battle, it is a battle all the same; and it is not only God's battle but ours. The faith of which we have been speaking consists not in doing something but in receiving something; but it is followed every time by a life in which great things are done.

This aspect of faith is put in classic fashion by the Apostle Paul in a wonderful phrase in the Epistle to the Galatians. "Neither circumcision availeth any thing," says Paul, "nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."¹¹ In that phrase, "faith which worketh by love," or, more literally, "faith working through love," a whole world of experience is compressed within the compass of four words.

Surely that is a text for a practical age; the world may perhaps again become interested in faith if it sees that faith is a thing that works. And certainly our practical age cannot afford to reject assistance wherever it can be found; for the truth is that this practical age seems just now to be signally failing to accomplish results even on its own ground; it seems to be signally failing to "make things go."

Strangely enough the present failure of the world to make things go is due just to that emphasis upon efficiency which might seem to make failure impossible; it is the paradox of efficiency that it can be attained only `by those who do not make it the express object of their

desires. The modern one-sided emphasis upon the practical has hindered the progress of humanity, we think, in at least two ways.

The first way has already been treated in what precedes. Men are so eager about the work, we observed, that they have neglected a proper choice of means to accomplish it; they think that they can make use of religion, as a means to an end, without settling the question of the truth of any particular religion; they think that they can make use of faith as a beneficent psychological phenomenon without determining whether the thing that is believed is true or false. The whole effort, as we observed, is vain; such a pragmatist use of faith really destroys the thing that is being used. If therefore the work is to proceed, we cannot in this pragmatist fashion avoid, but must first face and settle, the question of the means.

In the second place, men are so eager today about the work that they are sometimes indifferent to the question what particular kind of work it shall be. The efficient, energetic man is often being admired by the world at large, and particularly by himself, quite irrespective of the character of his achievements. It often seems to make little difference whether a man engages in the accumulation of material wealth or in the quest of political power or in the management of schools and hospitals and charities. Whether he engages in robbery or in missions, he is sure of recognition, provided only he succeeds, provided only he is "a man who does things." But however stimulating such a prizing of work for its own sake may be to the individual, it is obviously not conducive to any great advance for humanity as a whole. If my labor is going to be opposed to the work of my neighbor, we might both of us enjoy a good, old-fashioned, comfortable rest, so far as any general progress is concerned. Our efforts simply cancel each other. Consequently, although a great deal of energy is being displayed in the world today, one cannot help having the feeling that a vast deal of it is being wasted. The truth is that if we are to be truly practical men, we must first be theorizers. We must first settle upon some one great task and some one great force for its accomplishment.

The Pauline text makes proposals in both directions. It proposes both a task and a force to accomplish it. "Faith working itself out through love" - love is the work, faith the means.

It should be noticed in the first place that this work and this means are open to everyone. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female; nothing is required except what is common to all men. If we like the work we cannot say that it is beyond our reach.

The work is love, and what that is Paul explains in the last division of the same Epistle. It is not a mere emotion, it is not even a mere benevolent desire; it is a practical thing. We sometimes say of a rather unprincipled and dissipated man: "He is weak, but he has a good heart." Such mere good-heartedness is not Christian love. Christian love includes not merely the wish for the welfare of one's fellow men, not merely even the willingness to help, but also the power. In order to love in the Christian sense, a man must be not only benevolent, but also strong and good; he must love his fellow men enough to build up his own strength in order to use it for their benefit.

Such a task is very different from much of the work that is actually being done in the world. In the first place, it is a spiritual not a material work. It is really astonishing how many men are almost wholly absorbed in purely material things. Very many men seem to have no higher conception of work than that of making the dirt fly: the greatest nation is thought to be the nation that has the largest income and the biggest battleships; the greatest university, even, to be the one that has the finest laboratories. Such practical materialism need not be altogether selfish; the production of material goods may be desired for others as well as for one's self. Socialism may be taken as an example. It is not altogether selfish. But - at least in its most consistent forms - it errs in supposing that the proper distribution of material wealth will be a panacea. Indeed, such a habit of thought

has not been altogether absent from the Church itself. Wherever the notion is cherished that the relief of physical suffering is somehow more important - more practical - than the welfare of the human spirit, there material things are being made the chief object of pursuit. And that is not Christian love. Christian love does not, indeed, neglect men's physical welfare; it does not give a man a sermon when he needs bread. It relieves distress; it delights in affording even the simplest pleasure to a child. But it always does these things with the consciousness of the one inestimable gift that it has in reserve.

In the second place, Christian love is not merely intellectual or emotional, but also moral. It involves nothing less than the keeping of the whole moral law. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."¹² Christianity may provide a satisfactory worldview, it may give men comfort and happiness, it may deprive death of its terrors, it may produce the exaltation of religious emotion; but it is not Christianity unless it makes men better. Furthermore, love is a peculiar kind of observance of the moral law. It is not a mere performance of a set of external acts. That may be hypocrisy or expediency. Nor is it a mere devotion to duty for duty's sake. That is admirable and praiseworthy, but it is the childhood stage of morality. The Christian is no longer under the schoolmaster; his performance of the law springs not from obedience to a stern voice of duty but from an overpowering impulse; he *loves* the law of the Lord; he does right because he cannot help it.

In the third place, love involves, I think, a peculiar conception of the content of the law. It regards morality primarily as unselfishness. And what a vast deal of the culture of the world, with all its pomp and glitter, is selfish to the core! Genius exploits the plain men; Christ died for them: and His disciples must follow in the footsteps of their Lord.

In the fourth place, Christian love is not merely love for man; it is also, and even primarily, love for God. We have observed that love

for God is not the means by which we are saved: the New Testament does not say "Thy love hath saved thee," but "Thy faith hath saved thee"; it does not say, "Love the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," but "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But that does not mean that the New Testament depreciates love; it does not mean that if a man did love, and always had loved, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and his fellow-men, as he ought to love them, he would not be a saved man; it only means that because of sin no unregenerate man who has ever lived has actually done that. Love, according to the New Testament, is not the means of salvation, but it is the finest fruit of it; a man is saved by faith, not by love; but he is saved by faith in order that he may love.

Such, then, is the work. How may it be accomplished? "Simply by accomplishing it," says the "practical" man; "no appeal need be made except to the sovereign will; any time a man desires to stop his evil ways and begin to serve God and his fellow-men, the way is perfectly open for him to do it." Yet here is the remarkable thing: the way is always perfectly open, and yet the man never enters upon it; he always can, but never does. Some of us feel the logical necessity of seeking a common cause for such a uniform effect. And the common cause that we find is sin.

Of course if there is no such thing as sin, then nothing is needed to overcome it, and nothing stands in the way of Christian love. The existence of sin, as we observed, is quite generally denied in the modern world. It is denied in at least two ways. In the first place, men sometimes say in effect that there is no sin, but only imperfection; what we call "sin" is just one form of imperfection. If so, it may perhaps well be argued that the human will is sufficient for human tasks. We have obviously made at least some progress, it is said; we have advanced beyond the "stone age"; a continuation of the same efforts will no doubt bring us still further on our way; and as for perfection - that is as impossible for us in the very nature of things as infinity. In the second place, it is said, there is no sin but only sins. It is admitted that moral evil is different in kind from

imperfection, but it is thought to possess no unity; every individual choice is thought to be independent of every other; a man is thought to be free every time to choose either good or evil; no one else can help him, it is said, and no one need help him.

Paul's view of sin is opposed to both of these. In the first place, sin, according to Paul, is deadly guilt, and in the second place, it is not inherent merely in the individual acts. It is a mighty power, in the presence of which man is helpless. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."¹³ "But," it may be objected, "what a dangerous form of expression that 1st If it is no more I that do it, my responsibility is gone; how can I still feel guilt? If I am to be guilty, then sin must be a property simply and solely of my conscious acts." Yet experience curiously reverses such a *priori* reasoning; history teaches that the men who have actually felt most deeply the guilt of sin have been just the men who regarded it as a great force lying far beneath the individual acts. And a closer examination reveals the reason. If each act stands by itself, then a wrong choice at any particular time is, comparatively speaking, a trifling thing; it may easily be rectified next time. Such a philosophy can hardly produce any great horror and dread of sin. But if sin is regarded as a unitary power, irreconcilably opposed to what is good, then acts of sin, apparently trifling in themselves, show that we are under the dominion of such a power; the single wrong action can no longer be regarded by itself, but involves assent to a Satanic power, which then leads logically, irresistibly to the destruction of every right feeling, of every movement of love, of pity, of sympathy. When we come to see that what Paul calls the flesh is a mighty power, which is dragging us resistlessly down into an abyss of evil that has no bottom, then we feel our guilt and misery, then we look about for something stronger to help us than our own weak will.

Such a power is found by the Apostle Paul in faith; it is faith, he says, that produces, or works itself out in, the life of love. But what does Paul mean when he says that "faith works"? Certainly he does not mean what the modern pragmatist skeptic means when he uses the

same words; certainly he does not mean that it is merely faith, considered as a psychological phenomenon and independent of the truth or falsehood of its object, that does the work. What he does mean¹⁴ is made abundantly clear in the last section of this same Epistle to the Galatians, where the life of love is presented in some detail, In that section nothing whatever is said about faith; it is not faith that is there represented as producing the life of love but the Spirit of God; the Spirit is there represented as doing exactly what, in the phrase "faith working through love," is ascribed to faith. The apparent contradiction leads us on to the right conception of faith, True faith, strictly speaking, does not do anything; it does not give, but receives. So when one says that we do something by faith that is just another way of saying that we do nothing - at least that we do nothing of ourselves. It is of the very nature of faith, strictly speaking, to do nothing. So when it is said that faith works through love, that means that through faith, instead of doing something for ourselves we allow some one else to help us. That force which enters our life at the beginning through faith, before we could do anything at all to please God, and which then strengthens and supports us in the battle that it has enabled us to begin, is the power of the Spirit of God.

So in the midst of a practical world, the Christian exhibits a practical life of love - a busy life of helpfulness, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, receiving the strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and the prisoners. And all that accomplished not by his own unaided efforts, not even merely by his own faith, but by the great object of his faith, the all-powerful God.

The Christian preacher, then, comes before the world with a great alternative. Shall we continue to depend upon our own efforts, or shall we receive by faith the power of God? Shall we content ourselves with the materials which this world affords, seeking by endlessly new combinations to produce a building that shall endure; or shall we build with the materials that have no flaw? Shall we give men new motives, or ask God to give them a new power? Shall we

improve the world, or pray God to create a new world? The former alternatives have been tried and found wanting: the best of architects can produce no enduring building when all the materials are faulty; good motives are powerless when the heart is evil. Struggle as we may, we remain just a part of this evil world until, by faith, we cry: "Not by might, nor by power, but by Thy Spirit. O Lord of Hosts."

Notes

1. Rom. ii: 14.
2. Rom. vii: 24.
3. Rom. viii: 2.
4. Jer. xxxi: 33.
5. Rom. vi: 23.
6. I John iv: 10.
7. Gal. ii: 16. It is evident from the immediate context that this is the correct translation.
8. James ii: 24.
9. James iv: 13 f.
10. I Cor. vi: 9 f.
11. Gal. v: 6.
12. Ga1. v: 14.
13. Rom vii: 17.
14. Compare *Christianity and Liberalism*, 1923, pp. 146 ff.

Sin and its Consequences

[The Fall of Man](#)

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The Fall of Man

What is sin? It is a question that we cannot ignore. From false answers to it have come untold disaster to mankind and to the church, and in the right answer to it is to be found the beginning of the pathway of salvation.

How shall we obtain the answer to that momentous question? I think we can make a very good beginning by just examining the Biblical account of the way in which sin entered into the world. That account is given in the Book of Genesis in a very wonderful manner. The language is very simple; the story is told almost in words of one syllable. Yet how profound is the insight which it affords into the depths of the human soul!

"And the Lord God," says the Bible, "commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). It has been observed that no reason is said to have been given to Adam to tell him why he should not eat of that tree, and it has been said that that fact is perhaps significant. Eating of the tree was not in itself obviously wrong; the command not to eat of it was not reinforced by any instinct in man's nature. It appeared therefore all the more clearly as a sheer test of obedience. Would man obey God's commands knowing simply that they were God's commands, knowing that because He gave them they had some quite sufficient reason and were holy and just and good? How clearly and simply that is brought out in the narrative in the Book of Genesis!

An equal simplicity and an equal profundity characterize the following narrative — the narrative of the temptation and the fall. Adam and Eve were in the garden. The serpent said to the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)

I think we can detect even there the beginnings of the temptation. The woman is asked to eye the things that God has forbidden as though they were desirable things. It is hinted that the commands are hard commands; it is hinted that possibly they might even have involved the prohibition to eat of any of the trees of the garden.

Perhaps an attempt is made to cast doubt upon the very fact of the command. "*Hath* God said?" says the tempter. The woman is asked to envisage God's command as a barrier which it would be desirable to surmount. Is there no loophole? Has God really commanded this and that? Did He really mean to prohibit the eating of the trees of the garden?

The woman's reply states the fact — certainly in the main. God's command did not prohibit the eating of all the trees in the garden, but only of one tree. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:2-3).

Then at last there comes a direct attack upon the truthfulness of God. "Thou shalt surely die," said God: "Ye shall not surely die," said the tempter. At last the battle is directly joined. God, said the tempter, has lied, and He has lied for the purpose of keeping something good from man. "Ye shall not surely die," said the tempter: "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

At that point the question arises in our minds what the element of truth was in those words of the tempter. Those words were a lie, but the truly devilish lies are those that contain an element of truth, or, rather, they are those lies that twist the truth so that the resulting lie looks as though it itself were true.

Certainly it was true that by eating the forbidden fruit Adam attained

a knowledge that he did not possess before. That seems to be indicated in verse 22 of the same chapter of the Book of Genesis, where we read: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Genesis 3:22). Yes, it does seem to have been true that when he ate of the forbidden fruit man came to know something that he had not known before.

He had not known sin before; now he knew it. He had known only good before; now he knew good and evil. But what a curse that new knowledge was, and what an immense loss of knowledge as well as loss of everything else that new knowledge brought in its train! He now knew good and evil; but, alas, he knew good now only in memory, so far as his own experience was concerned; and the evil that he knew he knew to his eternal loss. Innocence, in other words, was gone.

What would have been the advance which resistance to that first temptation would have brought to Adam and Eve? It would have meant that the possibility of sinning would have been over. The probation would successfully have been sustained; man would have entered into a blessedness from which all jeopardy would have been removed.

The advance which a successful resistance to the temptation would have brought would also have been an advance in knowledge. That tree was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Well, there is perhaps a real sense in which it would have been to man a tree of the knowledge of good and evil even if he had not eaten of the fruit of it. If he had resisted the temptation to eat of the fruit of that tree, he would have come to know evil in addition to the knowledge that he already had of good. He would not have known it because he had fallen into it in his own life, but he would have known it because in his resistance to it he would have known it because in his resistance to it he would have put it sharply in contrast with good and would deliberately have rejected it. A state of innocence, in other words, where good was practiced without any conflict with evil, would have

given place to a state of assured goodness which evil would have been shown to have no power to disturb.

Such was the blessed state into which God was asking man to come. It was a state which included what I think we can call a knowledge of good and evil. Certainly it was a state in which the difference between good and evil would have been clearly discerned. There was a right way and a wrong way of seeking to attain discernment. The right way was the way of resistance to evil; the wrong way was the way of yielding to it.

The ancient lie is put into men's hearts again and again and again that the only way to attain a state higher than innocence is to have experience of sin in order to see what sin is like. Sowing wild oats is thought to be rather a good way of transcending childish innocence and of attaining strong and mature manhood.

Do you know how that lie can best be shown to be the lie that it is? Well, my friends, I think it is by the example of Jesus Christ. Do you despise innocence? Do you think that it is weak and childish not to have personal experience of evil? Do you think that if you do not obtain such experience of evil you must forever be a child?

If you have any such feeling, I just bid you contemplate Jesus of Nazareth. Does He make upon you any impression of immaturity or childishness? Was He lacking in some experience that is necessary to the highest manhood? Can you patronize Him as though He were but a child, whereas you with your boasted experience of evil are a full-grown man?

If that is the way you think of Jesus, even unbelievers, if they are at all thoughtful, will correct you. No, Jesus makes upon all thoughtful persons the impression of complete maturity and tremendous strength. With unblinking eyes He contemplates the evil of the human heart. "He knew what was in man" (John 2:25), says the Gospel according to John. Yet He never had those experiences of sin

which fools think to be necessary if innocence is to be transcended and the highest manhood to be attained. From His spotless purity and His all-conquering strength, that ancient lie that experience of evil is necessary if man is to attain the highest good recoils naked and ashamed.

That was the lie that the tempter brought to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Man was told to seek discernment in Satan's way and not in God's. Had man resisted the temptation what heights of knowledge and strength would have been his! But he yielded, and what was the result? He sought to attain knowledge, and lost the knowledge of good; he sought to attain power, and lost his own soul; he sought to become as God, and when God came to him in the garden he hid himself in shameful fear.

It is a sad story indeed. But it is the beginning and not the end of the Bible. The first chapters of the Bible tell us of the sin of man. The guilt of that sin has rested upon every single one of us, its guilt and its terrible results; but that is not the last word of the Bible. The Bible tells us not only of man's sin; it also tells us of something greater still; it tells us of the grace of the offended God.

The Consequences of the Fall of Man

Man, as created, was good. God created man in His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Well, then, if God created man good, how comes it that all men now are bad? How did sin pass into all mankind? What caused this stupendous change from good to bad?

Sin came into the world through the sin of Adam. Adam's descendants do not begin life sinless as he began it. They begin it tainted in some way or other with the sin that Adam committed. If Adam transgressed, he was to die. Death was to be the punishment of disobedience. Well, he did transgress. What then happened? Was Adam the only one who died? Did his descendants begin where he began? Did they have placed before them all over again that same

alternative between death and life that was placed before Adam? The Book of Genesis indicates the contrary very clearly. No, the descendants of Adam already, before they individually made any choices at all, had that penalty of death resting upon them.

What, then, does that mean? Adam was the divinely appointed representative of the race. If he obeyed the commandments of God, the whole race of his descendants would have life; if he disobeyed, the whole race would have death. I do not see how the narrative in the Book of Genesis, when you take it as a whole, can mean anything else.

That view of the matter becomes more explicit in certain important passages of the New Testament. In the latter part of the fifth chapter of Romans, in particular, the Apostle Paul makes it plain. "Through one trespass," he there says, "the judgment came unto all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:18). "Through the one man's disobedience," he says in the next verse, "the many were made sinners." In these words and all through this passage we have the great doctrine that when Adam sinned he sinned as the representative of the race, so that it is quite correct to say that all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. There is a profound connection between Adam and the whole race of his descendants.

God said to Adam that if he disobeyed he would die. What is the meaning of that death? Well, it includes physical death; there is no question about that. But, alas, it also includes far more than physical death. It includes spiritual death; it includes the death of the soul unto things that are good; it includes the death of the soul unto God. The dreadful penalty of that sin of Adam was that Adam and his descendants became dead in trespasses and sins. As a just penalty of Adam's sin, God withdrew his favor, and the souls of all mankind became spiritually dead. The soul that is spiritually dead, the soul that is corrupt, is guilty not only because of Adam's guilt but also because of its own sin. It deserves eternal punishment.

The doctrine of the wrath of God is not a popular doctrine, but there is no doctrine that is more utterly pervasive in the Bible. Paul devotes to it a large part of three chapters out of the eight chapters in his great Epistle to the Romans which he devotes to the exposition of his message of salvation, and he is at particular pains to show that the wrath of God rests upon all men except those who have been saved by God's grace. But there is nothing peculiar in that great passage in the first three chapters of Romans. That passage only puts in a comprehensive way what is presupposed from Genesis to Revelation and becomes explicit in passages almost beyond number.

Does the teaching of Jesus form any exception to the otherwise pervasive presentation of the wrath of God in the Bible? Well, you might think so if you listened only to what modern sentimentality says about Jesus of Nazareth. The men of the world, who have never been born again, who have never come under the conviction of sin, have reconstructed a Jesus to suit themselves, a feeble sentimentalist who preached only the love of God and had nothing to say about God's wrath. But very different was the real Jesus, the Jesus who is presented to us in our sources of historical information. The real Jesus certainly proclaimed a God who, as the Old Testament which he revered as God's Word says, is a "consuming fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24; compare Hebrews 12:29). Very terrible was Jesus' own anger as the Gospels describe it, a profound burning indignation against sin; and very terrible is the anger of the God whom He proclaimed as the Ruler of heaven and earth. No, you certainly cannot escape from the teaching of the Bible about the wrath of God by appealing to Jesus of Nazareth. The most terrible even among the Biblical presentations of God's wrath are those that are found in our blessed Savior's words.

Where do you find the most terrible descriptions of hell in the whole of the Bible? It is Jesus who speaks of the sin that shall not be forgiven either in this world or that which is to come; it is Jesus who speaks of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched (Mark 9:48); it is Jesus who has given us the story of the rich man

and Lazarus and of the great gulf between them (Luke 16:19-31); it is Jesus who says that it is profitable for a man to enter into life having one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Matthew 18:9). It appears in the Sermon on the Mount; it appears of course in the great judgment chapter, the twenty-fifth of Matthew; it appears in passages too numerous to mention. It is not somewhere on the circumference of his teaching, but is at the very heart and core of it.

I do not believe we always understand quite clearly enough how great is the divergence at this point between the teaching of Jesus and current preaching. Men are interested today in this world. They have lost the consciousness of sin, and having lost the consciousness of sin they have lost the fear of hell. They have tried to make Christianity a religion of this world. They have come to regard Christianity just as a program for setting up the conditions of the kingdom of God upon this earth, and they are tremendously impatient when anyone looks upon it as a means of entering into heaven and escaping hell.

I have mentioned the Biblical teaching about hell simply because it is necessary in order that you may understand the Biblical teaching about sin. The awfulness of the punishment of sin shows as nothing else could well do how heinous a thing sin really is in the sight of God.

I have tried to present to you in outline something like the whole picture — man guilty with the imputed guilt of Adam's first sin, man suffering therefore the death that is the penalty of that sin, not only physical death but also that spiritual death that consists in the corruption of man's whole nature and in his total inability to please God, man bringing forth out of his corrupt heart individual acts of transgression without number, man facing eternal punishment in hell. That is the picture that runs all through the Bible. Mankind, according to the Bible, is a race lost in sin; and sin is not just a misfortune, but is something that calls forth the white heat of the divine indignation. Before the awful justice of God no unclean thing

can stand; and man is unclean, transgressor against God's holy law, subject justly to its awful penalty.

As I try to present that picture to you, I think you as well as I are impressed with the fact that the men of the present day for the most part will have none of it. They will not admit at all that mankind is lost in sin. I remember a service that I attended some years ago in a little church in a pretty village. The preacher was distinctly above the average in culture and in moral fervor. I do not remember his sermon (except that it was a glorification of man); but I do remember something that he said in his prayer. He quoted that verse from Jeremiah to the effect that the heart of man is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9), and then he said in his prayer, as nearly as I can remember his words: "O Lord, thou knowest that we no longer accept this interpretation, but now think that man does what is right if only he knows the way." Well, that was at least being frank about the matter. We have a good opinion of ourselves these days, and if so, why should we not let the Lord in on our secret? Why should we go on quoting with a sanctimonious air confessions of sin from the Bible if we really do not believe a word of them? I think the prayer of that village preacher was bad — very bad — but I also think that perhaps it was not so bad perhaps as the prayers of those preachers who have really rejected the central message of the Bible just as completely as he had and yet conceal the fact by the use of traditional language. At least that prayer raised the issue clearly between the Biblical view of sin and the paganism of the modern creed, "I believe in man."

At the very foundation of all that the Bible says is this sad truth — that mankind is lost in sin. The Bible teaches, we have observed, that every man comes into the world a sinner. It is against that doctrine that the chief attack has been made; and I want to say a few words to you about the attack in order that the Bible doctrine which is attacked may become the more clear. The attack has come to be connected with the name of a British monk who lived in the latter part of the fourth and the early part of the fifth century after Christ.

His name was Pelagius. In contravention of the Biblical doctrine, Pelagius said that every man, far from being born with a corrupt nature, begins life practically where Adam began it, being perfectly able to choose either good or evil.

The Bible plainly teaches that sinful actions come from a corrupt nature of the man who commits them, that individual wrong choices come from the underlying state of the person who engages in them. A man is morally responsible for wrong choices springing out of his evil nature, and he is responsible for the evil nature out of which those wrong choices spring. Sin is not just a matter of individual actions. Both the bad actions and also the bad state from which the bad actions come are sin.

I am going to quote one passage from the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels and then I am going to ask you whether that one passage does not sum up the teaching of the whole Bible on this point. "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matthew 12:33-35) In the light of these words of Jesus, so simple and so profound, how utterly shallow the whole Pelagian view of sin is seen to be! According to Jesus, evil actions come from an evil heart, and both the actions and the heart from which they come are sinful.

That view is the view of the whole Bible. There is in the Bible from beginning to end no shadow of comfort for the shallow notion that sin is a matter only of individual choices and that a bad man can, without being changed within, suddenly bring forth good actions. No, the Bible everywhere finds the root of evil in the heart, and by the heart it does not mean just the feelings but the whole inner life of man. The heart of man, it tells us, is deceitful above all things and

desperately wicked, and because of that, man is a sinner in the sight of God. An evil man inevitably performs evil actions; the thing is as certain as that a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit: but the evil man performs those evil actions because he wants to perform them; they are his own free personal acts and he is responsible for them in the sight of God.

The Bible from beginning to end plainly teaches that individual sins come from a sinful nature, and that the nature of all men is sinful from their birth. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" — these words of the Fifty-first Psalm summarize, in the cry of a penitent sinner, a doctrine of sin that runs through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Upon that Biblical view of sin depends also the Biblical view of salvation. Does the Bible teach that all Christ did for us is to set us a good example which we are perfectly able to follow without a change of our hearts? The man who thinks so is a man who has not come even to the threshold of the great central truth which the Scriptures contain. "Ye must be born again," said Jesus Christ (John 3:7). There is no hope whatever for us until we are born again by an act that is not our own; there is no hope that we shall really choose the right until we are made alive by the Spirit of the living God.

Nothing that fallen and unregenerate men can do is really well-pleasing to God. Many things that they do are able to please us, with our imperfect standards, but nothing that they do is able to please God; nothing that they do can stand in the white light of His judgment throne. Some of their actions may be relatively good, but none of them are really good. All of them are affected by the deep depravity of the fallen human nature from which they come.

That brings us to another aspect of the great Biblical doctrine of depravity. It is found in the complete inability of fallen man to lift himself out of his fallen condition. Fallen man, according to the Bible, is unable to contribute the smallest part of the great change by which he is made to be alive from the dead. Men who are dead in

trespasses and sins are utterly unable to have saving faith, just as completely unable as a dead man lying in a tomb is unable to contribute the slightest bit to his resurrection. When a man is born again, the Holy Spirit works faith in him, and the man contributes nothing whatever to that blessed result. After he has been born again, he does cooperate with the Spirit of God in the daily battle against sin; after he has been made alive by God, he proceeds to show that he is alive by bringing forth good works: but until he is made alive he can do nothing that is really good; and the act of the Spirit of God by which he is made alive is a resistless and sovereign act.

Man, according to the Bible, is not merely sick in trespasses and sins; he is not merely in a weakened condition so that he needs divine help: but he is dead in trespasses and sins. He can do absolutely nothing to save himself, and God saves him by the gracious, sovereign act of the new birth. The Bible is a tremendously uncompromising book in this matter of the sin of man and the grace of God.

The Biblical doctrine of the grace of God does not mean, as caricatures of it sometimes represent it as meaning, that a man is saved against his will. No, it means that a man's will itself is renewed. His act of faith is his own act. He performs that act gladly, and is sure that he never was so free as when he performs it. Yet he is enabled to perform it simply by the gracious, sovereign act of the Spirit of God.

Ah, my friends, how precious is that doctrine of the grace of God! It is not in accordance with human pride. It is not a doctrine that we should ever have evolved. But when it is revealed in God's Word, the hearts of the redeemed cry, Amen. Sinners saved by grace love to ascribe not some but all of the praise to God.

What Is Sin?

We come now to ask what sin at bottom is. Widely different answers have been given to this question, and with these different answers have gone different views of the world and of God and of human life. The true answer is to be obtained very clearly in the Bible; but before I present that true answer to you, I want to speak to you about one or two wrong answers, in order that by contrast with them the true answer may be the more clearly understood.

In the first place, many men have notions of sin which really deprive sin of all its distinctiveness, or, rather, many men simply deny the existence of anything that can properly be called sin at all. According to a very widespread way of thinking in the unbelief of the present day, what we popularly call morality is simply the accumulated experience of the race as to the kind of conduct that leads to racial preservation and well-being. Tribes in which every man sought his own pleasure without regard to the welfare of his neighbors failed, it is said, in the struggle for existence, whereas those tribes that restrained the impulses of their members for the good of the whole prospered and multiplied. By a process of natural selection, therefore, according to this theory, it came more and more to be true that among the races of mankind those that cultivated solidarity were the ones that survived.

In the course of time — so the theory runs — the lowly origin of these social restraints was altogether lost from view, and they were felt to be rooted in something distinctive that came to be called morality or virtue. It is only in modern times that we have got behind the scenes and have discovered the ultimate identity between what we call "morality" and the self-interest of society. Such is a very widespread theory. According to that theory "sin" is only another name — and a very unsatisfactory name too — for anti-social conduct.

What shall we say of that notion of sin from the Christian point of view? The answer is surely quite plain. We must reject it very emphatically. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," says the Psalmist (Psalm 51:4). That is at the very heart of the Bible from

beginning to end. Sin, according to the Bible, is not just conduct that is contrary to the accumulated experience of the race; it is not just anti-social conduct: but it is an offence primarily against God.

Equally destructive of any true idea of sin is the error of those who say that the end of all human conduct is, or (as some of them say) ought to be, pleasure. Sometimes the pleasure which is regarded as the goal to be set before men is the pleasure of the individual — refined and thoroughly respectable pleasure no doubt, but still pleasure. Such a view has sometimes produced lives superficially decent. But even such superficial decency is not apt to be very lasting, and the degrading character of the philosophy underlying it is certain to make itself felt even on the surface sooner or later. Certainly that philosophy can never have a place for any notion that with any propriety at all could be called a true notion of sin.

Sometimes, it is true, the pleasure which is made the goal of human conduct is thought of as the pleasure, or (to use a more high-sounding word) the happiness, not of the individual but of the race. According to that view, altruism — namely, regard for the greatest happiness of the greatest number — is thought to be the sum-total of morality.

Thus we have seen in the newspapers recently a good deal of discussion about "mercy-killing" or "euthanasia". Certain physicians say very frankly that they think hopeless invalids, who never by any chance can be of use either to themselves or to anyone else, ought to be put painlessly out of the way. The modern advocates of euthanasia are arguing the thing out on an entirely different basis from the basis on which the Christian argues it. They are arguing the question on the basis of what is useful — what produces happiness and avoids pain for the human race. The Christian argues it on the basis of a definite divine command. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) settles the matter for the Christian. From the Christian point of view the physician who engages in a mercy-killing is just a murderer. It may also turn out that his mercy-killing is not really merciful in the long

run. But that is not the point. The real point is that be it never so merciful, it is murder, and murder is sin.

The views of sin that we have considered so far are obviously opposed to Christianity. No Christian can hold that morality is just the accumulated self-interest of the race, and that sin is merely conduct opposed to such self-interest. The Christian obviously must hold that righteousness is something quite distinct from happiness and that sin is something quite distinct from folly.

What, then, is sin? We have said what it is not. Now we ought to say what it is. Fortunately we do not have to search very long in the Bible to find the answer to that question. The Bible gives the answer right at the beginning in the account that it gives of the very first sin of man. What was that first sin of man, according to the Bible? Is not the answer perfectly clear? Why, it was disobedience to a command of God. God said, "Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree"; man ate of the fruit of the tree: and that was sin. There we have our definition of sin at last.

"Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Those are the words of the Shorter Catechism, not of the Bible; but they are true to what the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation. The most elementary thing about sin is that it is that which is contrary to God's law. You cannot believe in the existence of sin unless you believe in the existence of the law of God. The idea of sin and the idea of law go together.

That being so, I ask you just to run through the Bible in your mind and consider how very pervasive in the Bible is the Bible's teaching about the law of God. We have already observed how clear that teaching is in the account which the Bible gives of the first sin of man. God said, "Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree". That was God's law; it was a definite command. Man disobeyed that command; man did what God told him not to do: and that was sin. But the law of God runs all through the Bible. It is not found just in

this passage or that, but it is the background of everything that the Bible says regarding the relations between God and man.

Consider for a moment how large a part of the Old Testament is occupied with the law of God — the law as it was given through Moses. Do you think that came by chance? Not at all. It came because the law is truly fundamental in what the Bible has to say. All through the Old Testament there is held up a great central thought — God the lawgiver, man owing obedience to Him. How it is, then, with the New Testament? Does the New Testament obscure that thought; does the New Testament depreciate in any way the law of God? "Think not," said Jesus, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

Consider for a moment, my friends, the majesty of the law of God as the Bible sets it forth. One law over all — valid for Christians, valid for non-Christians, valid now and valid to all eternity. How grandly that law is promulgated amid the thunderings of Sinai! How much more grandly still and much more terribly it is set forth in the teaching of Jesus — in His teaching and in His example! With what terror we are fain to say, with Peter, in the presence of that dazzling purity: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8) Nowhere in the Bible, in the teaching of Jesus our Savior, do we escape from the awful majesty of the law of God — written in the constitution of the universe, searching the innermost recesses of the soul, embracing every idle word and every action and every secret thought of the heart, inescapable, all-inclusive, holy, terrible. God the lawgiver, man the subject; God the ruler, man the ruled! The service of God is a service that is perfect freedom, a duty that is the highest of all joys; yet it is a service still. Let us never forget that. God was always and is forever the sovereign King; the whole universe is beneath His holy law.

This law is grounded in the infinite perfection of the being of God Himself. "Be ye therefore perfect," said Jesus, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). That is the standard.

It is a holy law, as God Himself is holy. If that be the law of God, how awful a thing is sin! Not an offence against some rule proceeding from temporal authority or enforced by temporal penalties, but an offence against the infinite and eternal God!

I know that some of my hearers regard what I have been saying as being no more worthy of consideration than the hobgoblins and bogies with which nurses used to frighten naughty children. An outstanding characteristic of the age in which we are living is a disbelief in anything that can be called a law of God and in particular a disbelief in anything that can properly be called sin. The plain fact is that the men of our day are living for the most part in an entirely different world of thought and feeling and life from the world in which the Christian lives. The difference does not just concern this detail or that: it concerns the entire basis of life; it concerns the entire atmosphere in which men live and move and have their being. At the heart of everything that the Bible says are two great truths, which belong inseparably together — the majesty of the law of God, and sin as an offence against that law. Both these basic truths are denied in modern society, and in the denial of them is found the central characteristic of the age in which we are living.

Well, what sort of age is that; what sort of age is this in which the law of God is regarded as obsolete and in which there is no consciousness of sin? I will tell you. It is an age in which the disintegration of society is proceeding on a gigantic scale. Look about you, and what do you see? Everywhere the throwing off of restraint, the abandonment of standards.

The consciousness of sin alone leads men to turn to the Savior from sin, and the consciousness of sin comes only when men are brought face to face with the law of God. But men have no consciousness of sin today, and what are we going to do? I remember that that problem was presented very poignantly in my hearing some time ago by a preacher who was sadly puzzled. Here we are, said he. We are living in the twentieth century. We have to take things as we find

them; and as a matter of fact, whether we like it or not, if we talk to the young people of the present day about sin and guilt they will not know what we are talking about; they will simply turn away from us in utter boredom, and they will turn from the Christ whom we preach. Is not that really too bad? he continued. Is it not really too bad for them to miss the blessing that Christ has for them if only they would come to Him? If, therefore, they will not come to Christ in our way, ought we not to invite them to come in their way? If they will not come to Christ through the consciousness of sin induced by the terror of the law of God, may we not get them to come through the attraction of the amiable ethics of Jesus and the usefulness of His teaching in solving the problems of society?

I am afraid that in response to such questions we shall just have to answer, "No." I am afraid we shall just have to say that being a Christian is a much more tragic thing than these people suppose. I am afraid we shall just have to tell them that they cannot clamber over the wall into the Christian way. I am afraid we shall just have to point them to the little wicket gate, and tell them to seek their Savior while yet He may be found, in order that He may rescue them from the day of wrath.

But is that not utterly hopeless? Is it not utterly hopeless to try to get the people of the twentieth century to take the law of God with any seriousness or to be the slightest bit frightened about their sins? I answer, Certainly it is hopeless. Absolutely hopeless. As hopeless as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. But, you see, there is One who can do hopeless things. That is, the Spirit of the living God.

The Spirit of God has not lost His power. In His own good time, He will send His messengers even to a wicked and adulterous and careless generation. He will convict men of sin; He will break down men's pride; He will melt their stony hearts. Then He will lead them to the Savior of their souls.

Is Mankind Lost in Sin?

We have spoken of the first sin of man, and we have spoken of the question, "What is sin?" The question now arises what consequences that first sin of man has had for us and for all men. Some people think it had very slight consequences — if indeed these people think that there ever was a first sin of man at all, in the sense in which it is described in the third chapter of Genesis.

I remember that some years ago, when I was driving home in my car after a summer vacation, I stayed over Sunday in a certain city without any particular reason except that I do not like to travel on that day. Being without any acquaintance with the city, I dropped into what seemed perhaps to be the leading church in the central part of the town.

What I heard in that church was typical of what one hears in a great many churches today. It was the Sunday on which new teachers were being inducted into office. The pastor preached a sermon appropriate to the occasion. There are two notions about the teaching of children in the Church, he said. According to one notion, the children are to be told that they are sinners and need a Savior. That is the old notion, he said; it has been abandoned in the modern Church. According to the other notion, he said, which is of course the notion that we moderns hold, the business of the teacher is to nurture the tender plant of the religious nature of the child in order that it may bear fruit in a normal and healthy religious life.

Was that preacher right, or was what he designated as the old notion right? Are children born good, or are they born bad? Do they need, in order that they may grow up into Christian manhood, merely the use of the resources planted in them at birth, or do they need a new birth and a divine Savior?

That is certainly a momentous question. We may answer the question in this way or in that, but about the importance of the

question I do not see how there can well be any doubt. That preacher, in the church of which I have spoken, recognized the importance of the question. He answered the question that he raised quite wrongly, but at least he was right in looking the question fairly in the face. I propose that we should imitate that preacher in facing the question fairly, even though our conclusion may turn out to be different from his. Is each man the captain of his own soul, and a pretty capable captain too, or is all mankind lost in sin? Does the Bible teach that children are born into the world good (or at least evenly balanced between badness and goodness), or does it teach that all save one child are born in sin?

When we approach the Bible with that question in our minds, one thing is at once perfectly clear. It is that the Bible from Genesis to Revelation teaches that all men (with the one exception of Jesus Christ) are as a matter of fact sinners in the sight of God. In one great passage, particularly, that truth, that all men are sinners, is made the subject of definite exposition and proof. That passage is found in Romans 1:18 - 3:20. There the Apostle Paul, before he goes on to set forth the gospel, sets forth the universal need of the gospel. All have need of the gospel, he says, because all without exception are sinners. The Gentiles are sinners. They have disobeyed God's law, even though they have not that law in the particularly clear form in which it was presented to God's chosen people through Moses. Because they have disobeyed God's law, and as a punishment for their disobedience of it, they have sunk deeper and deeper into the mire of sin. The Jews also, says Paul, are sinners. They have great advantages; they have a special revelation from God; in particular they have a supernatural revelation of God's law. But it is not the hearing of the law that causes a man to be righteous but the doing of it; and the Jews, alas, though they have heard it, have not done it. They too are transgressors.

So all have sinned, according to Paul. He drives that truth home by a series of Old Testament Scripture quotations beginning with the words: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that

understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Romans 3:10-12)

I think it is hardly too much to say that if this Pauline teaching about the universal sinfulness of mankind is untrue, the whole of the rest of that glorious Epistle, the Epistle to the Romans, falls to the ground. Imagine Paul as admitting that a single mere man since the fall ever was righteous in the sight of God, not needing, therefore, redemption through the precious blood of Christ; and you see at once that such a Paul would be a totally different Paul from the one who speaks in every page of the Epistle to the Romans and in every one of the other Pauline Epistles that the New Testament contains. The light of the gospel, in the teaching of Paul, stands out always against the dark background of a race universally lost in sin.

Is the case any different in the rest of the Bible? I care not at this point whether you turn to the Old Testament or to the New Testament. Everywhere there is the same terrible diagnosis of the ill of mankind.

"Two men," said Jesus, "went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luk 18:10-13)

Which of these two men received a blessing from God when he prayed there in the temple — the man who thought he was an exception to God's call to repentance or the one who beat upon his breast and confessed himself a sinner? Jesus tells us very plainly. The publican went down to his house justified rather than the other. Ah, my friends, how terrible is the rebuke of Jesus again and again

and again for those who think that they form exceptions to the universal sinfulness of mankind!

A rich young ruler came running to Jesus one day, and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus repeated to him a number of the commandments. The man said, "All these have I observed from my youth." Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." The young man went away sorrowful. (Mark 10:17-22) He lacked something; he was not good as God regards goodness. The point is that every man always lacks something. No man comes up to God's standard; no man can inherit the kingdom of God if he stands upon his own obedience to God's law.

Did you ever observe what incident comes just before this incident of the rich young ruler in all three of the Synoptic Gospels — in Matthew and in Mark and in Luke? It is the incident of the bringing of little children to Jesus, when Jesus said to the disciples, as reported in Mark and similarly in Luke: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:15). There is a profound connection between these two incidents, as there is also a connection of both of them with the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican which in Luke immediately precedes.

Some years ago I heard a sermon on the incident of the Rich Young Ruler. What are the sermons that we are apt to remember? I think they are the sermons where the preacher does not preach himself but where he truly unfolds the meaning of some great passage of the Word of God.

The sermon of which I am now thinking is one which was preached some time ago in a Philadelphia church by my colleague, Professor R. B. Kuiper. He took the incident of the Rich Young Ruler together with the incident of the bringing of the little children to Jesus, and he showed how both incidents teach the same great lesson — the lesson of the utter helplessness of man the sinner and the absolute necessity

of the free grace of God. You cannot depend for your entrance into the kingdom of God upon anything that you have or anything that you are. You must be as helpless as a little child. Your reliance cannot be on your own goodness, for you have none. It can only be upon the grace of God.

God has told us that we are sinners; He has told us in His own holy Word from beginning to end. Well may the Apostle John say, in view of the whole of the Bible: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar" (I John 1:10). God is not a liar, my friends. This world is lost in sin.

Sin's Wages and God's Gift

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Some time ago I heard a sermon on this text by a preacher who has now retired. The sermon was not one that I agreed with altogether, but the beginning of it, I thought, was interesting. The preacher said that during the preceding summer he had met in a chance sort of way, on one of the steamers of the Great Lakes, a gentleman who turned out to be a man of large affairs, but a man who had little to do with the church. Incidentally the conversation turned to religious matters, and the man of business gave to the preacher the benefit of a little criticism. The criticism was perhaps not unworthy of attention. "You preachers," the outsider said, "don't preach hell enough."

Usually the criticism which is leveled at the church by men who know nothing about it is as valueless as ignorant criticism is in other spheres. But in this case I am inclined to think that the critic was right. We preachers do not preach hell enough, and we do not say enough about sin. We talk about the gospel and wonder why people are not interested in what we say. Of course they are not interested. No man is interested in a piece of good news unless he has the

consciousness of needing it; no man is interested in an offer of salvation unless he knows that there is something from which he needs to be saved. It is quite useless to ask a man to adopt the Christian view of the gospel unless he first has the Christian view of sin.

But a man will never adopt the Christian view of sin if he considers merely the sin of the world or the sins of other people. Consideration of the sins of other people is the deadliest of moral anodynes; it relieves the pain of conscience but it also destroys moral life. Many persons gloat over denunciations of that to which they are not tempted; or they even gloat over denunciations, in the case of other people, of sins which are also really theirs. King David was very severe when the prophet Nathan narrated to him his sordid tale of greed. "As the Lord liveth," said David, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." But Nathan was a disconcerting prophet. "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man." (II Samuel 12:5, 7) That was for David the beginning of a real sense of his sin. So it will also be with us.

Of course it seems quite preposterous that we should be sinners. It was preposterous also for King David seated on his throne in the majesty of his royal robes. It was preposterous, but it was true. So also it is preposterous for us. It seems to be a strange notion to treat respectable people as sinners. In the case of college men, it seems particularly absurd. College men look so pleasant; it seems preposterous to connect them with the dreadful fact of sin. Some time ago I was reading, I think in a journal published in London, a review of a book that dealt with religious conditions among university men or young people. The author of the book spoke of the moral ideals of the young men of the present day as being summed up in the notion of being a good sport. The young men of the present day, it was said in effect, may not use the old terminology of guilt and retribution, but they dislike the man who does not know how to play fairly a match of lawn tennis and does not know how to take defeat like a gentleman. The remark of the reviewer, I thought, was

eminently just. Surely, he said, with regard to this very common lawn tennis view of sin — surely, he said, among university men "there are grimmer facts than these." He was right, and we know he was right. He was right about university men in England; he was right about college men in America; and he was right about the rest of us as well. There are grimmer facts than poor lawn tennis and poor sport, regrettable though that no doubt is. There is, in general, in a thousand ugly forms, the grim fact of sin.

So when I speak of sin I am not talking to you about the sin of other people, but I am talking to you about your sin, and I am talking to myself about my sin. I am talking about that particular battle ground where you come to grips with the power of evil and where you meet your God.

Suppose that on that battle ground we have met defeat. What is the result? The answer of the text and the answer of the whole Bible is short and plain. "The wages of sin," says the Bible, "is death" (Romans 6:23). I shall not pause just now to consider in detail what Paul means by "death" — except just to point out this interesting fact that if you want to find the most terrible descriptions of this eternal death you will find them not in Paul but in Jesus. It is the custom nowadays to appeal from the supposedly gloomy theology of Paul to the supposedly sunny philosophy of Jesus; but the strange thing is that it is Jesus, not Paul, who speaks of the outer darkness and the everlasting fire and of the sin that shall not be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come. Paul is content in his Epistles to treat of the punishment of sin with some reserve — a reserve very impressive and very terrifying, it is true — but Jesus is more explicit. Jesus makes abundantly plain that the offender against God's law is facing something far more dreadful, to say the least, than mere annihilation would be. The teaching of Jesus has at the very center of it the fear of God and the fear of hell. No human law without sanction is complete; a law without a penalty is an altogether worthless and pitiful thing. Are God's laws of this pitiful kind?

There are some people who seem to think that they are. But as a matter of fact God's laws have attached to them sanctions compared with which all human penalties are as nothing.

The fact appears even in the course of this world. There is a deadly inexorableness about the laws of nature. Offend against the laws of health, and the result follows with a terrible certainty; no excuses will avail; crying and tears will count nothing; the retribution, however deferred, is sure. In the sphere of the physical life, it is certainly clear that the wages of sin is death. But many people think that the paymaster can be cheated, that after a life of sin we can present ourselves hopefully at the cashier's window and be paid in some different coin from that which we have earned. Do you really agree with them? Do you really think that in this accounting you can cheat? Do you really think that by care in the physical sphere you can avoid the consequences of sin? There is something within us that tells us that such is not the case; there is something within us that reveals the abyss over which we are standing, that brushes aside our petty excuses, that reveals in the inner, moral sphere, as in the physical realm, the same terrible inexorableness of law. God grant that we may not deceive ourselves! God grant that we may not hope to cheat! God grant that we may learn in time that the wages of sin is death!

There is a definiteness and certainty about wages. Wages are different from a spontaneous gift; wages, unlike a gift, are fixed. A man has done his week's work; he presents himself at the paymaster's desk, and is paid off; the matter is not discussed; the employee does not try then to strike a bargain with the cashier. The amount of the payment has been determined beforehand, and the payment itself is a purely formal, impersonal affair. So it is, somewhat, with the wages of sin. The wages have been fixed already. I do not mean that all sins are punished alike; no doubt at God's judgment seat there is a delicacy of discrimination quite impossible under human laws. And I do not mean that the penalty of sin follows merely by a natural law that is independent of God. But however the law has been established, it is, when once established, inexorable. It

is quite useless for a man to argue about the penalty of his sin; it is useless in the physical sphere of the laws of health, and it will be useless when we appear at last before Him who knows the secrets of the heart. Let us not deceive ourselves, my friends. The moral constitution of the universe is a very terrible thing. Let us not think that we can trifle with it. The world is governed by inexorable law. And that law establishes by an immutable decree the dreadful consequences of sin. The wages of sin is death.

At that point some preachers stop. Here stopped, for example, the noted preacher whose sermon gave us our text and our subject today. The terribleness of sin and the inexorableness of law — it is writ large in the physical organism of man and in the whole course of nature. It is also writ large in the Bible. But the Bible, unlike nature, does not stop here. "The wages of sin is death" — it is a great truth, but it is not the end of our text. The wages of sin is death — that is the law. But the Bible contains more than the law; it contains also the gospel. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The free gift is contrasted with wages. Yet men persist in dragging it down to the wage level; they persist in trying to make the gift of God a product of some law. They persist in regarding salvation as proceeding by some natural process from faith or from some other quality of men. They regard Christianity as founded upon permanent principles of religion instead of being founded upon an unexpected piece of news. When will the vain effort be abandoned? Salvation is nothing, or it is a free gift; it is not a principle that has been discovered but an event that has happened.

The trouble is that we are unwilling to take God at His word. We persist in endeavoring to save ourselves. If we have learned to any degree that lesson of the law, if we have come to have a horror of sin, we persist in thinking that it depends upon us to get rid of it. We try to make use of our own moral resources in this struggle, and we fall yet deeper and deeper into the mire. When shall we take God at His

word? When shall we simply accept, in faith, the gift of salvation which He has offered?

It is certainly worth accepting. It consists in "eternal life." We need not now ask in detail what that means. But certainly it is as glorious as the "death" with which it is contrasted is terrible. It is certainly happiness as contrasted with woe, but it is far more than happiness. It involves service, and it involves the presence of God.

The free gift of God is an absolutely unaccountable event in the life of every man who accepts it. It is not the natural working out of a principle, but it is a thing that happens. But that happening in the soul is the result of a happening in the sphere of external history. The free gift of God is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord*. There we have the central characteristic of our religion; the central characteristic of Christianity is that it is not founded merely upon what always was true but primarily upon something that happened — something that took place near Jerusalem at a definite time in the world's history. In other words, it is founded not merely upon permanent truths of religion, but upon a "gospel," a piece of news.

The Christian preacher, be he ever so humble, is entrusted with that gospel. We could not hope to be listened to if we had merely our own thoughts; there are so many others in the world wiser and more learned than we. But in a time of peril in a beleaguered city the humblest of day-laborers is more worth listening to than the greatest of orators, if he has news. So it is with the Christian preacher in this deadly peril of the soul. The wages of sin is death — that is the law. But at the decisive point Christ has taken the wages upon Himself — that is the gospel. Inexorable is the moral law of God. But God's mercy has used, and triumphed over, His law. We deserved eternal death; but Christ died instead of us on the cross. Shall we accept the gift? The result will be a fresh start in God's favor and then a winning battle against sin. "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

* These essays are extracted from Dr. Machen's books from *The Christian View of Man* (1937) and *God Transcendent* (1949).

The Witness of Paul to Christ

Paul an Apostle, not from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead, and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia..." (Gal. 1: 1-2, literal translation)

Human Merit vs. the Grace of God

The enemy against which Paul is fighting in the Epistle can be reconstructed fairly well from the Epistle itself. Paul was fighting against the doctrine that a man can earn a part, at least, of his salvation by his own obedience to God's law; he was fighting against the doctrine that a man is justified not by faith alone, but by faith and works.

That doctrine was being propagated by certain teachers who had come into the Galatian churches from the outside. These teachers were men of Jewish race; and since they sought to induce Gentile people to "Judaize" - that is, to adopt the Jewish manner of life - they are commonly called "Judaizers."

The Judaizers agreed with Paul about many things: they agreed in holding that Jesus was the Messiah; they seemed to have no quarrel whatever with Paul's lofty doctrine of the deity of Christ; they believed in the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Moreover, they even held, no doubt, that a man must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if he is to be saved.

But their error lay in holding not only that a man must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if he is to be saved, but that he must also do something else namely, keep at least a part of the law of God. Salvation according to those Judaizers, in other words, is attained

partly by the grace of God and partly by the merit of man.

The Modern Judaizers

The particular form of merit which they induced men to seek was the merit of keeping the law of Moses, particularly the ceremonial law. At first sight, that fact might seem to destroy the usefulness of the Epistle for the present day; for we of today are in no danger of desiring to keep Jewish fasts and feasts. But a little consideration will show that that is not at all the case. The really essential thing about the Judaizers' contention was not found in those particular "works of the law" that they urged upon the Galatians as being one of the grounds of salvation, but in the fact that they urged any works in this sense at all. The really serious error into which they fell was not that they carried the ceremonial law over into the new dispensation whither God did not intend it to be carried, but that they preached a religion of human merit as over against a religion of divine grace.

So the error of the Judaizers is a very modern error indeed, as well as a very ancient error. It is found in the modern Church wherever men seek salvation by "surrender" instead of by faith, or by their own character instead of by the imputed righteousness of Christ, or by "making Christ master in the life" instead of by trusting in His redeeming blood. In particular, it is found wherever men say "the real essentials" of Christianity are love, justice, mercy and other virtues, as contrasted with the great doctrines of God's Word. These are all just different ways of exalting the merit of man over against the Cross of Christ, they are all of them attacks upon the very heart and core of the Christian religion. And against all of them the mighty polemic of this Epistle to the Galatians is turned.

The Authority of Paul

But it is time to return to our word "not" in the first verse of the Epistle. We have seen that that word is typical of the whole Epistle, since this letter is a polemic from beginning to end. But the

particular reference of the word in this verse is not directly to the false gospel of the Judaizers, but to their personal attack upon Paul. The Judaizers had not been able to gain an entrance for their false teaching so long as the authority of the great Apostle remained beyond dispute. So they had proceeded to undermine that authority as best they could-, they had said that Paul was at best an apostle of the second rank - that he had not been with Jesus in Galilee as had Peter and the others of the original Twelve, and that consequently whatever authority he possessed had come to him only through them.

It is against this attack that Paul utters the "not" in this first verse; in this verse he defends his apostolic authority, not his gospel. But of course the defense of his apostolic authority was altogether for the sake of his gospel-, he is not interested in his apostolic prerogatives for their own sake, but only for the sake of the message which those prerogatives had been given him to proclaim. Hence the "not" of this verse is a very weighty word indeed; it involves, indirectly at least, the whole mighty conflict between pride in human goodness and the allsufficiency of the Cross of Christ.

With this understanding, let us see how Paul defends his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He is "an apostle," he says, "not from men nor through a man."

When he says that he is not an apostle from men, he denies that the source of his apostleship was found in men. So far, perhaps, even the Judaizers may have agreed with him, they may perhaps have admitted that ultimately his authority to preach came from Christ.

But the real point of his defense comes in the following words. "My apostleship not only did not come from men," he says - so much perhaps even his opponents admitted - "but it did not come even through a man." There is where the dispute arose. The Judaizers said that if Paul had any authority at all it came through those who had been apostles before him, but Paul says that it came to him directly

from Christ without any human intermediary at all: not only was the source of his apostleship divine, but also the channel through which it came to him; the Lord Jesus Christ did not use any intermediary to give him his commission as an apostle, but appeared to him directly on the road to Damascus.

Paul's Commission and Ours

Thus in the words, "nor through a man," Paul refers to a prerogative that differentiates him sharply from ordinary Christians.

Every humble Christian can in a certain sense go with Paul in the former of the two phrases that we have just discussed. Every humble Christian can say: "My commission comes to me not from men but from Christ." Of course, the ordinary Christian cannot say, as Paul could say, that his commission is an apostolic commission; for by the term "apostle" is designated a high function that has not been continued in the Church. Nevertheless, even the very humblest Christian can say that he has a commission which has come to him not from men but from God. That is true of a preacher, and it is just as true of the sexton who sweeps out the church and of the treasurer who takes care of the funds.

But we ordinary Christians, whether preachers or sextons or treasurers, cannot go with Paul in the second of the two phrases; we cannot say that our commission did not come to us through a man; for as a matter of fact it did come to us through some true evangelist who preached the gospel to us, or through some faithful pastor or teacher, or through some godly parent. Christ gave us our commission, but He used human emissaries in doing so; we are not eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. But in the case of Paul there was no such human emissary; to him Christ appeared on the road to Damascus and gave him directly his high commission.

The reference to Paul's conversion is plain in the words that immediately follow those with which we have just dealt. I am an

apostle," says Paul, "not from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead." The reference to the resurrection of Christ is not, at this point, a mere general reference to something that was fundamental in the Christian faith, but Paul is thinking specifically of the fact that his apostleship came to him from the risen Christ. I am an apostle," he says, "through Jesus Christ - yes, and through God the Father, since God the Father raised Christ from the dead and is concerned in all that the risen Christ does, including that call to me that came on the Damascus road."

The Contrast Between Christ and Man

So far we have explained the words that Paul uses in this verse. But it is to be wondered whether all readers are aware of the stupendous implications of those words. When Paul says, "Not through a man but through Jesus Christ," has it struck the reader that that is a very strange contrast; does it seem at all strange that the Apostle should set Jesus Christ sharply over against humanity in this way, as though He belonged in an entirely different category, as though of a man" and "Jesus Christ" were two entirely distinct things?

If it does not seem strange to us, that is simply because our Christian conviction about Jesus Christ has become so ingrained in us that the wonder of it has been lost from view. Thank God that it does not seem strange to us! But to most modern historians, both within and without the Church, it seems very strange indeed.

A Contemporary Witness

Who was this "Jesus Christ" who is separated thus by Paul so sharply from ordinary humanity and is placed on the side of God? Who was this person who is treated thus as a stupendous heavenly being to whom divine honors were to be paid, along with the honors paid to the eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth? Was He a mythical

personage of remote antiquity, around whom the legends of the ages would have been free to grow?

Not at all. He was a Jewish teacher, a contemporary of Paul, who lived in Palestine and had died a shameful death only a few years before this Epistle was written. He was a person one of whose brothers Paul had actually met (Gal. 1: 19). The genuineness of the Epistle to the Galatians is admitted by all serious historians, whether friends or foes of Christianity. The Epistle was admittedly written, then, by Paul; and the date of it can be fixed within rather narrow limits. It was written not later than about A. D. 55, only some twenty-five years after the death of this Jesus of whom Paul speaks. When, therefore, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as in such contrast with humanity and as standing so clearly on the side of God, he is not speaking about a personage of the dim and distant past, but about one of his own contemporaries. How shall so strange a phenomenon be explained?

The real Christian will have no difficulty in explaining it. "Paul speaks of Jesus as God," he will say, "because as a matter of fact Jesus was God, because He was the eternal Son of God who came voluntarily to this earth for our salvation, worked redemption for mankind, rose from the dead, and is now seated on the throne of all being to be worshiped and glorified by all who are His."

But to most modern historians, who regard Jesus as a mere man, the first verse of Galatians, together with all the rest that Paul says, presents a very strange problem indeed. How did a mere man, a Jewish teacher, come to be regarded thus as God, not by later generations but by one of His own contemporaries?

One God, Yet Christ is God

The thing would not be quite so strange if Paul, who attests this strange view of Jesus, had been a man of polytheistic training and belief. Had he

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believed in many gods, the adding of one more would not be quite so difficult to understand. But as a matter of fact Paul was a monotheist of the monotheists. Pharisaic Judaism of the first century was nothing if not monotheistic; it held with heart and soul to the doctrine that there is but one God. Paul shared that doctrine, both before and after his conversion, to the full. How could such a monotheist, such a believer in the awful separateness between the one God and the world that He had made, possibly come to exalt a mere man, Jesus, to the godhead and pay to him the reverence which belongs only to God?

That Paul does just that is attested not only by our verse but by his Epistles from beginning to end. He does, indeed, in certain passages, speak of Jesus as a man. In Rom. 5:15, for example, he contrasts the one man, Adam, with "the one man, Jesus Christ"; and a similar contrast between "the first man" and "the second man" occurs in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. So also in 1 Tim. 1-5, Paul speaks of the "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." But in these passages the careful reader receives somewhat the impression that the Apostle regards it as a strange thing, worthy of special note, that Jesus Christ should be a man as well as something other than man. At any rate, these passages do not in the slightest invalidate the fact that in the Epistles as a whole, as in our verse in Galatians, Jesus Christ is separated sharply from ordinary humanity and placed clearly on the side of God. Everywhere Paul stands in a truly religious relationship to Christ. Christ is for him not primarily an example for faith but the object of faith; his religion does not consist merely in having faith in God like the faith which Jesus had in God, but in having faith in Jesus.

That fact is enough to give the thoughtful historian pause. Who was this Jesus who could be exalted to the throne of God not by later

generations but by a man of His own generation, only a few years after His shameful death?

But we have not yet mentioned what is perhaps the most surprising thing of all. The surprising thing is not merely that Paul holds this stupendous view of Jesus, but that he does not argue about it, that he seems to be under no necessity whatever of defending it against attack within the Church. Even the Judaizers, so far as we can see, had no quarrel with Paul's lofty view of Christ. Paul said: "I am an apostle not through a man but through Jesus Christ"; the Judaizers said: "No, you are an apostle not through Jesus Christ but through a man"; but it never seems to have occurred to anyone in the Church to say: "You are an apostle through Jesus Christ and therefore you are an apostle through a man, since Jesus Christ was a mere man."

Certainly, at any rate, whatever may have been the attitude of the Judaizers, it is perfectly clear that even if they did differ from Paul about the person of Christ, the original apostles - Peter and others of the Twelve - gave them no slightest color of support on this point. The Judaizers may possibly have appealed to those original apostles on another point - namely, the attitude that was to be assumed in the Church toward the Mosaic law. Even that appeal - supposing they did make it, which is by no means perfectly certain - was, as we shall see, an utterly unjustified appeal. But with regard to the person of Christ, at any rate, they did not venture to make any appeal to the original apostles at all.

Here, then, we have the truly amazing thing. Not only does Paul hold to his stupendous view of the person of Christ, but he assumes that everyone agrees with him about it; in particular, he assumes that Peter agrees with him, and others of the intimate friends of Jesus. Those men had seen Jesus subjected to all the petty limitations of human life, as He had walked with them on the Galilean hills; and yet they agreed perfectly with the lofty view, which Paul presents in his Epistles, of Jesus as the Son of the living God.

That fact presents to the modern naturalistic historians, who reject the picture of Jesus which the New Testament contains, a serious problem. According to those historians, Jesus was a mere man, and His first disciples regarded Him at first as such. That, then, according to these historians, was the original, the "primitive," view of Jesus; Jesus presented Himself and was first regarded as a mere prophet of righteousness, or at most as a purely human Messiah. Yet the plain fact is - a fact which no historian can deny - that if that was the original view of Jesus it gave place to a totally different view not in some later generation but, as attested by the Epistles of Paul, in the very first Christian generation, when the intimate friends of Jesus were leaders in the Church.

The rapidity of the transition is very strange. But still more strange is the utter absence of any conflict at the time when the change was produced. The absence of conflict, the absence of any throes of transition, is eloquently attested by the Epistles of Paul. What we are asked by naturalistic historians to believe is that the true, the original, the "primitive," view of Jesus as just a great religious teacher, proclaiming the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, suddenly gave place, just after His shameful death, to a totally different, a totally incongruous, view, and that that mighty transition was effected without the slightest trace of any conflict in the Church!

That is really too much to believe. No, the matter-of-course way in which Jesus, as the Epistles of Paul attest, was regarded as a supernatural person in the earliest apostolic Church shows that there was something in His person from the very beginning that justified such a view.

Such is the witness of Paul to Christ. It is not dependent upon details in the Epistles, but is involved, rather, in the total phenomenon which the Epistles present. It has not been invalidated in the slightest by modern research.

The Resurrection of Christ

Some nineteen hundred years ago, in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, there lived one who, even to a casual observer might have seemed to be a remarkable man.

Up to the age of about thirty years. He lived an obscure life in the midst of an humble family. Then He began a remarkable course of ethical and religious teaching, accompanied by a ministry of healing.

At first He was very popular. Great crowds followed Him gladly, and the intellectual men of His people were interested in what He had to say.

But His teaching presented revolutionary features, and He did not satisfy the political expectations of the populace.

And so, before long, after some three years, He fell a victim to the jealousy of the leaders of His people and the cowardice of the Roman governor. He died the death of the criminals of those days, on the cross.

At His death, the disciples whom He had gathered about Him were utterly discouraged. In Him had centred all their loftiest hopes. And now that He was taken from them by a shameful death, their hopes were shattered.

They fled from Him in cowardly fear in the hour of His need, and an observer would have said that never was a movement more hopelessly dead.

These followers of Jesus had evidently been far inferior to Him in spiritual discernment and in courage. They had not been able, even when He was with them, to understand the lofty teachings of their leader. How, then, could they understand Him when He was gone?

The movement depended, one might have said, too much on one extraordinary man, and when He was taken away, then surely the movement was dead.

But then the astonishing thing happened. The plain fact, which no one doubts, is that those same weak, discouraged men who had just fled in the hour of their Master's need, and who were altogether hopeless on account of His death, suddenly began in Jerusalem, a very few days or weeks after their Master's death, what is certainly the most remarkable spiritual movement that the world has ever seen.

At first, the movement thus begun remained within the limits of the Jewish people. But soon it broke the bands of Judaism, and began to be planted in all the great cities of the Roman world.

Within three hundred years, the Empire itself had been conquered by the Christian faith.

But this movement was begun in those few decisive days after the death of Jesus. What was it which caused the striking change in those weak, discouraged disciples, which made them the spiritual conquerors of the world?

Historians of today are perfectly agreed that something must have happened, something decisive, after the death of Jesus, in order to begin this new movement.

It was not just an ordinary continuation of the influence of Jesus' teaching. The modern historians are at least agreed that some striking change took place after the death of Jesus, and before the beginning of the Christian missionary movement.

They are agreed, moreover, to some extent even about the question what the change was. They are agreed in holding that this new Christian movement was begun by the belief of the disciples in the resurrection of Jesus.

They are agreed in holding that in the minds and hearts of the disciples there was formed the conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Of course, that was not formerly admitted by every one. It used to be maintained, in the early days of modern scepticism, that the disciples of Jesus only pretended that He had risen from the dead.

Such hypotheses have long ago been placed in the limbo of discarded theories. The disciples of Jesus, the intimate friends of Jesus, it is now admitted, in a short time after His death came to believe honestly that He had risen from the dead.

The only difference of opinion comes when we ask what in turn produced this belief.

The New Testament answer to this question is perfectly plain. According to the New Testament, the disciples believed in the resurrection of Jesus because Jesus really, after His death, came out of the tomb, appeared to them, and held extended intercourse with them, so that their belief in the resurrection was simply based on fact.

Of course, this explanation is rejected by those modern men who are unwilling to recognise in the origin of Christianity an entrance of the creative power of God, in distinction from the laws which operate in nature.

And so another explanation has been proposed. It is that the belief of the disciples in the resurrection was produced by certain hallucinations in which they thought they saw Jesus, their teacher, and heard perhaps words of His ringing in their ears.

An hallucination is a phenomenon well known to students of pathology. In an hallucination, the optic nerve is affected, and the patient therefore does actually in one sense 'see' someone or

something. But this effect is produced, not by an external object, but by the pathological condition of the subject himself.

That is the view of the 'appearances' of the risen Christ which is held today by those who reject the miraculous in connection with the origin of Christianity.

It is also held, it is true, that what was decisive in the resurrection faith of the early disciples was the impression which they had received of Jesus' person.

Without that impression, it is supposed, they could never have had those pathological experiences which they called appearances of the risen Christ, so that those pathological experiences were merely the necessary form in which the continued impression of Jesus' person made itself felt in the life of the first disciples.

But after all, on this hypothesis, the resurrection faith of the disciples, upon which the Christian church is founded, was really based upon a pathological experience in which these men thought they saw Jesus, and heard perhaps a word or two of His ringing in their ears, when there was nothing in the external world to make them think that they were in His presence.

Formerly, it is true, there were other explanations. It used to be held sometimes that the disciples came to believe in the resurrection because Jesus was not really dead. When He was placed in the cool air of the tomb, He revived and came out, and the disciples thought that He had arisen.

A noteworthy scholar of today is said to have revived this theory, because he is dissatisfied with the prevailing idea. But the great majority of scholars today believe that this faith of the disciples was caused by hallucinations, which are called 'appearances' of the risen Lord.

But let us examine the New Testament account of the resurrection of Jesus, and of the related events. This account is contained particularly in six of the New Testament books.

Of course, all the New Testament books presuppose the resurrection, and witness is borne to it in all of them. But there are six of these books, above all others, which provide the details of the Resurrection.

These are the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

According to these six books, if their witness be put together, Jesus died on a Friday. His body was not allowed to remain and decompose on the cross, but was buried that same evening.

He was placed in a grave chosen by a leader of the people, a member of the Sanhedrin. His burial was witnessed by certain women.

He remained in the grave during the Sabbath. But on the morning of the first day of the week, He arose.

Certain women who came to the grave found it empty, and saw angels who told them He had risen from the dead. He appeared to these women.

The grave was visited that same morning by Peter and the beloved disciple.

In the course of the day Jesus appeared to Peter. In the evening He appeared to two unnamed disciples who were walking to Emmaus-, and apparently later on the same evening He appeared to all the apostles save Thomas.

Then a week later He appeared again to the apostles, Thomas being present.

Then He appeared in Galilee, as we learn from Matthew 28.

Paul is probably mentioning this same appearance when he says that 'He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once' (1 Corinthians 15:6).

It was probably then, also, that He appeared to the seven disciples on the sea of Galilee (John 21).

Then He appeared in Jerusalem, and ascended from the Mount of Olives.

Some time in the course of the appearances there was one to James, His own brother (I Corinthians 15:7). Later on He appeared to Paul.

Such is the New Testament account of the resurrection appearances of our Lord.

There are two features of this account to which great prominence has been given in recent discussions. These are, (1) the place, and (2) the character, of the appearances of Jesus.

According to the New Testament, the place was first Jerusalem, then Galilee, and then Jerusalem again. The appearances took place, not only in Galilee and in Jerusalem, but both in Jerusalem and in Galilee; and the first appearances took place in Jerusalem.

So much for the place of the appearances. As for the character of the appearances, they were, according to the New Testament, of a plain, physical kind.

In the New Testament Jesus is represented even as holding table companionship with His disciples after His resurrection, and as engaging in rather extended intercourse with them.

There is, it is true, something mysterious about this intercourse. It is not just a continuation of the old Galilean relationship. Jesus' body is

independent of conditions of time and space in a way that appeared only rarely in His previous ministry. There was a change. But there is also continuity.

The body of Jesus came out of the tomb and appeared to the disciples in such a way that a man could put his finger in the mark of the nails in His hands.

In two particulars, this account is contradicted by modern scholars.

In the first place, the character of the appearances, is supposed to have been different. The disciples of Jesus, it is supposed, saw Him just for a moment in glory, and perhaps heard a word or two ringing in their ears.

Of course this was not, according to the modern naturalistic historians, a real seeing and hearing, but an hallucination.

But the point is, that those who regard these appearances as hallucinations are not able to take the New Testament account and prove from it that these appearances were hallucinations and were not founded upon the real presence of the body of Jesus, but are obliged first to reduce the New Testament account to manageable proportions.

The reason is that there are limits to an hallucination. No sane men could think that they had had extended companionship with one who was not really present, or could believe that they had walked with Him and talked with Him after His death.

You cannot enter upon the modern explanation of these happenings as genuine experiences but at the same time mere visions, until you modify the account that is given of the appearance themselves.

And if this modified account be true, there must be a great deal in the New Testament account that is legendary. You must admit this, if you are going to explain these appearances as hallucinations.

So there is a difference concerning the nature of the appearances, according to modern reconstruction, as over against the New Testament.

And there is a difference also concerning the place of the appearances.

According to the customary modern view of naturalistic historians, the first appearances took place in Galilee, and not in Jerusalem.

But what is the importance of that difference of opinion? It looks at first sight as though it were a mere matter of detail. But in reality it is profoundly important for the whole modern reconstruction.

If you are going to explain these experiences as hallucinations, the necessary psychological conditions must have prevailed in order for the disciples to have had the experiences. Therefore modern historians are careful to allow time for the profound discouragement of the disciples to be gotten rid of ; for the disciples to return to Galilee, and to live again in the scenes where they had lived with Jesus; to muse upon Him, and be ready to have these visions of Him. Time must be permitted, and the place must be favourable.

And then there is another important element.

We come here to one of the most important things of all; the empty tomb.

If the first appearances were in Jerusalem, why did not the disciples or the enemies investigate the tomb, and refute this belief of finding the body of Jesus still there?

This argument is thought to be refuted by the Galilean hypothesis regarding the first appearances. If the first appearances took place not till weeks afterward and in Galilee, this mystery is thought to be explained. There would be no opportunity to investigate the tomb

until it was too late; and so the matter could have been allowed to pass, and the resurrection faith could have arisen.

Of course, this explanation is not quite satisfactory, because one cannot see how the disciples would not have been stimulated to investigate the tomb, whenever and wherever the appearances took place. We have not quite explained the empty tomb even by this Galilean hypothesis. But you can understand the insistence of the modern writers that the first appearances took place in Galilee.

So there is a difference between the modern historian and the New Testament account in the matters of the manner and of the place of these experiences.

Were they of a kind such that they could be explained as hallucinations or were they such that they could only be regarded as real appearances? Was the first appearance three days after Jesus' death, and near the tomb, or later on in Galilee?

Let us come now to the New Testament account. The first source that we should consider is the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. It is probably the earliest of the sources. But what is still more important the authorship and date of this particular source of information have been agreed upon even by the opponents of Christianity.

So this is not only a source of first-rate historical importance but it is a source of admitted importance. We have here a fixed starting-point in all controversy.

We must examine, then, this document with some care.

It was probably written, roughly speaking, about 55 A.D., about twenty-five years after the death of Jesus, about as long after the death of Jesus as 1924 is after the Spanish American War (1898). That is not such a very long period of time.

And of course, there is one vital element in the testimony here, which does not prevail in the case of the Spanish War. Most people have forgotten many details of the Spanish-American War, because they have not had them continuously in mind.

But it would not be so in the case now under consideration. The resurrection of Jesus was the thing which formed the basis of all the thought of the early Christians, and so the memory of it when it was twenty-five years past was very much fresher than the memory of an event like the Spanish-American War of twenty-five years ago, which has passed out of our consciousness.

Let us turn, then, to I Corinthians 15, and read the first verses. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received."

"First of all," or "among the first things," may mean first in point of time, or first in point of importance. At any rate, this was a part of Paul's fundamental preaching in Corinth, in about the year 51 or 52.

So we get back a little farther than the time when the Epistle was written. But these things were evidently also first and fundamental in Paul's preaching in other places, so that you are taken back an indefinite period in the ministry of Paul for this evidence.

But then you are taken back by the next words farther still — "that which I also received."

There is a common agreement as to the source from which Paul "received" this information; it is pretty generally agreed that he received it from the Jerusalem church.

According to the Epistle to the Galatians, he had been in conference with Peter and James only three years after his conversion. That was

the time for Paul to receive this tradition.

Historians are usually willing to admit that this information is nothing less than the account which the primitive Church, including Peter and James, gave of the events which lay at the foundation of the Church.

So you have here, even in the admission of modern men, a piece of historical information of priceless value.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Why does Paul mention the burial of Jesus? The impression which the mention of the burial produces upon every reader who comes to it for the first time is that Paul means to say that the body of Jesus was laid in the tomb. The burial, in other words, implies the empty tomb.

And yet a great many modern historians say that Paul "knows nothing" about the empty tomb! Surely such an assertion is quite false.

Paul does not indeed mention the empty tomb in so many words. He does not give a detailed description of it here. But that does not mean that he knew nothing about it.

Those to whom he was writing believed in it already, and he is simply reviewing a previous argument in order to draw inferences from it with regard to the resurrection of Christians.

To say that Paul knows nothing about the empty tomb ignores the fact that the mention of the burial is quite meaningless unless Paul had in mind the empty tomb. I do not see how any one can get any other impression.

Moreover is not that what resurrection means, after all? Modern historians say that Paul was interested simply in the continued life of Jesus in a new body which had nothing to do with the body which lay in the tomb. That is rather strange in this connection. Paul is arguing, in this passage, not against men who denied the immortality of the soul, but against men who held the Greek view of the immortality of the soul without the body.

The view that they were holding, would logically make of the resurrection of Jesus just the simple continuance of His personal life. There is no point at all, then, in what Paul says against them unless he is referring to the resurrection from the tomb. Unless he is referring to this, he is playing into the hands of his opponents.

But many men nowadays have such a strangely unhistorical notion of what "resurrection" meant to the early disciples. They talk as though the resurrection faith meant that those disciples simply believed that Jesus continued to exist after His crucifixion.

This is absurd. Those men believed in the continued existence after death of every man. There is not the slightest doubt about that. They were thoroughly imbued with this belief. They were not Sadducees. Even in those first three days after Jesus' crucifixion, they still believed that He was alive. If that is all that resurrection meant, there was nothing in it to cause joy.

Conviction of the continued life of Jesus would not make Him any different from other men. But what changed sadness into joy and brought about the founding of the Church was the substitution, for a belief in the continued existence of Jesus, of a belief in the emergence of His body from the tomb. And Paul's words imply that as clear as day.

"And that he rose again the third day." Of all the important things that Paul says, this is perhaps the most important, from the point of view of modern discussion. There are few words in the New

Testament that are more disconcerting to modern naturalistic historians than the words, "on the third day."

We have just observed what the modern reconstruction is. The disciples went back to Galilee, it is supposed, and there, some time after the crucifixion, they came to believe that Jesus was alive.

But if the first appearance took place on the third day, this explanation is not possible. The modern reconstruction disappears altogether if you believe that the first appearances were on the third day. If Paul's words are to be taken at their face value, the whole elaborate psychological reconstruction of the conditions in the disciples' minds, leading up to the hallucinations in Galilee, disappears.

Many men, it is true, have an answer ready. "Let us not," they say in effect, "go beyond what Paul actually says! Paul does not say that the first appearance occurred on the third day, but only that Christ rose on that day. He might have risen some time before He first appeared to them; the resurrection might have occurred on the third day and yet the first appearance might have occurred some weeks after, in Galilee."

But why, if nothing in particular happened on the third day, and if the first appearance occurred some weeks after, did the disciples hit upon just the third day as the day of the supposed resurrection? Surely it was very strange for them to suppose that Jesus had really risen a considerable time before He appeared to them and had left them all that time in their despair. So strange a supposition on the part of the disciples surely requires an explanation.

Why was it, if nothing happened on the third day, that the disciples ever came to suppose that the resurrection occurred on that day and not on some other day?

One proposed explanation is that the third day was hit upon as the day of the supposed resurrection because Scripture was thought to

require it. Paul says, it will be remembered, that Jesus rose the third day according to the Scriptures.

But where will you find in the Old Testament Scriptures any clear reference to the third day, as the day of the resurrection of Christ?

No doubt there is the "sign of Jonah." and there is also Hosea 6-2. We are certainly not denying that these passages (at least the former) are true prophecies of the resurrection on the third day.

But could they ever have been understood before the fulfilment had come? That is more than doubtful.

Indeed it is not even quite clear whether Paul means the words "according to the Scriptures" to refer to the third day at all, and not merely to the central fact of the resurrection itself. At any rate the Scripture passages never could have suggested the third day to the disciples unless something had actually happened on that day to indicate that Christ had then risen.

But had not Jesus Himself predicted that He would rise on the third day, and might not this prediction have caused the disciples to suppose that He had risen on that day even if the first appearance did not occur till long afterwards?

This is an obvious way out of the difficulty, but it is effectually closed to the modern naturalistic historian. For it would require us to suppose that Jesus' predictions of His resurrection, recorded in the Gospels, are historical. But the naturalistic historians are usually concerned with few things more than with the denial of the authenticity of these predictions.

According to the ordinary "liberal" view, Jesus certainly could not have predicted that He would rise from the dead in the manner recorded in the Gospels.

So for the "liberal" historians this explanation of "the third day" becomes impossible. The explanation would perhaps explain "the third day" in the belief of the disciples, but it would also destroy the whole account of the "liberal Jesus."

Accordingly it becomes necessary to seek explanations farther afield. Some have appealed to a supposed belief in antiquity to the effect that the soul of a dead person hovered around the body for three days and then departed. This belief, it is said, might have seemed to the disciples to make it necessary to put the supposed resurrection not later than the third day.

But how far did this belief prevail in Palestine in the first century? The question is perhaps not capable of satisfactory answer. Moreover, it is highly dangerous from the point of view of the modern naturalistic historians to appeal to this belief, since it would show that some interest was taken in the body of Jesus; and yet that is what these modern historians are most concerned to deny. For if interest was taken in the body, the old question arises again why the tomb was not investigated. And the whole vision hypothesis breaks down.

Since these explanations have proved unsatisfactory, some modern scholars have had recourse to a fourth explanation. There was in ancient times, they say, a pagan belief about a god who died and rose again. On the first day the worshiper of the god were to mourn, but on the third day they were to rejoice, because of the resurrection of the god.

So it is thought that the disciples may have been influenced by this pagan belief.

But surely this is a desperate expedient. It is only a very few students of the history of religions who would be quite so bold as to believe that in Palestine, in the time of Christ, there was any prevalence of this pagan belief with its dying and rising god. Indeed the

importance and clearness of this belief have been enormously exaggerated in recent works particularly as regards the rising of the god on the third day.

The truth is that the third day in the primitive account of the resurrection of Christ remains, and that there is no satisfactory means of explaining it away.

Indeed some naturalistic historians are actually coming back to the view that perhaps we cannot explain this third day away, and that perhaps something did happen on the third day to produce the faith of the disciples.

But if this conclusion be reached, then the whole psychological reconstruction disappears, and particularly the modern hypothesis about the place of the appearances. Something must have happened to produce the disciples' belief in the resurrection not far off in Galilee but near to the tomb in Jerusalem.

But if so, there would be no time for the elaborate psychological process which is supposed to have produced the visions, and there would be ample opportunity for the investigation of the tomb.

It is therefore a fact of enormous importance that it is just Paul in the passage where he is admittedly reproducing the tradition of the primitive Jerusalem Church, who mentions the third day.

Then, after mentioning the third day, Paul gives a detailed account which is not quite complete, of the resurrection appearances. He leaves out the account of the appearances to the women, because he is merely giving the official list of the appearances to the leaders in the Jerusalem church.

So much for the testimony of Paul. This testimony is sufficient of itself to refute the modern naturalistic reconstruction. But it is time to glance briefly at the testimony in the Gospels .

If you take the shortest Gospel, the Gospel according to Mark, you will find, first, that Mark gives an account of the burial, which is of great importance.

Modern historians cannot deny that Jesus was buried, because that is attested by the universally accepted source of information, I Corinthians 15. Mark is here confirmed by the Jerusalem tradition as preserved by Paul.

But the account of the burial in Mark is followed by the account of the empty tomb, and the two things are indissolubly connected. If one is historical, it is difficult to reject the other.

Modern naturalistic historians are in a divided condition about this matter of the empty tomb. Some admit that the tomb was empty. Others deny that it ever was. Some say what we have just outlined that the tomb was never investigated at all until it was too late, and that then the account of the empty tomb grew up as a legend in the Church.

But other historians are clear-sighted enough to see that you cannot get rid of the empty tomb in any such fashion.

But if the tomb was empty, why was it empty? The New Testament says that it was empty because the body of Jesus had been raised out of it. But if this be not the case, then why was the tomb empty?

Some say that the enemies of Jesus took the body away. If so, they have done the greatest possible service to the resurrection faith which they so much hated.

Others have said that the disciples stole the body away to make the people believe that Jesus was risen. But no one holds that view now.

Others have said that Joseph of Arimathea changed the place of burial. That is difficult to understand, because if such were the case,

why should Joseph of Arimathea have kept silence when the resurrection faith arose?

Other explanations, no doubt, have been proposed. But it cannot be said that these hypotheses have altogether satisfied even those historians who have proposed them. The empty tomb has never been successfully explained away.

We might go on to consider some of the other accounts, but I think we have pointed out some of the most important parts of the evidence. The resurrection was of a bodily kind, and appears in connection with the empty tomb.

It is quite a misrepresentation of the state of affairs when people talk about "interpreting" the New Testament in accordance with the modern view of natural law as operating in connection with the origin of Christianity. What is really being engaged in is not an interpretation of the New Testament but a complete contradiction of the New Testament at its central point.

In order to explain the resurrection faith of the disciples as caused by hallucinations, you must first pick and choose in the sources of information, and reconstruct a statement of the case for which you have no historical information. You must first reconstruct this account, different from that which is given in the only sources of information, before you can even begin to explain the appearances as hallucinations.

And even then you are really no better off. It is after all quite preposterous to explain the origin of the Christian Church as being due to pathological experiences of weak-minded men. So mighty a building was not founded upon so small a pin-point.

So the witness of the whole New Testament has not been put out of the way. It alone explains the origin of the Church, and the change of the disciples from weak men into the spiritual conquerors of the world.

Why is it, then, if the evidence be so strong, that so many modern men refuse to accept the New Testament testimony to the resurrection of Christ?

The answer is perfectly plain. The resurrection, if it be a fact, is a stupendous miracle and against the miraculous or the supernatural there is a tremendous opposition in the modern mind.

But is the opposition well grounded? It would perhaps be well-grounded if the direct evidence for the resurrection stood absolutely alone. If it were simply a question whether a man of the first century, otherwise unknown, really rose from the dead. There would in that case be a strong burden of proof against the belief in the resurrection.

But as a matter of fact the question is not whether any ordinary man rose from the dead, but whether Jesus rose from the dead.

We know something of Jesus from the Gospels, and as thus made known He is certainly different from all other men. A man who comes into contact with His tremendous personality will say to himself, "It is impossible that Jesus could ever have been holden [held] of death."

Thus when the extraordinary testimony to the resurrection faith which has been outlined above comes to us, we add to this our tremendous impression of Jesus' Person, gained from the reading of the Gospels, and we accept this strange belief which comes to us and fills us with joy, that the Redeemer really triumphed over death and the grave and sin.

And if He be living, we come to Him today. And thus finally we add to the direct historical evidence our own Christian experience. If He be a living Saviour, we come to Him for salvation today, and we add to the evidence from the New Testament documents an immediacy of conviction which delivers us from fear.

The Christian man should indeed never say, as men often say, "Because of my experience of Christ in my soul I am independent of the basic facts of Christianity; I am independent of the question whether Jesus rose from the grave or not."

But Christian experience, though it cannot make us Christians whether Jesus rose or not, still can add to the direct historical evidence a confirming witness that, as a matter of fact, Christ did really rise from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

The "witness of the Spirit" is not, as it is often quite falsely represented today, independent of the Bible; on the contrary it is a witness by the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Bible, to the fact that the Bible is true.

Constraining Love

J. Gresham Machen

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that 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)

In these great verses Paul speaks of love as a constraining force. Love, he says, hems us in. There are certain things which love prevents us from doing.

Earlier in the passage, he has spoken of another restraining force—namely, fear. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord," he says, "we

persuade men." Since we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, it behooves us to stand in fear of him; and there are many things which, because we shall stand before his judgment seat, we are afraid to do.

That motive of fear is used in many places in the Bible. It is used in the Old Testament. It is used in the New Testament. It is used with particular insistence in the teaching of Jesus. I think it is one of the strangest of modern aberrations when men say that it is a degrading and sub-Christian thing to tell man to stand in fear of God. Many passages in the Bible might be summarized by the words: "The fear of God constraineth us."

"The Love of Christ Constraineth Us"

In our text, however, it is something other than fear that is the thing that is said to constrain us or hem us in. It is love. "The love of Christ," Paul says, "constraineth us."

What then is here meant by the love of Christ? Our first impulse, perhaps, might be to say that it is our love of Christ, the love which we bear to Christ, the love in our hearts for Christ our Savior. The comparison with verse 11 might perhaps suggest that view. As there the fear which is in our hearts when we think of our standing before the judgment seat of Christ constrains us from doing things that we might otherwise do, so here the love which is in our hearts when we think of what Christ has done for us might seem to be the second constraining force of which Paul speaks.

Now if that is the right interpretation, the verse tells us something that is certainly true. It is certainly true, and eminently in accordance with Paul's teaching elsewhere, that the love of Christ which we have in our hearts restrains us from doing things which otherwise we might do. We refrain from doing those things not only because we are afraid to do them, but also because we love Christ too much to do them. Ah, how powerful a restraining force in the Christian's life is

the love he bears to Christ, his Savior! That love in the Christian's heart is a restraining force even more powerful than any fear.

As a matter of fact, however, that is not Paul's meaning here. The love of Christ which he here says constrains us is not our love for Christ, but it is Christ's love for us. We are restrained from doing evil things, Paul says, by that unspeakable love which Christ manifested when he died for us on the cross.

"Because We Have Thus Judged"

Well, then, if it is Christ's love for us which constrains us, according to this verse, how does Christ's love for us produce that constraining effect in our lives?

The following words give the answer. "The love of Christ constraineth us," Paul says, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." I do not think that the translation "because we thus judge," though it appears in both the Authorized and in the Revised Version, is strictly accurate. It ought rather to be "because we have thus judged." The great conviction that Christ died for all and that therefore all died is not formed again and again in Paul's mind as though it were a new conviction, but it has already been formed. It is one of the basic convictions underlying all Paul's Christian life. "The love of Christ constraineth us," Paul says, "because we formed the conviction long ago that Christ died for all and that therefore all died." Those who have that conviction, as Paul had, already formed in their minds are restrained ever after from doing certain things which otherwise they might do. Since they are convinced that Christ died for them, they cannot thereafter do the things that are displeasing to him—to him who by his death for them showed that he loved them with such a wonderful love. Once they are convinced that Christ's death was a death for them, their gratitude to the one who died hems them in, restrains them from evil, more effectively than they could have been restrained by prison bars.

That much, I think, is certainly in this passage. We have here a true scriptural basis for the great hymn of Isaac Watts:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

The overpowering love of Christ for us, manifested when he died for us on the cross, calls forth our all in response. Nothing can be so precious to us that we should not give it up to him who gave himself there for us on the tree.

But although that is no doubt taught or implied in the passage, a great deal more is taught. There are great depths of additional meaning in the passage, and we must try to explore those depths just a little further before we sit at the table of the Lord.

"Therefore All Died"

"The love of Christ constraineth us," Paul says, "because we have thus judged, that one died for all, therefore all died." Those are rather strange words, when you come to think of it—"One died for all, therefore all died." How does the second of these two propositions follow from the former? Why should we draw from the fact that one died for all the inference that therefore all died? A very different inference might conceivably be drawn. It might be said with more apparent show of reason: "One died for all, therefore all did not die; one died for all, therefore all lived." When one man dies for others, the usual purpose of his dying is that those others may not have to die; he dies that those others may live.

Yet here we have it said that one died for all and then all died. Apparently the death of Christ did no good to those for whom he died. Apparently he did not succeed in rescuing them from death. Apparently they had to die after all.

It might look at least as though Paul ought to have recognized the contradiction. It might look as though he ought to have said: "One died for all, nevertheless all died." But he does not recognize the contradiction at all. He puts the death of Christ not as something that might conceivably prevent the death of others, but as something that actually brought with it the death of others. He says not: "One died for all, nevertheless all died," but: "One died for all, therefore all died."

The thing might seem strange to the unbeliever; it might seem strange to the man who should come to this passage without having read the rest of the Bible and in particular the rest of the Epistles of Paul. But it does not seem at all strange to the Christian; it does not seem at all strange to the man who reads it in connection with the great central teaching of the Word of God regarding the Cross of Christ.

Christ died for all, therefore all died—of course, that is so because Christ was the representative of all when he died. The death that he died on the cross was in itself the death of all. Since Christ was the representative of all, therefore all may have been said to have died there on the cross outside the walls of Jerusalem when Christ died.

We may imagine a dialogue between the law of God and a sinful man.

"Man," says the law of God, "have you obeyed my commands?"

"No," says the sinner, "I have transgressed them in thought, word, and deed."

"Well, then, sinner," says the law, "have you paid the penalty which I have pronounced upon those who have disobeyed? Have you died in the sense that I meant when I said, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die'?"

"Yes," says the sinner, "I have died. That penalty that you pronounced upon my sin has been paid."

"What do you mean," says the law, "by saying that you have died? You do not look as though you had died. You look as though you were very much alive."

"Yes," says the sinner, "I have died. I died there on the cross outside the walls of Jerusalem; for Jesus died there as my representative and my substitute. I died there, so far as the penalty of the law was concerned."

"You say Christ is your representative and substitute," says the law. "Then I have indeed no further claim of penalty against you. The curse which I pronounced against your sin has indeed been fulfilled. My threatenings are very terrible, but I have nothing to say against those for whom Christ died."

That, my friends, is what Paul means by the tremendous "therefore," when he says: "One died for all, therefore all died." On that "therefore" hangs all our hope for time and for eternity.

For Whom Did Christ Die?

But what does he mean by "all"? "One died for all," he says, "therefore all died." He seems to lay considerable emphasis upon that word "all." What does he mean by it?

Well, I suppose our Christian brethren in other churches, our Christian brethren who are opposed to the Reformed faith, might be tempted to make that word "all" mean, in this passage, "all men"; they might be tempted to make it refer to the whole human race. They might be tempted to interpret the words "Christ died for all" to mean "Christ died for all men everywhere, whether Christian or not."

But if they are tempted to make it mean that, they ought to resist the temptation, since this passage is really a very dangerous passage for them to lay stress on in support of their view.

In the first place, the context is dead against it. It is rather strongly against the view that "Christ died for all men." All through this passage, Paul is speaking not of the relation of Christ to all men, but of the relation of Christ to the church.

In the second place, the view that "Christ died for all" means "Christ died for all men" proves too much. The things that Paul says in this passage about those for whom Christ died do not fit those who merely have the gospel offered to them; they fit only those who accept the gospel for the salvation of their soul. Can it be said of all men, including those who reject the gospel or have never heard it, that they died when Christ died on the cross; can it be said of them that they no longer live unto themselves but unto the Christ who died for them? Surely these things cannot be said of all men, and therefore the word "all" does not mean "all men."

Perhaps, indeed, it will be said that Paul is speaking only of the purpose of Christ in dying for all men, without implying that that purpose was accomplished. Perhaps, it will be said, he means only that Christ died for them, without at all implying how many of those for whom Christ died actually accomplished that purpose by living in that way.

Well—quite aside from the difficulty of supposing that God's purpose ever fails—I can only say that if that meaning is to be attributed to the passage, the force of the passage is, to say the least, seriously impaired. Did Christ upon the cross die merely to make possible my salvation? Did he die merely for the great mass of humanity and then leave it to the decision of individuals in that mass whether they would make any use of what Christ purchased for them at such cost? Was I, in the thought of the Son of God when he died there on Calvary, merely one in the great mass of persons who might possibly at some future time accept the benefits of his death?

I tell you, my friends, if I thought that—if, in other words, I became a consistent Arminian instead of a Calvinist—I should feel almost as

though the light had forever gone out of my soul. No, indeed, my friends, Christ did not die there on Calvary merely to make possible our salvation. He died to save us. He died not merely to provide a general benefit for the human race from which we might at some future time draw, as from some general fund, what is needed for the salvation of our souls. No, thank God, he died there on the cross for us individually. He called us, when he died for us, by our names. He loved us not as infinitesimal particles in the mass of the human race, but he loved us every one.

Do you ask how that could be? Do you ask how Christ, when he died, could have in his mind and heart every one of the millions of those who had been saved under the old dispensation and who were to be saved in the long centuries that were to come? I will tell you how it could be. It could be because Christ is God. Being God, he knows us every one, with an intimacy that is far greater than the intimacy of the tenderest mother's love.

People say that Calvinism is a dour, hard creed. How broad and comforting, they say, is the doctrine of a universal atonement, the doctrine that Christ died equally for all men there upon the cross! How narrow and harsh, they say, is this Calvinistic doctrine—one of the "five points" of Calvinism—this doctrine of the "limited atonement," this doctrine that Christ died for the elect of God in a sense in which he did not die for the unsaved!

But do you know, my friends, it is surprising that men say that. It is surprising that they regard the doctrine of a universal atonement as being a comforting doctrine. In reality it is a very gloomy doctrine indeed. Ah, if it were only a doctrine of a universal salvation, instead of a doctrine of a universal atonement, then it would no doubt be a very comforting doctrine; then no doubt it would conform wonderfully well to what we in our puny wisdom might have thought the course of the world should have been. But a universal atonement without a universal salvation is a cold, gloomy doctrine indeed. To say that Christ died for all men alike and that then not all men are

saved, to say that Christ died for humanity simply in the mass, and that the choice of those who out of that mass are saved depends upon the greater receptivity of some as compared with others—that is a doctrine that takes from the gospel much of its sweetness and much of its joy. From the cold universalism of that Arminian creed we turn ever again with a new thankfulness to the warm and tender individualism of our Reformed faith, which we believe to be in accord with God's holy Word. Thank God we can say, every one, as we contemplate Christ upon the cross, not just: "He died for the mass of humanity, and how glad I am that I am amid that mass," but: "He loved me and gave himself for me; my name was written from all eternity upon his heart, and when he hung and suffered there on the cross, he thought of me, even me, as one for whom in his grace he was willing to die."

"Should Not Henceforth Live unto Themselves"

That is what Paul means when he says, "One died for all, therefore all died." But is that all that Paul says? No, he says something more; and we must consider briefly that something more, before we turn away from this marvelous passage.

"All of us died," Paul says, "since it was as our representative that Christ died." But what then? What becomes afterwards of those who have thus died to the curse of the law? Are they free thereafter to live as they please, because the penalty of their sins has been paid?

Paul gives the answer in no uncertain terms. "One died for all," he says, "therefore all died, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Some people upon this earth, he says, have passed through a wonderful thing! They have died. That is, Christ died for them as their representative. They have died so far as concerns the death which the law of God pronounces as the penalty of sin. They died there on Calvary in the person of Christ their Savior. But what of

them now? Look at them, and you might think, if you were a very superficial observer, that they are living very much as before. They are subject to all the petty limitations of human life. They are walking the streets of Corinth or of Philadelphia. They are going about their daily tasks. They might seem to be very much the same. Ah, but, says Paul, they are not really the same; a great change has taken place in them. They are living upon this earth. Yes, that is granted. They are living in the flesh. Very true. But their lives—their humdrum, working lives upon this earth—have now an entirely new direction. Formerly they were living unto themselves; now they are living unto Christ. What greater change could there possibly be than that?

Christ had that change definitely in view, Paul says, when he died for them on the cross. He did not die for them on the cross in order that they might live with impunity in sin. He did not die for them on the cross in order that they might continue to live for themselves. He died that they might live for him.

"One died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves"—let us stop just there for a moment to notice that at that point the grand circle is complete. Paul has got back to the assertion with which he began; only now he has shown gloriously how it is that that assertion is true. He began by saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and now he has shown how that constraint has been brought about. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we have thus judged, that one died for all, therefore all died; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live for themselves." "Should not henceforth live unto themselves"—that is the constraint of which Paul started out to speak. A man who may not live unto himself is indeed under constraint. All the impulses of fallen man lead him to live unto himself. A hundred selfish passions and appetites crave free course. Yet here are fallen men who check the free course of those selfish passions and appetites. What has caused them to do so? The answer is "Christ's love." He loved them. Loving them, he died for them on the cross. Dying for them on the cross, he wiped out the curse of the

law against them, that in the new life that they then began by his Spirit to live they might, by thinking on his death, be led to live no longer unto themselves. What a wonderful restraining force was exerted by Christ's dying love! How many things, freely done by the men of the world, the Christian is restrained by Christ's love from doing!

Yes, it is indeed true that, if we are real Christians, "the love of Christ constraineth us." Paul is not afraid to use a very drastic word in this connection. He is not afraid to say: "The love of Christ hems us in, surrounds us on every side as with a barrier or wall."

The reason why he is not afraid to say that is that he is going to wipe the paradox out in this very same verse: he is going to show his readers at once that the restraint of which he speaks is the most glorious freedom; he is going to make abundantly plain right in this very passage that the Christian life is not a cabined and confined life at all, but a life that is marvelously right and free. The Christian is restrained from doing certain things. True. But he is restrained from doing those things not in order that he may do nothing at all, but in order that he may do other things that are infinitely more worthwhile. He is restrained from doing evil things, that he may do the things that are good; he is restrained from doing things that bring death, in order that he may do things that belong to eternal life. "But unto Him Which Died for Them"

What are those good things in the doing of which Christian freedom is shown? Ah, how wonderfully does Paul sum them up in this glorious verse! Listen to the grand climax with which the sentence ends. "The love of Christ constraineth us," he says, "because we have thus judged, that one died for all, therefore all died; and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." "But unto him which died for them"—ah, there is the refutation forever of the charge brought by carnal men that the Christian life is a narrow and restricted life, a life hemmed in by "Thou shalt nots," but without

high aspirations or a worthy goal. No, it is not a narrow and restricted life at all.

What sweet and lovely thing in human living may not be included in that one great business of living unto Christ? Art, you say? Is that excluded? No, indeed. Christ made the beauty of the world, and he made men that they might enjoy that beauty and celebrate it unto his praise. Science? All the wonders of the universe are his. He made all, and the true man of science has the privilege of looking just a little way into his glorious works. Every high and worthy human pursuit may be ennobled and enlarged by being consecrated unto Christ. But highest of all is the privilege of bringing other souls to him. That privilege belongs not only to the wise and learned. It belongs to the humblest Christians. To be the instrument in saving a soul from death—what more wonderful adventure can there be than that? No, the Christian life is not a narrow and restricted life. It is a life most wonderfully free. What rich harvest fields it offers, what broad prospects, what glittering mountain heights!

In all that life of high endeavor the Christian thinks always of the One to whom he owes it all, the One who died. Ever does he remember that one died for all, and that therefore all died. What depth of love in the Christian's heart is called forth by that story of the dying love of Christ! What a barrier it is against selfishness and sin, what an incentive to brave and loving deeds! He died for all, and in the true Christian's life the purpose of his dying is indeed fulfilled, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.

"And Rose Again"

We have almost finished. We have read the passage almost to the end. But there is one word that we have so far not touched. It is the very last word. Sadly incomplete would our exposition be if we did not now notice that tremendous word.

"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we have thus judged, that one died for all, therefore all died; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

"And rose again"—that is the word (it is one word in the Greek) that we must notice at last before we sit down together at the table of our Lord.

How does our thought of the death of Christ restrain us from evil and inspire us to good? Is it merely like the thought of some dear one who has gone? Is it merely the thought of that last smile on a mother's face; is it merely like our thought of the last touch of her vanished hand; is it merely like the memory of those last loving words when she bade us be true and good?

Well, we do think of the death of our Lord in some such way as that. We commemorate that death today in the broken bread and the poured-out cup. We think of that simple story in the Gospels which tells how he broke the bread with his disciples, endured mocking of wicked men, was taken outside the walls, and died for the love that he bore to us sinners. And as we think on that story, our hearts melt within us and we are ashamed to offend against such love. We say to ourselves, in the words of the sweet Christian hymn:

O, dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

But is that all? No, it is not all, my friends. It is not all, because that One who there died for us is now alive. He is not dead, but is with us in blessed presence today. He died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. We do more than commemorate his death when we sit around the table this morning. We rejoice also in his presence. And as we go

forth from this place, we must live as those who are ever in his sight. Are we in temptation? Let us remember that he who died for us, and who by his dying love constrains us that we fall not into sin, is with us today, and is grieved if we dishonor him in our lives. It is not to a memory merely that we Christians have dedicated ourselves. It is to the service of a living Savior. Let us remember always that "he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again."

The Presbyterian Church of America

This morning we, a little branch of his church universal, are gathered for the first time together around his table. We shall go forth from this service into the deliberations of this Assembly and then into the varied work of the church.

If we remember what this service commemorates, there are certain things which we shall be constrained by Christ's love not to do.

We shall be constrained, for example, not to weaken in the stand which we have taken for the sake of Christ. How many movements have begun bravely like this one, and then have been deceived by Satan—have been deceived by Satan into belittling controversy, condoning sin and error, seeking favor from the world or from a worldly church, substituting a worldly urbanity for Christian love. May Christ's love indeed constrain us, that we may not thus fall!

We shall be constrained, in the second place, from seeking unworthily our own advantage or preferment, and from being jealous of the advantage or preferment of our brethren. May Christ's love indeed constrain us, that we fall not into faults such as these!

We shall be constrained, in the third place, from stifling discussion for the sake of peace and from (as has been said) "shelving important issues in moments of silent prayer." May Christ's love constrain us from such a misuse of the sacred and blessed privilege of prayer! May Christ's love prevent us from doing anything to hinder our

brethren from giving legitimate expression to the convictions of their minds and hearts!

We shall be constrained, in short, from succumbing to the many dangers which always beset a movement such as this. Christ's love alone will save us from such dangers.

But Christ's love will do more than restrain us from evil. It will lead us also into good. It will do more than prevent us from living unto ourselves. It will also lead us to live unto him.

What a wonderful, open door God has placed before the Presbyterian Church of America! A pagan world, weary and sick, often distrusting its own modern gods. A saving gospel strangely entrusted to us unworthy messengers. A divine Book with unused resources of glory and power. Ah, what a marvelous opportunity, my brethren! What a privilege to proclaim not some partial system of truth, but the full, glorious system which God has revealed in his Word, and which is summarized in the wonderful standards of our faith! What a privilege to get those hallowed instruments, in which that truth is summarized, down from the shelf and write them in patient instruction, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, upon the tablets of the children's hearts! What a privilege to present our historic standards in all their fullness in the pulpit and at the teacher's desk and in the Christian home! What a privilege to do that for the one reason that those standards present, not a "man-made creed," but what God has told us in his holy Word! What a privilege to proclaim that same system of divine truth to the unsaved! What a privilege to carry the message of the Cross, unshackled by compromising associations, to all the world! What a privilege to send it to foreign lands! What a privilege to proclaim it to the souls of people who sit in nominally Christian churches and starve for lack of the bread of life! Oh, yes, what a privilege and what a joy, my brethren! Shall we lose that joy for any selfishness or jealousy; shall we lose it for any of the sins into which every one of us without exception is prone to fall?

Only one thing can prevent us from losing it, my brethren. Only one thing can bestow it upon us in all its fullness. That one thing is the love of Jesus Christ our Savior—the love that we celebrate as we sit this morning around the table of our Lord. That love alone can restrain us from the sins that will, if unchecked, destroy this Church's life—the sins of the preacher of this morning, the sins of those to whom he preaches. That alone can send us forth rejoicing to live for him who died. As we sit now at his table, and commemorate his dying love, may the blessed words that we have read together this morning sink deep into our minds and hearts and bear fruit in our lives. May it now indeed be true of us that: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

This sermon was preached at the communion service that preceded the Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (renamed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1939) on November 12, 1936. It appeared in the *Presbyterian Guardian*, December 12, 1936. Dr. Machen died on January 1, 1937.

The Minister and His Greek Testament

The widening breach between the minister and his Greek Testament may be traced to two principal causes. The modern minister objects to his Greek New Testament or is indifferent to it, first, because he is becoming less interested in his Greek, and second, because he is becoming less interested in his New Testament.

The former objection is merely one manifestation of the well known tendency in modern education to reject the "humanities" in favor of studies that are more obviously useful, a tendency which is fully as pronounced in the universities as it is in the theological seminaries. In many colleges the study of Greek is almost abandoned; there is little wonder, therefore, that the graduates are not prepared to use their Greek Testament. Plato and Homer are being neglected as much as Paul. A refutation of the arguments by which this tendency is justified would exceed the limits of the present article. This much, however, may be said—the refutation must recognize the opposing principles that are involved. The advocate of the study of Greek and Latin should never attempt to plead his cause merely before the bar of "efficiency." Something, no doubt, might be said even there; it might possibly be contended that an acquaintance with Greek and Latin is really necessary to acquaintance with the mother tongue, which is obviously so important for getting on in the world. But why not go straight to the root of the matter? The real trouble with the modern exaltation of "practical" studies at the expense of the humanities is that it is based upon a vicious conception of the whole purpose of education. The modern conception of the purpose of education is that education is merely intended to enable a man to live, but not to give him those things in life that make life worth living.

In the second place, the modern minister is neglecting his Greek New Testament because he is becoming less interested in his New Testament in general—less interested in his Bible. The Bible used to be regarded as providing the very sum and substance of preaching; a preacher was true to his calling only as he succeeded in reproducing and applying the message of the Word of God. Very different is the modern attitude. The Bible is not discarded, to be sure, but it is treated only as one of the sources, even though it be still the chief source, of the preacher's inspiration. Moreover, a host of duties other than preaching and other than interpretation of the Word of God are required of the modern pastor. He must organize clubs and social activities of a dozen different kinds; he must assume a prominent

part in movements for civic reform. In short, the minister has ceased to be a specialist. The change appears, for example, in the attitude of theological students, even of a devout and reverent type. One outstanding difficulty in theological education today is that the students persist in regarding themselves, not as specialists, but as laymen. Critical questions about the Bible they regard as the property of men who are training themselves for theological professorships or the like, while the ordinary minister, in their judgment, may content himself with the most superficial layman's acquaintance with the problems involved. The minister is thus no longer a specialist in the Bible, but has become merely a sort of general manager of the affairs of a congregation.

The bearing of this modern attitude toward the study of the Bible upon the study of the Greek Testament is sufficiently obvious. If the time allotted to strictly biblical studies must be diminished, obviously the most laborious part of those studies, the part least productive of immediate results, will be the first to go. And that part, for students insufficiently prepared, is the study of Greek and Hebrew. If, on the other hand, the minister is a specialist—if the one thing that he owes his congregation above all others is a thorough acquaintance, scientific as well as experimental, with the Bible—then the importance of Greek requires no elaborate argument. In the first place, almost all the most important books about the New Testament presuppose a knowledge of Greek: the student who is without at least a smattering of Greek is obliged to use for the most part works that are written, figuratively speaking, in words of one syllable. In the second place, such a student cannot deal with all the problems at first hand, but in a thousand important questions is at the mercy of the judgment of others. In the third place, our student without Greek cannot acquaint himself with the form as well as the content of the New Testament books. The New Testament, as well as all other literature, loses something in translation. But why argue the question? Every scientific student of the New Testament without exception knows that Greek is really necessary to his work: the real

question is only as to whether our ministry should be manned by scientific students.

That question is merely one phase of the most important question that is now facing the church—the question of Christianity and culture. The modern world is dominated by a type of thought that is either contradictory to Christianity or else out of vital connection with Christianity. This type of thought applied directly to the Bible has resulted in the naturalistic view of the biblical history—the view that rejects the supernatural not merely in the Old Testament narratives, but also in the Gospel account of the life of Jesus. According to such a view the Bible is valuable because it teaches certain ideas about God and his relations to the world, because it teaches by symbols and example, as well as by formal presentation, certain great principles that have always been true. According to the supernaturalistic view, on the other hand, the Bible contains not merely a presentation of something that was always true, but also a record of something that happened—namely, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. If this latter view be correct, then the Bible is unique; it is not merely one of the sources of the preacher's inspiration, but the very sum and substance of what he has to say. But, if so, then whatever else the preacher need not know, he must know the Bible; he must know it at first hand, and be able to interpret and defend it. Especially while doubt remains in the world as to the great central question, who more properly than the ministers should engage in the work of resolving such doubt—by intellectual instruction even more than by argument? The work cannot be turned over to a few professors whose work is of interest only to themselves, but must be undertaken energetically by spiritually minded men throughout the church. But obviously this work can be undertaken to best advantage only by those who have an important prerequisite for the study in a knowledge of the original languages upon which a large part of the discussion is based.

If, however, it is important for the minister to use his Greek Testament, what is to be done about it? Suppose early opportunities

were neglected, or what was once required has been lost in the busy rush of ministerial life. Here we may come forward boldly with a message of hope. The Greek of the New Testament is by no means a difficult language; a very fair knowledge of it may be acquired by any minister of average intelligence. And to that end two homely directions may be given. In the first place, the Greek should be read aloud. A language cannot easily be learned by the eye alone. The sound as well as the sense of familiar passages should be impressed upon the mind, until sound and sense are connected without the medium of translation. Let this result not be hastened; it will come of itself if the simple direction be followed. In the second place, the Greek Testament should be read every day without fail, Sabbaths included. Ten minutes a day is of vastly more value than seventy minutes once a week. If the student keeps a "morning watch," the Greek Testament ought to be given a place in it; at any rate, the Greek Testament should be read devotionally. The Greek Testament is a sacred book, and should be treated as such. If it is treated so, the reading of it will soon become a source of joy and power.

J. Gresham Machen was a founding minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This essay was originally printed in *The Presbyterian* (February 7, 1918).

What Is Orthodoxy?

To the surprise of many, including a number who not too long ago prophesied our denomination's imminent demise, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church recently has experienced remarkable popularity. It seems the OPC has become "the church of choice" for an increasing company of inquiring Presbyterian and Reformed groups and individuals across the United States. We are amazed and grateful to God for the interest and zeal expressed by these people.

At the same time, we need to appreciate the opportunity that is ours. I mention this because we may not be taking full advantage of this opportunity. For example, for many years the word orthodox in our name has been thought by some to be a liability to the growth of the denomination—so much so that a number of congregations have chosen not to include it in their names.

But as more and more people are seeking us out specifically because of our orthodoxy, does it not make sense for us to set our full name prominently before the public? If we are hesitant, maybe it would be helpful to know what J. Gresham Machen thought of the word orthodox. In fact, as we choose names for our congregations, it may be well to consult Dr. Machen.

Presented here is Dr. Machen's forceful editorial for your consideration. It was written before the founding of the OPC and appeared in the November 4, 1935, issue of the Presbyterian Guardian (on page 38). Later, it exerted great influence on the young church when she chose her present name in 1939.

Who knows, with someone as significant as Machen adding his thoughts to the discussion, you may discover that our denomination's full name has much more going for it than you first thought.

—Charles G. Dennison

Historian for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Many years ago, in that ancient time when jokes now hoary with age had the blush of early youth upon their cheeks, when a man first asked, "When is a door not a door?" and when the answer seemed to be a marvelously fresh and brilliant thing—at some happy moment in that ancient time, some brilliant person said: "Orthodoxy means 'my doxy' and heterodoxy means 'the other man's doxy.' "

The unknown author of that famous definition—unknown to me at least—may have thought that he was being very learned. Knowing

that the Greek word *heteros*, which forms a part of the English word *heterodoxy*, means "other," he built his famous definition around that one word, and *heterodoxy* became to him "the other man's doxy."

Possibly, however, he knew perfectly well that he was not being learned, and merely desired to have his little joke. As a matter of fact, the Greek word *heteros* in *heterodoxy* does not just mean "other" in the ordinary sense of that word, as when we speak of "one" man and "another" man, but it usually means "other" with an added idea of "different."

So if we are really going to indulge in a little etymology, if we are really going to analyze the words and have recourse to the origin of them in the Greek language from which they have come, we shall arrive at a very different result from the result which was arrived at by the author of the facetious definition mentioned above. The word *orthos* in *orthodoxy* means "straight," and the word *heteros* in *heterodoxy* means "other" with an implication of "different." Accordingly, the real state of the case is that *orthodoxy* means "straight doxy" and *heterodoxy* means "something different from straight doxy"; or, in other words, it means "crooked doxy." [And *doxy* means "teaching."]

Now I am not inclined to recommend etymology indiscriminately to preachers in their treatment of their texts. It has its uses, but it also has its abuses. Very often it leads those who indulge in it very far astray indeed. The meanings of words change in the course of centuries, and so the actual use of a word often differs widely from what one would suppose from an examination of the original uses of its component parts. Etymology has spoiled many a good sermon.

In this case, however, etymology does not lead us astray at all. Orthodoxy does mean "straight doxy" [and thus "straight teaching"], and it is a good old word which I think we might well revive. What term shall we who stand for the Bible in the Presbyterian Church in

the U.S.A. use to designate our position? For my part, I cannot say that I like the term *Fundamentalism*. I am not inclined, indeed, to quibble about these important matters. If an inquirer asks me whether I am a Fundamentalist or a Modernist, I do not say, "Neither." Instead, I say: "Well, you are using terminology that I do not like, but if I may for the moment use your terminology, in order that you may get plainly what I mean, I just want to say, when you ask me whether I am a Fundamentalist or a Modernist, that I am a Fundamentalist from the word go!"

However, it is a different matter when we are choosing terminology that we shall actually use about ourselves. When we are doing that, I think we ought to be just as careful as we possibly can be.

The term *Fundamentalism* seems to represent the Christian religion as though it had suddenly become an "ism" and needed to be called by some strange new name. I cannot see why that should be done. The term seems to me to be particularly inadequate as applied to us conservative Presbyterians. We have a great heritage. We are standing in what we hold to be the great central current of the Church's life—the great tradition that comes down through Augustine and Calvin to the Westminster Confession of Faith. That we hold to be the high straight road of truth as opposed to vagaries on one side or on the other. Why then should we be so prone to adopt some strange new term?

Well, then, if we do not altogether like the term *Fundamentalism*—close though our fellowship is with those who do like that term—what term shall we actually choose?

Conservative does seem to be rather too cold. It is apt to create the impression that we are holding desperately to something that is old just because it is old, and that we are not eager for new and glorious manifestations of the Spirit of God.

Evangelical, on the other hand, although it is a fine term, does not quite seem to designate clearly enough the position of those who hold specifically to the system of doctrine taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, as distinguished from other systems which are near enough to the truth in order that they may be called "evangelical" but which yet fall short of being the system that is contained in God's Word.

Therefore, in view of the objections that face the use of other terminology, I think we might do far worse than revive the good old word *orthodoxy* as a designation of our position.

Orthodoxy means, as we have seen, "straight doxy" [or "straight teaching, straight doctrine"]. Well, how do we tell whether a thing is straight or not? The answer is plain. By comparing it with a rule or plumb line. Our rule or plumb line is the Bible. A thing is "orthodox" if it is in accordance with the Bible. I think we might well revive the word. But whether we revive the word or not, we certainly ought to hold to the thing that is designated by the word.

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