

**THE  
PREACHING OF JESUS  
AND THE  
GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

**P.T. FORYSTH**

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P. T. FORSYTH

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## FOREWORD

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P. T. Forsyth died in 1921. While his ministry and message were richly appreciated by many during his lifetime, it would be true to say that his influence has been felt even more keenly upon those in the generations which have followed. He was a prolific author, and the legacy of his writings has enriched many a preacher and theologian in the sixty odd years since his death. While his style of writing has long been a point of debate (and he himself was aware of the problems his form of expression sometimes posed), his fervency for the great doctrines of grace that lie at the heart of the gospel cannot be gainsaid.

While some of his best known works have been republished (by Independent Press, Baker Book House, and the publishers of this volume, for example), there remain a large number of articles and essays that have not appeared in anything other than academic journals which are largely inaccessible to the general public. This volume, for example, consists of material published in *The Expositor*, eighth series, numbers 9 and 10 (April, May, July, August, October and November) 1915, and is reproduced here for two reasons.

Firstly, while the academic debate that underlies this series of articles may be somewhat obscure to those who have not

pursued theology as a discipline, some of the insights that we are able to gain into the person and work of Christ are amongst the richest appearing in all of Forsyth's work. In the light of this it was thought good to publish the material in easily accessible book form, even though there is the risk of seeming to have published something that relates to an academic debate that may or may not have finished many years ago.

Secondly, the material contained within these articles comes as a firm reminder to us of the ever-present tendency to follow paths that are eccentric from the truth. Christ and His cross stand at the centre of history Jesus Christ and Him crucified should be the constant theme of the church's theological reflection and proclamation, but this is the one thing that we most readily fall away from. At the time of their original publication Forsyth was concerned in these articles to battle a tendency in theology to decline away from the central revelation of the cross and look instead at the simple teaching of Jesus. This thrust is not dead, though the words may be different. There is no Christ apart from His cross, and as soon as we separate His teaching (as given in the Gospels) from His work (as unfolded in the Epistles) we have a deficient view of them troth.

The book itself is prefaced by a brief biographical sketch of Forsyth and by a short essay that is designed to give the general reader some background to understand the academic debate that underlies the articles. The more unusual foreign words and phrases have been explained in the publisher's footnotes—which are indicated by superior figures (1)—or in square brackets [ ] within the text. The author's original footnotes are indicated by an asterisk (\*). Words that were in Greek have been transliterated.

*Noel Due, 1987*

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# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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In 1909 Lord Morley, then Chancellor of the University of Manchester, dubbed Forsyth 'One of the most brilliant minds of Europe'.<sup>1</sup> In 1962 Emil Brunner, when invited in a television interview to say who was the greatest of British theologians, named P. T. Forsyth.<sup>2</sup> Likewise Karl Barth spoke in warm terms about Forsyth's work,<sup>3</sup> while J. K. Mozley stated that Forsyth was perhaps English Christianity's most

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<sup>1</sup> For the full story behind this comment, see D. R. Davies' Foreword to *The Justification of God* (1948), p 5. Davies was the student to whom the comment was made.

<sup>2</sup> For details see A. M. Hunter, 'P. T. Forsyth, Neutestamentler', *Expository Times*, vol. 73 (Jan. 1962), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter to W. H. Leembruggen, Barth wrote: 'It has interested me to learn that you are a disciple of P. T. Forsyth. I only heard a little time ago of the books of this man and I was very much touched to see that these things were written and said by him at a time in which they were forgotten **and outmoded** in England and on the Continent'. Leembruggen does not date this letter, but the above words appear in Leembruggen's article, 'The Witness of P. T. Forsyth, a Theologian of the Cross', first published in the Reformed *Theological Review*, 1945.

Karl Barth's son, Markus, speaks in glowing terms of Forsyth in 'P. T. Forsyth: The Theologian for the Practical Man', in the *Congregational Quarterly*, vol. 17 (Oct. 1939), pp. 436-442. Perhaps it was his son who drew Barth's attention to Forsyth's work?

powerful theologian in the sphere of dogmatics.<sup>1</sup>

What do we know of this man who has been the object of the praise of the not insignificant names mentioned above? There is no complete biography of Forsyth available, nor is there likely to be one. He once said to his daughter: 'I hope no-one will ever write a dreary full-dress biography of me!<sup>2</sup> None has appeared, but we do have a number of rather detailed sketches of his life.<sup>3</sup> From such resources the following facts can be drawn.

Forsyth was born in Aberdeen on 12th May, 1848, the son of a postman and his wife, a maid. His surroundings during his growing years were frugal to say the least. His mother had to take in boarders to make ends meet, and even then her sympathy for others who were struggling financially meant that she often carried her boarders for extended periods without cost.<sup>4</sup> As a child he was never very healthy and he wrote later in life: 'I cannot remember since boyhood passing a day without pain'.<sup>5</sup>

For all this, however, he seems to have been a lad of bright spirits, and was often the centre of classroom pranks. Certainly he was bright academically: the academic roll of honour of Aberdeen Grammar School has recorded on it: 'DUX 1864, PETER TAYLOR FORSYTH'. In the autumn of the same

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1 J. K. Mozley, *The Heart of the Gospel*, p. 66.

2 Quoted by Jessie Forsyth Andrews in the Memoir which prefaces *The Work of Christ* (1938 edn), p. vii.

3 For example, the Memoir mentioned above and also: A. M. Hunter, *Teaching and Preaching the New Testament*, pp. 131-143; J. H. Rodgers, *The Theology of P. T. Forsyth*, pp. 2-9; W. L. Bradley, P. T. Forsyth. *The Man and His Work*, pp. 13-63; R. M. Brown, P. T. Forsyth, *Prophet for Today*, pp. 13-31.

4 Forsyth's less than luxurious surroundings are reflected in a letter to his daughter. In apology for ignoring her birthday he wrote: 'Forgive a poor boy who never had any birthdays or any presents'. Memoir in *Work*, p. ix.

5 Quoted in W. L. Bradley, P. T. Forsyth, *The Man and His Work*, p. 17. Cf. a schoolmate of Forsyth's who wrote: '... as a boy he was never robust, and rarely went in for outdoor games. While we were at our bats, he was at his books'. *Ibid.*

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year he won a Cargill Bursary to Aberdeen University and embarked on the study of the Classics. He did exceptionally well, collecting prizes in Greek, Humanities, English, Latin and Moral Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> A colleague later wrote:

Forsyth was one of the ablest students that Aberdeen ever boasted. He was not only a great prize-taker, but he was a brilliant personality. You could not be about the University at this time without being aware of him.<sup>2</sup>

In 1873 Forsyth entered Hackney College, London, in order to train for the Congregational ministry. Poor health forced him to leave the college early, in 1874, before completing the full course of study, and for the next two years we have no record of his movements.

After graduation he assisted the Professor of Latin for a year, before studying under Ritschl in Gottingen for a semester in 1872.<sup>3</sup> In his own opinion this was the most important intellectual factor in his experience,<sup>4</sup> and during this time Forsyth gained a love for both the German people and German theology which had endured throughout his life;<sup>5</sup> a fact which made the outbreak of World War I particularly painful for him.

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1 For details taken from his academic record, see *ibid.*, p. 20

2 W. R. Nicholl, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.

3 Forsyth's daughter indicates that one of the prime movers in this step was his friend Robertson Smith, adding 'and this name foreshadows the period of his so called heterodoxy' (see *Memoir in Work*, p. xi). Smith was suspended as Professor of Oriental Languages and O.T. Exegesis at Free Church College, Aberdeen in 1879 for his unorthodox views regarding the inspiration of Scripture.

4 *Ibid.*, p. xi. Hence Rodger's comments: 'One could, with reasonable accuracy, describe Forsyth's whole theological pilgrimage as an inner critique of Ritschlian theology. One should add immediately, however, that the critique was so radical and basic as to create a position which can only in the most qualified manner he described as Ritschlian. J. H. Rodgers, *The Theology of P. T. Forsyth*, p. 3.

5 His daughter estimates that at least a third of the books in his library were in German. He received German religious periodicals and weekly papers throughout his life. *Memoir. op. cit.*, p. xxii..

In 1876 Forsyth began his public ministry at Shipley in Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> This was the first of a series of five pastorates spanning a period of twenty-five years. Four years after going to Shipley he accepted a call to St. Thomas' Square, Hackney in London. This was followed by a move to Cheetham Hill Congregational Church at Manchester in 1885. Subsequently he had six years at Clarendon Park, Leicester, and in 1894 he went to Emmanuel Church in Cambridge.<sup>2</sup>

Forsyth was refused membership of the Congregational Union while at Shipley (which was a non-Union Church), and also during his initial period at Hackney. There can be little doubt that this rejection was related to his heterodox views on the nature of the atonement<sup>3</sup> and to his involvement in the 'Leicester Conference'.<sup>4</sup> His acceptance by the Union during the latter part of his ministry at Hackney reflects the change that took place within his theology.

In 1895 Forsyth was awarded the D.D. degree from Aberdeen, though he was too ill to be present at the conferring ceremony. He accepted the call to the principalship of

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1 He had worked in a least one pastorate in a part-time capacity earlier, when he and John Hunter (another Aberdonian), sought to resuscitate the Congregational Chapel in Dee Street (For details see Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 21). Shipley, however, was his first full-time pastoral charge.

2 Only two weeks after his arrival here, his wife died unexpectedly. This event broke Forsyth's health, frail at the best of times, and he was forced to take six months' leave before he could resume work.

3 During his time at Shipley, Forsyth published as a pamphlet the text of a sermon entitled 'Justice and Mercy'. We have, unfortunately, no copies of the pamphlet itself, but we do have an anonymous rejoinder printed shortly after Forsyth's work appeared. From this it seems clear that Forsyth opposed the whole immoral theory of substitution. For details see Bradley, *ibid.*, p. 31f

4 The Leicester Conference, which met concurrently with the regular meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1877, was called by a group of liberals with the intention 'to encourage a wider bond of fellowship than conventional orthodoxy. Forsyth openly identified himself with the liberal group, calling upon them not to rely so much on Paul as to '...lean simply on Christ... call all men who worship the goodness of Christ, members of Christ'.

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Hackney College in the spring of 1901, which position he filled until his death twenty years later.

These two decades were the most busy, and productive, of Forsyth's life. Besides administrative duties he had a heavy lecturing load, extra responsibilities as the Dean of the Faculty of the London Theological Colleges and involvement in a number of public controversies.<sup>1</sup> In 1905 he was elected Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He was also involved in a number of lecturing tours, e.g. the Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale in 1907, yet these decades saw him produce more than twenty books and over two hundred articles, pamphlets and essays.

As a College Principal he is reported to have had an intimate rapport with his students and colleagues, who appreciated his quick wit and bright personality. His daughter describes him as one who was "cheery, witty, ironical, and he suffered fools madly".<sup>2</sup> He was, as a friend put it, 'a good man to go hunting tigers with'.<sup>3</sup>

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1 For example: opposing alterations to the new Education Bill in 1906. opposing the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal, and the protracted battle with R. J. Campbell over Campbell's 'New Theology'. For details see Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-57

2 Memoir in Work. p. xxiv 'He was a charming colleague. I am told—easy to work with, always tolerant, always sympathetic, never intransigent, even in the least degree. He had a swift, gay wit...and he had an inexhaustible deep [sic] of humour...'Ibid

3 Quoted in A M. Hunter, *Teaching and Preaching the New Testament*. p 137



# THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

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The issues behind Forsyth's production of these articles will no doubt be familiar to any one who has pursued theology as an academic discipline. For them the names of the continental theologians mentioned by Forsyth will be familiar, and they will (to a greater or lesser degree), have an understanding of how these theologians fit into the scheme of the theological developments of the last one hundred or so years. This introduction is, therefore, a layman's guide to the issues. Doubtless it may be seen as an over-simplification, but it is in keeping with the intentions behind the republication of this work.

It has become a truism to say that Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), was the founder not just of the liberal school of theology, but of the whole modern theological era. His work was in many ways a reaction to what he saw as a dead orthodoxy that was long on doctrine but short on warmth or experience. For him, God's revelation was not simply or primarily doctrinal, but personal. The doctrine contained in Scripture arose out of personal experience of God, not out of the revelation of propositions about God. He

argued that belief is not belief in a set of doctrines, but experience of the Person behind them. Thus there is, for Schleiermacher, a big difference between religion and theology. His classic definition of religion is 'the feeling of absolute dependence' or 'God consciousness', and though there is some debate as to the way he used the word 'feeling' in his work, it is clear that it is heavily influenced by mystical piety. Theology is thus seen as the language of religion, the expression of religious experience. This means implicitly that there is a difference between the study of religion and the study of theology. The task of theology is to record the religious experience of each succeeding generation, but theological statements need not be binding. The church must live in and through its religious experience, not its theology.

While there is no doubt much in this approach with which we would agree, Schleiermacher's appraisal does lead to some radical results. Implicitly, theology is divorced from any external norms. Statements about the attributes of God, for example, relate, not to objective truth, but to the way the biblical authors experienced God. The criteria for theology become, not the doctrines contained in the Scriptures, but the experiences reflected in the testimony of the biblical writers. Authority thus becomes a very problematic area, and there can be no surety that the records in the New Testament (which are statements out of the religious experience of men such as Peter and Paul) are binding upon later generations.

Not all who came after Schleiermacher agreed with his seemingly inordinate emphasis on subjectivity, but the taper lit by him rapidly spread to illumine the thinking of many others, in that it opened a new and seemingly less hamstrung approach to the study of Christology. Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889), under whom Forsyth sat for a term in Germany, looked for a firm foothold in history upon which to

ground his theology. He believed that solid, scientific historical research was needed so that religion could be established on concrete facts and events, thus meaning that the Scriptures need to be reassessed in the light of modern methods of historical and literary criticism. He saw also that the gospel had been corrupted by the alien influence of Greek philosophy and that these accretions must be broken through in order for the moral and ethical power of the gospel to prevail in the church.

While being greatly influenced by the theology of Luther, Ritschl did not regard as significant any doctrines that could not be taken in and expressed in terms of moral action. The value of doctrine is its value for us, so issues such as the pre-existence of Christ, the virgin birth, the resurrection, etc. become non-essentials. For him the church, which was the ethical community established by Jesus, was to be the agent for the change of human society into the Kingdom of God.

Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), who was a disciple of Ritschl, traced in detail the course of the alleged corruption of the gospel that earlier theologians had intimated. Von Harnack was primarily an historian of dogma, his major work being a three-volume tome called *The History of Dogma*. He argued that there was an abiding validity in the teachings of Jesus, but that the simple religion of Jesus had been greatly mutated by the early church in general (through the process of 'hellenization', i.e. the accretion of Greek culture and philosophy obscuring the kernel of the gospel) and the apostle Paul in particular. He saw that 'Paulinism' had hidden the religion of Jesus so that we now have a religion about Jesus rather than the religion of Jesus. This influence is not, moreover, limited to the Pauline Epistles, for even the Synoptic Gospels were penned by people (or groups of people) who had been influenced by Paul.

Von Harnack came to believe that the central teachings of

Jesus were God's Fatherhood and the ethics related to the Kingdom. He did not preach Himself, or the work of redemption. The task of the church is now to re seize the ethics of the Kingdom in its life and ministry, particularly in the light of God's Fatherhood which means that all men are brothers.

While the three theologians mentioned here do not exhaust the theological climate of the late 1800's and early 1900's, and while they do not present us with a solidly united front, they represent the general trends that theology was taking during this period. As a result of work by men such as these, the person of Jesus was pushed to the foreground of theology (though admittedly with Ritschl His work was of more immediate concern) and the methods of historical criticism were rigorously applied to the New Testament in order to rediscover the real, historical Jesus. It was argued that we must be teaching what He taught, not what was taught about Him.

The search for the Historical Jesus culminated in the work of Albert Schweitzer ( 1875-1965), whose book *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (published in 1906) made a profound impact. Schweitzer argued that his was the most realistic reconstruction of Jesus' life and ministry, though his conclusions were quite different from earlier liberal theologians. According to him Jesus preached a message of the coming Kingdom of God, but as understood in contemporary Jewish thinking. When His preaching ministry did not usher in the Kingdom, He mistakenly tried to bring it all to a head by challenging the powers of His own day, ending ultimately in His martyrdom on the cross where we see Him 'broken on the wheel of history'. Although He failed in His ultimate mission, the spirit of Jesus lives on, and thus the church is called to take up its cross to effect the Kingdom's establishment.

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While not jettisoning the positive gains of liberal theology and the advances made in biblical research, Forsyth, in this series of articles, takes issue with the basic position of liberal theology that drives a wedge between the preaching of the historical Jesus and the later emerging doctrine of the 'Christ of faith'. We find the key statement of his purpose outlined in Section 1, page 4:

Christianity, then, has made its great appeal to the world as a religion of such redemption and reconciliation, of redemption from guilt once for all, and reconciliation with God for ever. And both centre not in Christ merely, but in the Cross of Christ.

There is no doubt about this for the apostles. But question has been raised if it was so with Christ Himself. His references to the Cross are few; and fewer still those that connect it with redemption. As a preacher He had far more to say about the Kingdom than the Cross. And as a personality His witness, it is said, was wholly to the Father and not to Himself. He was no part of His own gospel, so far as His preaching went. So it is urged. And the contention means of course, that there is a great gulf between the preaching of Christ and that of His apostles—especially Paul. This raises a twofold question:

1. Is Christ a *preacher* for us in the same sense as He was for His own generation?
2. Insofar as He was a *preacher* at all, *did* He preach the gospel!

The argument unfolds by indicating that we cannot preach the same message that Jesus preached, for His was a message to Israel, expressed in the parlance of the times and this before the cross which was His governing purpose. 'His preaching days', says Forsyth, 'were to His consummate work of the Cross what the Baptist was to Himself— forerunners'. Our message cannot be a simple re-statement of His that does not take into central account the effect and significance of His work as Redeemer.

It is in this work that the message and the Person are to be fully seen and understood. True apostolic preaching must

include, indeed consist of, the cross of the Christ who gave it birth. Forsyth saw that the great failing of liberalism was that at its heart it had no conception of God's holiness. In light of this lack, Fatherhood was reduced to sentiment, the Kingdom to moralism, the Cross to a divine demonstration of love, and Redemption to a process of self-help. History without holy judgement becomes meaningless, and the preaching of Jesus without the holy atonement won by the cross becomes an impotent ethic.

In the development of his argument Forsyth makes many comments that are incidental to his main theme. These comments are not to be glossed over, for they contain some of his richest work. Overall this series of articles presents some of the finest insights in all of Forsyth's work. The reader is encouraged to be diligent in the reading, but even more diligent in the hearing of Forsyth's message.

# —ONE—

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We are frequently referred to the words of Christ as forming the preachers' warrant, and often indeed as forming his model. But if we aim at a precise meaning here, it should be remembered that preaching took hold of the Church, less from the injunction, or the example even, of Christ than from the native action of the Gospel itself. 'It pleased God so to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him.' It may be useful, therefore, to discuss in what sense our Lord as preacher bears on our preaching today.

Christianity makes its appeal to the world as the religion of redemption. What does that mean when we interrogate our terms, and seek positive ideas?

Let us begin by recognizing that a religion of rescue is one thing, a religion of redemption is another. The dull man, or the savage, believes in a religion of rescue. His God helps him from time to time, extricates him from this peril, or leads him to that success. And it is only from time to time of need or of precaution that he turns to his God. But a religion of redemption bears not upon junctures but upon life, on the soul itself. And life is not atomistic. It is a moral personal

unity. The soul is one. And therefore if we come to a critical affair at all, it is not a series of crises but one great crisis, now less acutely felt, now more. The peril is a tissue, or rather a drama, of perils woven into life as one whole. And the Enemy is not many but one, as the Soul is one, and its Saviour. It is one vast moral issue that is at stake. It means the gain or loss of the Soul. And so great, so complete, is the unity, that the crisis involves not the visible world alone, but also the world unseen. It involves God and His help. And the help of God, bearing as it does on the whole soul's fate, is more than help, it is salvation. It is redemption. It is thus that even Buddhism construes religion. And so far Christianity and Buddhism stand together in isolation amid the faiths of the world.

But beyond this point they part. Christianity is not a religion of Redemption only, but also of Reconciliation. Any idea of Reconciliation in Buddhism is but the reconciliation of man to his fate. But reconciliation to a fate is no more than resignation. Redemption becomes, then, the self-elevation of the Soul above the suffering of life by a subjective process all on one side. It is a process of internalization, of sinking into our self. It is self-salvation. It is not redemption by a reconciling person into communion with himself. And it is self-salvation from the innate woe of life. Now in Christianity also we are helpless—the more helpless the more we turn our gaze inward—but we are saved by a power from without, and only by that power. We are saved, moreover, not from life's innate woe, nor only from an alien evil, but from one which is moral in its kind. It is a guilty paralysis of will. Our foe is one that we discover in command of our commanding self whenever we set about escape from our alien ill. It is something that impairs the very will by which we should escape from the tangle of sorrow. It destroys our power of uniting with any helper. The reconciliation we need is not with our dismal fate

(which means with our distraught selves) but with a saving God. And our redemption is not from something which crushes our happiness, but from something which loads our conscience and mars our perfection. The fruit of our redemption is an ethical reconciliation in a free conscience, and not an eudaemonist reconciliation in a free development. It is a free soul and not a free career.

Let us be more explicit still. To Christian faith the pain of our case is not merely the misery of moral impotence, nor the chagrin of perpetual failure. These still leave us with a feeling more like mortification than repentance—mortification in the presence of our ideal self rather than repentance in the sight of God, a loss of self-respect rather than of sonship. We suffer in our moral self-esteem, not because of our wound to the Holy. But to Christian faith the sting in sin is its wound to God, its stain to holiness. To many a Christian man the first torment after his lapse is not fear, nor remorse. It is nothing so selfish. It is a passion of grief for the wound he has dealt to the holiness of God, and to the Christ he has crucified afresh. There is shame indeed for himself, but still more there is grief for another. There is of course the crushing loss of self-respect, the blow to his own satisfaction with his faith—he thought he was such a promising Christian too; but far more poignant is the grief that he has struck his God, denied his Saviour, pierced Him anew, and undone His Cross. To Christian faith this is the sting of sin—the sense of having struck in the face God's holy love. It is the sense of not merely denying Him but denying ourselves to Him; the sense of robbing Him nor of His honour but of our worship, our souls, our faith; the sense of loss, damage, and grief to Him. We have soiled His purity, despised His love, and crossed His will. Our self-humiliation is less than our sense of having humiliated Him, and put the cross on Him again. Hence the reconciliation we need (when we take faith's word for what we need)

is not a reconciliation either with our own self-respect or with our neighbour, but with God and His holy love. The peace we need is not calm, but it is the restoration of confidence, the renewal of personal relations, of communion with our Holy Father. Christian peace is not the saint's calm, but the son's confidence when, perhaps, we are anything but calm. And reconciliation is not lying on Jesus' breast, as the unpleasant phrase sometimes is, but possessing the fruit of Christ in the confidence of faith, the destruction of guilt, the fellowship restored. Troubled we may be, but sure; with a deeper repentance, but one due to a deeper faith; and we may be pressed with care, but we rest secure in Him who careth for us.

Christianity, then, has made its great appeal to the world as a religion of such redemption and reconciliation, of redemption from guilt once for all, and reconciliation with God for ever. And both centre not in Christ merely, but in the Cross of Christ.

There is no doubt about this for the apostles. But question has been raised if it was so with Christ Himself. His references to the Cross are few; and fewer still those that connect it with redemption. As a preacher He had far more to say about the Kingdom than the Cross. And as a personality His witness, it is said, was wholly to the Father and not to Himself. He was no part of His own gospel, so far as His preaching went. So it is urged. And the contention means, of course, that there is a great gulf between the preaching of Christ and that of His apostles—especially Paul. This raises a twofold question:

*1. Is Christ a preacher for us in the same sense as He was for His own generation?*

*2. Insofar as He was a preacher at all, did He preach the gospel?*

In this article I will deal with the first question only.

The issue raised by it is one of great moment for our whole construction of Christ's life-work. In what He said to the Jews round Him, had He any direct or conscious reference to a remote posterity? Was he speaking to a real public, or, over their heads, to far later ages?

There can be little doubt about the answer, surely. There is no sign that He was talking over the heads of the people round Him in order to reach us through the reporters. He never made His disciples His reporters in the sense of taking His words down or memorizing them for a distant future. He never examined them to see if they had got them correctly. It is now freely recognized that He regarded the mission of His life as confined to Israel—at least till near its close. The Gentiles did not enter into His direct concern while He was dealing with His nation by parable or miracle. Allusions to their reception of these but point His rebukes to Israel for its rejection of Himself; and miracles to Gentiles did not flow, but were wrung from Him. Insofar as He was preacher and teacher, insofar as the influence of His historic personality went, He was a prophet to Israel alone. He met His people with a bona fide call, and not one perfunctory and useless, whose failure was foregone. It was a call, at first hopeful, to the greatest decision and the deepest repentance to which that people had ever been summoned by all the prophetic line. It was not impossible that he should have been heard, though (by the identification of Israel with Pharisaism, as of Catholicism with Curialism) it soon grew improbable. He took His mission to Israel with entire seriousness. With all His heart He taught not only the lost sheep, but at first the national soul. But without the effect He sought. He failed with His public. And it was His failure as prophet that extorted His resources as Redeemer. The Kingdom, His great theme, could only be established in His Cross. It was His

desertion as preacher that cast Him on His greatest work of becoming the preacher's Gospel. It was His ill- success with Israel that turned Him to a world commensurate with the super-national greatness of His soul. And the Cross, which seemed to His own at first but as a martyrdom, became His one grand work. Israel's martyr became the world's Saviour. When the Cross was forced upon Him (at whatever point this came home), it broke open as the world-Cross. It was and is the universal element in Christianity, as the conscience it saved is in Humanity. And when the agony seized Him, its immediate grief was the grief of the spiritual patriot at the loss and guilt of His land. It was His poignant insight into the doom which His very Grace had brought to His own through its refusal. If His deepest woe was His sympathy with the holy Grace of God in its wound, perhaps His nearest was the fearful judgement which seemed to Him the one result of His life to His own; whom yet He had not come to judge with wrath but to save with all the love of His divine heart.

The staple of His preaching appealed directly to Israel alone, without *arriere pensée*.<sup>1</sup> He was not consciously using an Israel hopeless from the first as a mere sounding-board to reach the world. Israel was not His mere audience for posterity. His conceptual world was that of Israel. It was God's old controversy with Israel that He entered, Israel's historic mission and problem. He did not speak the language nor seek the ideals of pagan culture. He did not make any overtures or concessions to it. His teaching took up the Jewish tradition. His parables are couched in the social dialect of His land and age, however universal the idea they enclose. He does not boggle about economic situations which His gospel has now antiquated. 'Can I not do what I will with My own?' His words are not discourses so much as demands or appeals

1 Ulterior motive, mental reservation.

illustrated in the current national vein of the *Maschal*.<sup>11</sup> We do not, and could not, use that style with His effect. We follow His model in this regard sparingly. Our sermons need not deal in illustration to the extent His did, or, if we illustrate, we use the apologue less. He took that form because it was the form of His people. The oriental has always used some form of apologue to a degree foreign to the West. Had Jesus been born in Greece He would have used dialectic or oratory as naturally as He used parable. And had He been a Latin He might have been as periodic as Cicero. The style of His preaching reflected the form and pressure of His place. His economic system, for instance, is patriarchal. He contemplates neither Roman law, nor modern conditions, nor the social results of His own Gospel. He was not a social reformer. He used the relations He found without criticizing them. In 'The Labourers in the Vineyard' (as I have said) He has no hesitation in using existing, but antiquated, not to say arbitrary, social relations to symbolize the equal dependence of all men on God's free Grace. So with the Dishonest Steward. There is no hint anywhere that He was dissatisfied with the social relations current, or aimed at subverting them. Social inequalities do not seem to have greatly troubled Him, and He did not contemplate adjusting them in a new programme. He was more anxious about the effect of wealth on its possessor than on the community or on the classes below. He was engrossed with His relation to Israel, and Israel's to its holy God; and He dealt in the only language Israel could understand. His life-work, as distinct from His death (shall we say His professional work?) had no conscious address to the Gentiles. When He treated them as He treated Israel it was with a struggle. I am thinking, of course, of the way He was overborne by the Syrophoenician

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew proverbial speech, as in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament

or the Centurion.

And just as little did He deliberately address Himself to posterity. He was not dictating *mémoires pour servir*.<sup>1</sup> He knew He would survive and rule in a community, but (or, therefore) we find no provision or precaution for the survival of His discourses. The new junctures should be met by the new insight of the Spirit to the Church, and not by a preceptual use of His words. And Tolstoi is quite wrong, and all his kind are quite unhistoric. If Christ preach to us it is not as He preached to His contemporaries; it is in His Spirit. There is much for the most trained and skilful minds to discount and to adjust in applying to our conditions His treatment of His own. Not only was His milieu national, but His speech, like His miracles, was always 'occasional', always *ad hoc* as well as *ad rem*. If it went to the eternal heart of the matter it also rose from the situation of the hour and addressed it. It is true He was not understood by His public, but that was not because He was reaching over His present public in the effort to touch another centuries away. Such at least is not the preaching style of the Synoptics. His ideas and calls were for immediate use, and they were clothed in current forms. His style had nothing archaic, His mind nothing cumbrous, His thoughts nothing dreamy. His obscurity was due to the obsession of His public by the God of the period and the prince of this world. His gospel was hidden not because men were dense, but because they were lost, because of *moral* and not mental stupidity, because of a religious obsession, because Israel had become orthodox and pharisee. His reading of the situation was absolutely relevant to it, and it was hidden only to religious dullness. As a preacher, He won His popularity by His style, and lost it by His meaning. As soon as He was understood He was deserted. As His invitation was a *bona*

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'a journal or diary to be used', i.e. a diary for public consumption.

*fide* call, His rejection was a real rejection. It was not the public's neglect of a dreamer, it was its repudiation of a realist who angered His time by touching its nerve. He stirred a resentment only too intelligent in all but moral insight. He did not simply trouble His enemies, He judged them; and they knew it. What He presented to His day both in His word and person was what He presents to every age—a moral ultimatum. But yet it was not the same as He presents to us—by all the difference made by His death and what it implies once for all—for His Cross can never be repeated. The Gospel comes to us in a form given it from its rejection by those to whom Christ first came. His preaching of His Kingdom to His public lacked that which is the staple of the Apostolic kerugma [proclamation] and the marrow of ours—Himself in His death. But it was the preaching of one whose person was identical with His message, His religion with His revelation. The Kingdom He preached was His own reign. On the few occasions when He spoke of His suffering and death it was not to the public, it was but to His disciples, and perhaps to the inner circle only of those; even to them only on the most agitated and exalted occasions, which broke the crust of His habitual reserve. We, on the contrary, hold up the Cross to all we meet as the whole gospel. For the whole Christ was in it and the whole Kingdom.

It is a mistake, therefore, to speak of Christ as the typical preacher unless we are careful what we mean by the gospel. Whatever He may have thought it expedient to preach about Himself, He has left us, by the very way He preached other things, nothing but Himself to preach. If He preached the Kingdom it was only as the King could whom we preach. We cannot read the Kingdom except through the Cross and its royalty. If He preached the Father it was only as the Son could; and the Son whose supreme revelation of the Father was His revelation of the Father's holiness on the Cross.

Christ is Preacher, as He is Revealer, only in the exercise of His task as Redeemer. His function was not to be the herald but the hero. His preaching days were to His consummate work of the Cross what the Baptist was to Himself— forerunners. He began by preparing men for the Kingdom, He ended by setting it up in Himself and His supreme deed. His great work at last was not to declare, nor even to offer, not to seek, but to achieve; and to achieve for the most part in silence, even about the very Cross which came to fill all His concern and taxed all His will. He does not denounce sin, nor only convince us of it, but destroy it, condemn and execute it in the flesh. Nor does He proclaim righteousness; He establishes it once for all. He is not witness but judge—not prophet, but King.

Christ began in the form of a prophet; but He prophesied as one much more than a prophet, as only Messiah could. And He behaved as Messiah in a way that only the Son of God could. His Messiahship rested on His Sonship, not His Sonship on His Messiahship. He was not Son of God as Messiah. He was Messiah as being Son of God. He preached not in an interpretive way but in a creative way. He did not simply proclaim and expound the Kingdom of God, like a prophet; nor did He simply put Himself at the head of His Kingdom, like a Messiah. He did what none of the Messiahs could do, what they failed because they could not do—he created the men that composed the Kingdom. He gave men power from the endless resource of power He felt in Himself. Nothing is so striking in Mark as His early consciousness of superhuman power. His every act of power was but an expression of His soul's power. Thus His words were more than words. They were deeds. When Jeremiah says the ordinance of nature might fail, but the purpose of God could never fail, he was speaking on a very different level from Christ when He said, 'Heaven and earth may pass away, but

My words shall never pass away'. Christ did not mean that though He perished truth was so. He meant that if worlds crashed they would collide at the word of Him whose words in their ears were even then works in their Soul. Every word He spoke becomes in this respect a function of the Cross He achieved. We can see that now in the Spirit. While He was but a preacher He yet preached as Redeemer. When He spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven in parables He was making the Kingdom. He was not uttering a doctrine, nor even making a claim. His word only escapes being a new law by being a gospel, a new power. He was exerting His creative power. He did not simply call to repentance; He created repentance. He gave it. He called to repentance in the giving spirit of His habitual love. He demanded much, but only because He gave much more. He baptized with the Holy Ghost. Do not think of the Holy Ghost as a genial light, but as mighty power, almighty, creative power. He spoke from reserves of such power. He was Himself the energy in His own words, the effective thing, the creative thing. His sense of Himself was always a sense of power, and of outgoing power to bless men's needs, not of absorbent power to exploit their powers. His every word was a work. His loving was always a doing, never an enjoying; so that when He exchanged preaching for doing and the parable for the Cross He was but changing the form of what He had been doing all along. He taught and He died as the New Creator, however veiled at first that consciousness was.



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By the Gospel we may mean one of several things.

It may mean what Jesus said, the express message of Jesus as the greatest of the prophets. His work is then declaratory— with passion, compassion, conviction, and effect, but still declaratory or exhibitory. He could be thus the exemplary preacher, first in power, model in meekness, and standard in matter for all Christian time. The gnomic and pictorial style would then be our aim. And all testimony of Him, even the apostolic, we must trim to the type of such relics of His discourse as have reached us, or to such a way of handling life. The didactic parts of the Gospels would become the doctrinal test of the Epistles and the face value of Christ's express witness to Himself the sole ground and measure of our faith in Him. And we have the situation created for the New Testament by Harnack's statement that Jesus did not preach Himself at all, but only the Father and the Kingdom. He is then the martyr of His teaching, and not the propitiation of His gospel.

If Harnack's position were true it would only indicate anew the occasional and gradual character of Christ's

teaching.

Throughout He preached the Father as only the Son could, the Kingdom as only the King could, the prophetic word as only the creating Word could. But, for this function, and for the full revelation of either Father, or Kingdom, or Word, something more than a manner of teaching was required, as the event showed. He spoke during His life with a manner of authority that flowed from His person; but when He spoke to Paul, or John, and inspired them after His death, it was much more than manner. His teaching then had His finished work behind it, and all we mean by the Holy Ghost. The difficulty we have to face, if Christ was mainly a teacher, or even but a personal influence, is this—that, like prophetism altogether, He was a failure with those who came under Him at first hand. His personal influence through His doctrine averted neither His unpopularity, His desertion, nor His Cross. It did not prevent the people it was turned on from disowning Him, nor the disciples from leaving Him, nor the authorities from killing Him. Indeed it provoked all three. How then are we to expect another effect from it, taken alone, upon the world of posterity? It must become diluted by distance, and enfeebled accordingly. It reaches the world only as a record, and an ancient one, always growing in antiquity and losing in historic directness. We are ever farther removed from the active personality of the teacher and such good effect as it did have. Its power must leak in transmission and lose by distance. But as a matter of fact that has not been the action of Christ in the world. His power has grown with distance—the power even of His teaching. How is this? It was never the slow saturation of the public by those precepts or doctrines that gave them their present place. For as precepts especially they are but very partially honoured even by the Church, and in some cases frankly ignored. Besides, they were not used by those apostles who founded the Church—being replaced by their

own advice as circumstances suggested. The triumph of Christ's doctrines, so far as it has gone, has not been a posthumous redress due to men's tardy awakening to the value of a neglected genius. For they were not, like the light of genius, flashes of fresh interpretation of life which experience gradually caught and verified, but they went in the face of the natural life, and mortified it, and crucified it. It was not reflection on Christ's teaching, and it was not the *desiderium tam cari capitis*,<sup>1</sup> that restored the disciples to their spiritual loyalty, and raised it once and for all to apostolic faith.

What was it that produced the change? Some answers would remove the stress from the teaching, and place it upon the personality. In His cross He is then the protagonist of man's tragic fate, but not the propitiation of man's guilty soul. The change in the disciples was produced by a revisit, actual or believed, from His immortal and insuperable person. Ever since Schleiermacher the person of Christ has been placed in front of His teaching, the revelation in Himself has cast the true light upon all His word, and we have come to realize the autobiography in them. And no doubt that has been a great move in the right direction, and it was long overdue when it was made. And, as I have hinted, it supplies an expansion and corrective to Harnack's startling theme. But even if we take it so, if we recognize the effect of Christ's personal reappearance after death, is that sufficient explanation of the immense and permanent change in the apostles' faith and action? Was it the re-emergence of Christ's personality as invincible to death, was it the mere indomitable persistence of His vital principle, the quenchlessness of His Spirit that raised them to a point from which they never looked back? Did He not Himself deny the possibility that true faith should be produced by a *revenant*?<sup>2</sup>—to say nothing

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1 Literally, 'the love of such a dear head'.

2 Literally, 'one returned from the dead or from exile'.

of forgiveness for cowardly treason? 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rose from the dead.' Was the whole soul and world of the apostles changed, was the Church set up, by the rehabilitation of the Master after an interval of arrest caused by a premature and unfortunate death, which merely retarded His Messianic schemes and delayed the winning of the campaign by the loss of an early battle? Was the Church founded upon the Resurrection merely as a resurrection? Did the Church rise upon the rising of an inextinguishable personality, which there emerged from the grave as if it had been no more than a tunnel or a retreat? Was it His mere experience and survival of death, was it an enlarged pertinacity of person, that turned the historic Jesus into the Church's Christ? Did He just emerge faithful and purified, in His grand degree, from the fire we must all pass through? Had He gone there just 'to prove His Soul'? Was that the impression? Or did He not rather return from the fire, not as one who had only passed through it, but as one who had extinguished the flames—their more than conqueror, their destroyer? Did He not stand on the earth which He revisited with the old moral world under His feet, with a new moral world achieved in the crisis of all His soul, and realized in His unearthly power, reign, and joy? Did He not now face mankind full of the Eternity He had won for them, the spiritual stability that nothing possible could now overthrow, and the moral, the holy power that nothing could at last withstand? Surely the crucial effect of the Resurrection was its evidence, not of an unimpaired spiritual vitality, not of the passing of an eclipse, but of an objective achievement for human destiny in Christ's death, a final business done with the God who engrossed Him in His death, the knot of a whole world loosed, the world-foe vanquished for ever, the final and absolute conquest won, the everlasting Salvation brought

in. The Cross was the work that Christ did, the Resurrection was the work that God, well pleased for ever, did upon Him in its wake. God raised Him up when He had overcome the world for good and all. The Resurrection was not so much the finished work, but God's seal upon it. Historically it may have been the Resurrection that founded the Church, but it was the Cross that won the Resurrection by founding the New Covenant of the Gospel.

Such at least is the burthen of New Testament testimony. The Resurrection there is not merely the survival of Christ's personality (far less its mere reanimation); but it is the due divine seal upon a crucial moral achievement and a victory once for all, which drew upon the whole spiritual resources of that unique personality in an act correspondingly great and final, and which gave it not only complete expression, but practical effect as decisive for the whole spiritual world of man's relations with God. As in the Cross we have Christ's great and final act upon God, so in the Resurrection we have God's great and final act on Christ. I would press the great difference between the Cross as the affecting expression in martyrdom of Christ's prophetic personality and the Cross as the purposed and final achievement of that world-person, as the practical effect it took for God and man. Or, taking the Cross as the completion of Christ's personality, I would distinguish between such completion, taken aesthetically, as the finest spectacle of self-realization by sacrifice to man's tragic fate, and taken ethically, as the final moral act for man's conscience and history before God. The one idea is artistic, like so much of our modern religion, the other is dynamic and evangelical. The one is a moral marvel, the other a new creation. We have had much to say in the name of religion about developing to flower and fruit all that it is in us to be, realizing ourselves, rounding the sphere of our personality, achieving our soul, being true to ourselves, and so forth. That

is all very well as a youthful and idealist way of beginning. But few have set to work on this seriously without finding out that we have little power in our personality, even when it is reinforced, to be anything to God's purpose, and that such a programme of life may be in the end more effective for the making of prigs than personalities. It is morally impossible that a real personality should be developed on any such self-centred lines, or made spherical or symmetrical by rotating on its own axis. To shrink your personality work at it; take yourself with absurd seriousness; sacrifice everything to self-realization, self-expression. Do this and you will have produced the prig of culture, who is in some ways worse than the prig of piety. So also if you would lose holiness, work at it. Do everything, not because it is God's will, but because you have taken up sanctity as a profession—shall I say an ambition? Be more concerned to realize your own holiness than to understand God's. Study your soul freshly and your Bible conventionally. Cherish a warm piety and a poor creed. But if you really would save your soul, lose it. Seek truth first, and effect thereby. Beware of ethical self-seeking. To develop your personality forget it. Devote yourself not to it but to some real problem and work, some task which you will probably find to your hand. The great personalities have not laboured to express or realize themselves, but to do some real service to the world, and service they did not pick and choose but found laid upon them. Their best work was 'occasional'— i.e. in the way of concrete duty. They did not live for set speeches but for business affairs. They found their personality, their soul, in the work given them to do; given them because of that soul, indeed, but never effected by petting it. They found their personality by losing it, and came to themselves by erasing themselves. Their ideal was not, 'I must become this or that' or 'I must produce my impression, and leave my mark', but 'I must will, I must do, this or that

obedience'. To effect something is the way to become something.

So Christ's purpose, whether in His preaching or in His Cross, was not primarily to stamp His whole personality on the world in one careful, concentrated, and indelible expression of it, but to finish a work God gave Him to do; than which there is nothing more impressive for men. His purpose was, with all the might of His personality, to do a certain thing with God for the world. He was at the last preoccupied with God, which is the final way to command man. His engrossing work was not to leave an impression on the public; and His Gospel in the apostles was more than their witness to an impression on their experience. His work's total effect on the moral universe was something far greater than the impression he made even on the apostles. His object was to do something with God for the world, and only in that way to act on it. His preaching was not impressionist, it was evangelical, seeking to adjust the conscience more than to delight or even fortify the soul. His death effected something intimate for God and critical for the conscience with God, something which only *His* personality could do. But it could never do it by striving to achieve itself and stamp itself on time, but only by devoting itself utterly to the holy and redemptive Will of God for the hallowing of it, for its satisfaction. True, He was 'priest for Himself'. He maintained His own personal life with God in the offering of Himself for us. But He was not 'priest of Himself', like the idol of a coterie. There is no sign at the end that Christ was either guided or sustained by thinking of the impression His death would make on the world, but only by concentrating on His offering of Himself to God. His way was the way of regeneration, not of religious impressionism. He did not rise above the fear of death by visions of the grand result of His work to men. He had no such visions. Had He had them there could have been no anguish for joy that man

was reborn into the world. All would have been submerged in glory. He overcame by His perfect committal to the will of God amid the collapse of insight into its reason, by His perfect confession, amid actual sinful conditions, of the holiness of God, by His pleasing it, satisfying it, sanctifying it. Our salvation was built in an eclipse and rigged with curses dark; in losing the Father's face (but not the Father), He became a curse for us—in the true incarnation He became sin for us. His death was certainly service to man, but for Him it was an offering to God. It went round to man that way. It was with God alone He had then to do. His saving act was in yielding to the divine 'must' more than to the human need. Nor can we say, even if we take His words alone, that the divine 'must' arose simply out of God's merciful perception of human need; for Christ's obedience was, in His own mind, to a holy God and not simply a pitiful, it was to hallow His name, and not simply give His blessing. We need kindness oftener, but we need grace more. In His death He stood for the hallowing of God's name as He had stood all along, whether in His rebukes of the Pharisees or in the cleansing of the Temple. When He stood as prophet on the side of God against Judaism He was but doing, in one phase of it, what He did compendiously and essentially in His priestly death. He stood on God's side against men, even while He stood for them. He died before God and not before men. And it was God's judgement that slew Him more even than man's. He was directly serving God rather than man; and about the reaction on Himself and His sanctity He did not think at all. If God in Christ was reconciling the world, Christ in God was reconciling God in a sense most real, however carefully we guard the phrase. He was not indeed procuring Grace, nor changing anger to love; but He was altering the relation on both sides (as personal relation must always be altered) by presenting the consummate oblation of that holy obedience

wherein the Holy Father was always pleased, wherein, finding Himself, the Father always found a full complacency and complete satisfaction. 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' That contains the principle of the Christian doctrine of satisfaction, so lost in many forensic theologies. Would there be noticeable objection to the doctrine of satisfaction if it meant the joy and fulness in which one soul of infinitely holy love finds itself so perfectly and eternally in another that all men at last followed the spell?

Such is the apostolic gospel, the dominant note, the organizing note, in the New Testament creed, in the *total* teaching of Christ. It was for the sake of this Gospel of God that the gospel of the apostles was preached, and the gospels themselves were written. We get the secret of the Evangelists in the writings of Paul that preceded them—to say nothing of Peter. There we find the Gospel of the Church which the gospels arose to edify and sustain. There we find the Gospel whose product the gospels were, the Gospel whose preaching made the Church that required the gospels for its use. These were not unchosen scraps of memorabilia, stray memoirs filed, flyleaves of episode or anecdote in the life of a spiritual hero. They crystallize on a message and a faith, as the great prominence of the passion shows, no less than the drift towards it. The apostles were not mere chroniclers. They were charged with a message rather than a memoir. And the evangelists, whoever they were, were apostles in function if not in name. They had apostles behind them. And the message the apostles preached was not the Gospel Christ preached so much as the Gospel He was, and the Gospel He did when His preaching failed and ceased. The Gospel that made the Church was less what was said by Jesus than what was said about Him and about the Gospel He did. The gospel the apostles spoke was the fruit and echo of the Gospel He achieved. It was uttered, too, by men with whom His earthly

teaching did not succeed, who had to be shocked into their spiritual senses once for all by the stroke of His death and the sting of His resurrection. And the front of the message was that He was delivered for our sins, in the deep sense in which the vision of the exilian prophet declared the Saviour must be. This made the preaching of the apostles differ from that of Jesus Himself. Preaching up to the Cross is one thing, and some are hut at that disciple stage. Preaching down from it is another, and that is the work of an apostle. The Saviour belongs to neither category. He is not the preacher but the thing preached, the Gospel itself. The Cross, as the real act now complete at the moral centre of the spiritual world, made an essential difference in the historic situation of the soil, and in what was to be said to it. The apostles preached under a historic something which Christ only preached towards, which He preached with much reserve, almost reluctance, as strong men speak of their greatest sorrow or their greatest creed. The apostles had nothing else to manifest hut what He often hid, and sometimes shunned. Even they were more solemn and less voluble about it than we are. They rejoiced in nothing but what had been His holy dread. And thus it can be more wrong than right to speak of Jesus as the model preacher, or to test the Gospel wholly by His express words to Israel, or even to His disciples.

Clearly I have been using the word 'Gospel' at intervals in two senses, and the ambiguity may easily create confusion. I have spoken of it as the apostolic message, and I have spoken of it as the redeeming act; now as the apostles' preaching about Christ, and now as God's saving action in Christ. The latter, of course, is the ultimate sense. The apostolic preaching was but man's gospel of God's. Man's gospel in word was the reverberation of God's Gospel in deed. It was the returning wave on earth's waters caused by the crisis on the eternal shore. It was God's Work returning on itself in a Word

which it created, a Word which was also a work, as being a function of His Work. The one acted by inspiration, the other by creation. The one was inspired by what the other did. It is this greater and final sense of the word Gospel that restores it in its full sense to Jesus after all. What we have in the life of Jesus is not a witness of God, nor a creature of God, but the incarnate act of God. We have the very work of God's grace in the activity of Christ, a God of grace at work, and no mere testimony of it. We have God reconciling, not a reconciliation redolent of God. It is not the mere message of redemption, even from God's own throne, nor its echo in an apostle, nor the impression it made on the Church. Certainly it is not a theory of the message or of the deed; which Christ never uttered, nor even had. When we reach the reality it is the achievement of God Himself in the moral universe, and of God present not simply with Christ but in Him, not breathing in His personality, nor ministering to His Spirit, but living and acting in it, God living, dying, and redeeming in His Son. It is the word of Him whose Word is at once a person and a deed co- extensive with that person. It is the revelation to us that the invitation is the Redemption itself, that the Cross is itself the call, that the call is the act, that the act is the new creation and not a preliminary of it, itself the saving of the world and not a mere postulate of it. Christ was the apostle and high priest of our calling in the sense that in Him God was His own apostle and preached in Christ's atoning act. God in Christ's Cross was His own priest. As Ritschl puts the offices, Christ as prophet and priest was so supreme, perfect, and final that He was also King, and embodied in His Redemption the holy Sovereignty of God. 'Christ was present in the Sacrament not simply as a person but as crucified and broken for our sins. Considered in the excellency of His person, He might be an object for the faith of angels; but as crucified He is fitted for sinners. And He

becomes not an object of love for the excellency of His person, but of faith and confidence as a means and ordinance for the salvation of sinners.' So Goodwin.

The Gospel, then, which is the power and standard behind every testimony of it, the Gospel as the apostles learned it from the whole Christ, is God's act of grace in Christ crucified (an act appreciable only by a responsive act of ours called faith) in which He set upon a new ground (which yet was eternal and from the beginning) not only man's whole relation to Himself, but also His own relation to man. This change is not a new affection in God; for the grace and mercy at the source of it are inseparable from His eternal changeless holiness, and even the Cross could not procure it. But it is a new relation and treatment on both sides; for you cannot treat your son in his self-alienation as you could treat him in his filial confidence, though you loved him no less. But in Christ man stands before a gracious God, and stands in alienation no more.

The redeeming and atoning act of God filled the whole personality of Christ, and covered His whole life. It was the principle of it, whatever the form it took in His consciousness or His situation for the moment. But in the act of the Cross it had its consummate action, which gave value to all the rest, both prospectively and retrospectively. The purpose of that act was to reveal the holy love of God in the only way it could be revealed to sinful and hostile men—as in deadly, final, active, victorious collision with active sin, within one collective personality. This is to say, the Revelation of the Holy to us could only be Redemption. The eye to see it had to be created in us. Holiness could be revealed to sin only by an act of Redemption, by a Redemption whose principle consisted in that which active holiness always is as it is established—the reaction on sin, the judgement of sin and its destruction. For judgement was He come into the world. But, according to

what has been said, it was a judgement whose condemnation meant sin's execution and destruction as the negative side of what sets up the holy reign. In Christ's Cross sin was executed in that God's holiness was established for ever.

But one of the cardinal Christian errors of the time is that the idea of judgement has almost disappeared from the current conception either of sin, sanctity, or gospel, in a way that it never did from even the preaching of Jesus. The gospel has ceased in many quarters to be an ethical, and therefore a social, Gospel at all on God's side. It has become on that side only sympathetic; and the ethic appears only in the human and individual results—consequently even there with quite inadequate power. We were told, and truly, that the forensic theories of the Cross were not ethical enough—though they were a great ethical advance on theories which preceded them about tricking or trading with the devil, or satisfying feudal honour. And we were told, with less truth, that the one ethical reform in interpreting our relations with God was to transfer grace from the courts to the family, from the imperial to the domestic, to discard every legal suggestion, and read everything in the light of the Fatherhood, and mostly the Fatherhood to the single soul. This alone (it was said) was the burden of Christ's message. But in practice it came to mean substituting for the forensic idea a conception which was only affectional and not ethical, individual and not collective as the Redemption was. It was overlooked, in the reaction from judicial categories, that the Father of Christ is the Holy Father and the universal, that, while the forms of the jurist may pass, the living holiness is the one eternal and infrangible thing in the universe, with an inextinguishable claim, and a claim on the conscience of the whole race and its history. We cannot ethicize the relation to God till fatherhood itself is ethicized, and the name hallowed, the holiness met, on the absolute scale. For you do not introduce the

moral element by merely introducing the paternal. You must take the holiness at least as seriously as the affection, and the world as seriously as the individual, if you are to do justice to the Fatherhood of God on the scale of affairs. And you cannot take in earnest this holiness without giving judgement, and a public judgement, its own place in the gospel act of the Cross. If we would but see that the real incarnation was not in Christ's being made flesh for us, but in His being made sin for us! I hope it is not too much to say that no one who has the due response to that truth in his religious experience can fail to discern its action in the Jesus of the gospels. And it may be among the moral fruits of the present calamity of war,<sup>1</sup> and such a war, that the idea of collective judgement, of which Christ had so much to say, should return to a place nearer the centre of our religion, and to a vital function, indeed, in the Cross of our worship.

This place has not been given to judgement in the pseudo-liberal version of Christianity. And the omission not only places it in collision with the New Testament. It is a moral defect at its core, which makes it often as ineffective for the world of adult or devilish sin, for spiritual wickedness in high places of the soul, as it is engaging for the young and the kind. The Cross, which is the source and centre, the principle and foundation, of the whole moral universe, has become but the apotheosis of noble self-sacrifice, the crisis of the tragedy in human fate, and the culmination of the native spirituality of man. It ceases to be the hallowing even in man's guilt of the holy love of God, the origin and focus of the Christian conscience and the creator of Christian ethic. It loses its prime reference to the holiness of God, and ceases thus to be chiefly an adjustment with the whole moral soul of things. It

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<sup>1</sup> That is World War I. So also the references to the 'debacle', on pp. 100 and 115, and the 'European war', on pp. 84, 85.

becomes aesthetic rather than moral, the centre of religious sentiment rather than of the world-conscience. Public and social morals especially are sentimentalized in a non-moral way, which is fruitful in due course of the immoral. The moral note of authority is lost, however a seemly and humane piety may gain. We are taught to think much of what was suffered on the Cross for our admiration, or our relief, and little of the judgement that fell upon our sin there. Salvation is not a decisive thing done for the world once for all in the Cross, but it becomes identified with our repeated forgiveness. It becomes individual only, and even atomic. And so forgiveness itself, with nothing to hold it up in the way of holiness, of moral seriousness absolute and universal, sinks to be merely amnesty on a wide and ready scale. It becomes a mere 'making it up' with God on the private scale. There are even more sickly levels. And we shall not be able to keep Christianity or our preaching above them, we shall not do justice to the element of judgement in the preaching of Jesus, unless we are taught by the New Testament to find in the death of Christ the judgement of God on the world on a scale far vaster and more solemn than a European war; unless we, therefore, find our one redemption in the effect of that death on a holy God rather than on poor man, and upon our sin more even than on our sympathies.

To restore to the Cross this focal and creative moral place in some high and final form is the main correction which the Christ-taught Church, by a positive and ample theology, must make to a liberal religion trying to ignore theology. It is to make Christianity a religion of real redemption and not mere illumination, real regeneration and not mere reformation, a religion of conscience and not mere conduct or sentiment. The more we dwell on the relation between God and man as a moral one, the more inadequate does a gospel of mere fatherhood become, however extensive or intimate we

may conceive it to be. We want a conception of love less quantitative and more qualitative, with more stress on the holiness of it than on its intensity or range, if we are to be led by the thought of God that ruled the word of Jesus. It is not breadth but depth that is now the need. The modern demand that we moralize God is a sound one. But the more we moralize God's dealings with man the more firmly we must start from His holiness and its reaction against sin in judgement. The holy is the foundation of all religion. And we must recognize an eternal and fundamental movement in a holy God to judgement—not primarily a demand for suffering or for punishment, but for judgement, for the assertion of holy love in dark, mortal, and final conflict with sin. If this was not in the Cross of Christ then there is yet a fearful looking for it to come. 'Either Christ or you must bear the weight of your sins and the curse due to them.' For the holy law cannot be set aside even by the compassionate movements of God's own heart. The temper of the hour on the other hand is that no divine claim is so holy as pity, and no ill so great as human misery, that anything may be sacrificed to give course to compassion, or anything done to shorten pain or avoid it.

The element of divine demand has much faded out of our Christianity before the element of humane blessing; which again does not echo the preaching of Jesus. Christ, it is said, came to be beneficent and not exigent; or to be exigent only on the haves, and beneficent to the have-nots. But Christianity can give to men only as it asks of them. (Why, even our autonomy means a *nomos* [law] upon the *autos* [self].) Its law and its blessing are inseparable in the Cross as elsewhere. And the demand it sets up is as wide as its gift. *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.*<sup>1</sup> But it does not save our person and then ask

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'Give what you command, and command what you wish'—a precise translation of a sentence from Augustine's Confessions.

certain acts, or certain gifts in a secondary way, as acknowledgments or quit-rents. If its boon save the person it is the whole person it requires. The responsibility is as great as the gift. The love is itself the judgement. It is morally useless to ask Christian contributions where men do not contribute themselves; and they will not, they cannot, do that where they do not feel that their whole soul's blessed release came by an act which did full justice to the demand of God and His urgent Eternity. What saves them sanctifies the divine demand, it does not suspend it. It spreads it over the whole soul. Christ's preaching was very exigent, with the exigence of one who believed in the indivisible unity of the soul, in its single eye, and who claimed it all. But much in the tone of our public opinion on moral questions of public rank testifies to what we have lost by losing the sense of the moral objectivity and cruciality of the Cross, of its spiritual finality, its absolute judgement of sin, and its supreme offering to the infrangible holiness of God as the only radical way of dealing with the last need of men. Is any need of ours so great as our need of a justifier with God! But is this really a conviction of the Churches? At the present time (thank God!) personal relations are more kind than they have before been, but they may be, perhaps, less sincere; and public policy in a nation is more pitiful but often less just; and therefore authority gradually subsides. There is less of the finer conscience in great matters—as indeed we should expect when the greatest matter of all—the Cross—ceases to appear great and fontal to the conscience, and is so only to the heart. Fraternity takes the place of the communion of saints, and patriotism of general justice. It is the age of Fatherhood in faith, yet children grow more independent and disobedient, even in Christian homes. I have often known the children of good Christian people to be as morally ruined by the laxity flowing from sentimental views of God's Fatherhood as any ever were by the stern old

views of the Sovereignty. Gentlemanly form replaces moral dignity, and the free spending of money (with or without good taste) hushes question as to how it came. And heaven and hell dropping from practical faith as realities or motives— dropping from the place they had for Jesus—have become a kind of mythology in the Christian faith—in effect I mean, whether in creed or not.

Amid so much wreck in things around us it will not have been all loss if we recover from the preaching of Jesus some lost belief in the judgement of God as an integral element in His Redemption, and as a vital factor in the Gospel of Christ and the Cross of our salvation.

## —THREE—

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### THE MIND OF CHRIST ON HIS DEATH

Did Jesus say about Himself every word that the fourth Gospel reports? If He did, is the Jesus of the fourth Gospel the Jesus of the Synoptics? Could the Jesus of the Synoptics think or speak of Himself as the Jesus of John did? Yet we recall that exalted hour in Matthew 11:25-27. Could the Jesus of John not lie deep in the Jesus of the Synoptics? Must He be always fully conscious of all He was? Or might He not be reserved—for other reasons than mere accommodation? Would it not argue some lack of historic sense as well as of spiritual insight to say that Jesus in His lifetime could speak, or even think, of what He was, and was doing, in the terms which became inevitable to Him after His personality was perfect, and His work done, in death and resurrection? It was the same Jesus, the same personality, in grief as in glory, in eclipse as in power. The same Jesus as spoke of Himself in the Synoptics also spoke of Himself to Paul and John, and in them and through them. But He spoke differently in these—speaking not only through their mentality, but from His own

final mastery of the world. The glorified Christ, of whom this John has so much to say, is not a Christ illuminated with an overhead ray turned on Him, but a Christ whose inner light broke out in an achieved consummation of power. He is not a Christ in the light but a Christ of the Spirit, the Light of Life. Such glory is not illumination but transfiguration. The light does not fall on Him, it flows from Him. It is the complete revelation of His true and latent nature come to a head in His complete act. It is the overflow of His intrinsic fulness upon a fulness of time. It is Christ coming to His true self, and determined into His own native power (Rom. 1:4).

He did not in His life, therefore, preach the whole gospel, unless we include in the message the Preacher, the personality of whom all His words were sacramental, and the thing that He had it in His person at the end to do. Nor did He in any way before His death utter, or give effect to, His whole self. There was more in that mighty person than anything short of His redeeming death could realize, or anything less than His Resurrection express, or anything lower than His Holy Spirit reveal. He said, indeed, from time to time what the occasion demanded, and always the deep thing, the right thing, and the decisive. But it was the thing always right for His complete work, the thing the final Saviour should say at that stage; not necessarily the right thing measured by the moment's success, or by a sectional or a pagan ethic. (And, of course, not the thing that He judged would be theologically consistent with what the Spirit might one day teach about His death. ) His whole self did not receive effect till the consummation at once so fatal, so vital, and so final. On the third day He was perfected. His whole self is not in His biography. No soul, indeed, with a real history has its full self at any one stage of life. We never once possess our souls before we die. And Christ had a dramatic history, with a movement, a crisis, a culmination in it. Its summit emerged beyond the clouds of

earth. His whole action upon the world was a cumulative and ascending thing, as in His Church so in His life. In humbling Himself down, down, to the depths of death He kept rising always to the summit of resurrection. He ascended into hell. But at no point in His life's process till the crisis was over could He say the final word about His final work. If saying things had been His work, we might have expected the final work in some final word; and yet, in the way of a teaching word, there are so many things that we feel acutely He ought to have settled and has not. But if redemption was His one work, His redeemed feel more keenly still that there is no more to be done. All they need in Him they find. About that redemption, indeed, we wish often He had said more. But He could not while it was in the doing. Nor could He till He spoke to and in congenial Paul or John. And as to doing, what was to be done more? We might deny that He has done for the world what His Church has experienced and believed. But if He has done it, must we not admit that it is the one thing the world needs, and the one thing a living God was called on to do—to save? The Church exists to say He has saved and does save to the uttermost.

The old orthodoxy, like the old rationalism, had no historical perspective, no sense of development. It saw hut a map on a wall. It thought that the great truths of Revelation must have been equally well known at every stage in its course. And much ingenuity went to surmise what Adam's theology must have been when God talked with him in the garden, and when he knew that the Trinity looked out of the majestic plural, 'Let us make man', or to prove that the whole doctrine of satisfaction was compressed in the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. If we could light on some script of unfallen Adam carried from the Library of Eden to the cells of Tel-el-Amarna,

we might have an anticipation of the great theologies of the future, similar to the prognosis of future history which was found in the arithmetical conundrums of the Book of Daniel or the Apocalypse. But we have outgrown all that fantasy. We realize that revelation gives no programmes; nor was it a formed, finished, and alien mass dropped like an aerolite into history, or deposited from heaven like an erratic block on earth. However superhistoric, it was of history, and had itself a history. We realize that that history came in Christ to a climax which was also a perennial source; and that we now live in and from the fulness which the pre-Christian ages were but living towards. We are on the plateau to which they rose, 'the shining tableland to which our God Himself is sun and moon.

And is Christ Himself, in the drama of His soul, not an epitome of this waxing history of revelation? Did not His earthly life correspond, on its own rising plane, to the growing and tragic revelation in Israel? And does not His life after death answer to the final revelation which has ended Israel's mission and replaced it by the living Church? The crisis of His death was the culmination of the onward history at once of His person and of His nation. As Jesus was to Israel, so was His death and perfecting to Jesus. It took all Israel to produce the Christ we know; and it took all Christ to die so that we should know Him as He is and is to be. His earthly life was but the sacrament of His vital person, which found itself as these earthly occasions fell away. While he lived, was not His true life a buried life, a retracted life, a life limited in the expression, and perhaps in the sense, of itself; a life that had not yet fully come to itself in action? He could say more about Himself in Paul than He could in His own flesh. To expect in the teaching of His life the self-interpretation of Him which we find in the apostles is to commit the same error as if we should look for a dogmatic of Atonement in Numbers or in

Isaiah. The historians who would make Christ speak but in His life, and who find His whole self between birth and death, seem to show some lack of both historic tact and moral sense. It shows a lack of power to appreciate so great a personality if we think that it could come to itself during a life so brief, or even in a merely posthumous effect independent of personal continuity and control. God's revelation has always been by historic deeds more than by historic words or luminous examples. A soul like Christ's, also, could not be there only as an aesthetic spectacle. And where in His life was there a deed adequate to a personality so great? A personality like that could not put itself into any doctrine, nor into any number of sporadic deeds, however wonderful and beneficent, nor into anything less than the greatest act of history and the moral focus of the race. If His death was only a martyrdom, an arrest of the great deed, and His resurrection but a myth to cover the calamity, what a *manqué* tale! The mighty personality was nipped in its bloom. Its promise was shrivelled by His end. Its power was mocked by its fate in the world, its effect dissipated and wasted. Nay, but the real expression, the real effectuation, of His person was in that death as His final work. There alone He did a thing as vast as He was. To say His message was as great as God and greater than any act He did, is to mistake the message in its nature, and to put His religion below His revelation. To say He was as great even as Humanity, and yet to have that greatness put into no corresponding deed (i.e. no final deed) is to detach Him from the doers who most truly represent their race. To say that He left Himself to posterity would mean then but that He left a memory, or an ideal, or at most an inert mystic presence, but not a power, not the power, of a historic God in a world like this. But His messages were only facets of His mission; and His mission, according to the New Testament, our only source, was to do the historic work of a redeeming

God. He remains King and Lord as one in whose grand act we are more than conquerors—we are redeemed. The gospel in the gospel is His work; it is what His life effected in its death; that is the deed which made the real message, made it more than His conviction, and made it eternal. That is the gospel which all His preaching had deep in its heart. He brought God to man and man to God in a mystic act and on moral terms once for all. That was what His teaching did in word and in part to some, to an unstable group—as to some souls and such groups it may do still; but it was what His death did in deed for a Church, for a world, and for ever. He, with that act deep in Him and working often, perhaps, more mightily than even He always knew, He Himself was the power and substance of His own preaching, as the apostles saw, and said most clearly. Their word of the Cross and Resurrection was their one gospel. If there is no name but His, there is no salvation but in His death. The real Jesus of history is the Christ that the apostles preached, and that the Church exists to preach. It is not the Jesus of biography but the Jesus of Gospel, made unto us justification, and sanctification, and redemption. For the Church to leave behind that apostolic Gospel is to leave behind its vocation, dignity, and existence as a Church.

It is useless, it is too late in the day, to challenge the right to apply modern critical methods to the New Testament and to the Gospels in particular. It is not only impossible to evade this application, but it would be wrong. It would be refusing light from heaven. The critics have done wonders not only for particular passages, but for our construction of the whole Bible and its historic atmosphere. They have, in certain respects, made a new book of it, and in a sense have saved it. The New Testament shares in the radiance which criticism

has poured on the Old Testament. And in a sense, too, it shares in the revolution effected there.

There is this mighty difference, of course, to be noted by a criticism that regards all the facts and evaluates them, that in the New Testament we are dealing with what we have not in the Old Testament—a historical character who is not only living today, nor only acting on us, but is the object of our action also, and especially of our chief action, our worship. We are in living communion, especially by prayer, with Jesus Christ in virtue of what He did. Both as single souls and as a whole Church we are so. He is our life. The nature of our dealings with the Risen is part of the evidence that He rose.

We are obliged to recognize that our verdict in such a case is not a matter of purely scientific history, or of cold 'evidence'. Our judgement of the *value* of a historic fact has much to do with our critical treatment of it, just as the will to believe has much to do with the belief. Belief of what happened in history is much affected by belief in it, belief in what happens thereby for and in me. We even have some of the leading students of comparative religion and its philosophy telling us that the philosopher of religion ought to be a personally religious philosopher in order to be just to the facts he handles. Here, as elsewhere, we find that Nature and Supernature do not simply co-exist; they interpenetrate in an organic unity. So also do the past and the present, Jesus and the soul. So that what collides in the discussion of the matter is not *two* views of history purely scientific, but *two* ways of construing the world, *two Weltanschauungen* [world views], one exclusive and one inclusive of personal experience of the fact, Christianity belongs *to* the latter. And there is no *Weltanschauung* which is out of relation to Christianity, and does not invite its verdict.

It is to be added, in connection with our present subject, that we have in one section of the New Testament, in the

Epistles, an inspired, and so far authoritative, interpretation of the value of that historic figure—inspired and authoritative as claiming to be, in substance, Christ's word about Himself, His self-exposition, through a special action of that indwelling communion with Him which the apostles shared with the whole Church. To that we have nothing parallel in the Old Testament.

But when we allow for all that, we may welcome the critical principle and certain of its criticized results on the Gospels. Thorough-going as the critics may be, it is by criticism they must be corrected, by a criticism more thorough-going. The results may appear to some almost as revolutionary as the inversion now accepted for Israel's history. But historic inversions matter less, so long as they do not amount to spiritual subversion. And some of the results that I mean do light up, or promise to light up, certain things in the life and motive of Christ which have perplexed many, and to light them up with, on the whole, the apostolic ray.

To take a case. Take the question, Why did Christ go to Jerusalem if He knew that it could only mean failure and death? Why did He denounce and exasperate the authorities, instead of conciliating and educating them as we are often advised in His name to do? To that problem there is, of course, a familiar theological answer, but interest today fastens rather upon the historical answer. Will it carry the theology? There has seemed to some no historical necessity for the Cross, or at least for Christ's polemical language and conduct that provoked it. It has seemed gratuitous. These denunciations have appeared to some mere moral choler. Why did He not stay in Galilee where He had the crowd—or return there? Why did He beard the authorities so prematurely, directly, and alone? Why did He not make Himself so powerful with the public as to force their hand? To such questions the answers are various. For one thing, it was not

the public merely that Christ wanted, but the nation with its rulers. He had no idea of a democracy as the true nation with a constitutional right to impose its will on the rulers. That is a discovery of the modern world. It was not within Christ's view, for whom the powers that were were ordained of God, and the nation was the real *vis-a-vis* of God, and the direct object of God's appeal.

But it looks now as if some of the critics, less pedantic and more 'actual' than the rest, had set the true historical answer in train, and by a loopleveline were actually restoring to us a theological interpretation. It becomes possible that the historic explanation is a theological one after all, that it was a theological motive that urged Jesus, and urged Him to a tremendous national *coup d'état* in a way we shall see.

In our return to Christ our preaching has suffered much from the anecdotal treatment of Him, and the loss has not been fully repaired by the biographical. We must, therefore, return to the evangelical. But with this difference, that the work of Christ on the Cross be regarded much less as a Passion and much more as an Action, and as a national action with universal finality, the action for the race and for eternity both of a person and of a people. The Cross is not the supreme feat of endurance, but the supreme and historic act of obedience and of victory on a world scale. It is not primarily suffering, but achievement. It is also the work of a national personality, of a king, more than the offering of a social victim. It is the triumph of one who is always master of himself, of the situation, of God's public purpose, and of the world. It is a heroic occasion and not a pathetic. And the only adequate and divine interpretation of a personal. national. universal, eternal crisis is a theology.

The critics have done much to rescue the Gospels from the popular anecdotal treatment, and to extract from them something in the nature of a biography. The whole 'Life-of-Jesus

movement', as it has been called, is the most distinctive feature of the modern study of the New Testament. And it has had a very great effect upon the current way of looking at Christianity both in Protestant countries and in Roman Modernism. But that biographical movement has run its course. It is felt more and more in critical quarters that a real biography of Jesus is impossible. And, if it were more feasible than it is, it would neither explain nor reproduce the tremendous action of Christ on the world, which has been theological up to now at least for Christ's Church, and therefore was so all the more possibly for Christ Himself. The attempt to squeeze Jesus into the mould of human psychology, or place Him in a succession of spiritual genius, reduces Him to a figure that can no longer do the work of Jesus. A mere historical Jesus, a Jesus of biography, which ignores the theological Christ, is not only inaccessible, it is ineffectual. 'Historical knowledge', says one of the powerful critics (Jülicher), 'can clear up many of our current notions of spiritual life, but one thing it cannot do—it cannot awake life'.

So criticism itself, in certain of its most vivid representatives, is moving to return not indeed to a Christ of orthodoxy but to a theological Christ, in the sense, at least, of a Christ whose leading motives were theological, whatever we think of His nature. The Gospels are here held to be substantially in line with the Epistles. Their note, their continuity, their culmination, is dogmatic. They are not a silent protest against the dogmatic apostles. Some, of course, explain the fact through Pauline influence infecting the simpler sources of the Evangelists. But at least the connection, and even the continuity, of the two parts of the New Testament is critically recognized; which is a great matter today, when so much on the surface points the other way. The Jesus of the Synoptics is being construed dogmatically, as the Evangelists meant—in

the light of the thing He was to accomplish for God at Jerusalem when He flung His whole personality upon the Cross. His action was not merely the defiant preaching of certain radical principles or ideals at the national headquarters in scorn of consequence; but it was with a very clear and deliberate regard to consequence, and to the divine strategy. It was the fulfilment of a certain programme of action that filled and taxed His whole soul, as being God's instruction to Him for the Kingdom. The necessity for His death was primarily created and forced by Himself in God's name; not indeed as if He was obsessed by an artificial and advertising form of suicide, but as the result of certain eschatological convictions about God's procedure and requirement which would now be called dogmatic rather than simply ethical. We are here far beyond the mean conception which reduces that death to a mere martyrdom, and makes Christ a sufferer historically as passive as He has sometimes been viewed theologically to be. Christ (it is now suggested) was moved to force the whole situation by convictions from God about the prior necessity of a national judgement and expiation for the coming of the Kingdom (Schweitzer). He was thus far more of an agent, and a national agent, than an individual victim or hero. He was also more than the classic case, or the sacrificial protagonist, of the great human tragedy and fate. He was really the ruling power of the public situation, and the arbiter of the future. He created the historic necessity of His death by His own views of that necessity as divine; it was not merely incidental to certain ethical teachings of His, which the rulers resented. He knew (as a defiant modernist might know and intend in the Roman Church today) that He was making it humanly impossible for these rulers to take any other course than they did at the pitch to which their misconception of God had come. It was not the mere collision of His principles with those of the public, nor

of His individual holiness with its moral stupidity. It was not but a fatal accident from collision with antagonists too strongly entrenched in the prejudices which He challenged. It was not the too common case of a strong and stiff old institution, in its ordinary brute movement, rolling over a violent but fine and helpless critic. The critic was creative enough to dominate and shape the total position, and bold enough to compel a crisis on an issue of national life or death in the interests of God's universal kingdom of righteousness. The necessity of His death was forced upon the history of the hour by the Victim Himself, acting on a certain theological conviction of His death's vital place in the national vocation by God, and ultimately in the world's destiny viewed as God's ultimate will. No Pharisee could have been surer than Jesus was of the world- mission of Israel and its lead of history; they differed as to the nature of the lead and the genius of the mission. Pharisaism and Jesus were equally devoted to God's will; they differed as to its nature. And the breadth of the difference was all the depth of the Cross. Israel had in trust the revelation of the world righteousness, and the possibility, therefore, of a history of the world. Of this righteousness it was to be the organ. But by its treatment of Jesus it became instead the organ of the world's sin. The Cross of Christ, therefore, judged and took away the sin of the whole world.

The sense seems to grow, among critics sensitive still to both history and the soul, that the historical Jesus as His modern biographers would give Him, the psychological Jesus of modern desire, is not the Jesus that has made the past, or can make the future. We have gone too far, as Schweitzer himself tells his fellow- critics after passing them all in review, in the attempt to put Jesus into modern categories, and make Him

the grand agent and congenial denizen of modern culture. Theological liberalism, starting from ideas, has committed suicide; and there is the more room for a liberal theology starting from the saving facts; but there is still greater need for one deep, large, and full of spiritual imagination, intimacy, and distinction. The present state of the Church, the poverty of its influence on the world, and especially the German world, shows that we have gone much too far in the effort of liberalism to interpret Him as the expression and patron of what is best in the world, as the tutelar of civilization, at the cost of His work in renouncing, challenging, overcoming, and so commanding, the world. The Jesus of the Cross has succumbed, even within the Church, to the Jesus of society, the Jesus of culture, or the Jesus of the affections. We are trying to act on men with a Jesus of distinguished religion, or a Jesus the sanest of all the deep saints, with Jesus the historic character, or the fraternal, or the pietist, rather than with Jesus the Gospel power, the living dynamic of the Kingdom of God. And the result on the world is disappointing. Jesus was nothing if not dogmatic—not only in His manner but in His motive and conviction. He was neither suggestive, nor tentative, nor apologetic. He broke His nation on a theology. He was a ruler and commander of the people. Of all things in the world He was not 'a thoughtful preacher'. His vein was that of a tribune of the Kingdom—when it was not expressly that of its King. And He did not explain His words. He was often obscure and paradoxical. Perhaps He sent out His seventy in the hope of getting at people whom His own style of address did not reach. He was not too careful either to avoid or to clear up misunderstanding. It was as if He cared less to be understood than to get something done that was laid on Him. He did not reveal His inmost life, or obtrude His guiding theology. What He did say bewildered. To the end His intimates, His disciples, were in great ignorance about

His deep intent and final goal. It came home to them only from the event.

Of course, the precise form of theology in Christ's own mind, looking forward to the crisis, may not have been quite what it was for Paul looking back on it. How far it was so is another question. The point here is that it was on theological considerations that He acted, and it was for theological convictions as to God's purpose, and method, and requirement that He died. He was not bowing in resignation to a divine will honoured but not understood, a necessity piously but blindly felt to be of God, a mere pressure without a plan. He was carrying out a conviction, sure however informal, of that will and its way—much though He kept hoping that God might possibly reveal to Him some other way before the bitterest end. In the great hour He was more engrossed with obedience to this divine requirement than with His own blessed effect on man. Insofar as He thought of man, it was of the national, social effect of His death and not only of its individual action upon souls. And this first and immediate effect on the society round Him He knew, and meant at last, to be judgement. His death would throw His people in the wrong. That was the essence of His agony. Their greatest lover was to be their final doom. But nothing turned Him. And all because He knew that to be God's way, to be God's grand prerequisite of the true Messianic work. Amid the judgement He was offering His obedience to God for His Kingdom, and making the sacrifice required by the holiness of that Will. He sacrificed Himself to the divine judgement. 'The Kingdom could not come', says Schweitzer again, 'till the guilt was brought to a head and atoned'. But that changed the whole view of the Kingdom. Christ went to Jerusalem like a rushing mighty wind, in a rapt motion of fateful impatience and divine urgency, for a purpose which was less to convert than to hasten a crisis, so to give His message as to

precipitate the issue, to force the rulers to a choice which would ruin Israel for ever if it did not save it; and by such violence He would take the Kingdom. He would put God's fortune to the touch and win or lose it all. There was a strategy in it. Jesus coerced events, forced a situation, and compelled the Kingdom in. His death should involve that prophesied time of tribulation, catastrophe, and judgement prior and necessary to His coming with the unmistakable Kingdom of God. His sorrow was not the agony of a man full of divine vitality shrinking from death. He was more of 'a public person' than that. It was the agony of an old nation not only dying but damned; and all its vast tragedy transpiring not only within the soul of one man, but (chief horror!) by the solemn choice and awful act of that man himself, and He its lover. Think of a whole nation proud, stubborn, and passionate, with an ingrained belief in a world prerogative and mission, expiring in one man, in whom also by a dreadful collision was rising the Kingdom of God they had forsworn; the fate of God's whole Kingdom in the world decided in an Armageddon of that one spirit; a world's eternal warfare and destiny forced through the channel of one foul vast enough, whatever He did not know or could not do, to be in His death alive and adequate to such an issue. When we remember that it was not Israel's doom alone that was sealed in that soul but also ( in His own belief ) the divine fate of the world, is it quite easy to avoid the conclusion that we have here to do with something more than either a preacher or a paragon, that He is more even than the first tragic figure of our human fate, and that the sufferer and the judge is at once the Son of lost man and the Son of redeeming God?

What has been said may be illustrated more fully from the critical treatment of a parable which has a very close bearing

on the question whether Christ made Himself a part of His own Gospel. It is easy to go too far in depreciating the value of Christ's teaching in the interest of His work. It should never even seem to be depreciated except in that interest. Surely more than enough has lately been done on the other side—depreciating His work compared with His words. And I would refer to a passage in His teaching where He is more explicit than in any other (except in the ransom passage and at the Supper) about His death and its action.\* I refer to the parable of the wicked husbandmen in Mark 12:1-12. Our Lord's habitual reserve on the subject of His death is here maintained by His putting His meaning in the dark form of a spoken parable—as at the very close He put it into the symbol and mystery of His 'last parable', the enacted parable of the Supper. As Dr. Burkitt says, it is coming to be recognized, even among advanced scholars, from Germany to America, that a doctrine of Atonement through Christ's death is implied in St. Mark's Gospel. It could hardly be otherwise, inspired as that Gospel was by Peter, and written for Churches that certainly took their origin in the preaching of such a message. Of course the position is turned by saying that our Mark was written, and covered up Q,<sup>1</sup> under the deflecting influence of Paulinism—as if every apostle did not believe with the whole Church that 'Christ died for our sins' (I Cor. 15:3). Dr. Burkitt gives reasons, into which I need not here go, why this cannot have been so, why no such deflection can be supposed. What we have in this parable is Christ's interpretation of

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\* My interest in this point was first roused by Schweitzer; and the special bearing of parable came home to me in conversation with Dr. Burkitt, the Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, who has since been good enough to send me a copy of his paper discussing the passage at the Oxford Congress of Religions in 1908. The next few pages owe it much.

<sup>1</sup> 'Q' (from the German *Quelle*, 'source') is a shorthand way of referring to material that is common to Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark.

His death, on the lines I have already drawn, as the crisis in God's historic judgement of Israel. The Cross was the organ of that judgement which goes with all the promise in the Old Testament, and was never dissociated from the coming of the Kingdom of God. The general idea of judgement in the Bible, and certainly in the Old Testament, is not ours. It is looked forward to with hope and joy. See especially Psalm 96:1 1-13. It is not retribution that is the uppermost notion in it, but vindication. It is not terror but glory, not our day of doom but the day of a righteousness whose victory is established in this way. The great event is not shunned but hailed. It is not the destruction of God's enemies that fills the foreground, but the establishment of His people for the sake of His Kingdom. Judgement is adjustment far more than vengeance. It is sanctification more than punishment. Nothing could be more shallow than talk about the Old Testament God as being angry in the sense of vindictive.

How then could a soul like Christ's have possibly missed that essential feature of judgement in the Old Testament purpose and method of God which He knew converged on Himself? If we read the parable in the larger context of Christ's mind thus fed, He not only felt His death to be inevitable ( for He often says that), but He here indicates why. It was a necessity of judgement in God's providence, the labourers behaving as they did—a historic necessity in any history where God's purpose must rule all. The murder of the son does not destroy the estate, its administration, or the interest in it of the owner. There is, to be sure, a great change, with fresh tenants, but not a surrender of the business, which is God's sovereignty on earth. The old occupiers are destroyed, but the vineyard goes on. The last gift of the Son is also the last judgement, but also the final atonement and salvation. Israel is judged, but the kingdom goes on in other hands under the same Lord. To bring about this crisis, this

new departure and sure establishment of the kingdom, the death of the Son was a moral necessity, in the frame of mind to which Israel had come. It was a moral necessity, not a strategic, not a political; for Christ was no *agent provocateur*<sup>1</sup> to Israel like Satan to Job. It was an act of judgement as well as of sacrifice. The historic crime, unfated and free as it was, became the agent of the divine judgement; which again by its sacrificial acceptance became the atoning condition of the final and universal Kingdom.

Jesus had come to feel that, in spite of His own preaching and that of His disciples, He was not really affecting the public. They were not rising nor ripening to the Kingdom. There was none of the national repentance that the Kingdom required for a foundation. The result of the mission of the seventy was a disappointment to His hope. It did not rouse the popular commotion and crisis which must bring the Kingdom in. It did not seem to create as much public furore as John had done. The people did not wake to the call. 'The brand He flung went out.' All the more He would the fire were well kindled. It came home to Jesus that things must come to a head. To produce the crisis that must make the Kingdom He must die. He must so present His claim that death became inevitable unless it was received; and so die that the death both judged the nation and atoned to its God. The Elijah had been killed in John—so must the greater than Elijah in Jesus, whose course was so greatly affected by John's death. Only thus could He be revealed as the Son of man—by a resurrection that took its whole moral meaning from the atoning judgement effected by His criminal death. As a great statesman, in full view of the situation and its crisis, might commit a people to war, so He would force the whole nation into the valley of decision for Israel's death or life, into the

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<sup>1</sup> Person employed to detect suspected offenders

great *peirasmos* [trial, testing] which was so terrible that He prayed in Gethsemane, and made His disciples pray, it might even yet be spared to Him and them. For He quite expected they would share His fate. 'Wake, and pray that ye enter not into the awful crisis.' 'Lead us not into the crisis; but, crisis or none, deliver us from the Evil One.' The dying which He had before pressed on His flock is now concentrated in Himself, and He speaks less of their obligation to surrender life than of His own purpose to do so. His magnificent impatience would not let Him rest. How does He move? Does He set about a new effort to educate the people, as if it were a modern political issue? He was no such man. He was the man of the soul's last alternative, of the Lord's controversy, of the eternal polemic, where compromise is at last unknown. Campaign gives way to crisis. The issue could not but be hardened. The dilemma must be sharpened—redemption or ruin, world mastery or downfall for this people. The fulness of the charged time had come to explosion. The public choice that would not answer the Gospel grace must answer the Gospel judgement, unto national salvation or damnation. The national guilt remained; it must be removed or fixed for ever by putting the nation on a final and eternal hazard. 'They will reverence the Son.' Farther even God could not go than His Son, and to send Him was therefore to face a fearful risk. The great stroke was called for to precipitate the Kingdom, to carry home the judgement which marks the Kingdom. If men would not take it home, and if to the divine eye it was hopeless that they should, at His kindling word, then let it come in the self-judgement of public doom. Behind this parable is a Jesus who was coming to the conclusion that they did not reverence the Son, and that His death must be the instrument of the great tribulation which transferred the Kingdom from national to universal hands. But universal it must be, either through Israel's life or over Israel's corpse.

And of Israel's faith and life He was now all but hopeless. Before Messiah could come with the Kingdom in unmistakable glory He must go out in such a death as should be the doom of an Israel intractable, rebellious, and antichrist. It would be a judgement then not for Israel but on Israel—and, by sympathy and solidarity alas! upon the good as well as on the bad, and chiefly upon Him, the holiest and most loving of all.

But judgement so far, judgement working on men as doom, was only negative. It had its positive action Godward, as sacrifice, as righteousness realized and offered in satisfying response to a holy God, as the atonement which the suffering of the culprits could never be. Nay more, the moral power thus to judge and atone was so great and divine that it was creative (though all this development of the judgement does not lie directly within the four corners of the parable). The crisis is, still more than judgement, a time of redemption and reconciliation and reconstitution in a new creation—it is the day of the Lord. With the remnant of His people, as with His Son, God is well pleased, now that holiness is established and calamity sanctified in crucial and final judgement. The remnant will make a new and denationalized Israel. Christ's death thus brings both the judgement and the reconciliation, and both He must sympathetically share. It is a sacrifice—and not only to a historic necessity but, in Christ's faith, to the purpose, the method, the will, of God; to views of His which are, indeed, God's own thoughts and acts;\* to whose note all history moves, and to His goal. If Jesus expected His speedy return in the Messianic glory, that would be only one aspect of the kenotic limitation of His knowledge of times and seasons which He himself admitted, and which need not trouble any who realize that such limitation was self-imposed.

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\* This of course men like Schweitzer would not admit.

In this passage of Christ's teaching, then, do we not have His mature idea of His central place, and the central place of His judgement-death, in the programme of His Gospel? Have we not some hint of a psychological explanation of His death? Have we not something like a policy and a purpose, which seems missing in some views of the end? And have we not one theological enough to explain the society founded on it, and the history flowing from it, which are theological or nothing? We have some answer to the questions, Why did He deliberately court failure by going to Jerusalem? Why did He use language so passionate and so irritating? That language has been to many a problem and to many a snare. They have thought that it justified them in a like explosive tone amid their own society. They did not see that Christ was contemplating what was not in their purpose—the final divine crisis of a nation with a history that stood for God against the world in the soul's final and eternal issue. Facing Him, Israel stood before its own soul, to either hail or scorn its own destiny. Their idea is reform, which comes by compromise, His was decision, which needs a sharp dilemma. For purposes of mere reform, violent denunciation and provocation are out of place. The old prophet who faced an end of existing things in the issue of such good and evil as mean God or no God had other methods and speech than the modern politician, whose business it is to mend things. And the sons of the prophets would do well to bear the difference in mind. As a politician the prophet, with the prophet's tension, is out of place. We have here, then, one answer to such questions that deserves much attention. Christ courted the risk because a crisis must be forced. His failure, should He fail, was essential for the judgement of those who should make Him fail. They would fail then and not God, they would fail their own God, and judgement could not but come. It was essential for their confounding and the release of the Kingdom from such

hands. It was essential for the release of the Kingdom for Humanity, one is tempted in these days to say; but it is more Christian to say for the whole purpose of God with man. There was always the chance, of course, that in thus forcing the crisis, He might make the heads of the nation realize the gravity of the situation, and stop before they made the final refusal. They might recoil from the crime they came so near with a horror which would make a moral revolution, and which might still put a shocked and saved Israel at the head of God's Kingdom in the world. Their moral freedom always left that chance. So that He did not go to be their Fate; but still to be their Doom, if they would have it so.

All this may construe the mind of Christ on the lines of Jewish eschatology rather than of the Pauline thought, but it was not foreign to one educated like Paul. And we may even find it easier in some ways to see how germane the Pauline interpretation is, and its development from judgement of its latent atonement and regeneration. Jesus was involved in the collapse of the temple He pulled down. He was drawn into the circle of national doom. The judgement began with the suffering and death of its prophet. He was the first victim of the awful process. But vicarious judgement, judgement undeserved, on this holy and universal scale, is Atonement when it is positively put. It means a new relation to God. Paul's theology of justification is not alien to Christ's conception of a sacrificial judgement-death, which grew upon Him as the debt to God from public guilt, and as the prior condition of a glorious and royal return with the Kingdom. It becomes easier to see how real, however latent, is the connection between the thought of Jesus on the matter and that of Paul, and how well Paul might be certain he 'had the mind of Christ'.\* To be sure the interpretation I have named of our

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\* I Cor. 2:16. Which certainly does not mean merely the temper of Christ, but His thought, His programme, His method, 'thinking His thoughts after Him', His theology.

Lord's motive is more or less of a construction. But it is construction of data in Christ's teaching under the *principle* of the apostolic construction, the construction which the apostles and the whole Church have held to be Christ's own, the construction that Christ's supreme and creative value is in His death and glory. I do not say the construction is made under the apostolic method. For it is the critical and historical treatment of His words that is at work. But it comes out with substantially the evangelical result, which is a great matter. Criticism here presents a Christ acting as the apostles interpreted His action—eschatologically, and therefore theologically. The simplest story—Mark's—surely tells it so, like the rest. Of course when criticism has scientifically discovered this, it may take the other step already mentioned—perhaps less scientific, when everything is considered. It may say that Mark must be a product of Paulinism, that already the real legacy of Jesus had been so edited and so varnished that 'Mark has already lost all real grasp of the historic life of Jesus' (Wrede). That is construction, and as we may think inferior construction. I mean that the attempt to get back to a simpler Jesus behind the Pauline or Petrine misconceptions of Mark is such a construction. And it seems much less violent to speak of Mark, with Dr. Burkitt, not as a product of Paul, but as his anticipation.



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### **CHRIST'S OFFERING OF HIS SOUL FOR SIN**

WHEN I speak here about the preaching of the Cross of Christ, I mean ultimately the Cross itself as a preaching, as God's 'preachment' which gave Christian preaching birth, made it inevitable, prolonged itself in it, and provided its perpetual note. As God's preaching of Himself in the Cross was an act, the act of giving Himself, so all true preaching of it is an act also, and more than speech only. It is a devoted act of the preacher's personality, conveying God in His grace and self-donation. It is not merely exhibiting Him. It is sacramental.

This Gospel is the answer to the prime religious question of the soul. What is that question? It is one that is roused chiefly by the Gospel itself. Nowhere, not even in Job, do we find our classic account of the great question stirred in the soul but in the New Testament with its Gospel. And the question there provoked or sharpened by its proleptic answer is not, How shall man recall and realize his spiritual instincts or his indelible sonship to the Father, so deeply

misunderstood but never broken? That is not a just version of the question that dominates the New Testament, i.e. dominates the soul at closest quarters with the Gospel, i.e. with God. Is it not this: How shall a man, how shall lost man, be right with God? How shall our conscience stand before our Holy One, our Judge? That has been the standing question of Israel. It was the ruling note of the Apostles. They all answer the question with an atonement. And such is the point of view of the Evangelists. They wrote no biography of a prophet, but outlined the story of an atoning Redeemer. Truly the answer of the question was, Your Judge is your Father in Jesus Christ. But it was not the Father that had ousted the Judge. He was Father-Judge. He was the judging Father and the atoning Redeemer. The Holy Father was Himself the Saviour in His Son, making far more sacrifice than He received, making what He did receive, making it for man and to His own holy name. He was the Father who chose and saved us in His grace rather than the Father who created and perfected us in His image. He is the Father of the will in us which responds to choice rather than of our nature that responds to charm. And we are sons by His adoption rather than by any descent or continuity—by the adoption, to wit the Redemption. Otherwise we are but His offspring, not His sons. We are His offspring (like the heathen) by creation, but His children (like Israel) by His choice; we are His sons in Christ and in His Grace alone. The gospel is the gospel of the Fatherhood in the atoning Cross.

We cannot get away from this fact, this type of Christianity, on any just or sympathetic interpretation of the New Testament. And we should remember that it becomes more pronounced in the later parts of the New Testament (like John); which would not have been the case had the history but crystallized on an idea of expiation and been its created myth instead of its creative power (as Dr. Andrews admir-

ably expounds in the March *Expositor*). We may modernize the book's message as we will, and the way in which the book conveys it; but if we inquire what it actually, historically was, was it not as I have said? That gospel of our sonship in redemption and not creation, in the second creation and not the first, is bound up with the New Testament version of Christ. We can, of course, superannuate the New Testament in this respect to meet the modern consciousness, and we can construct another Christ. But let us do it with our eyes open as to what the New Testament says, and what it is we do. We cannot continue to have the New Testament Christ without that gospel of an atoning Christ. Without that we have but New Testament data, to be severely sifted and freshly combined in the interest of the humanist Christ now emerging at last. We are dependent for our historic Christ not upon documents in the strict sense of the word, documents in the sense in which state papers are documents. We have only the accounts of deeply moved disciples or apostles, who were under such an impression from Christ that they welcomed as their spokesman one who called Him 'My Lord and my God'. For the character and teaching of Christ we are quite dependent on such devotees, who concentrate on the new creation in His Cross. So that the interpretation of Christ's person by this Cross is at least as integral a part of the New Testament account as the character or teaching of Christ is. It is solid with all the historic data. And it is far more dominant than the teaching. Are we then treating the documents fairly if we fashion a Christ entirely detached from the Christ who saturates and dominates the only sources of knowledge we have—the Christ of the Cross, and of the Atoning Cross? If we evaporate all the water there is no more sea.

At any rate it is a great point gained for clearness if we recognize the fact that that revelation, whether final or not, has its central meaning only as redemption, and that the New

Testament Christ is an atoning and not merely an exhibitory Christ (whatever form we may give to a real propitiation in our modern theological crucible). In this light the prime question of the soul which the Cross answers is not the filial question of a child-heart simply to be met by the mere revelation of a Father correcting our bewilderment; nor is that the question answered in the discourses of Christ; but it is everywhere the moral question of an adult conscience, the question of sinful man before his Judge, to be answered by a justification and a real redemption. The preacher who does not recognize this must expect that his interpretation will much affect his gospel power and his final result. It must make a tremendous difference whether the prime relation of his message is to God's offspring or God's prodigals, to moral minors or moral adults, to moral vagrants or moral rebels, to stray sheep or defiant wills; whether his central appeal is to the lone and hungry heart, as in some great city, or to the evil conscience as in a moral Eternity; whether his note is pathos and pity or judgement and grace.

In every serious case of interpreting Paul the old Reformers were substantially right. There were giants in those days. They did treat the New Testament revelation thoroughly, whatever they did with its texture. They did understand the psychology of sin and the action of mercy. What we do is done upon their shoulders. What we must repudiate in them is to be rejected on their own great lines. To this extent at least they were right, that what was central, if not always foremost, in Paul's interpretation of the Cross was its objective effect beyond man, and not merely its impressive effect upon man. And this was the perspective of Christ Himself.

The love which was to reconcile man was a love that began with a propitiation for man. John makes Paul very clear here. Herein is love—not that we loved, but that He loved, that is, gave His Son for our propitiation. The love in love is the

provision not of blessing simply, but of atonement. For it has much to do with the love beyond all love—God's love of His own holy Self. If it was to propitiate neither man nor devil, what is left but His own holiness? We start with this. (I mean the Church must. I am not thinking of individuals, for fundamental theology is the trust properly, not of individuals, but of the corporate Church. ) We cannot begin, as the somewhat amateur Broad Church of the Victorian age used to do, by construing Paul in terms of modern liberalism—as if, for instance, the propitiation was God's propitiation of us, or as if Paul had before him the modern idea of Humanity, or as if the word 'justify' in him meant 'to make just' instead of 'to declare just', as if there were nothing forensic in his thought, but only an ethical idea. The scientific interpretation of Paul permits only the forensic meaning, however ethical and exalted our notion of the holy forum and its procedure may be. The mode of treatment is now changed. Admitting Paul's view, and the apostolic view, the view of our documents, to be as I have said, the question asked is this: This objective and atoning Gospel so surely Paul's—is it the true halo of the Cross or a mere haze upon it? Did Paul truly break up and transmit, like a prism, the pure light and mind of the heavenly Christ as to His death? Do the Epistles contain a true spectrum of the Cross? Or did they paint upon the simple doctrine of Christ certain barbaric bands of Judaism, which only obscure it while meant to adorn—as at a king's coming the bunting hides or disfigures a beautiful town? On such a vital matter did Paul develop congenially the purpose of the Christ who lived in him and whose thoughts he thought? Or, being more mastered by the *Zeitgeist*<sup>1</sup> than by his hero, did he plant upon Jesus certain current dreams of an ideal Christ? Or was he here driven by stress of controversy

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<sup>1</sup> Spirit of the times; trend of thought or feeling in a period

into the falsehood of extremes and the extravagance of harsh dilemmas? Was his thought on that atoning meaning of the Cross which was at the centre of his faith Christ thinking in him deep down where he lived his own life no more but Christ lived in him? Or was it an idiosyncrasy? Or a syncretist infection from the air he breathed? Need sin now preoccupy the Christian foreground as Paul made it do? Need sacrifice, in any atoning sense, any sense which involves a real objective action on God? Was Christ's propitiation but God's effort to propitiate man, impress him, and smooth a misunderstanding? Need we preach sacrifice in any but the altruistic and heroic sense it bears in the high humanitarian ethic of man and man? Jesus, it is urged, preached a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees in the name of a pure and direct Fatherhood; was that simplicity not confused, and turned into another righteousness, by Paul's sophisticated view of sacrifice? By a righteousness exceeding that of Scribe and Pharisee did He not mean that enlarged? Could He mean another kind—Paul's justification by faith in atoning grace? In views like Paul's did not Judaism surge back on Christianity and take its revenge on Christ? Was Paul not, by some historic irony, the supreme agent of the Pharisaism he had left but could not lose for choking the Gospel of Christ? Did he not turn Christ from a prophet to a theologian when he changed Him from being the supreme medium of God's mercy to being its only mediator, and fumed Him from a prophet to a priest? Did he not erect on this perversion a whole Church, which has been to this day a large factor in the delay of the Kingdom?

We are becoming familiar with such criticisms. They have much to make them plausible to the public. They are the more plausible because of the amount of truth they do possess. There is no doubt that the processes of Paul's argument are sometimes Judaic and irrelevant to us—as in

the well-known Hagar passage in Galatians. His dialectic is sometimes foreign to such logical habits as we have. These criticisms are very old, but they seem to the lay mind new and simple. And this is a democratic time when simplicity has become the test of truth, partly because it is easiest and wins most votes. These views are bound to have vogue in an age when the mere public becomes the court of religious appeal, the agnostic press claims its place as a critic of Christian truth, poetic love is used as the Christian principle, and social comfort is made the measure of Christian success. If the eternal Glory of God cease to be the Holiness of His love, and man's chief bane cease to be his sin against it, it may readily seem as if most that Paul stood for (beyond his brilliant religious genius) was a confusion of the truth as it appears to the rapid reader of the words of Jesus, or to the heart unacquainted with moral strife or despair. Paul's speculations may then appear as mischievous to the Church as the ecclesiastical policy of Constantine or Hildebrand. There is no doubt, if we treat sin only in the light of love, and not in the light of Love's Holiness and its Grace, if by ethical Christianity we mean only a Christianity for man's conduct or affection and not supremely for God's Holiness, then the Pauline Cross is either an offence or a folly as we may prefer to view it. To the ordinary intelligence, predisposed to religious sympathy, bred in a Christian atmosphere, sheltered from acute personal wickedness, secluded from close contact with moral wrecks and blights, unfamiliar with national perdition, social devilry, or racial godlessness, and therefore unawed by anything tragic in the moral life or desperate in the spiritual—to such a mind a view of the Cross which at once taxes heaven, harrows hell, and changes eternity, may well seem overdone. It may well seem then as if there were in Paul a new departure, pedantic, obscure, forced, and gratuitous, with no point of attachment in Jesus beyond a few dark

sayings about His death, perhaps imported, perhaps altered, perhaps due to depression, but certainly overworked by the orthodox belief. It is a singular thing, but some of the views which do least justice to the depth, and poignancy, and finality of the Cross arise from its very success, from the peaceful air of the Christian home, where the children grow in the Lord's nurture, their ordered lives mature in the virtues and graces, and they develop the most lovable intelligence of everything Christian except the crucial word to the fearless sinner, to the cynic iniquity, the broken heart, the damned conscience, the world-tragedy, and the soul's despair. But here, as in textual criticism, the easier reading is the more suspect. It is so in life generally. Always suspect simple solutions of moral problems ages old. Distrust the bland note that says, 'Believe me, dear friends, there is no need of so much posher. It is really very plain. Let your own little child lead you. See.' And then he proceeds to advertise his adolescence in the question by domestic analogies for arguments or for revelations.

Much talk about the simplicity of our Lord's teaching is calculated to irritate the serious student and sadden the forgiven saint; not only because it reduces Jesus to the level of a popular writer, with publishers for his apostles, and editors for his overseers, but because it suggests in the talker a teacher who has never really learned there where to learn costs the uttermost farthing. The worst dogmatism is the dogmatism, bland or blunt, of the man who is anti-dogmatic from an incapacity to gauge the difficulties or grasp the questions which dogma does attempt to solve. The non-dogmatism of the pooh-pooh school is more unreal than the dogmatisms they denounce. Let us not idolize simplicity, nor look for it in the wrong direction. For what seems over our heads let us lift up our heads. Why, in most regions of His teaching Jesus hardly ever opened His mouth without

offending His public or puzzling His friends. No great teacher was ever more careless about being properly intelligible, or averting misunderstanding. No modern editor would have printed Him. It is impossible for a seer of paradox and a master of irony like Christ to be simple in the sense in which the railway reader making for his home demands it. Almost everything He said produced at first more bewilderment than light, till He had created the conscience which alone could understand Him. The natural conscience, and with it the natural mind, had to be reborn for the purpose. And when it was reborn it saw and it hailed the Pauline Cross. One of the worst fallacies about Christ is that He and His prime truths and effects are among the great simplicities which need but to be stated to go straight to the general heart and to wield the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. That is not so. The true response to Him was not in the compass of flesh and blood. And what the common people heard so gladly from Christ was what is always gladly heard—His attacks on their hard taskmasters and religious humbugs, the Scribes and Pharisees. The context of Mark 12:37 shows this plainly. The gladness with which the crowd heard Him there could not be because they understood His argument. And it was certainly not because of any spiritual apprehension of great David's greater Son. But they saw gladly that the Scribes understood it all well enough to be worsted and silenced, and they were delighted. The common people disliked their eminent religionists enough to rejoice in their public discomfiture by a man on the street. But the more close He went to the great object of His life the less He was understood like many of the disciples that have gone closest and deepest in the retracing of His thought since. The more He went to the heart of His Gospel the less He went to the heart of His public, and the more His friends forsook Him and fled. Jesus, of course, neither taught nor had a theory of His

work, as Paul had it. He belonged, as I have said, to the class that sees and does things which the next class expounds and applies. And His place in our spiritual world is one which He compels from us rather than expressly claims. His place in Athanasian thought was the natural and necessary fruit in the then world of the Church He made—it was that rather than the means of its making. For the creeds were rational hymns rather than missionary gospels. They were exuberant confessions rather than specifications. The actual Saviour of the Church's new nature and experience is the reality which theological science richly expounds, just as cosmic Nature is the reality that physical science so amply unfolds. And the method of each science is always presented by the nature of that which is its object. Now here the object of our faith is not, like nature, a mere object that we know, but the great Subject that knows us. The risen Christ taught His apostles, and especially Paul, from heaven, and taught them what as mere disciples on the other side of the Cross they could not bear. Paul's inspiration consisted with the most mystic note of his life. It was not he who knew the great truths, but Christ who knew them in him. So the Spirit has led the Church into more truth than is express in the Bible, in Paul, or John, or even in the character of Christ, but not into more than these contain. Doctrine has not been created (like life) so much as developed; and the development of doctrine has waited upon the growth of faith. We believe more things than the first Church, though our faith and love be less. We see in Christ what it did not see, even if we realize less. We may know more of the world, even of the psychology or theology of the moral world, than Jesus Himself did, though we do not know what He did of the soul or of the Father—of whom indeed we know nothing fontal or certain but what the Son reveals. And Paul (so early) had thoughts of Christ's work and person which we have nothing to show were present to the earthly

Christ's own mind. But it was from Christ he had them, whatever was the psychology of their mediation to him.

But with these concessions I go on to one plea that Christ's words about the Son and the Father suggest. Christ did know that His relation to the Father was unique, and that His person and Cross were more deeply involved in His Gospel than some of His words express. No fair criticism, no criticism without a *parti pris*,<sup>1</sup> can take out of His mouth that great crucial word of Matthew 11:25-27. He knew with a knowledge inexplicable to us, and to Himself needing no explanation, that God's grace to man stood or fell with Him, with His religious consciousness and His practical work, in a way that applied to no other man. Further, it seems clear that Jesus had in view a great and near crisis of redemption in whatever form. We may criticize the details of the eschatological addresses, but the fact persists that He felt Himself to be in charge of the great and immediate crisis of God's historic teleology. His very ethical teaching, as about revenge, rested on a faith in the nearness of the vengeance of God. All His words are autobiographic of a soul that only came to its full self in the Cross. His consciousness was Messianic, and therefore telic. His teaching associated His person and work with man's great deliverance from his objective and final foe. His ethic had not simply a religious basis but an evangelical, dealing not simply with God but with a holy God. It rested deep on an atonement, a redemption, a new creature, and not merely on a new ideal, or a fresh inspiration. Its source and authority are less in His precepts than in His Cross, and the new covenant and the new creation there. It rested on a salvation whose final agent He was, on a new creation corresponding to the novelty, uniqueness, and miracle of His own royal person and sacrifice. Israel should forgive because God

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<sup>1</sup> Pre-conceived opinion or view.

in His Messiah was forgiving Israel. When He forgives cases He only details to individuals (as His Spirit now does) the collective salvation gathered, effected, and guaranteed in His person and its work. His ethic is not for the natural man, but for the saved, the man lifted from a centre in his own egoism and planted with Christ in God. It is not for the politics of the potsherds of the earth but for the dealings of brothers in the Kingdom of God, not for the nations but for the Church. It is for a community that has found the international secret in a supernational society, whose secret is the miracle of the supernatural life. It is founded on a presupposition of moral regeneration, and cannot come but in its wake. Such ethic cannot therefore be separated from its context in the Saviour who spoke it, the Kingdom He brought, and the power He gave. Nor can it be applied where His power is disowned. It must have its context in the faith that responds, as in the Saviour who spoke. It is an ethic of the Kingdom, and it is for the world only as the world comes to seek first the Kingdom. And He preached the Kingdom as a King who is too great to boast of His reign. All which puts a great gulf between His preaching and ours, changing Him from our model to our Master, nay, to our Matter, and changing us from the partners of His deed to be its product, from imitators of it to trophies and agents of its power.

This feature it is—His unique value for the central moral crisis of the race—which emerges in His sayings about His death and His victory. They are all the less negligible because few. They are flashes of the central fire. They are hilltops and outcrops which reveal, as they emerge, the continuous and substantial strata, parts of which often dipped below His own consciousness in His self-humiliation—as some of the great mystics had but half a dozen of the great and rapt experiences which opened Eternity and settled and coloured their life. Such references by Christ are few, also, partly

because of the density of perception in those round Him. He was chilled by their reception, and He could not develop such a subject in such an atmosphere. From the time He began to speak of His death (I have said) an estrangement set in between His disciples and Himself. Misgiving grew into suspicion, and ended in desertion. Who so quick to feel that alienation as He? And who so likely to answer that frost by the inevitable reserve as the man who was carried so far in the other direction by Peter's great confession? He was driven in on Himself. He *could* not expand and enlarge on such a subject to their growing mood. Even the tender passion of the supper left them with but an ill-understood hint whose verbal form is uncertain. He could not say the mighty word because of their unbelief; or rather their wrong belief, their belief in Israel rather than in Grace, in country rather than God, in a patriotic more than a gracious God. 'We trusted that it was He who should have restored the lead of the world to Israel.' At the deep end He was even cast back from words of His own upon passages from the liturgy of Israel, from the Psalms. So far did His reticence go. Every preacher knows that it is not only fruitless but impossible to press the sacred core of the Cross on the social democracy as such, on the political mind, the parliamentary horizon, on an audience of men totally preoccupied with earthly ideals or even social reforms—whatever be the personal esteem in which the speaker is held. Nothing is so hard as public prayer with a mixed congregation. And I shall have to indicate that some reserve on our part about the Cross may be suggested to us in the interests of the best evangelization. Those few words of Christ about His death are not pathetic fallacies or His weak moments. They well form His soul's centre. They are first principles, the outlook of the strong foundations of His Eternal World. They are not fanciful aspects of His work sicklied by hours of depression. They are not gleams of it at a

rare angle, caught, shaped, and then dropped, like the fine relic of some lyric mood. They are the sparse self-revelations of a mighty soul rapt in a crushing task. They are forced from His silent depths only by a rare and solemn conjunction. They are less heard than overheard, not didactic like the feet-washing but sacramental like the supper. They are not lessons, but agonies, not suggestions but groans. They do not flow from Him, they are wrung. They convey Himself more than His truth, His heartbreak rather than His discourse. They are of the utterances that are deep deeds rather than strong words. They are preludes or facets of the one deed of that Cross through which at last His whole person poured as in a narrow gorge and gate of hell ere it broke broad into the Kingdom of Heaven; where the fountains of His great deep were broken up to submerge the old evil world and float the new. The act of the Cross, thus presaged and precluded, was the real founding of the New Covenant, the true Kingdom, and the New Humanity—the New Covenant whose establishment meant more for Him, and was more directly His work, than even the founding of the Church. His work was evangelical before it was pentecostal. Lighted up by the Resurrection the Cross threw into the background for the apostles all eschatological dreams about a foundation only in the Messiah's return for a new effort of a more imposing kind. This return when it came could only be a fruit of the Cross's victory, and not the repair of its misfortune. The Cross was the last of Christ's miracles, as the Supper was the last of His parables (for the Resurrection was but the obverse of the same act). It gathered up His whole vacation to overcome the world, and it drew on His whole divine person which reconstituted it. Such a life as Christ's inward and unutterable life with the Holy Father could in such a world only flower in a deed and a death like this; and it could only reach us so, and by no mere statement from His lips, and no

mere impression from His discourse. Yet His death is only what it is by crowning such a life and such discourse. To separate the one from the other is a mediaeval mistake. It destroys not only the symmetry of Christ but His moral perfection, the spiritual unity of His person in its total obedience to the Father's holy will.

To make His soul an offering for sin is the greatest use that we can make of it. It is the greatest use to which we can turn the deeper knowledge we win from modern scholarship of the inner life of Jesus, or the more intimate glimpses of His psychology, or the more vivid sense of His talk. This all sets out the wealth of the saving sacrifice. And so to use it prevents even that solemn knowledge from remaining but knowledge and becoming stale as it grows familiar. There is no such justice done to the mind of Christ, there is no such seal and appropriation of His life, as when we realize the creative death in it all; when we use our new sense of His soul to enhance the greatness of its constant outpouring unto death, and to magnify the propitiation we have therein for our sin. It was the offered soul that was the sacrifice, and not the mere demise. It was such a mighty soul—the unspeakable riches of Christ—self-offered in holy obedience that was the propitiation, the satisfaction, the thing in which the holy Father was well pleased to the uttermost. The greater the dimensions, and the power, and the sanctity of that living self, so much the greater was its self-sacrifice, so much more its value to holy God. The supreme worth of it all was its value to the Father, its value there for our impotent and evil souls. He made an offering of His soul (as the variant translation says) and poured it out unto death. It is impossible for us to think that Jesus did not know Isaiah 53. It is equally impossible to believe that, knowing it, such a soul as His, moving to such a doom, would not come to be engrossed with that of all the passages in the Bible on which He fed His faith. The

scanty allusion may be due to several causes—some historical, like the entire absence from His public of any such idea in the chapter as a suffering Messiah; others more or less psychological, both in Him and His. Chiefly, perhaps (as I have said) it is due to His reticence on an experience which concerned that inmost life (within the inner) which we are not allowed to reach; to His reserve on an experience so deep and unspeakable, so foreign and unintelligible to those round Him. But to one thing it could not be due. It could not be due to such motives in Him as lead some today to blunt the edge and soften the point of certain phrases in the Isaian passage that carry the prophet beyond ideas of mere martyrdom or sacrifice. It could not be due to a deliberate aversion of Jesus to the expiatory idea, to a distaste and avoidance of certain phrases and thoughts most characteristic of that passage in the Old Testament which came nearest of all to reveal an atoning function and a redeeming act in Israel's soul and Saviour.

'He made His soul an offering for sin.' If we were free to treat His grief and death as literature would treat it, and as preaching treats it perhaps too often—if we treated it Hellenically and aesthetically—His passion might appear as the greatest of all the tragedies which exhibit the heroic will as rising against woe, but overborne in its noble protest by inhuman Fate. And who will say that such an element is not in it? But that is not the note of either gospel or epistle in connection with the death of Christ. There is no trace of such a view, which, however valuable, here is rather a modern antique. There is more in the New Testament conception of Christ's death than tragedy, even as, by virtue of it, we are more than heroes and conquerors. There is no mistake about the suffering, even to agony; but Christ's attitude to it is neither the hero's nor the martyr's. He neither storms nor strives against it. He does not let it break on His constancy as

a broken wave. He is not simply fearless as the ruin smites Him. Nor, on the other hand, is it a case of loving resignation alone. He was never so much in action as in His passion, nor so mighty. He suffers and dies because He wills it so. He wills the grief, He accepts it, He bears, transmutes, fertilizes, and perfects it. He went down not defiantly, but with all His broken heart and soul and its power with God. He made His suffering soul an offering to His holy Father. He did not merely commend His soul to God's hands, but He offered it up, and He hallowed in the act God's holy name and purpose. It was no mere godly end, but the victory in which the faith of the world-Soul overcame the world for the Father. He took the doom in holy love, and above all in the love of the holy. Never did *such* love and sorrow meet—I do not mean so much, but of such a holy kind. It was all a part and climax of His long, holy, saving obedience. It was enough for Him that God required it of Him. He had no theodicy. He did not ask God to justify His demand. 'Even so, Holy Father, so it hath seemed good in Thy sight.' We do not traffic in theodicies when we are crucified with Christ. And we are far beyond poetry or art. He was reconciled to the Cross—as the disciples, reconciled by it, had come to be before they could give the account of it they do. He (and they in His wake) found it neither a bane nor an arrest, neither a martyrdom of His love nor an object lesson of God's, but a propitiation. Love may not morally make sacrifice just to exhibit itself, may not cast itself from the pinnacle of the temple, without meeting a real need, or doing a real objective service and duty which raises sacrifice above suicide. And the moral achievement in the sacrifice of Christ was one that met with active and entire holiness the holy One's supreme need of such propitiation. But in the Son it was God's self-propitiation, in which He did not merely serve man aesthetically by a supreme and impressive spectacle of love's sacrifice, but really did something

—His holy Self took away the sin of the whole world. It was a positive will and work of Godhead. Christ's deed was the supreme obedience of the Son's loving soul to the holy Father, and so complete that in His work the Father worked, and our Maker was our Redeemer. The suffering was not despised and defied, but made an offering to God. It was hallowed, not in itself but in the obedience of it, as the will of God for our expiation, and His dark sure way for our redemption. It was all done under God's will, to which the soul of Jesus was a perpetual oblation, and one by death consummated for ever in an obedience that did not fail even in the shadow of God's judgement, when, in a last crisis, the Son was denied the Father's power, communion, or aid. To obey and trust a God with His face hidden and His hand stayed, to accept in loving faith such a will of God, was, for the Son of God, the height of all obedience, trust, and love. Life had no higher service for man to offer, and death could give no greater worship or honour to God. Only it was not a mere arbitrary sacrifice and lesson of love, chosen without a moral necessity in its form, and merely because it was extreme and impressive. That comes too near the egoisms of self-mortification or of suicide to advertise a cause. It was required and prescribed by a holy God. And it was a service, joy, satisfaction, and atonement to the eternal holiness which made for Jesus the keynote of fatherhood, the divine thing in love, and the spring of our redemption. 'Thou art our Holy One, therefore we shall not die.' All this seems to me as latent in the Synoptics as it is explicit elsewhere.

A word must be said on this moral perspective, to clear the way for much that follows.

In a discussion like this, concerned with life's active powers, everything depends on the point from which we start—whether it is a dynamic point and a real source, and if so what is the nature of the influence that it exerts. When this

is applied to the case in our hand, it means that all depends whether we begin our approach from the divine holiness or the divine love—insofar as these are distinguishable.

Now this is a question which some would answer offhand by asking, Where did Christ begin? But, simple as this looks, it is not so obvious as *Simplicissimus* thinks. Do we mean the beginning of His ministry with its shining face or the foundation of His work in His broken heart? Do we have the foundation of His gospel expressed at the opening of His career? Was its distinctive note struck there? Or did any great change in His note take place at a point of that career?

As a matter of fact we must begin where Christ ended, and read every other gift by His last and greatest.

Was there not a stage when He began to speak of a death which did not seem inevitable at first, and to tune His message to that note? Was there not a point where He passed from a more sanguine faith to one of shadow and even gloom—the more idyllic dawn deepening to the tragic close, and the sense of miraculous power from God trembling down by disillusion to the sense of still greater power with God? That there was some great change of the kind in His ministry it is not easy to deny, however we state it. Do we state it rightly if we say that in the former stage He was preoccupied with God's giving love, but in the second, as the moral foe was measured and the conflict deepened, with the demand of the holiness in that love? Was there a point where He took up His cross, and forsook all that love so dearly means for that which it so dearly costs? Was the morning sun covered in the evening blast? Did not His preaching to the crowd of a radiant Fatherhood pass, with His experience of His public and His problem, into the preaching to Israel of a judging Fatherhood, and then into His own meeting of the judgement? Did not His note change, as His work became more national corporate, and racial, from the genial to the judicial? The

Cross, in which He was all gathered up, became (as the Church has found it) the revelation of God's exigent holiness—only a revelation thereof by the way in which His love, equally divine, met it. He began with a love meeting love, and a response in joy; He ended with a love meeting holiness and its reaction on sin. So that the conception of a genial Fatherhood (if there at all) goes back not to the Synoptics (which it can only do by treating the passion as an incidental calamity and not as a deliberate mission), but only to the first and briefest part of the Synoptics. For the shadow of the Cross fell early on this rapt, swift and piercing spirit. I keep pointing out that it was the holiness in God's love, its demand rather than its benediction, that engrossed Him as He moved to His end. The love within Him was revealed less in the way He greeted the love without than in the answer He made to the holiness above. Yet always in such a way that His love, first and last, was God's love. God in Christ ends by meeting for us His own prime demand. The love that fills our needs is the love which first hallows His name. The love that blesses is at its deeper heart the love that atones.

We begin therefore where Christ ended. We judge the early stages of revelation by the last. That is the rule of spiritual evolution. And must we not apply it to the revelation in Christ, if it took place as a real life under historic and psychological conditions?

And does it not stand to reason, to sacred reason? The prime thing in God is His holiness. From His holiness flows His love. We are apt to merge His holiness in His love. Or we think of it as a shield, or a stay, or a tonic of His love, or a preventive of its misuse. But surely holiness must be first with a God of love, and the first charge on love's revelation. We shall not miss the love if we seek first the holiness; but are we so sure of the holiness when we seek first the love? The present state of the Church's faith may answer that question.

Love is the outgoing movement which brings and gives— what? Love is sacrifice—for what? What does God love in Himself? Has the gift in God's love not absolute moral value? What makes love divine—its pathos or its ethos, its amount as passion, or its quality as holy? Were He not the Holy what would the worth be of the love that gave us life! Would it be more than instinct raised to infinity? Must God not first be ( if we will speak so) the perfect and holy life before He can give it? What can God's love give at last but fellowship of His absolute and blessed holiness and His self- sufficiency of goodness? His love is precious as His holy life in the outgoing—which must be there first in being. The wealth must first be there which love bestows. The motive matter in His love is His blessed and holy life, which would be less than holy if it did not go out to plant itself in command everywhere, and especially where it was challenged most. It is the absolute power and wealth of His holiness that goes out in love to fill our poverty in both. Our salvation was not wrung from His holiness nor bought. It flowed from it. In our redemption He hallowed His own name. He owed it to Himself. 'I do not this for your sake, but for My holy name which ye have profaned.' In His love He gave the Self that makes Him what He is eternally, and is in Himself and of Himself. His holiness was able to make His own propitiation, which was so willing in His love. If the sin thus atoned is the worst thing in man, the holiness that makes it sin is the first thing in God. And did not Christ regard it so? Or are we reading into His thought of God more than His faith contained or His words conveyed?



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**MORTAL FINALITY AND CERTAINTY IN THE HOLINESS  
OF THE CROSS**

The reason given by some who stake all on the preaching or teaching of Jesus is that they find there more than in any theology of His death to meet their personal, subjective, and what they would call their simple religion. They do not always consider the needs of a Church, nor the will of God for our great belief apart from personal edification. But even from the personal point of view they are probably not clear in their mind (never perhaps having raised the question) how or why this effect should flow to them from the words of Jesus. Either (they might say) it is because these words 'find' them, and carry their own witness of their truth and power in the pacifying, fortifying or exalting influence on the soul—and then the standard of their effect is subjective as well as the experience. 'Nothing but truth could do me so much good', they say. Or else it is because of the authority and force that breathe in the words from the personality of the Speaker. But, if they were further asked why that Speaker should be

found so authoritative, and especially why He should become at last the sovereign imperative, they would fall back again probably on the subjective impression He makes on them, of which they can give no more account. And for the individual that is quite good ground to take. The issue, however, is more than individual and must be pressed. It presses itself. We cannot but ask at last why He should become for the race the sovereign imperative, and more than the chief influence. The answer to that lies deeper than subjective impression, and it becomes urgent as we widen our area of consideration to the scale of a Church and a race. So being forced outside and beyond themselves some may come to say that the authority of Jesus rests on the authority for His divine nature of either a Book or a Church. But each of these is a minor authority, because each is His creature, and is therefore really incapable of acting as an authority for His, or as more than a witness of it. If, then, these fail them, if they are obliged to go deeper and directer for a conviction so vast, they might come to realize the weight of this—that they are themselves, as Christians, the most immediate spiritual creation of the Jesus who said these things, and His authority is the new Creator's; that they are His, not by the voucher of book or church, nor by the mere impression from His excellence upon the best that is in them, but by the redemption He achieved for them at their worst, and the regeneration He brought to pass in them. That is to say, the real source and guarantee of what is most great and comfortable in His words lies neither in their nameless spell as spiritual truth, nor in His as a spiritual hero and splendour; nor is it the warrant of Bible or Church, which might extort an admission rather than create an experience of their power. No such things can give us an objectivity objective and divine enough to be the real source of the permanent influence even of the prophetic and preaching Christ on the world. Yet such an objectivity we

must have if the influence of His doctrine on us is to be more than aesthetic, if it is to be religious in that deep and ethical sense of the word which transcends mere mood or manner, and associates it with the reality of the conscience and its regeneration to eternal life. That objectivity the New Testament as a whole does find in the Speaker of the words; but in something in Him which is more than majestic spell or moral dignity, something active and creative, something which the Reformers described as the testimony of the Holy Spirit, working not as an outward sponsor nor as a flashlight, but as the inward and intimate new life, the action in us of the very power in which Christ offered Himself and rose from the dead—the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). It finds it in the Cross which is within Christ's person, the work which meant most for Himself, always (however implicitly) at His core, and always, as He trod the long, dying way, rising to more conscious command of His deepening soul, till He overcame the world by it, and could no more be holden of the world's death. It finds it in the priest within the prophet, the priest in the prophet's mantle, in the sacrificial act which came to engross Him, which delivered the world from its last crisis of distress, and which put Him in control of the spiritual realm, the Kingdom of God, whether as seen or unseen, temporal or eternal, as history or as heaven. Here emerges the distinction between an orthodox, a positive, and a liberal Christianity. Orthodoxy urges the necessity of a certain theological system for salvation; liberalism grounds faith on general ideas or sympathies native to man but roused by Christ, who gave them unique expression winged by His great personality, while positive Christianity rests Christian faith on certain historic and saving facts, centring in the death and resurrection of Christ, as the new creation of the race. The spiritual destiny of the race is the work of Christ's atoning and creative death.

The work of Christ does not simply face us as a landscape or a heroism faces us for our appreciation and description. His words might so confront us, but not His work underlying them and rising both to transcend them and suffuse them. It does not simply stamp itself on us. It is not only impressive, but dynamic. It makes and unmakes us for its own response, it creates (it does not simply elicit) the power to answer and understand itself. This we recognize when we say that our faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God by the Spirit. But we mostly mean this too vaguely, as if it were God's gift by a second act of His Spirit distinct from the great, pregnant, and fountal gift of historic redemption in the Cross. We treat it as if it were a new departure and approach to us—that of the Spirit—forming another 'dispensation', and, therefore, an arbitrary influence upon us; whereas it is a part or function of God's one pregnant deed and gift to us of Christ's Cross, which has a faith-creating power intrinsic to it as the complete and compendious act of redemption; for redemption is really and at last faith- production. In this light the New Testament belief, as the belief of the apostles who were the first great products of the Cross, is the self-explication of the Cross, its exposition of itself as the supreme act of the Holy Spirit wherein Christ offered Himself to God. The Epistles especially are Christ in self-exposition. They are an autobiography of His death. The substance of the apostolic message is the product of the work of the Spirit-filled Christ at its first, pure, potent, and normative source. The inspiration of the apostles means that the divine deed created its own atmosphere and its own authentic word by its very redeeming nature, by an action on men inevitable and reciprocal; as in a lyric the thought or passion creates the one right form, and wears it not as a garment but as a body spiritual and immortal. We can say that Christ taught Paul from His exaltation, as He taught the disciples from amid His humili-

ation; or that he was taught by the Spirit; or that it was the Cross explaining itself in the faith of a great soul it had created anew. But, if the apostolic word of the Cross is in any sense the self-expression of the Cross, then it cannot be foreign to the Saviour's own word.

It is not as if we had to deal with two things alongside or confronting each other—Christ's work of redemption and its response in the sum total of its individual believers—two such things external to each other, severed by time, and darkly joined only in a region at subliminal depths in the soul. If that were so, the deed of Christ would be featureless and impotent, as it never was in His own consciousness. It would not create faith but only meet it. It would lose, above all, its nature and self-sufficiency of redeeming power. Its redeeming principle and power would not be complete till our act of subjective appropriation—as its redeeming *effect* of course, is not. But then our act of appropriation is also, in such a view, an incomplete thing. For it is a contributory work of ours, an act of our personality; and we can never be quite sure if we have done it fully or even adequately. That is to say, we have the objective and the subjective parts of our religion so related that what we add to the one is taken from the other; owing to which view we have, on one side, deep believers in the Cross with a poor insight into Christ's character and discourse, and, on the other side, vivid devotees of these who seem little affected by the Redemption in His Cross. But, if we are to treat the objective fact in our faith as really full in itself of infinite power for us, it must be a fact like this. It must be such a paradoxical and miraculous fact that the more it is outside the soul and free of its variations so much the more it becomes our subjective possession; as we are *lost* in it, we are full of it; we become (strange words!) the fulness of Him who already filleth all in all. It is so fixed, deep and dominant in time that it is equally real and final for all

time. The more it is independent of the present and its distractions, as a storm-free fact of the past, so much the more is it the real, eternal power for the present and its conflicts. But this is really and experimentally true only of the Christ of the redeeming and regenerating Cross. Apart from that experience, all this is so intolerably difficult and paradoxical that it is easily dismissed as mannered and perverse. But the more we take stand on Christ's Cross (or rather in it), the more we find to prize in His own prior works or deeds in one direction, and the more also we feel in command of the deep, strange words and deeds of good men ever since in the other. The more we find the Cross of Christ *to* be a finished act of reconciliation for us beyond our consciousness, so much the more do we find it the ruling and growing experience of our consciousness. Christ for us is the only true, effectual, arid permanent condition of Christ, or indeed of the spiritual world, *in us*—meaning by us mankind, and not an elite of religious temperament or culture. Here is the true and universal mysticism. The mysticism for the common man and all men is the mysticism of the conscience redeemed once for all by Christ, the same yesterday and for ever. The faith that takes home today the work of Christ in that far yesterday is not our contribution to it, not our 'homologation' of it, but rather a present creation of it. The Cross of one Soul in Time becomes the timeless power for every man. Christ's work on the Cross, therefore, and our faith in it, are not two hemispheres which orb into the perfect star, any more than the universe is a collocation of God and the world. It is Christ's death and resurrection that work on in us as our faith. Believing we rise with Him. We obey the same power which raised Him from the dead. Here again we have the *testimonium Sancti Spiritus*.<sup>1</sup> Our overcoming of the

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'witness of the Holy Spirit'.

world is a function of His resurrection (as the obverse of His death). And our Christian mysticism is the same Christ in us who was for us. It is the creation of a new man by the mystic yet active (not to say ethical) communion not of Him only but of His death and resurrection. This is the only source of a mysticism energetic and not merely quietist, a mysticism which is the fellowship of the divine Act rather than of the divine Being. We do not sufficiently consider that the obedience of Christ was not simply to God's truth, as a prophet, nor to God's will, as a saint, but to God's saving work, which He did not merely declare nor reflect, but achieved and completed. The objective and the subjective, therefore, the past and the present, are not in a contact where the one surface takes the imprint of the other, but in a polarity and a *perichoresis*,<sup>1</sup> in which, however, the one pole is rather the creative source than the complement of the other. For such an order of subjective faith there is (even in Christ Himself) nothing objective with sufficient creative power but His consummation as a complete and perfecting person in the atoning redemption of the Cross, in the New Covenant, and the creation of the new man. In this creative consummation all the discourse of Jesus is an organic under-agent, speaking to us as never man spoke because proceeding from such a person as man never was, and achieving such an eternal act of God as man never did, and never could do.

I desire to keep in view the Cross, the organic crisis of Christ's whole life, earthly and eternal, as God's one kerugma, as the burthen, key, consummation and purpose of Christ's whole person and mission, who is 'the Apostle of our confession,. Our preaching of that Gospel is not simply our true reflection of Jesus, but a living function of that Cross itself. It is not mirrored in us but mediated. It is our witness

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<sup>1</sup> That is, 'in an adjacent relationship'.

viewed as His work, just as our faith is the prolonged action of His resurrection (Eph. 1:19, 20). It is that saving and finished act of God in Christ re-enacting itself sacramentally through the detail of the Church. We are not preaching Christ unless we preach the Cross—either implicitly or pointedly—and the Cross not as a moral ideal, but as a historic act, as an objective deliverance and a subjective regeneration of man, something critical, decisive, positive for all spiritual being in God or man. It is there, in the pointing of Christ's person there, that we gain the certainty of which criticism is apt to rob some who stake their all upon the biography and the character. It is there that we gain the certainty of His person and union with it, the finality of His work, and the communion of His Holy Spirit.

And these are notes that the Church's message must have if it is to survive, if it is to minister to the real needs of the race's soul, moralize the conscience of society, and cease to linger as a tolerated tradition. Certainty and finality are the prime necessities when the conscience realizes its actual case. It is not intellectual doubt that troubles us so much, it is religious doubt. It is not doubt about truths, or even facts, but about our soul—about our soul's state and our world's destiny. What is all the question raised by science compared with the tragic doubt rising from a European war which seems to knock the bottom out of a moral world; and yet that war is a less tragedy than the death of Christ.

I found Him in the flowering of the fields,  
I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
But in His ways with men I found Him not.

It were well if we could turn all intellectual question into religious doubt. It would force the crisis we need, and send multitudes of men into the valley of decision. If men raised more searching question about their state before God,

collective or individual, and less about this or that problem, we should be in a more hopeful way for the solution even of these problems. There are too many people working on problems for the number that are concerned about the soul and its task, whether in a man or an age. It might be well that people were less occupied with the problems of the text if they were more with the problem of themselves and their kind. What we need most is not intellectual certainty but evangelical, not scientific history but history impressive, creative, teleological. And that is why one turns away for a time, however gratefully, from the scholars to the theologians, from the critics, work upon the New Testament to the believers work upon the Gospel. We must have footing from which to take our critical work on the preaching of Jesus calmly, footing to look down on it. And how can we do that if we are agitated every moment with the fear that our moral foundation may give way, and we, and all our critical apparatus, collapse? How can we pursue our scientific treatment of the Gospels with mental quiet and balance if we are momentarily threatened with the loss of a Gospel, a Salvation, a Saviour, as its result? How can we hopefully pursue anything, when the floor falls out of our civilization in a European war caused by a Christian nation's cynical negation of a world-conscience or a divine kingdom, unless we are founded on the divine victory in a moral strife more mortal and awful still; which comes home to us in Christ's Cross as a vaster tragedy and crisis than that through which we are living now? It is good, it is essential, that we be first established in history by Grace, and by the Grace of the historic Cross as the last value in history.

It is only the experience of the Gospel that gives us the true point of command for the Gospels, whether it command all history for us or not. It is only the Epistles that give us the proper *pou sto* [starting point] for the evangelists. It is only the

apostolic Church that has all the conditions for fertile criticism, it is not the State schools. It is only a Christ that we can verify in our personal experience that makes us free to deal with those portions of the record which are no longer matter of experience, as also with the judgements in history that appal experience. It is only the Christ of the indubitable Cross and its new creation of history that equips us with the certainty which can calmly discuss the challenge of the miracles, or the spectacle of public and Christian Antichrist let loose on a world more ready to admire Christ's teaching than to owe itself to that Cross. We shall approach the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ with an essential factor in the verdict if we come from the experience of communion with the risen Christ, and if we know (as Paul knew in Ephesians) our faith amid a world-wreck to be the continued action of that resurrection and not merely its effect. This is why the preacher might be reserved about critical results or apologetical solutions till he has secured the evangelical solution in continuity with the Church's inmost life of Redemption. It is his work, it is the true method of the Church, to approach the gospels through the Gospel; just as Christianity judges the world altogether not by its history but by Eternity, not by the progress discernible in its career, but by a standard for progress itself, and one revealed by another world which invades it in the Cross. It is this construction of the need of the hour that has turned the attention of some away (by comparison) from New Testament criticism to the New Testament Gospel and the theology which is its truth and power. It is the sense of the time's spiritual need that makes some regret to see a preacher claiming rational freedom before he has realized spiritual, and discussing (or emitting) from his pulpit either critical results or irenical optimisms before he has established his flock in that personal experience of redemption which so secures the heart and

mind in advance that it assures criticism of its full Christian liberty.

Finality and certainty, I venture to repeat, are prime necessities of religion when the conscience is fully roused to its actual case. And they are the Church's monopoly, by virtue, not of an appreciation of the preaching Jesus (which is much shared by the natural world), but of the Church's creation by the most supernatural and anti-mundane thing that ever happened—the Cross of Christ as interpreted by Himself in His Spirit. The Church is equipped, by God's gift, with such a self-interpretation of Christ in His climax of death as supplies that certainty and finality. These form a demand unmet by any view of that Cross which reduces its prime purpose to impression instead of either atonement or regeneration—to its action on us, whether morally or emotionally, whether in producing repentance or producing affection. If its chief object was to stir these, it is one that does not seem to have been present to Christ's mind as His passion came to its crisis, when He was engrossed with God and with action on Him. But also such impressionism does not give us a fixed point of confidence within the spiritual universe. It may waft us on a course but it does not anchor us behind the veil. It does not moor us there amid the variations and misgivings of our experience—our failures in ethic, our falsities in love, our poverty of contrition. We need something more than a preached, prophetic, or even dramatic assurance of forgiveness if we have really felt guilt's crushing load or sin's benumbing sting, and tasted the need for redemption on the serious, searching, universal scale of God's Holiness. We need a regeneration. We need the actual judgement of sin, which is the creative reaction of holiness upon it. And we need the actual and final (though not the

penal) satisfaction of holy God, a satisfaction by sanctity and not by suffering, by obedience and not by a victim. Our conscience would demand that on His behalf, even did He make no such demand historically. To meet our case we must have more than an impressive revelation of a love stronger than death by its passion. We need to realize a love stronger than sin by its holiness, love engaged in the very act of destroying sin as holiness alone can do; we need to see and realize the destruction of sin by the establishment of the holy Kingdom amid earth's career. If the Cross was not the establishment of this Kingdom it was no fit close to a historic life which had the Kingdom for its burthen and task. And the death of Christ was then no essential part of the Gospel He preached. But all Christ's teachings about the Kingdom were only facets of His act of the Cross, which founded it where nothing can be shaken—on the holiness of God and what that holiness both required and gave. Roused, melted, or crushed by His words, we need more than a present God for a help in time of trouble; we need a God doing eternal and historic justice to what is the most perfect and real thing in the universe, and our own last interest there—to the holiness of His own love, which we have so deeply wronged. The effect on us of the mere spectacle of Christ carries us beyond spectacle. We need there an act of judgement and not merely of exhibition, of reparation and not mere confession. We need a confession so full and perfect as to be reparation—the full confession of the Holy by the Holy amid the conditions of universal sin. For the purposes of the Kingdom Christ preached. We need more than a God made mortal flesh; and what we are offered in Christ is God made sin for us. Our preaching is so often without due ethical nerve or result because the Church is too much detached from the Kingdom and its word; it is becoming too much a revelation of love and too little a revelation of judgement, and of judgement sure

and saving at last, because securely come and spiritually complete already. It must not be a question of a judgement to come, but a certainty of a judgement come once for all, and working immanently to effect always.

If any man sin it is not enough for our conscience, on the scale on which Christ viewed conscience, that we have a Father pitiful and patient in the knowledge that we are but frail dust. We have more than that in Christ's consciousness of Himself, His mission, and His power. It is said (I John 2:1 ) that in our sin we have an Advocate with the Father, perfectly righteous; who by His very sanctity is not simply a skilled pleader but a merciful and faithful High Priest; nay, who is a judgement-laden Propitiation; and therein so perfect and holy as to be a perpetual joy and full satisfaction to the holy God over all the horror and tragedy of human sin; a delightful Propitiation, on the whole scale of that sin also, the whole scale of history and of the world; nay, one on the scale of God, since in all Christ does He is no mere bystander or third person with good offices between God and man, but the Father's Eternal Son; so that the propitiation is in and from God Himself; God makes it, and it is the first charge upon His initiative and recreative love (I John 4:10).

But when all that is said, are we moving away from the historic Christ to an apostolic fancy? Will it be pleaded that this tremendous New Testament conception, which no true penitent can rehearse without an emotion deeper than tears, really deflects and minishes the true greatness of Christ's offered soul? Is it anything but the mind of Jesus the preacher made explicit in minds to whom by His Cross He had become Christ the Gospel?

A Cross whose purpose was exhausted in such moral effect on us as is associated with the preaching of Jesus might convince us that our guilt was put behind God's back; would it convince us that from there it would never look out upon

us again? For an absolute confidence, we need to know that it was surmounted and destroyed for good and all. Its ceasing to press on us at any time would give us no surety that it had therefore ceased to be; and if it did not cease to be it might still rise up against us. God's work on sin, Christ's work, is not perfect if He only remove its reproach in us; the sin has to be undone, especially as guilt. He must exert His holy might in a final judgement not only of silence but of ruin on it. It must be more than covered, it must be extinguished; else it might lift its head and hide the grace it could not kill. And this destruction of sin was brought about in its judgement on the Cross—its judgement and destruction as a world-power by Christ when He set up in history an eternal holiness.

But shall we go farther than by Christ, and still be true to the Word of Jesus? Shall we speak of sin's judgement in Christ? Shall we go beyond the judgement Christ inflicted on sin, and speak of its judgement inflicted on Christ, of sin's condemnation in Him, in the awful warfare in His moral personality? This is a question to which I must return. For it is of no small moment to the complexion of a preached Gospel, and to the Church's command of its message, whatever individuals may think or feel. But I will leave the matter at this stage with the observation that, while great care is needed in the way we put it, the full tragedy, as well as the full glory, of the situation is not realized till we view Christ in some due way as 'made sin for us', not as the judge alone but as the victim of judgement, with the chastisement of our peace upon Him.

The destruction of human sin and the satisfaction of a holy God on the Cross make a moral act or nothing; and a moral act in a deeper sense than any preaching of a facultative forgiveness could be, even by Jesus. Being the creation of

God's Kingdom, it is not a fiat nor a *tour de force* but a moral conquest within the Eternity immanent in Time. The unholy thing is destroyed by the condensed moral energy of the Holy One, in a conflict wherein a thousand years are as one day. It was where the Fall was—in the timeless conscience within history—that the decisive battle was fought and won; just as I have said that progress within time can only be measured by standards that look imperiously from eternity. And it is the conscience that understands that victory, and gives the great response to it. Christianity is no mere moralism; but in its most mystic depth it is more of an ethos than a pathos, a moral re-creation more even than a revelation of kindness. Did the message of Jesus reveal chiefly love's affection or its holiness? Surely it is a conscience more troubled about God's holiness than even its own shame, lovelessness, or doom that understands the last word on such a matter as the Cross of the Preacher of the Holy Father. It is the holy sorrow of the forgiven, the mature repentance and regeneration of the sanctified, that places us in the most vital contact with the loving work of the Redeemer. It is the holy that appreciate the Holy One, and the conditions of His love. But I mean the holy of the swift and piercing conscience, the holy of the passionate and tragic soul, the holy who are forgiven much— it is they rather than those white flowers of the blameless life, the angelic purity, and the mystic mood; it is regenerate Launcelot more than noble Arthur. Our public life, which has suffered from the ineffectiveness both of a commercial orthodoxy and a sentimental liberalism, needs to be braced by a more subtly ethical grasp of the moral source of our race's Redemption. Back to Christ must mean back more searchingly with the human conscience to the Cross, and back, therefore, to the primacy in revelation of the holy. The conscience of the West owes most to the Christian Cross. And now that that conscience publicly collapses and needs

reconstruction for God's Kingdom, it is back to the Cross the Church must go, and to the Kingdom's moral foundation there, if she is to be the true and effective international. Man can be morally remade always and only by his Redeemer. There is no regeneration apart from redemption, and no redemption apart from regeneration. And the reconstructors are not the educational ethicists but the regenerative preachers, the true gossellers to a conscience that needs life more than light. They need not lay down an ethic of social progress, nor prescribe business precepts, nor agitate economic programmes. But they must go into the wilderness and preach the Cross in a way that for a time may please neither hard orthodoxy nor mild liberalism. But it should compel both to a new sense of moral holiness, of loving repentance, and of such righteousness, public and private, as cannot but flow from that spring at the heart of things. If the Cross, as the crisis of God's conscience, were as much the source of the public conscience as it is the centre of public sentiment, man should be well within the Kingdom of God. If the fellowship of the Resurrection were as much the partnership of the Saviour's holy and creative energy as it is of a still and detached piety, the new heavens would break up through a vernal earth. Our every act of faith would be a function of that Resurrection. And Christian men would then find it possible to guide the gathering of their wealth with the same Christian principle as so often guides its distribution when it has been gained. We should spend ourselves as christianly in the getting as in the giving. Whereas the giving is often much wasted because of the taint that is on it from the getting. It is very inadequate because of the wounds the getting has made either on the getters or the losers.

The aggressive Church must incessantly renew its strength and refine its quality at such a Cross as fits the Saviour's invincible sense of holy power over the world's evil, a sense

which meets us even in the opening chapters of Mark. It must gather its strength at the Cross taken with soul-seriousness, and with the moral realism that loses no whit either of God's grace or man's devilry. That region is the Christian's native air; for it is the climate in which Jesus not only began but went to His death and rose from it to be the providence of His own Salvation, and to expound from heaven that holy victory to its chief trophies in the apostles. We can, of course, bore the world with talk of the Cross—as we may a stranger with vernacular talk, or tales of our native land. The public has been thus bored with it. And we can do nothing with people we bore. But when the Church is bored with the Cross (and not with the preacher), when it is bored with an Atoning Cross, even if it prize a sacrificial, it is losing its creative source and its Holy Ghost, and ceasing to be a Church. It may be said the Church never is bored with the true Cross—only with men who would bore people whatever they talked about, or with notions too old to be talked about. Is that quite certain? Are there no Churches that dislike the preaching of an atoning Cross, even by the most vivid voice, as mere theology? Have there never been preachers who have lost the Cross in precious things like sympathy, sentiment, idealism, and the like, divorced from eternal things like repentance, forgiveness, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost? The most impressive preacher will make no standing Church unless he have a secret deeper than impression. And that is the secret of regeneration, stored in the new creating Cross, whose chief value, even for its effect on man, is its value to the God who engrossed the whole thought and sacrifice of the dying Jesus. Impressive preaching makes an audience, but it is regenerative preaching that makes a Church. And regenerative preaching finds the chief value of all that Christ said in what He did, and did unto God.

To many it has been and is a great trouble, when they

considered the action of Christianity on the world, to have to own the slow progress made by the Church, and even the imperfect machinery left us by Christ for covering the world with true Christians. They are bewildered to note that the Gospel of the Cross does not do more to realize the teaching of Jesus. But while we sympathize with the passion, we may correct its impatience, which has at times done something to delay its own goal by increasing the machinery at the cost of the soul. Whole Churches may make this false choice by a greater interest in the increase of agencies or adornment of fabrics than in the religious education or care of their ministry. And to correct our impatience and comfort our longing we may ask ourselves if we have duly measured either the nature or the size of the problem. We may take the historic hint that God's ways are perhaps not our ways, nor His thoughts ours in such matters. When we perceive the slowness and the groping of the Church's action in history, we may cherish a doubt whether the speed and success which are our eager desire really correspond to the supreme purpose and method of Christ and His Salvation. And it may occur to us, if we really believe that Christ is always having His perfect work, to infer that some other purpose ruled Him and His mission at last besides a swift ingathering of men or nations, and a prompt establishment of the Kingdom on earth. We may go aside for a little to realize in Him when He reached His Cross another object, far less palpable but far more powerful, taking precedence of His effect on the world, and regarding rather His effect on God. If His supreme work was one directed to God rather than man, the pace of its influence on man must wait upon the manner of its action on God. Its catholicity must wait on its holiness (whereas the Church is always sacrificing its sanctity to its success). If it went first to deal with a holy God, it achieved a moral task as much greater than any task of history as God is greater than man. But moral

progress is the slowest of all, by the call it makes on the soul's freedom, and the curb it lays on its egoism. By how much the greater, therefore, the gospel is as a moral achievement within the soul's eternity, by so much the more it must linger in the progress of time. We may find both consolation and patience in the remembrance that, however it fail with men, its success with God was complete and final. And it will go the faster with history the more deeply we enter into the moral secret of its effect in heaven. Man finds himself as he is found in God. And it is the victory in Eternity that prescribes the conduct of the campaign in Time.

Nothing does more than the new social conscience to withdraw interest from the atoning and apostolic value of the Cross of Christ, and to confine attention to its sacrificial and altruist worth—to turn it from being the source of the world's new creation to be but the centre of the world's moral scene, or the summit of its moral ideal. It is forgotten that the atoning Cross (with its voucher of the Resurrection) became the source of the greatest moral Society the world has ever known, or can know, in the Christian Church.

Truly, to touch the nerve of the social sore we must pierce to the social conscience. But we do not touch the moral reality of the race and its conscience till we come into real relation with that which fulfils *all* righteousness, with goodness universal and absolute, with the holy, with the holy judgement and justification in Christ's Cross. There is no moral future for a society in which Christ is but the prophet of social righteousness, and His Cross but a prophet's reward.

It is the Christian belief that nothing but Christian love can save the world. But could the teaching, or even the example, of Christ produce it on that saving scale, and work the radical

change on human egoism? Christian love grows out of Christian faith—it cannot take the place of faith. And faith is marked, first or last, by two things Jesus never lost from sight—by wonder and repentance; wonder before the miracle of grace, and repentance before its holiness. It is faith in a holy God's strange Grace to His enemies, and not in His natural affection for His offspring, nor in anything common equally to the just and the unjust. And in a world like this the Grace of God is not the Grace of a just and holy God unless it pass to us through an atoning, judging, and justifying Cross. If God is the holy one that Christ revealed Him to be, could He be duly met and owned by a cross that was no more than the height of that self-sacrifice and service which Jesus taught? Surely as it is holy love, so it is holy Grace that is the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ—Grace that fulfils and satisfies *all* righteousness, i.e. the absolute holiness of God. Such is the God and Grace of Christ, of Paul, of Luther. And it is between this holy, judging, atoning God, both of Epistle and Gospel—it is between that God and no God that the world has at last to choose. Let us deal as patiently and concessively with individuals as we may. It is not always kind or wise to force individuals on sharp dilemmas—especially young and raw minds, whose faith is being made out of love, whereas at the first love grew out of faith. That change means some difference in treatment. The tyro must be led on and built up from where we can begin with him. But we are occupied at the moment with society rather than the individual, with the trust and message of the Church, and not with the piety of its members or catechumens. And between the Gospel and Society it comes to be a great Armageddon, forcing us on the final and founding position which makes the Church what it is. That final position is not a halfway house. It is an absolute and eternal alternative. It is the human soul's last dilemma. Christ does force the last stand and the last verdict of the

conscience for Himself or for His enemies. On the way many who are not against Him are for Him, but at the end those who are not for Him are against Him. When we come there, to the last great battle, the choice is narrow but vast, brief but yet endless, and as strait as it is sublime. It is really a choice between the Redeeming God and no God that the world has to face. Nay, can we avoid going the full length with moral thoroughness and saying that it is a choice between the crucified, atoning God and no God? It is not between mere Fatherhood and Atheism; it is between Redemption and Atheism. If God has revealed Himself as Redeemer, nothing but such a Christ can save us from Atheism. The protection from Atheism is not Deism, but boldly a Trinity of salvation. It is with the Gospel, not simply of a loving God, but of a gracious, an atoning and redeeming God, providing His own propitiation, that the Church is charged to the world. The loving, liberating God is not explicit enough. He is not concrete enough. He is not intimate nor even relevant to the world's moral case. He does not meet the sharp dilemma, last despair, and world-tragedy of the soul. The God in Christ was not a liberator nor an ameliorator, but an absolute and eternal Saviour, and not from the world simply but from perdition. He is the Creator, in the moral crisis of the Cross, of a holy Kingdom; and only if we place the act of such a God at faith's centre (as the New Testament does) can we do for Society the most vital and fontal service of moralizing its religion. The true social ethic is at last evangelical. It is the explication in practical detail of that adjustment of sin to sanctity, of man's conscience and God's, which was done once for all, fontally and creatively, in the Cross of our religion. I speak here of the great world-Gospel in the charge of the great world Church. Of course, individuals going out with that Gospel have large discretion for their own idiosyncrasy, and for particular cases. And the Church has to do it

justice by the exercise of much discretion always, and due knowledge of the facts, deadly or divine. But what makes the Church the Church is its message to the world—and this message at last of a historic salvation and Kingdom once for all. Its only power with the world is a Gospel which in the long run leaves no choice or compromise between the Redeemer God in Christ and the no God, or the aesthetic God of civilization. If society reject Redemption it is choosing moral relapse, however it may try to stand still or to soften its own fall.

The movement of human thought and progress does us this service—it forces us by a process of exhaustion on the God reconciling by a judgement in Christ's atoning Cross. The Judaistic God has been tried and failed. The Hellenic God is a dead God, a lovely and melancholy shade. The God of mere retributory wrath and distributive justice is gone—as has his antithesis, the humanistic God of mere benevolence and kindly love. The God of mere fatherhood fails a conscience stern with itself, fails even the heart that outgrows domestic interests, and certainly cannot keep a church alive. And the God of the stoic moralist has retired—the God of the stoic moralist who just lets us reap, by an ethical nemesis, what we sow, and rewards us by a reflex tariff, according to our works. The unknown God, to whom science has been paying the worship of nescience—He is as good as gone. The God is gone who is never at home to callers, however vigilant He is of His victims. And by all such failures, in the moral pressure of life and the growing tragedy of history, where a sea of brother's blood now crieth from the ground, we are shut up to Christ, to the blood of Christ, speaking better things, and to the God and Father of Christ redeeming upon His Cross. The atoning Christ of the long procession of catholic faith and sanctity cannot be in such conflict with the prophetic Christ of the Gospels as we are asked to believe. A

Christ thus rent could not have produced even the Christianity we see. And the contrast is less the more seriously we take such words as love, mercy, or holiness. At their richest they are flushed with the blood of Christ. If we pierce Christ's mind, we must come out in Paul, who said of himself, 'Our thoughts are Christ's thoughts' (I Cor. 2:16); or in John, for whom the first gift of the first love was not a mere boon but a propitiation (I John 4:10). Christ's God, and Paul's, and John's, and Peter's survives alone, facing with due seriousness and sanctity the god of the period, or the polytheism of the distraught age. There are many that have gone on to lose their God because they began by losing the Cross as more than a heroism. Can it be otherwise at last if it be true that God's real self-donation is in His propitiating and redeeming love? There are some, still Christian, that lose their God by living in their piety, more than in Christ's grace. We can all lose our God by ceasing to find and read Him for ourselves at His moral rendezvous in a Cross more holy than even heroic or pathetic. Would the moral mind of the public be where it is now, would the Church itself be capable so often of the moral density which lays it open to the cynicism of the world, if so many Christians had not softened the Cross and lost the Saviour of their conscience in their culture of the heart? It is possible to cast out devils in Christ's name, be the best of Samaritans, be very impressive, tender, and mystic, and do many wonders, and yet never know Him as He strove and died to be known. It is possible to care for Him and yet care little for that for which He cared most. It is as possible to lose the true God in general benevolence as it is to lose benevolence itself in selfish spirituality. It is possible to be full of domestic affection and to be a public Satan. We have gained much from humanitarian love and mystic spell; but, unbased on Christian faith, and principle, and power, it goes down before the haste, taste, worldliness, and selfishness

of civilization, like the gentle Peruvians before Spain. It is unequal to the problem of history. A cultured Christianity of fatherhood leaves a Church without the moral power that should keep nationality from being an inhuman egotism and a world curse.

What is around us at this moment is all a parable, nay, a sample, of the moral debacle that civilization, progress, enterprise must come to, unless from its soul it worship a self-revealing, man-redeeming, holy and gracious God in Christ. Progress and liberty are much, but righteousness and peace are worlds more; that is, if at the centre of our Christian religion we have also the eternal victory and standard of moral power—if we have the insight to know that the moral principle hallowed and secured in the atoning Cross goes far beyond the practical ethic or religious prospects of the individual, and is identical with the principle on which the universe subsists and the foundations of the moral world are laid. This is what the Church preaches as the Gospel of Christ—the moral and spiritual crisis of the universe. Is it really a different word from that which was in the mouth of Jesus, as the lever to lift the wise, able, efficient, and progressive world out of its moral wreck or ineptitude on to the rails of the Kingdom of God, of a holy, judging, saving God?

There are at least three features, not to say foundations, of a religion of Atonement on the ethical plane. First the supremacy of conscience, or the hegemony of the moral, in human affairs. Second, and by consequence, the absoluteness and finality of the holy in matters pertaining to God. The first question to be put to every theology concerns its justice to the holiness of God's love. And, third, the human tragedy as the site of revelation. That is to say, we shall look for the normative action and decisive revelation of God where we need it most—in the region of life's collisions, crises, dooms and despairs rather than in the region of its law,

order, and happy evolution. Revelation is more dramatic than rational.  
And war touches its nerve more than peace.

If we come with these requirements, the only answer is the apostolic.  
Were they the features of the mind, message, and mission of Jesus?



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### **IN WHAT SENSE DID JESUS PREACH THE GOSPEL?**

THE second question that faced us in connection with Christ as preacher was the somewhat strange inquiry, Did He preach the Gospel?

To that there can surely be but one answer at last—unless the Evangelists have painted out the Gospel with Apostolic theology. The gospel of mere benignant fatherhood, of the natural man magnified and infinitely good, Jesus did not preach, but the Gospel of a holy gracious fatherhood in a 'Kingdom founded and opened by Himself alone, He did. He did not preach a natural sonship spiritualized, but a sonship based upon God's holy will and gracious choice rather than upon mere continuity of nature. Israel was God's son, not as a sample of the nations but as elect from them. And Christ's word, so based, was a sonship of grace and redemption rather than a childship by creation. It was a new and greater creation, a second creation with the first but as its prelude. A sonship of faith and repentance, one conferred and not inborn, was His ruling thought, as it was Paul's, who struck

Christ's true note in the metaphor of adoption. We have not two Gospels. Paul took seriously and developed Christ's fundamental principle of grace—to every man this penny, as a gift and not a wage; and the faith he found so fundamental was its response. Jesus preached a gospel of grace calling for faith rather than of love calling for love. He intended love, but He did not ask for it. But He asked for faith, sure that faith in *Him* must work into love.

Still, in the precise form in which Paul preached the Gospel Jesus did not preach it. He did far more than that, I have said. He brought it, He achieved it. He provided the act and fact which Paul expounded, which He expounded in Paul. His preaching of the Gospel would have been felt to lack fulness by a listener bred in our modern evangelical schools. And indeed it would not have satisfied Paul, as it did not save Peter, John, or Judas from their fall. For in the interval had not the Cross come and gone? Would Christ's own teaching have had the same form had He preached after the Cross instead of before? Was the preaching of Paul not in substance the posthumous preaching of Christ Himself? To Paul, I say, would not Christ's preaching in the Synoptics have savoured of those limitations of the fleshly Christ that belonged to His humiliation, and were dissolved in the full Christ, dead and risen by the Spirit of holiness, and superseding within him his own personal life and thought? It is certain that the burthen of the parable of the Prodigal is not the Gospel which Paul, with all the Church, put en *prótois*<sup>1</sup>—that Christ was delivered for our sins according to the Scriptures. But is it not also certain that the parable contains less the marrow of the Gospel than a prime aspect of it for a purpose, that it was apologetic in its occasion—not addressed to poor prodigals, but to carping Scribes and Pharisees; that it has nothing of

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, "in the first place; primacy".

God's seeking love nor of the evangelical providence which corners a man into mercy; that its historical centre of gravity is not the prodigal but his brother, and its eye was on the elder son rather than the younger; and that it was meant less as a gospel than as a defence, or a rebuke? The younger son forms the large foreground of the picture, but not its key. Christ spoke in the parable the Gospel of the Father's pitying love, forgiving the penitent but not seeking the lost; but that was all that the occasion required. He had enough to say at other times about seeking and saving the lost—indeed in the same group of parables. And that element is what culminated, out of all His life-prelude, in the Cross. What He enacted there was the Gospel of a grace not merely receiving and blessing but at great cost redeeming. And about that He said little. He said least about what filled and taxed Him most—as the way of such men is., Such men do the things which kindle others to admire, worship, explain, or enforce. They do things which compel their explanation in the very report of them, and which cannot be reported without being enforced in the act. There is a fulness which overflows into speech; and there is a fulness which is poured only into action. The latter is the fulness of divine strength; and it was Christ's. 'The eloquence of inferiors is in words, the eloquence of superiors is in action', says Donne. The fulness of Godhead can utter itself only in a deed, and neither in a truth nor an emotion. One is tempted sometimes to think that all the tragedy of the Church and its divisions is due to the central fatal fallacy that the matter of revelation is truth. It is the most inveterate of all the errors and heresies. It is quite shallow and misleading to point to parables such as that of the prodigal, in proof of the non-atoning character of the Gospel. We might as easily, by the same reference, deny either the Father's seeking love or the action of a Holy Spirit, or many other central elements of experienced faith. In the

greatest work of Christ the parables were adjuncts and expedients. The Cross showed how powerless they were to avert the doom. They were in a sense by-products. I have ventured to call them facets of the Cross and its Kingdom. Like most of His other words, they lay less in the route of Christ's action on the whole world, than in the course of His direct and 'occasional' contact with Israel, in the junctures between His people and Himself. And they were so conditioned, and so narrowed. Their truth was not only coloured, but measured to their occasion. In their reserve lay some of the secret of such effect as they had. They were so effective because they were made to converge so upon the situation, and speak to the issue of the moment. But His great world-mission and Gospel Christ enacted and did not illustrate (unless we treat the Supper as a parable instead of a gift). His love was always more of a deed and a power than a word or a passion. It was an energy and quality of His will. At its height on the Cross it was the silent deed of obedience to God, or of destruction to Satan. And all the Church's upward history and thought, all the deeper moralization of the world, is but giving tongue to this eternal Act of holiness by the renewal of the Holy Ghost.

Christ did not preach the Gospel in the sense of the word that has almost become slang. He became a Gospel to preach. He was God's Apostle, as Paul was His. God was in Christ reconciling, as Paul at the heart of His apostolate lived not, but Christ lived in Him. The prime interest in the case of both men was their occupant not their audience, the message and not the impression, fidelity to God and not favour with men, the Gospel and not the Church, the revelation rather than the inspiration, and the inspiration more than the success. It is a most surprising thing that Paul should have viewed the destruction (not to say annihilation) of the "teat mass of his contemporaries with so little concern. It is mainly

explicable by the fact that his first and engrossing concern was with Christ, and not with man, as Christ's was with God. He could not see for the glory of that light. This is the secret of Christ's power with man—His preoccupation with God. And Paul's preoccupation by Christ is the reason why he has done more for man in Christ's name than any other believer. Can we always do the duty of the hour, and especially of the great crucial hour, by direct sympathy, by simply putting ourselves in our opponent's place? Is there not a duty to God and right, for which we must not indeed harden our heart to others, but must still confess that they are beyond us and our responsibility, and commit them to the judgement of the same God as we have to serve by neglecting or resisting them? We can never do most for man by obsession with man. Paul was filled by a Christ whose sphere was Humanity, and in whose hand were all the generations. Christ was made unto him eternal redemption. His real passion was not the modern social passion of saving men from misfortune, but the moral passion of saving them for Christ. His ideal was not man glorified in Christ, but Christ glorified in man. And the long result of his apostolate shows how sound this principle of his preaching was, how humanitarian, and how effectual in the end if not at the first. We should have to spend less care and thought on the art of getting at the people if we spent more of both on the Gospel, the Christ, for whom we want them. And we should save our Gospel from much religious debasement and futility. Missions are seriously threatened because we have been trying to do more for souls than for Christ, and understanding them better than we do the Gospel. We can do less by winning people for Christ than by carrying home to them a Christ who wins them. If we thought less of saving men and more of saving Christ among men, more men would be saved; for the saved would be better and mightier men. It is our Gospel, our Christ, that tells in

the end more than our preaching.

I have placed Paul's relation to Christ in analogy with Christ's relation to God—I in you, as the Father in Me'. And I have spoken about Paul's preoccupation with Christ. This leads me to amplify a remark already made about Christ's preoccupation with God, and especially so in the crisis of the Cross. According to the account it was not man's case that Christ felt to be the first charge upon Him but God's. He went to His death not, primarily, because man needed it, but because God did, because of the divine *dei* [imperative]. Deeply as He felt the wounds of men, He felt more deeply their wound to God. Pitifully, freely, as He healed men's wounds, He healed the wound to the Holy One still more. Whether He preached the Kingdom, or suffered for it, it was as the Kingdom established the holiness of God. He did not die to satisfy divine justice in the retributory, penal sense; for the fulness and power of His deed was in its perfect obedience and not in its deep agony. But in that perfect obedience He did die to honour and delight the holy Name, that in the holy Son and all His believing train the holy Father might come to His own and be well pleased for ever. The essence of the sacrifice was that response and obedience of the Holy to the Holy which we call prayer; an eternal communion, sacrifice, and intercession. And in Christ's world of prayer, as of thought, it was always that interest of holiness, of love's absolute righteousness, that came first. On the very front of His prayer the Father's desecrated name had to be hallowed by its practical confession in a perfect holiness of response, before the Kingdom should come either in earth or heaven. And that is the nature of Atonement—the practical hallowing of God's name in Humanity by the Son of God and in the sight of God. It was not so much the divine confession of our sin as it was the confession which sin had killed—the practical confession, from the sinner's side, and

on the scale of the race, of the holy judgement of God, as the conscience of the Holy alone could measure it and own it.

It is plausibly put forward that much of the insistence on an Atonement seems to give the holy law an existence and a claim outside God which Jesus never recognized, and which did not leave God free to be His gracious self till it was satisfied. But such Atonement is not in the New Testament anywhere, nor does it flow from its Gospel, to which it does no honour. It would make the divine task easier and meaner than it really was. Had God been but a King or a Judge, sitting beside a law He guarded but did not make, a law over Him, a law He was responsible to and for, the situation would have been simpler and slighter. He could then perhaps have found means, easy to a divine intelligence, to compromise with the law, or get round it. But God's holy law is His own holy nature, the principle of His own holy heart, the life action and norm of His moral personality, with no source or authority outside Himself, and no claim He could even wish to ignore or evade. To tamper with it would have been to deny His own soul. He loves it as He must love Himself, or His other self, His very Son, His Holy One, dearer to Him than all men and all prodigals. A wound to that holy law of His Being is a stab to His own heart at least as keen and urgent as any love or pity He might feel to men. Nor could the passion for men of the God that Christ preached be satisfied till He saw on their side (or in their Head and Surety) a holiness like His own, and not merely a merit deserving holiness. For all His love is holy love, if Christ represent it as truly as He does man. The question, therefore, is not one of God's coercion by a law which is to Him as Fate was to Zeus. Nor is it a question of a struggle between justice and love. The crisis was no such strain, but one more severe. It was between love and

love. He loved His own holiness, especially in its counterpart in His Holy Son; and He loved His unholy sons of men. And His Grace in Atonement is the secret of His doing justice to both in a judgement by Godhead provided, by Godhead borne and by Godhead understood. It is beyond us what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we might be called sons of God. He so loved the world, in a manner so unique, that He gave His Son as a propitiation, as a critical, supreme, and historic exercise of that satisfaction wherein Father and Son ever delight in each other's holy person and are well pleased each with the other's sublime Act. Christ's incarnation of Godhead was really His supreme, perfect, and joyful preoccupation with a holy God.

It was, therefore, even in the record, an objective redemption that engaged Him. He was above all engaged with God, and with what God needed from Him. He was doing for man something more than He did directly on man. Redemption is action in the highest sense; that is, it is real action on spiritual reality. This was the case with the forgiveness that Christ exercised in His lifetime. It was an act that drew on His divine power more severely than the healing did. It had been easier to cure the paralytic than forgive him. Forgiveness was an act dealing with a power and an enemy outside man more deeply than His exorcisms did. It is remarkable, but the exorcisms seem to receive in the Synoptics more attention than the railings from the dead—possibly because they indicate Christ's power over, not only Hades, but Hell, not only over the dead but over the more deadly demons; because they invade Satan's seat rather than the abode of souls, the citadel of the power that grace had to cope with.\* And perhaps we may pause a moment here to observe on the function of the

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\* In the Fourth Gospel there are no exorcisms. and the conflict with Satan is prominent. Though of course there is the raising of Lazarus.

miracles in general that, in the Synoptics at least, they were not done to convince. They were not there chiefly as evidence, as preaching. They were refused when asked as evidence. And they were not done to impress; for Christ was no thaumaturgist. But they were done as divine blessings, to glorify God by giving positive relief to individual need. They seem to have been moved often by irrepressible pity, though it always waited on the Father's will. They were even forbidden to be published, for fear of an impression that would not suit Christ's larger purpose. And they remained good in their effects when the impression faded—as mere gratitude and wonder do fade. 'Where are the nine?'

I have already hinted that love which dies with no other object than to show love or create an effect is morally unreal, and could not therefore reflect Christ's view of His own death. It is stagey love. If it die, not in the course of duty to God but in the way of a device with men, not in rendering a positive service or averting a real peril but as a powerful spectacle, not to deal with an objective crisis but to exhibit a subjective volume of passion, if it die but to impress its love and provide an effective proof of it, then it is more or less acting. It is saltless sacrifice. It is more or less gratuitous, more or less of a pose, and, to that extent, loses in moral result and even tends to hypocrisy. The lady who threw her glove among the lions simply that her knight for her glory might exhibit his love, deserved the contempt with which he flung it in her face. This defect is what impairs the so-called 'moral theory' of Atonement, insofar as account is had only of its effects upon man, as a public tribute to the moral order,\* or as a moving exhibition to man of love, pity, and

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\* We do not escape the unreality on the Grotian line of making Christ's death an exhibition by God rather than His actual effectuation of the moral order of the world, by treating the Cross as a warning that that order cannot be tampered with rather than as the crucial establishment of the holy Kingdom. The holy law cannot be honoured by negative penalty, but only by its taking such positive and perfect effect in holiness as the conditions of sin prescribe.

sacrifice. It was all that, but chiefly in course of another object than that. It was solving a practical problem in the destruction of sin by the erection of a final Kingdom of holiness so universal that no room was left for sin; and thus it delighted in perfect worship the person of a Holy Father. It was all that the moral theory suggests, but it was so indirectly, in the course of a real redemption of man, not merely from his own ignorance or slowness of heart, but from some objective and fatal power or position, and through a conflict man could appropriate but not comprehend. It is one thing to show love by suicide, and exhibit conviction by acts of striking advertisement in the way of martyrdom. And it may be a very poor theatrical thing, which does no more at best than show conviction, and at worst indulges a morbid egotism. But it is quite another thing to meet death in the course of a real service to love, or a duty to Righteousness. It is the chief vice of Anselm's theory of Christ's work that he makes it something gratuitous, something not owed by Christ to God, not springing out of their eternal relation, instead of something required and ordained by God. It is therefore not ethical—not a voluntary obedience, but a voluntary device, and one more arbitrary and gratuitous even than voluntary.

Christ does not seem to have been exercised as to a duly ingenious and original scheme of service with which to delight God. Nor was He much concerned at His end with any impression His death might make on men. That may be one reason why our data for the psychology of the Passion are so scanty. Nor was He cheered by the thought of what the travail of His soul would win through ages and ages of souls impressed by it and reconciled. That might have reduced His

suffering to the light affliction of a moment. But He was too full of what His death might mean to God's sovereignty for that. God would set Him right with men if He gave Himself to set things right with God. He sought first the sovereignty of holiness, and all men are added to Him. Insofar as He was sustained at the last it was not by the vision of what He would be for the feelings of men, but by the faith of what He was for the requirements of God. The Cross is the great sermon in history, Christ's supreme and mostly silent kerugma, because, though addressed to men, it was far more offered to God. Christ in His death preached to men only because He was wholly offered to God.

Again we are warned of the true condition of the preacher's education, and of his success. He will succeed with men ( in the proper sense, as a minister of the Word and of the Church) in proportion as he aims less at attracting and impressing them, and more at hallowing the Cross with them. If he is more concerned with impressing men, even for good, than he is about the truth, reality, and power of his gospel, he is on the slope at whose foot the bones bleach of so many pulpit actors, prophets of a temperament, and aesthetic idols. It would be with a pang of distress, if we saw gifted and earnest preachers more bent on ingathering than on revealing, on circulation than education, more influential than sacramental, palpably straining to win and hold the public, courting the magnates and wooing the press, and all the time losing in weighty sanctity and sound judgement by their loss of preoccupation with the Cross itself, giving up its propitiation to God in the desire to propitiate men, or sacrificing its deep power to mere liberality or fascination.

If the Church lose its supreme interest in the supremely objective and atoning value of the Cross of Christ it is not progress but relapse; it falls back into some form of Judaism; and it ceases insofar as to be a Church, and begins the descent to

a mere group. It is not a gain of effect but a loss of it at last. We are then reverting to the position of the disciples previous to the Cross, when they were but spiritual minors, who could understand a prophet from God but not an advocate with the Father. Disciples, they were indeed, but Christ's catechumens more than His apostles, and not protected from being His traitors. They had truly much then that we covet now, but not enough for their task or their soul. What had they? They were full of ardour for the Kingdom. They went preaching it at Christ's command with great success. They saw (though dimly) what the good of old had only desired to look into. They had opened to them many mysteries of the Kingdom. They possessed miraculous power, and in Christ's name did many wonderful works. They resumed from a mission campaign with a report that felt more radiant to them than it seemed to Him. The demons were subject to them. They owned it was not they that spake but the Spirit in them. They received new authority of binding and loosing. They were the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. But all these and such things alone would not have made them apostles, as they did not give their campaign permanent value. They were but disciples and prentices still. At the most they were but prophets, or sons of the prophets. And they were liable to the prophetic collapse. John Baptist, the greatest of prophets by Christ's own seal, test his Oth in Him at last, under the vast strain that a Messiah making for the Cross put an it. The disciples fell, after all they had had as His companions and done as His missionaries. They forsook Him and fled. They betrayed and denied the Name they had used with such effect, and which had made such a strong impression upon them. Impression is not faith, precious as it is for its birth, and it can never do its work. I have said that a careful study of the Gospel notes that an estrangement of the disciples set in from the time when Jesus began to teach them

about His decease at Jerusalem. They began to suspect Him. Was He a *fainéant* [idle, or inactive] Messiah? So that their desertion and denial in the crisis were but the last of a series. The impression faded as a power—as mere impressions do, as the moral or ideal popularity of Christ at the present hour will do in due course (if it has not done so in the war). The temptation mastered them, as usual, because it had been prepared for by a series of misgivings and a growing detachment. They fell because they really in heart sacrificed Christ to Pharisaism; they sacrificed faith to efficiency, the Cross to Church prosperity, and religious insight to religious success. It may well scare the most pious and active of us, and shock the Churches worse than the war. What for Christ was the crown of all His saving purpose and His perfect pleasing of God seemed to these disciples but the depth of His miscalculation, ineptitude, and failure. They had only a bustling sense of spiritual values, the value of a Gospel to a Church as a going concern. They had more belief in God for a Church than in a Church for God. He was more tutelar than sovereign. (Is this the secret of the present debacle of Christian civilization?) Their Church, their Israel, was more real to them than its God. They had no interest in what was really for their Master the crisis that gathered all, the judgement that settled all, the victory that saved all, the end that crowned all.

Had Christ left them there they would have been, for all they had heard of His preaching, among those who, in His name, had cast out devils, and done many mighty works, but at the last were repelled and disowned. 'I never knew you.' They loved with zeal, but with no insight, not according to knowledge. They had not the insight of holiness. They had the impressions that exalt, but not the faith that changes men. They were stamped but not annealed. And the Kingdom of God does not find its account in love or pity without faith, without the moral vision of the evangelical insight into the

holy; it does not stand in any love or pity which stumbles at the Cross and our redemption by the holiness there. These sympathies, fair and precious as they are, are apt at last to be dyes without a mordant, and the colours fade, and the Churches flag. A Church without an atoning, redeeming, recreating Cross is not only an extinct volcano; it exhibits the tragedy of a saint's failure. Christ had to love, honour, and obey the holiness of God's love on the Cross before He could do anything to inspire men with love, as He cared for love. He died unto God before He died unto us, else our preaching of Him would be of no final avail. He was a holy offering to God before He became the saving influence on man. No Christian dies to show how a Christian can die. Nor did Christ. We all die because it is the will of God. It is that call we obey. And so with Christ. Only with Him it was willingly. And it was for the World. It was the greatest service of His willing life.

But for Christ's death, which all the apostles found after their recovery to be an atoning death, and not a martyr's— but for His death, and the resurrection light upon it, they would have been scattered. They could not have impressed the world. All the stir would have been but one more fruitless movement in Judea, and this revival would have subsided like the rest. And the Church will fail to change the world, in the long run, if it is no more than philanthropist, ethical, sympathetic, ideal, ardent for the social millennium, and the admirer or imitator of Christ; if it is more full of concern for Christ than of Christ's concern for God. It will fail if it is more full of man's work for Christ than of Christ's work for man; if it is always looking for the impression on men, either of Christ's work or of our own in His name; in a word, if it work more really and freely than it worships. Both work and prayer begin with the thankful praise of a soul no longer its own. Peter at Caesarea swept round quickly from a hierophant into a Satan, and finally he denied. He spoke naturally,

loyally, in his great confession—yet what must he hear immediately on the back of it! He loved Christ, he had a splendid gleam, but he had not grasped the Gospel. He confessed a Son of God insofar as that is possible without believing in a crucified Saviour, that is, in a Saviour saving on the Cross. He was but an organ of the Spirit, a reed played on by the wind, an Aeolian soul; he was not yet an apostolic personality, not yet a new creature in Christ. He did not measure either Christ or himself. His belief in the Son of the living God did not preserve him, did not give him the final secret. He found it easier to acknowledge an Incarnation than to realize an Atonement—as most Christian people do, especially in the cultured classes. They confess Christ more than they appropriate Him. It is but a Chalcedonian piety. It is but the Catholic, the infra-ethical stage of faith. It has not reached its Reformation. It begins with Christ and makes room for the Cross, instead of beginning with the Cross and arriving at Christ. Peter was not really and finally a changed and settled man, he did not really believe in the Son of God, till he believed, through his fall and redemption, in the Christ who ( in his own words) bare our sins in His own body on the tree. And we may further note that it was only the effect on Christ's atoning death on him that answered Christ's own prayer for him that Satan might not have him. Even Christ's own prayer did not avail except as prolonged into His death. If exception should be taken to the phrase that we have an Advocate with the Father as being foreign to the mind of Jesus, there is at least no doubt that Jesus prayed for His disciples. And what was His prayer worth? The Cross tells us; which was the consummation of it all, the prayer which crowned, secured and sealed all the rest. The Atonement is the one effective prayer, the standing intercession, for all the world. And we may note that it was an ardent Peter, a loving Peter, a bold, aggressive Peter, an eminently Christian Peter

as most would count Christianity in our Churches today, who came so near hell that nothing but Christ's death could keep him out of it.

It is its grasp of this objective reality that keeps the Church the Church, that lifts the sect into a Church again, and saves it from deliquescence into the religious group. The action and effect of the whole Church is lamed wherever we lose a prime faith in the objective value of the work of Christ, with its action direct on the spiritual world, and reflex on man. We invert things if we make it direct on man and, through its far-flung effect on man, reflex on God. The mistake is one that affects us in various ways, and especially does it scatter and fritter the Church's energy. If we lay all our stress on the moral effect of the Cross on man we shall succumb at last to the immense variety and urgency of human need. We shall be more distracted by the manifold tensions of the moral situation there than collected for its command at the source of moral power. Most of our merely ardent power will be lost by leakage over the plexus of wires that convey it to such a multitude of souls, each with the diverse needs of the longing heart rather than the one need of the sinful conscience. The mistake is apt also to generate the note of blandishment. I have often indicated how we suffer in moral power on the large scale by detaching from the Cross of Grace the idea of judgement. Our effect on the world suffers from an excessive eagerness to win it by avoiding what is to it an unwelcome note. In many cases we hasten even to coax it. And the world itself despises that note. The root of such haste is unfaith (or loss of a faith with a moral nerve), and impatience; whereof the end is religious unreality, hollowness, and collapse. It is hard for such a love to be without hypocrisy. We long to advance faster than we can move our supplies or reserves.

Our energy is ahead of our resource, and faith becomes feigned, worked up rather than worked out. There have been vehement utterances where the speaker seemed trying to browbeat himself into belief. And there is religious work and lusty crusading, where the worker seeks in activity an anodyne to the ache of an ebbing creed or a gnawing soul. 'Will do, shall know', is interpreted as if he who will do anything should come to know everything. There are churches that seem to live in an atmosphere of affable bustle, where all is heart and nothing is soul, where men decay and worship dies. There is an activity which is an index of more vigour than faith, more haste than speed, more work than power. It is sometimes more inspired by the business passion of efficiency than the Christian passion of fidelity or adoration. Its aim is to make the concern go rather than to compass the Righteousness of God. We want to advance faster than faith can, faster than is compatible with the moral genius of the Cross, and the law of its permanent progress. We occupy more than we can hold. If we take in new ground we have to resort to such devices to accomplish it that the tone of religion suffers and the love or care for Christian truth. And the preacher, as he is often the chief of sinners in this respect, is also the chief of sufferers. And so we may lose more in spiritual quality than we gain in Church extension. In God's name we may thwart God's will. Faith, ceasing to be communion, becomes mere occupation, and the Church a scene of beneficent bustle, from which the Spirit flees. Religious progress outruns moral, and thus it ceases to be spiritual in the Christian sense, in any but a vague pious sense. Before long the going power flags, the petrol gives out on a desert. Missions but stagger along *sublimi anhelitu*.<sup>1</sup> Moral progress

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'with lofty panting' The meaning seems to be that the aspirations are high or lofty, but the achievement is attended with great difficulty—perhaps even substantial failure

must always share the slowness of moral principles; and these are not like fire in the heather. They do not run over the world like a scientific idea or a new invention, which has no friction or antagonism to meet in human nature. Yet the Cross, either as Jesus preached it or effected it, spreads only in moral progress, in the health of the moral soul. I do not mean in its wake, in the train of moral progress, but in that spirit, in a conscience washed in pure water. 'Since the Reformation at least there is no satisfying religious ethic whose pulse is not the doctrine of justification by faith.'

In all this I trust I have not lost sight of my leading light—that the Church's Gospel of Christ is not foreign to the synoptic mind of Jesus. For the Church could never have come to be what it has been, in and for the active world, had its central creed of an atoning Cross been in violent and gratuitous collision with its Lord's conception of His supreme work. Such a conflict in the cause would have wrecked the effect. The existing divisions in the Church have not been due to that issue, which is comparatively recent. Nor can the Church hope to go on and perfect its moral mastery of the world for the Kingdom if the gulf widen between its catholic message and the Saviour's intent. Behind all the teaching of Jesus throbs His experience. This the Church realizes now as never before. And in His experience we find much more than a sense of God's benignity, or even His sacrificial effort, in the face of human sin. And that more, what is it? Is it not that element which the Epistles found coming to a head in the Cross as the propitiation for the sin of the whole world?

When we press the death of Christ as the organic goal of His life we are resisting the fallacy which starts with the life and teaching to interpret the death, instead of beginning with the Cross, as the New Testament does, and viewing

everything from it. This error leads us to treat the Cross as a fate and not a work—as the unhappy fate of Christ the Prophet instead of the glorious function of Christ the Priest; and even if we do not regard it as a mere martyrdom we come to take it as but the supreme object lesson of a life devoted to teaching at once the goodness and the severity of God. In any case we miss the supremely moral idea of Christ as our atoning sacrifice to a holy God, an idea which came to take the ruling place in His mind as His teaching retired, and His crisis became more rapt and severe. The ransom passage cannot really be explained away into any lower sense, especially as it is sustained by the words of the supper about the New Covenant in His blood (even if we drop 'for the remission of sins' as a gloss of the Spirit rather than a record of the words). Such references are few and brief, but they are slit windows that open a world, and reveal the true perspective forced upon His mind. They show us that He felt in the Cross something unique, something which for us is less drawn from the record of His life than reflected back upon His life as its true light and inwardness. And one historic consideration offers itself in this connection which I may briefly name. It was upon its infliction of the Cross that Israel was broken rather than upon its contempt of Christ's person and word. It was by thus ending His life rather than by merely ignoring or opposing it that the nation fell. That, and not their belittling of His message, was the unforgivable sin, that and not their dullness to His moral note or His personal spell. It was the Cross that judged Israel, the murder and not the neglect. Jesus doomed His people in an agony, not for refusing the word and spirit of His life, but for compassing His death, He being what He was for their God. 'This is the heir, come let us kill Him.' That was what led to the closing down of the vineyard and the ruin of its staff. It was not for slaying another prophet, but for executing their King—no herald of

Salvation but the Saviour. It was not just a worse crime than before against a finer word, but it was the crime in all their crimes. Now at length might Israel say to God, 'Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned'. The killing of Christ was the practical head of the unforgivable sin against the Spirit of God; for it identified Jesus with the Satan whom it was God's first business to destroy, and therefore the first business of His people. The killing of the Son was done in the Father's name. It made God slay His perfect Messiah, since it was done as a service to God. That is, their God was Christ's devil. His relatives indeed put down His new way of life, with all its beneficence, to madness, i.e. to demonic possession, but they did not hate or kill Him. They sought to take care of Him. Besides, they were not in the position of the responsible leaders of a people's religion, who should have been experts of the Holy Spirit, whereas His relatives were bound to Him rather by the ties of the Son of Man. To speak against the loving Son of Man was pardonable, but for the ministers of God to speak against the Holy Spirit of God was not. A sin against sanctity is less venial than a sin against love. In the chosen leaders of the chosen people of the Holy One, in the ministers of the Church always, sin is a more serious thing than it is in others; and what would not be fatal to an individual is deadly to a community or to its chiefs.

This carried to a head was the unique thing which made Israel's final judgement. It gave the apostles, indeed, the Atonement. It gave the world its priest. Our reconciliation is a regicide peace. But it gave Israel its doom. It is a great irony. And the suggestion is that the uniqueness and finality of Israel's mortal crime against its King means (when we regard it positively instead of negatively) the same uniqueness and finality about His priesthood in that deed. For it was His deed too. If He had not laid His life down no man could have taken it from Him. He became the priest that only the divine King

could be. The unforgivableness of their sin means the incomparability of His death. 'They slew' not a saint but 'the Holy One and the Just'. Such a crime made such a death like no other in its effect on the eternal and invincible holiness of both God and man. It was not superior to all other deaths in its impressive degree, but quite different in its kind, function, and place.