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THE DIVINE APPROACH TO MAN
By Arthur E. Barkley

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DEDICATION

To Rev. W. Roy Stewart,
Co-Laborer In Many Campaigns
And Camp-Meetings And
A True Christian
Brother

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FOREWORD

It is not my purpose to enter into a profound and laborious discussion upon any of the great questions of Christian theology, but that there was a dispensation of grace prior to the coming of Christ, is evident to every person who reads the Old Testament Scriptures. It commenced immediately after the fall of man, when the first promise of mercy was made, and continued until the death of our Savior when it was formally abolished.

That it was virtually the same with the present dispensation, and differed only in form, may be seen in various instances: the promise of the seed of the woman as the ground of hope to man was the preaching of the gospel to our parents in paradise, and the same object was pointed out to the patriarchs in later revelations, -- to the Jews by their typical institutions and sacrifices and later by the voices of the prophets of God, so that truths which were once dimly seen now shine with the light of day, and God has come nigh unto us in the virgin birth, virtuous life, vicarious death and victorious resurrection of Christ.

I have tried to present a long-range picture of the unfolding of God's plan of redemption from Eden to the present day of grace. Chapter Two is the key chapter. In Abel's day, the lamb was for the individual. In Egypt, the lamb was for a household. In the wilderness, the sacrifice of a lamb was for the entire nation. Now God's Lamb is not only for an individual, or a family, or a certain nation, but "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Arthur E. Barkley

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01 -- THE FIRST DISCORD

Away back in ageless eternity, in that day that had neither beginning nor ending, God was enjoying infinite communion with the amiable society of the three persons of the trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Wanting nothing for His perfection, desiring nothing for His happiness, needing nothing for the replenishing of His life, there was no need for God ever to go outside Himself. If, therefore, He ever chose to make a world, it must have been not on account of need, or duty, or constraint, but only on account of love.

Quite naturally the mind of the Great Architect might have conceived ten thousand possible worlds other than this. This is not the best world that God could have made, but it is the best world for the purpose which He had in mind in making it. So when the point in eternity came which God had fixed for the creation of the universe, He spoke the word and matter took form; He reached down the hand of His omnipotence into the abyss of nothingness and threw it out into nowhere, and NOTHING became SOMETHING. Out from the finger-tips of God there were born worlds and planets, solar systems and constellations. Calling forth each by name He set them in the chandeliers of heaven, and sent them whirling through the firmament to the music of the spheres.

The Bible gives facts. It does not theorize or speculate. Its statement of the being of God is not a philosophical statement, for without discussing the being of God, the opening sentence

of Genesis makes Him the author of all creation. There, was not any pre-existent matter out of which the earth was produced. By the ordinary power of nature, it is impossible that anything should be made out of nothing. Man can only make things when the materials are furnished but he cannot go beyond this: he cannot create. God only can create.

No man is able to prove that the production of something out of nothing is impossible; all that he can say is that it is inconceivable to him HOW it may be done. The description of the work of creation in the book of Genesis is sublime, but simple: "In the beginning God created..." If one admits the fact of God, it is not hard to believe that God is able to do anything He may choose, even to creating all things. In that long procession of the unfolding of the creative power of God, there came first, matter. Then vegetable and animal life, and finally, the masterpiece of creation, which was man.

I think that this must have been a beautiful world when God first made it and put man on it. It is beautiful now; I love this earth, but how much more beautiful it was on that morning of creation, when the first man looked out upon it with no sin to mar any of its beauty! In a beautiful garden, made beautiful as only God knows how to make things beautiful, man was placed in the world as a king in a palace stored with all to please him, and monarch of all the lower orders of creation. The elements of nature to be his slaves and messengers, with flowers to scent his pathway; fruit to please his taste; birds to sing for him; beasts to toil for him and carry him, and man himself, amid all this luxury, a striking example of the image of God. This is man as God made him; we see him now as sin made him. His crown is rolled in the dust and tarnished; his sovereignty is strongly disputed by the lower orders of creation. The earth supplies him with food only after arduous toil; The beasts serve him only after they have been laboriously tamed and trained, while vast numbers roam the forests, preying upon the human family. But not so in the beginning. As man came from the creative hand of God, he was an example of the highest thoughts of the Creator.

There are ultimately only two possible theories to account for the nature and origin of man: One is that the life of man is a push from below; the other, that the life of man is a gift from above. The second is the Christian conception. Man is not a risen beast, he is rather a kind of fallen angel. His origin is not hidden in the slime and dust of primeval jungles, but in the clear daylight of Eden where he communed with God.

The assertion is often made today that man became, by evolution, the beauty of the world and the paragon of animals, by losing the hand of the beast, or the foot of the animal, or the visage of an orangoutang. But we know that, according to the Word of God, man is what he is because of the immortal soul breathed into him by God. As one has said, "Let a man keep the paw of the beast, but give him an immortal soul and it will not be long until he will be moving that paw over the keys of a piano and drawing out of it the melodies of a Mozart; let him even keep the tail of a beast, but give him an immortal soul and it will not be long until that tail will be picking up a pen, and writing dramas like those of Shakespeare and poetry like that of Dante and Milton,"

We did not evolve from the beast; but we have devolved to the beast. We did not rise from the animal; we fell to the animal. Chesterton said, "You never have to dig very deep to find

the record of a man drawing a picture of a monkey, but no one yet has dug deep enough to find the record of a monkey drawing the picture of a man.

The story of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden is well-known to all, and it is not necessary to enter into a detailed account of all the events that took place, but when man was placed in the garden, two things were said to him: "Thou mayest," and "Thou shalt not." Genesis 2: verses 16 and 17 tell us! "...of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Our lives, too, in a greater or lesser way, are hedged by these two laws. There are some things that we are permitted to do, and then, there are some things that we must not do, or if we do these things, we shall certainly suffer the consequences.

Freedom of the will implies the power of choice; that is, it suggests that of two objects presented to him, a person may choose the one or the other. If he can choose the one, but cannot choose the other -- if he is restrained by the law of his nature from acting except in one particular way, he is not free, in the sense in which the term is commonly used. The only way to try love is in a trial which forces one to declare it. The only way for Adam and Eve, as free moral beings to prove their love and gratitude to God, was by choosing Him in preference to all else.

It will not be denied that God had a right to prohibit the use of the tree of knowledge, as He was the sole proprietor of all the trees of the garden; surely this restriction did not come from an intention to impair the happiness of man, because with this single reservation, he was at liberty to appropriate the great variety of fruit with which the garden was stored. Surely no command could be easier, because it did not carry with it the suggestion of painful privation, but simple abstinence from one out of many things. Who would consider it a hardship if he were sitting at a table loaded with all kinds of delicate and substantial food, to be told that there was one, and only one that he was forbidden to taste?

God did not say WHY they should not eat of the fruit of this tree, and there was no reason why he shouldn't except the divine prohibition, or the fact that God had spoken. The morality of an action does not depend upon its abstract nature but upon its relation to the law of God. Perhaps you say, "Oh, surely there can be no harm in a matter so trifling as the eating of a little fruit." But the essence of sin is the transgression of a law; and whether that law forbids you to commit murder, or to move your finger, it is equally transgressed when you violate the precept. Whatever the act of disobedience, it is rebellion against the law-maker, and a renunciation of his authority. God was imposing a limit to the sovereignty of man, reminding him that if he did the one thing forbidden he would imperil all the things provided, and that like Pandora, if he should open the forbidden box, he would lose his treasures and let loose unspeakable confusion on the world.

The sin, then, of Adam and Eve was the taking of the fruit in disobedience to God's command. And disobedience to God is the great sin, and also the root of all sins. Satan preached his first sermon in the Garden of Eden, and he got two converts. Appearing in the form of a serpent, he tempted Eve with the question that destroyed confidence (which is the root of all love) by saying "God does not love you, for He has forbidden you some things... You shall not

surely die, but shall be as gods." Satan tried to make Eve believe that she had misunderstood God. The first lie!

Notice the art of the deceiver in accomplishing his purpose: Had he addressed himself to the animal part of their nature, or held out the allurements of sensual pleasure, or had he appealed only to the beauty and taste of the fruit, his proposal would have been immediately rejected. Still untainted with sin, they were not to be drawn aside from the path of rectitude by those low and paltry gratifications which exert so powerful an influence upon their degraded children. He adapted the temptation to the nobler part of their nature, and held out the deceitful promise of extra-ordinary wisdom which would elevate them above their present condition and render them worthy to associate with the inhabitants of the celestial regions.

Eve looks at the forbidden fruit; it is beautiful to behold, and it will be the means of greater knowledge and wisdom. In their state of innocence there must have existed the desire for knowledge, because being finite, man was capable of endless improvement in wisdom. More and more she turns herself from the voice and thought of God to the fragrant and imagined sweetness of the forbidden fruit. The lingering thought forms into a vivid imagination; the vivid imagination into a burning wish; the burning wish into a half-formed purpose; the half-formed purpose into a hasty act. Swiftly the crisis is upon her, as all such crises are, and the deed is done until Time shall be no more. She gives the forbidden fruit to Adam. He wanted to be independent, and show her that he could do as he liked, chose to follow his own wishes rather than God's will for him.

Surely this is understandable. Have we not done the same thing in our lives over and over again? When we were children we were forbidden to do something which we wanted very much to do; and then we longed for it, and determined to have it all the more because it was forbidden. Adam acted from the same impulse, and that act of disobedience by which Adam failed the test of love is the first sin of this created universe.

The immediate consequences of the fall, in relation to our first parents, are detailed in the narrative as given in the book of Genesis: First, "their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

The fact that their bodies were without covering, they knew before; and the opening of their eyes, and their knowing that they were naked, must mean something different. The result of eating of the forbidden fruit was not the acquiring of supernatural wisdom, as they had hoped; but a discovery that they had reduced themselves to a wretched and unprotected condition, being divested of original righteousness and exposed to the wrath of their Maker. So they covered themselves with fig-leaves and hid themselves among the trees of the garden that they might not be found out. They did not wish to meet God now in their present condition. I am certain that bodily nakedness was not the thought Adam was trying to express when he said, "I was afraid, because I was naked..." or he would have said, "I was ashamed." The nakedness which gave rise to fear, must have been the nakedness of the soul. They had their eyes opened, and saw, not visions of glory, but their own sinfulness.

Second: They were summoned into God's presence, and the sentence was pronounced upon them by which they were subjected to all the miseries of life, and finally to death.

Instead of man seeking for God, we see how God came to seek for man; Adam should have been walking up and down the garden calling for God, instead of God calling for Adam; but God, then as now, took the place of the seeker. It has always been so; the sheep did not seek the shepherd, but the shepherd sought the sheep.

The curse was pronounced first upon the serpent. The serpent is the only animal with a bony skeleton that goes upon its belly. Then a curse upon the woman; upon Adam; and upon the ground. Every thorn and weed and thistle is a reminder of the curse, and now man gets nothing from the ground except by labor.

Lastly: They were expelled from the garden of paradise, a place too sacred to be the abode of the guilty, and sent out into the wide world, now cursed for their sake in which toil and trouble awaited them.

Notice the words as given to us in God's Word again: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." God drove man out, and kept him out, and the reason being not only that he had put forth his hand, and taken of the tree of knowledge, which was his sin, but lest he should again put forth his hand and take also of the TREE OF LIFE -- now forbidden him by the divine sentence, as the tree of knowledge was forbidden by law -- and should dare to eat of that tree, and live forever in his fallen state.

"Where did God send Adam and Eve after they were driven out? He might justly have cast them down to hell, as He did the angels that sinned when He shut them out of the heavenly paradise, (II Peter 2:4) but man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was sent to a place of toil, not a place of torment; to the ground, not to the grave." (-- Matthew Henry.)

There are a few observations we might make just here, concerning the fall of man, and the nature he received and transmitted to all of Adam's posterity:

1. The sin of Adam was not merely the sin of an individual, but it was, and is, sin of all humanity. He acted in our name since he was the federal head of the human race, and his obedience would have brought happiness to all of his descendants, so his transgression involved them all in guilt and condemnation. The fountain having been polluted, the stream which flows from it is impure; the tree being corrupt, the fruit which it produces is also likewise corrupt. There is nothing essentially queer about YOU, but there is something queer about all human nature. Since this perversion is universal with human nature, and since it affects, not just your personality nor mine but the entire human family, it must be due to something that happened to human nature at its origin. Since evil is not merely a product of bad environment, but is in-bred in the heart of man, it cannot be explained except on the basis of a universal fracture of some great moral law to which we are all bound.

Humanity has not just made a few mistakes in book-keeping which any expert accountant or economic adviser can correct; there is something wrong inside us. God made us one way; He wrote the drama, we changed the plot. He started man down the right track at the beginning, but humanity got side-tracked later on in the journey. The world is not in a muddle because of stupidity of the intellect, but because of perversity of the will. We know enough; it is our choices that are wrong.

2. Then, it is due to his sin that death has ever since been making havoc of mankind, and sweeping one generation after another into the grave; it is owing to his sin that holiness has been banished from its rightful place and crimes and miseries have been multiplied from age to age: it is because of his sin that human beings, capable of immortal happiness and endless improvement, have been lost, and are doomed to spend this life in sorrow and eternity in despair.

3. Then, too, God's first covenant with man was broken and it was hopeless for him to expect life and happiness and righteousness by virtue of the first covenant. Since the command of that covenant was broken, the curse of it is in full force, and we are all undone if we are judged by that covenant. Man, by sin, closed one way; God opened a new and living way through grace.

To summarize the effects of the fall of man let us notice:

1. Our first parents lost their primitive holiness, and their entire physical, mental, and moral nature became depraved,

2. When Adam propagated children he gave them just what he had to give -- a depraved and fallen nature, weak, temptable, deranged, liable to sin, and doomed to face death.

3. Because of this, men are born with a nature full of propensities to sin, which lead them universally to commit sin, but they are not born sinners; they make themselves sinners by their own wicked choices. But they are born with the principal of sin, proneness to sin, which leads all men to commit sin and become sinners.

4. No man can ever estimate the fearful results of sin. Sin is the worst thing in the universe. Sin is not natural in the world, nor in human nature; it is something foreign that has been brought in and has no right here. One of the greatest wrongs of our day is the effort to cover up, and explain away this fact of man's fallen condition and make him appear different from what he really is. All the misery and woe, sorrow and crime, and corruption and evil is traceable to sin.

5. But the assets of grace are more than "the liabilities of sin." Through the atonement made by Jesus Christ we have access by faith into the grace and favor of God. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (even Christ) shall many more be made righteous." (Romans 5:19.) Paradise, which was lost to us in Eden is restored through 'Calvary. After the first chapters of the Bible, which tell of sin's entrance into the world, the remainder of the Book is given to telling us about salvation, or how to get rid of

sin, and regain God's favor. Surely we have reason to be thankful that God has remembered us in our lost estate and sent His Son to redeem us from it!

Through Christ man rises from the fall, and in a better world shall know happiness which will know no end nor have no limit.

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02 -- THE DIVINE APPROACH TO MAN

The are accustomed to think of religion, and to be more specific, -- the Christian religion, as beginning only a little more than nineteen hundred years ago with the message the disciples and early church fathers began to preach and publish abroad, and thus to distinguish it from any preceding revelations made by God to men, but let us see how the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, holds the truths taught by both, and acknowledges as her head the same divine Redeemer who is the subject of their united testimony.

Although God first made known His plan to our first parents indirectly, and in figurative language, we can see at the very beginning of the race, a religion instituted which would be like the seed thrown upon the soil by the husbandman, containing the germ of a future plant, and under the care of Heaven it is now presented to us in all its beauty and splendor. And as light increases slowly from the first faint suggestion of dawn in the east to the full splendor of noonday, so religion has advanced to its present stage, and prophecy having achieved its fulfillment in so many particulars, God's plan has become intelligible, and salvation is now made possible.

It has been said that when man first fell, God "appeared on the scene and caught him in the arms of mercy." The first suggestion of a salvation for the race is given in the words spoken to man by God: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15) To suppose nothing more is meant here than that there should be henceforth war between the tribe of serpents and the human race; that serpents should sometimes bite men, and men should sometimes destroy serpents, is to interpret Scripture in such a way as to turn it into ridicule. There is no doubt that, although the serpent is mentioned, it was not against it that the curse was directed, but against the invisible agent who used it as his instrument in the seduction of Eve the prince of fallen angels, called in the Word of God "the old serpent."

The man would be wounded in the heel; the serpent would be bruised in the head. The heel is most exposed to the bite of the serpent, which crawls upon the ground, particularly when a person is attempting to crush it with his foot; and if the head of a serpent be trodden upon, it will inevitably die. The heel could well represent the human nature of our Savior, which could be injured by Satan and which he contrived, by his agents upon earth, to nail to the cross. The head of the serpent represents the power of Satan over mankind which Christ abolished by His death.

This seems clear enough to us in the light of its fulfillment, but how far its meaning was understood by our first parents it is impossible to say. It was doubtless intelligible in some degree to Satan, as it was evidently intended that he should immediately know how miserably his scheme would end for himself. And it may have been, to some degree, intelligible to Adam and his wife. Being pronounced in their hearing it was an encouragement for them to return to their Maker, to lay the foundation of a new and friendly intercourse with Him. They learned from it too, that in spite of their great offense, God would be merciful to them, and receive them again into His favor. They learned that their deliverance would be effected by one of their own offspring, the Seed of the woman in a peculiar sense, who although a sufferer in the warfare with their enemy, should obtain the victory, and destroy the empire which he had established over them. So the gospel was first preached in Paradise, and the first rays of the Sun of Righteousness which began to dispel the moral darkness over the earth, were shed abroad.

That the revelation of a Savior was accompanied with the institution of religious rites, and particularly of sacrifices, may be seen from the use of them in the service of God. It is not to be thought that our first parents were left to devise a ritual of their own, and particularly, that so important a thing as the offering of sacrifices, which served the high purpose of typifying the great redemption, was the fruit of human invention.

It is really inconceivable that the mind of man should of itself have contrived sacrifices as the means of propitiating the deity, because reason can find no connection between the slaying of an animal, and the averting of His wrath; and it might seem to be a new offense to put an innocent creature to death because we were doomed to die, and were desirous to make our escape. There is no doubt that our first parents were supernaturally guided to this mode of at once acknowledging their guilt and imploring the mercy of their Maker, with a reference to the future substitution and atonement of the seed of the woman.

Some have supposed that the coats of skin, with which God is said to have clothed Adam and Eve, were the skins of animals which had been offered on the altar, and later used as garments, under the direction of God. Be this as it may, we find their two sons, Cain and Abel, presenting their offerings later, one bringing the firstlings of the flock, and the other the fruits of the ground. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect," and this comment is made in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice, than Cain." (Heb. 11:4) Much controversy has arisen over these words, but without going into too great detail, the thought is generally conceded that Abel, one of the saints, and the first martyr for religion, is a fit pattern for the Hebrews to imitate, and that the sacrifice of Abel, presented in the faith of God's mercy through the promised Redeemer, was a sacrifice of atonement. In offering his sacrifice, he acknowledged himself to be a sinner who deserved to die, and only hoping for mercy through the great sacrifice. Cain brought only a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and here was no confession of sin, met with the doom which every sinner may expect who presumes to draw near to God without an atonement.

God did not suffer Abel's faith to die with him, but raised up others who would obtain like precious faith, and so He did, for we read: "And to Seth also, there was born a son, and he called his name Enos; then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. 4:26) Perhaps

these words refer to some revival of religion -- to some new and vigorous efforts made by good men for the honor of God, and the more general observance of His institutions. At any rate, it is certain that a new epoch is marked in the history of religion. Some scholars believe that here an open separation took place between the pious and the profane, the first group making a public profession of religion in opposition to the others who, lived without God in the world. These separatists are the "sons of God" mentioned in the Word, who in process of time relaxed their strictness, and lost their purity by marrying wives of the "daughters of men," or the corrupt race in which they lived. This offers room for thought, at least.

Prior to the flood we should notice, too, the life and faith of Enoch, who was exempted from the general law of death, and gave his public testimony to the truth of religion before a sinful and ungodly age. In the antediluvian world great corruption of manners prevailed; God and eternal things were disregarded, and with the exception of a few, the rest were intent only upon their gains and their pleasures. God was pleased to translate a good man to heaven, no doubt before competent witnesses, to remind those who were left behind that there is an invisible world, in which the righteous shall be rewarded, and consequently that there is a God who judges in the earth, and to whom we are all responsible.

With the flood we can see that God provided salvation for all who should choose to enter into the ark, and that He cared for those who did obey His word, and preserved them alive. It is plain, too, that God never sends punishment or judgment until He first gives warning, and provides an escape. It was true in the destruction of Sodom, that God sent first His messengers to warn the inhabitants of the cities of the plains, before He sent the destroying fire and brimstone.

After the flood, the dispensation of religion was carried on for a considerable time in the same manner as before it, then we soon see that God gave to the patriarch, Abraham, the promise of a numerous family, and of their settlement in the land of Caanan; and the promise of a Redeemer was repeatedly renewed to him, and he was informed that He should spring from his loins. Surely Abraham had a much more extensive knowledge of his illustrious descendant than these few words may lead us to suppose, or else both he, and our first parents could have formed only a confused idea of some great thing to be done for our guilty and lost race, and would have given little satisfaction to their minds, I say this because Jesus, upon one occasion, said to the Jews: "Your father, Abraham, saw my day and was glad." Then we notice how that the promise was repeated to Isaac and to Jacob, and in his last years we read how Jacob spoke of the coming One as he blessed his sons, saying, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10) The Redeemer had first been announced as a man, and afterwards as a descendant of Abraham; now the tribe from which He should arise is pointed out, and the era of His appearance is fixed, and the consequence is represented to be the gathering of the people to Him, or the adoption of his religion by the nations of the world.

The time at last arrived when God was to make a change in the dispensation of religion by establishing it in a single nation, and in a particular country, by giving to His people a written rule to guide their faith and practice, and by giving them a variety of laws to gain their obedience, and direct their thoughts to the Redeemer and His atonement. Four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was made with Abraham, God delivered his seed, which had increased

to a great multitude in Egypt, from the yoke of their oppressors. He led them through the Red Sea into the wilderness, and after forty years, finally put them in possession of the land which He had promised to their fathers. During this process a series of miracles was exhibited with the object of convincing the Egyptians, the Caananites, and the neighboring nations of the superiority of God compared to the heathen gods which they worshipped; also to impress upon the minds of the Israelites, the great truth that He was Jehovah, the Creator and Ruler of His world, and the author of those laws which were delivered to them by Moses.

The religion of the Israelites was virtually the same as the patriarchal religion in the truths to be believed about God, and also in some of the rites to be performed, but as they were embodied into a nation and brought into a more perfect state, there was given them a code of laws adapted to the circumstances in which they were placed. It was given on Sinai, partly by God Himself, with an audible voice, and partly by private communication with Moses, who conveyed to the people His message and commands. The Laws may be divided into three classes: judicial, moral, and ceremonial.

The judicial laws were merely national laws enacted like those of any other country by the supreme power, for regulating marriages, contracts, purchases, and other such matters. They were temporary institutions, that is, being intended for this nation alone, they were to last no longer than it continued as a political body. They are binding on no other people, except so far as they are founded on the principles of immutable justice.

The moral law is contained in the Ten Commandments, and was the only part of their religion which was spoken by God Himself in an audible voice. It is the same law as was written upon the heart of man at his creation, and is the rule of righteousness under all dispensations. A man is just as free to break the moral law of his conscience as he is free to break the law of gravitation, but in both instances he hurts himself.

The one great design of the ceremonial law was to pre-figure to the people of God, the coming Savior and redemption through His blood. A type is a person, or thing, by which another person or thing is symbolized, or suggested. Nothing can be more explicit than the words of the writer to the Hebrews, where he says that the ceremonial ordinances were shadows of good things to come. The high-priest represented Jesus Christ; the sin-offerings were symbolical of His death on the cross; the sprinklings of blood were significant of the application of the virtue of the atonement to the conscience and soul of believers; and the annual entrance of the high-priest into the holy of holies was a figure of His entrance into heaven, to plead the merit of His death in their behalf and procure the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

We may say concerning the Levitical Law that it was very burdensome in consequence of the nature and number of its injunctions, sacrifices and ablutions -- a yoke, as Peter says, which the Jews were not able to bear. The observance of many holidays was necessary, which caused frequent interruptions from labor; the laws respecting meats must have required much caution in preparation of their food, and would place them under many inconveniences. When they had committed any sin, it could not be expiated without a sacrifice, and Jerusalem was the only place in which it was lawful to offer it. The offerings demanded from them were costly, a lamb, a ram,

a goat or bullock; and a single sacrifice would have cost an Israelite more than most Christians are called to give in a year for the support of the gospel.

Whether Moses explained his institutions to the children of Israel, we cannot tell, as the history is silent on this subject; but it is certain that under Jewish economy many intimations are given of the future Savior, and of the new dispensation which it was the purpose of God to introduce, and from Moses to the coming of Christ, a period of fifteen hundred years, the Israelites enjoyed the true religion and the law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. Let it not be imagined that when an Israelite had gone through the forms of his religion; when he had offered sacrifices, and performed ablutions, and observed holidays, he had fulfilled its demands. God, who is a spirit, requires the same worship in every age of the world. It was **THE SERVICE OF THE HEART** which alone was acceptable to Him, that God required as He directed their thoughts to Him by means of the ordinances and sacrifices. Prophets were given in succession who admonished the people not to rest in the sacrifices which were required by the law, but to look to Him who would put away our sins by the oblation of Himself.

This was God's figure for the time then present we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The dispensation was too imperfect to be final; it was accommodated to the times which then were, and it did not realize, or bring to pass all that the people of God were taught to expect. God had provided some things for us, which we enjoy through the ministry of His Son, by whom He has spoken to us in these last days.

We must believe revelation in every age to have been sufficient to guide men into the way of salvation, or it would have been given in vain. Under the Mosaic economy it was clearer than under the system of the patriarchs, but the law and the prophets must give way in turn to the fullness of the gospel of Christ. The revelation of Jesus Christ, being perfect, is final; nothing will be added to it, for nothing is wanting for its completeness. It is **THE ONLY PLAN** by which God will ever deal with the human race. Moses foretold a prophet who would arise after him, and commanded the people to hear him, but Christ gave no word of any successor. The Holy Spirit would come, but He would come in His name, to take the things of Christ and show them to His followers.

As a shadow, the law was of no value to those who possessed the substance, and had it been retained in the worship of God it would have proclaimed a falsehood, signifying that the events predicted were still to be expected, although they had been fully accomplished. As soon as the Savior died on the cross the sacrifice and oblation legally ceased; the Temple at Jerusalem was no longer the habitation of God; the priests had no right to minister in it. The covenant of law was dissolved, and the privileges of the people of God were extended to the men of every nation under heaven. The temple, it is true, stood after the death of Jesus for some forty years, and the priests performed the service after the usual method, but the sanctity of the place and of the worship had passed.

God did no longer require the fat of rams and sacrifices of beasts; a Sacrifice of a different kind had been offered without the gates of the city -- prophecy has been turned into history, and the spiritual nature of His salvation is distinctly understood. There are now no sacrifices of the flock and herd, nor the smoke of incense ascending from the censers of the

priests; the only oblations are those of prayer and praise, and of a devout and holy heart. There is now no magnificent temple appointed to be the seat of worship, to which men are required to come from far and near, but in every place they are commanded to worship the Father. There is now no particular family who alone are authorized to minister in the sanctuary; God chooses His servants from every class of society to dispense the ordinances of religion, whatever may be their parentage and family connections. There are now no sacred places to which it is necessary to journey because God is to be found there alone of all places, but His people may assemble anywhere to serve Him, and their prayers and praises are equally acceptable to Him in the open air as in a magnificent building.

If we take into consideration the increased clearness of the Christian religion, and its superiority over the former revelations made by God to His people, surely we must say that the privileges and advantages of the people of God are greater, and their attainments are also higher. Consequently there must be a degree of knowledge and of faith and holiness among Christians which could not be expected among the Jews.

When we speak of the perfection of the Christian revelation, we must believe that it was completed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, and also by the works and ministry of the apostles. During His lifetime on earth, Jesus announced Himself as the Messiah, and preached the gospel in Judea and Galilee, with many signs and miracles, but even to His own disciples, to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, He did not make a full disclosure of the counsels of the Father. He adapted His instructions to their capacity, and reserved much to be communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, whom He would send after He had ascended to heaven. Without Him religion would have been a cold and lifeless form; there would have been no faith, no repentance, no love, no holiness, for these we know are the fruits of the Spirit.

God reveals Himself best to man in the coming of the Holy Spirit, as one who will not only be with the Christian in his pilgrimage to heaven, but will indwell his life, and lead him into all truth. The idea of man being the temple and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within, runs as a golden thread throughout the whole of the New Testament, and when the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the heart of a fully consecrated believer, the nearest approach of God to man, or man to God, in this world, is graciously consummated.

The climax of Christianity, then, is not Christ in prophecy, not Christ in literature, nor Christ in nature, nor Christ in hymnology, but that Christ "may dwell in our hearts by faith..." May the law and Spirit of God possess every heart who reads these words. Amen.

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03 -- BEHOLD THE MAN! -- GOD REVEALED THROUGH CHRIST

There are two angles from which our Redeemer may be viewed, both very different in themselves, but both necessary to the execution of His offices. The one portrays Him humbled and abased; the other exhibits Him exalted and glorified.

Quite naturally one would have expected that the coming of Jesus Christ into the world would be attended by signs in the heaven, and on the earth; that the celestial spirits would wait upon Him in a visible form; that princes and kings would lay their crowns and scepters at His feet; that all tribes and groups of mankind, and in particular the nation of the Jews, would welcome Him with shouts of joy and triumph; and that now, if ever, the words of prophecy would receive a literal fulfillment, that seas and mountains and forests, would break out into a universal chorus of praise.

But "God's thoughts are not our thoughts." Our Savior did not come unnoticed to all the world, though but few were told of the arrival of this illustrious One. A great part of His life was spent in privacy and obscurity; and when He came forward upon the public stage, He had to encounter the contempt and ridicule of the majority of His countrymen, and His short career terminated in ignominy and blood. All this, though foretold by the prophets, had been overlooked by the Jews, therefore with bitter disappointment and scorn they rejected Him saying, "How can this man save us?"

Judging according to our ideas and customs of society, we might have expected that He would be the son of a mighty princess; that the place of His birth would be a magnificent palace; and that the kings and nobles of Judea would be assembled to receive with joy, this wonderful child, whose career would be so glorious, and whose future empire would extend over heaven and earth.

But this expectation was not realized in a single particular. True, there were some circumstances which shed a passing splendor on His birth, as the appearance of the angels who announced it to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem, and the visit of the Eastern Magi, who, having been lead by a miraculous star, came to adore Him and present their gifts. God would not permit His Son to come into the world altogether unnoticed; and in His deepest abasement He bore testimony to him who men despised, by signs and wonders.

But in every other respect, nothing could be more lowly than His entrance upon this earthly scene. His mother was a descendant from the family which once swayed the scepter in Jerusalem, but this was only a nominal honor, which did not protect her and her off-spring from the contempt with which poverty is regarded by the world. Mary was a woman of the most humble rank of society, and her husband was a toiler who earned his bread by the labor of his hands in a carpenter shop. The most illustrious woman, it is true, was unworthy to be the mother of the Son of God, and her station would have reflected no dignity upon Him; but we must judge, at present by a human standard, and in this view, He humbled Himself when He stooped to be born of the wife of a carpenter.

Corresponding with the lowly station of His mother was the place where He first drew the breath of life. He was born in Bethlehem, that prophecy might be fulfilled, but Bethlehem was not the chief city of the kingdom; it was little among the thousands of Judah, celebrated as the city of David, but was a small town some distance from the capital. When Joseph and Mary arrived there, in obedience to the decree of the emperor to be enrolled, it was so crowded with strangers who had come for the same purpose, that there was no room for them in the inn. They therefore took lodging in a stable, and there was He brought forth who was to rule over the house

of Jacob forever. In this obscure manner, He made His appearance upon earth. No person knew who He was but His parents and a few shepherds who had been given the news by a heavenly messenger. Others who might accidentally hear of the event, would consider Him as the lowest of the low on account of the humble circumstances of His parents, and the unusual place of His birth.

Who would have thought of searching for the Redeemer of Israel, and the Son of the Most High, in a stable which was used for keeping cattle? Who would have supposed, if he had by chance seen an infant lying in a manger, and attended by two unknown individuals, that this was He, of whose advent and glory, prophets had spoken in strains of enraptured eloquence? Who could have recognized in this unpromising form the Savior of the human race the future Judge of angels and men?

We read that "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of woman, made under the law." (Gal. 4:4) Now, there was only one way in which He could be a partaker of our nature, and this was by being conceived and born of a woman; and surely it was the first step of His humiliation that He submitted to a process by which, though all things were created by Him, He was placed upon a level with His own creatures. Notwithstanding His unspotted purity, He was treated by the law as if He had been a sinner. It brought Him before its tribunal and condemned Him to bear the punishment which it had pronounced upon the guilty. By being made under the law He was made under the curse. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us." -- (Gal. 3:13) The law made no concession to His dignity; it waived none of its rights in His favor. It spoke to Him with the same high tone of authority in which it addresses a mere mortal. It was equally strict and unrelenting in its demands; nothing less would satisfy it than His blood as a compensation for the wrongs which it had sustained from those whom He had undertaken to befriend.

Though He was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," we have no reason to think that He was subject to disease. We never read that He was sick, or that He suffered any of those pains which are inflicted upon mortals, as He was perfectly holy there were no seeds of decay and dissolution in His body; but He experienced all the other sinless infirmities of our nature. He was hungry, and thirsty, and weary; He felt the inconvenience of excessive cold and heat, and as He was endowed with the common passions and feelings of human nature, He was not a stranger to disappointment and sorrow and the pangs of ungratefulness.

To these evils were added the hardships of poverty. He became literally poor when He assumed our nature; and in doing so, He humbled Himself, because He was originally rich. The possessor of heaven and earth had not where to lay His head; He could not call the lowliest cottage in Judea His own. If He had a purse it was always empty, for when the tribute for the use of the Temple was asked from Him, He found it necessary to work a miracle to obtain the small sum of sater [sic -- DVM] which was required.

During His public ministry, if He was admired and followed by some, He was hated and persecuted by others. His teachings gave particular offense to the proud rulers and worldly-minded Pharisees, because He spoke out against their corruptions of religion and exposed to view the crimes in which they secretly indulged. He was called a glutton, and a

drunkard, and a friend of publicans and sinners, and an emissary of Satan, who aided Him in doing the things He was doing, and other forms of blasphemy and wickedness. To these efforts of malignity He was not insensible, though He was conscious of perfect innocence.

Men of flesh and blood were not the only enemies with which He had to contend. The hostility of the old serpent was awakened with the appearance of the "seed of the woman," against whom he directed his efforts ineffectual though they were. Immediately after His baptism He was carried into the wilderness by the devil, where for forty days, He was exposed to his temptations and overcame them. Of his final assault upon Him at the close of His life, we have a hint, and only a hint, so that we cannot explain in what manner it was conducted, nor tell what trouble it caused His opponent: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30) And again, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke 22:53) This, however, we know that by his immediate temptations and by stirring up wicked men to betray and crucify Him, he accomplished what from the beginning had been foretold, that the heel of our Savior should be bruised

But His sorrows were not yet at an end. He was reviled and insulted in all the forms which hostility and hatred could invent. At the judgment-seat of Pilate, and in the presence of Herod and his courtiers, He was treated as the vilest of mankind, and at last was delivered up as a victim to the clamor of the rabble. We then see Him led forth to Calvary, and nailed to a cross, on which He hung for some hours, till He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit.

Of the various modes of taking life by violence, crucifixion is probably the most tormenting. It is one of the many contrivances of barbarity, the object of which is to make the unhappy sufferer feel himself dying. He was fixed to the cross with nails driven through His hands and feet. Besides the extreme pain caused by the perforation of so many parts full of nerves, which are instruments of sensation, great torment must have arisen from the distention of His body, the forcible stretching of its joints and sinews by its own weight. To this He alludes in the twenty-second Psalm: "And all my bones are out of joint..." There are some kinds of torture, which by their severity, bring speedy relief. Nature sinks under them and is released. As in crucifixion, however, sometimes life was a lingering for days. Our Lord expired sooner than the malefactors who were put to death with Him, perhaps because He was partly exhausted by His previous agony, but even so, His sufferings lasted for at least six tedious hours, for they began at nine in the morning and did not end until three in the afternoon.

Some modes of putting people to death are thought to be more honorable than others, but the most ignominious was reserved for our Savior, who suffered the death of a criminal, or a slave. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, but was counted so infamous that it could not be inflicted on a Roman citizen; only the off-scouring of mankind were nailed to the cross. Behold His humiliation! He died on Calvary as a man who had no civil rights, who was protected by no law; whom society regarded as an outcast, and who was associated with the lowest and most worthless of men -- two robbers or thieves, and in the midst of them He was crucified as if He had been the worst of the three, and thus the prophecy was fulfilled, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

Our Redeemer stooped low indeed when He assumed our nature, but lower still when He submitted to be laid in the grave. This is the last degree of humiliation. All the glory of man is extinguished in the tomb. Who is this that occupies the sepulcher of Joseph? Is it a prophet or a king? No, it is one greater than all the prophets and kings, the Son of the Living God, the Lord of heaven and earth; but there is now nothing to distinguish Him from the weakest of the human race. The tongue which charmed thousands with its eloquence is mute, and the hand which controlled the powers of the visible and invisible world is unnerved. The shades of death have enveloped Him, and silence reigns in His lonely abode.

His life, from the manger to the tomb was a course of deepest abasement and humility. It was not until His resurrection that the glory which was to follow His sufferings began to be seen. The resurrection removed the shame and ignominy of the cross, revived the hopes of His disciples, and is the sure foundation of our faith in Him.

After His death, His body was taken down from the cross and committed to the tomb, where it remained in a state of insensibility for at least thirty-six hours. Had it been immediately restored to life, it could have been said that He did not even die, but only fainted on the cross and was revived by the cool air of the tomb; and the evidence of His Messiahship which His resurrection affords, would have been weakened. Had it remained longer under the power of death, the natural processes of corruption would have commenced, unless His body had been preserved by a miracle. But the Scriptures had foretold that the "Holy One of God should not see corruption," and accordingly the time was abridged, and on the morning of the third day He arose in triumph.

Speaking of His death and resurrection, Jesus used the figure of a temple, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19) His enemies said to Pilate, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'" He died on the afternoon of Friday, and was buried before sunset when the day ended, according to the Jewish reckoning. This was the first day. At sunset the Jewish Sabbath began, and during this whole time Jesus was in the grave. When the sun set again the third day commenced. On the ensuing morning, most probably between dawn and sunrise, the soul of our Redeemer was re-united with His body and He left the sepulcher of Joseph the glorious conqueror of the kingdom of terrors.

It is common, in ordinary conversation, when we do not adhere to strict accuracy, to put a whole day for only a part of it. According to this mode of speaking, Christ was in the grave three days. It would seem that a revolution of the earth around its axis, which we call a day, the Jews called a day and a night. Holding to this form of expression they would say of an event which took up a part of three days, that it was three days and three nights in accomplishing. It is in this manner that we see the statement of Jesus, "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," to make sense, or to find its fulfillment in His resurrection. He used the language of the country; and His words were fulfilled, although He was not more than thirty-six or thirty-seven hours in the tomb, because these hours were made up of one whole day, and parts of two of those periods which the Jews called a day and a night. The time was long enough to show that He was really dead, but not so long as to permit His disciples to sink into despair.

Our Lord Jesus Christ having finished the work assigned to Him by His Father, knew that it was not necessary to prolong His stay upon this earth. The victory had been won, and God's plan was fulfilled, so it was rather necessary that He should leave it in order to perform those offices by which the benefits of His death and passion would be communicated to His followers. And in particular, to make way for the coming of another Divine Person, not in a visible form, but in a wonderful dispensation of light and holiness. Hear the last tender words of Jesus to the disciples: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (John 16:7) So we must conclude, too, that one great object of His death and resurrection and ascension is that His followers might have the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit with them, and in them, helping them to reproduce the life of Christ in the Christian, and also enabling them to evangelize a lost world and build the kingdom of Christ.

Jesus continued upon earth after His resurrection for forty days, showing Himself "alive after His passion by many infallible proofs," and then left the earth and entered into that invisible region of the universe where God sits on the throne of His majesty, heaven, where sitting at the right hand of God, He is nearer to Him than any man or angel; and His nearness implies not only a closer relation resulting from the union of the human nature to the Divine, but also more intimate fellowship. The presence of God is a source of joy and happiness. The place which we call heaven would not be happier than the most desolate spot on earth, if He did not impart there the fullness of His love.

The sitting of Christ at the right hand of God is an expressive proof of His exaltation. As the Scriptures were written by Jews, and addressed to them in the first instance, it is by their usages that we find explanation of the expression, "the right hand of God," as well as others of a similar nature. Now, among them, the right hand was a place of honor. "The man of God's right hand, is the man whom God delights to honor." A wise man's heart is said to be at his right hand because he engages in honorable pursuits; but a "fool's heart" to be at his left hand, because he acts imprudently and shamefully.

Again, the right hand is an emblem of power. This is the general idea which is suggested when hands and arms are attributed to God, because it is with our hands and arms that we exert our strength. The right hand is most commonly used, and whatever cause may be assigned for this curious fact, is a more powerful instrument than the left hand. The sitting of our Savior at the right hand of God, signifies that He is exalted to authority and dominion. "Hereafter," He said to the Jewish council, "ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power." (Matthew 26: 64)

There is one other idea connected with His sitting at the right hand of God which I shall mention: It is suggested by the contrast between Him and the priests of the law, "Every priest standeth daffy ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His foot-stool." (Heb. 10:12, 13)

The posture of the priesthood mentioned here, shows that they were constantly engaged in the service of the altar, and consequently had not accomplished the hope of their office, by the perfect reconciliation of the people to God. The high-priest never sat down in the most holy place, but having stood for some time before the mercy-seat, he retired to offer new sacrifices, and again to go the round of the sacred offices and tasks that were his. But Jesus Christ, when He entered into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God, and is "a priest upon His throne." His position signifies that His work is finished, and the Father has testified His approval of it by conferring upon Him honor and authority, majesty and power.

"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."

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04 -- THE LINK THAT BINDS US TO GOD

If the modern mind were asked what thing it would like most to discover, it would probably answer: the missing link. Every now and then we hear of its discovery, but it is only a rumor -- for the most annoying feature of the missing link is that it is MISSING!

I suppose there is nothing wrong in seeking the missing link, but it does seem to be a rather absurd emphasis on the wrong thing. Why should anyone be so interested in the link that binds us to the beast, and so little concerned about the link that binds us to God? Why should the deep secrets of man's being be sought in the slime of the earth rather than the rarefied atmosphere of the courts of heaven? And so I plead, not for a quest of the link imprisoned in the dust, binding us to an animal, but for the link suspended from heaven which binds us to God.

A link, or bond there must be between God and man, for man has distanced himself from God by sin. Man, by nature, is sinful; God is holy. There is nothing in common between the two. Man is human, and God is divine, and there is nothing in common here either. If there is ever to be real communion between heaven and earth-between God and man, there must be a bond between the two.

By my own power I am not able to touch the ceiling of this building, but the link of a ladder would make this possible. In like manner, to have communion between heaven and earth, and between God and man, there must be a connecting link between the two, bringing them together. The ones who seek the missing link between the man and the animal say that this link must have something common to both. In seeking for the link between God and man, we must then expect to find one who has human and also divine characteristics, or better still, a person who is both Divine and human, or a combination of both these elements. The only One who can meet this requirement is the Lord Jesus Christ -- Son of God, and son of man. Jesus Christ then, is the Link between the finite and the infinite, because finite in His human nature, and infinite in His divine nature, and one in the unity of His person, He has brought God and man together. Yet He is MISSING because men have lost Him.

The mission of Jesus is to do two things primarily: (1) To bring God to man by the infusion of the Divine life of God into souls dead in the grave of sin; and (2) to bring man to God

by freeing him from sin, and from all that sin can do to a soul. This, Jesus declared, was His purpose and plan in coming to this world, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The real ground for regeneration is not that we were born IN something, but rather that something was NOT in us; we were born with divine life NOT in us. Jesus came to bring divine life to souls of men.

Man is never satisfied with his mere earthly life. Like a great imprisoned bird, wings beating against the gilded cage of time and space, he seeks to know something better than a mere existence and the needs of his body satisfied, he seeks Eternal Life, and fellowship with God. Man has always sought to be more than he is. That is why he has ideals; that is why he has hopes; that is why he prays. That is why the Roman emperors called themselves gods. That is why man, when he forgets the true God, adores himself as God.

But since man can never acquire that life in his own power, it must be given to him from above. This is the message Jesus gave to Nicodemus, who misunderstanding it, said, "Can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus replied that He meant, not a physical birth, but that spiritual regeneration, by which we are reborn as a child of God.

The second function of the Lord Jesus Christ consists not only in linking the life of God to man, but also in reconciling man to God by redeeming him from his sin. Many of the modern clergymen and religious teachers of the day picture Christ as merely a social reformer, or a teacher of humanitarian ethics, but Jesus is first and foremost a SAVIOR, a REDEEMER! He did not come unto the world primarily to preach, or teach, or heal, or work miracles, although He did do these things during His ministry -- but the great purpose of His coming was to die. This opens a field of thought that gives us a greater vision and deeper appreciation for Christ and His gospel.

Socrates came to teach, hence the greatest tragedy in his life was the cup of poisoned hemlock that was given him to execute him, which interrupted his teaching about truth. But the cross was not to Christ what the hemlock juice was to Socrates; it was not the interruption of His life, it was the very beginning. Take any one of the reformers and religious teachers -- Buddha, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, each and every one of them came into the world to live, but Jesus came into the world to die. From the beginning of His earthly life, only one vision was before His eyes -- HE WAS GOING TO DIE!

Jesus was born with the shadow of the cross on Him. From HIS earliest moments it was His burden by day, and His bed by night; on sunrise and sunset, on the waters of Galilee; the well-curb at Sychar; on the door of the Temple; on the silent years at Nazareth, over His whole life the cross. He foretold His death by saying, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up."... "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

We should always keep in mind three things concerning the atonement made by Christ for us:

1. It was a human life. It had to be, for humanity had sinned: the broken law demanded that man must die, and that is why Jesus took upon Himself humanity and became partaker of our nature. If an atonement was necessary, we cannot conceive it to have been made by the sufferings of any other nature than that which incurred the penalty of sin.

2. It was a sinless life. Having no sin of His own to stand in the way, He could, therefore, die for others who were under the awful curse of sin, and wrath of God.

3. Then, too, if there was to be an atonement made for sin, the One making atonement must not only be one of the human family, and sinless in nature, but He must be INFINITE. The ransom price must be greater than all finite lives put together, and greater than all human sin.

No person who has read the Old Testament can be ignorant of what is meant by a sacrifice. He understands it to have been a victim slain and offered upon the altar, in order to avert the anger and procure the favor of God. When he finds that, in the New Testament, the death of Christ is called a sacrifice, he is led to believe that the word retains its ancient sense, and that Christ dies in our stead to reconcile us to God.

From the earliest age, Christians have believed that His death was an atonement for sin; a sacrifice offered to God to satisfy His justice, and avert His wrath from the guilty; that it was the means of reconciling us to our Creator the procuring cause of pardon and eternal life. In this view, all the great bodies into which professed Christians are divided, -- Eastern and Western, Papist and Protestant, Calvinists and Arminians are agreed. They may differ in their explanation of the nature of the atonement; its extent, and the means of its application; but with regard to the general truth, that the death of Christ was propitiatory, there is no conflict of opinion.

The death of Christ is one of the most remarkable events recorded in history. Many ages before it happened, it was foretold by men whom God raised up to uphold the authority of His law among His chosen people, and to direct their thoughts and expectations to a future and more perfect dispensation. David, Isaiah, and Daniel described the Messiah not only as a person of high dignity, and the Author of the most glorious works, but also as one who should lead a lowly and afflicted life and terminate His labors and sorrows by a painful and violent death. The cause or occasion of it was not the effect of accident or disease, or the decay of nature, but was inflicted by a judicial sentence pronounced upon Him for the supposed crimes of blasphemy and sedition. The darkness at mid-day without any natural cause, the earthquake which tore asunder the rocks and laid open the graves, and the rending of the veil of the Temple from top to bottom, proclaimed that He who was hanging on the cross was no ordinary sufferer.

In the New Testament, His death is represented as an event of the greatest importance, -- as a fact on which Christianity rests, as the only ground of hope to the guilty, as the only source of peace and consolation, -- as of all motives, the most powerful to cause us to turn from sin, and to devote ourselves to the service of God.

The humiliation of Christ manifests the greatness of His love and power, and the riches of His grace. It was for us, (fallen mankind) and for our salvation, that He assumed human nature

and abased Himself to the dust of death. He drew a veil over His glory that He might remove our reproach and raise us to heavenly honors and everlasting happiness.

There was a very touching scene among an Indian tribe in the early days of our nation's history. It seemed that one of the chieftains had slain a man belonging to an opposite tribe, and a large band from that tribe came up and said: "We will exterminate you unless you surrender the man who committed that crime." The chieftain who did the crime stepped out from the ranks, and said: "I am not afraid to die, but I have a wife and four children, and an aged father, and an aged mother, whom I support by hunting, and I sorrow to leave them homeless." Just as he said that, his old father stepped out from behind, and said, "He shall not die. I will take his place. I am old and stricken in years. My days are almost over. I can do no good. Take me!" and they accepted the sacrifice. This represents, in a faint manner, the sacrifice of Christ for men. If you are ever redeemed it won't be by corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

There is an old legend that tells us how God called the hosts of heaven together for a conference. Seated upon His great Throne, He pointed to the earth, and directing the attention of the heavenly hosts to the transgressions, iniquities, and disobediences of men, out of the emotions of His very soul, God spoke: "They are ungrateful children; a disobedient race, but in spite of their shortcomings, I love them. The tale of their iniquities rises to the very heavens, yet do I love them with an everlasting love, and with the cords of mercy would I draw them. But the law must be satisfied; the principle of Justice must be honored; judgment must find its victim. Who will go and tell them of my love, satisfy my law; pay the penalty for their sins, that I might be just and yet justify those who will hear and heed?"

The heavens grew silent. The angels bowed their heads in gloomy thought. The saints stood abashed in quandary of mind. Suddenly there stepped out of the ranks of the angelic host the mighty archangel, Gabriel. Removing his sword, and laying down his trumpet, he prostrated himself before the throne of God:

"Lord of heavens and earth! Thou has entrusted me with the leadership of all Thy mighty armies. I have done my best, and have tried not to fail Thee. Wilt thou entrust me with this task?"

God smiled, and shook his head, "Nay Gabriel, thou art the strength of my right arm. No task in heaven nor on earth is there with which I would not entrust thee, but this is beyond any angel. Someone else must do the required task."

Again stillness reigned over the expanse of that celestial land. It was broken by the steps of one of the saints. Tall and stately, his bearded face shining with an unearthly light, he knelt before God.

"Lord," he said, "when I was upon earth, thou didst call me out from among my brethren. Thou didst entrust me with the commandership of Thy redeemed people. With a mighty hand, and in miraculous, wondrous fashion, Thou didst cause me to lead them out of their galling bondage, almost into the riches of the Promised Land. Let me go back to the earth; let me tell them the story of Thy love. Let my life satisfy the requirements of Thy law."

The Lord's face grew sad and somewhat stern. "Nay, Moses, even thou art not good enough. Someone has to pay for the sin that thou didst commit in striking the rock instead of speaking to it, as I told thee. The weight and burden of thy sins is still heavy upon my heart, and still recorded upon the record of the heavens. They, too, can be washed away only by the blood of some mighty victim."

Suddenly, from the very Throne of glory there came forth a stately figure, outshining the sun in its noon-day splendor. It was Jesus. Removing the crown of glory from His head, and laying aside the robes of royalty from His back, He unloosed the shoes of authority from off His feet, and knelt before the Father.

"Father, Thou didst use me in the creation of those children of Thine. I, too, have loved them, and yearned over them; there is but one more thing I can do for them. Let me go down amongst them. Let me reveal to them Thy love. Let me bear their sins in my own body." God stooped from His throne, lifted His Son, clasped Him to His breast, and said: "Go, Thou star of the morning! Let that be Thy mission. Fulfill that which we knew from the very beginning of eternity would have to come to pass! Go, let thy royal blood expiate the sins of a world!"

And as the lightning flashes from the east to the west, so Jesus left His glory-circled home in heaven, and came to this lost, sin-riven world. He was born of the Virgin in Bethlehem's stable; He grew to manhood in the silent years of Nazareth, broken only by His visit to His Father's house in Jerusalem at His confirmation. In the vigor of His manhood He submitted to the baptism of John. For a little more than three years He walked up and down the length and breadth of Palestine, preaching and teaching, healing, and working miracles. He suffered as no man has ever suffered; spoke as no man has spoken; toiled as no man has ever toiled, yet His own received Him not, but cruelly turned their backs upon Him. Gethsemane's agony passed over Him; Pilate's scourge lacerated His back; the Roman cross bore His torn, bleeding form; Joseph's sepulcher entombed His lifeless body. And now, for the first time in all His life, the cruel world left Him alone. On the third day God raised Him from the dead; for forty days He walked and talked with His disciples. He ascended up into glory, and is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Some day He is coming again to receive all His blessed, believing children unto Himself in glory. To Him be praise forever!

* * * * *

05 -- OUR PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Ever since the fall the hopes of the human race have centered in the Messiah. He is the restorer of our fallen nature, the conqueror of our formidable adversary, the mediator by whose ministry peace with God is procured, the second Adam who has removed the curse pronounced upon us for the sin of Adam, and the link which binds us to God.

Jesus is called in the New Testament, the Messiah, and in the Old Testament, the Christ; and both these words suggest the fact that He was the Anointed One of God. This designation is given to Him in view of the fact that under the former dispensation men were consecrated to

their office by being anointed with oil. This rite was observed in the case of the three offices which were most celebrated -- those of prophet, priest, and king.

With regard to the prophets we have, I believe, the solitary instance of Elisha, but it is enough to establish the fact that it was occasionally, if not universally used, in setting them apart. The anointing of Aaron and his sons to priesthood, is expressly mentioned in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, and particular directions are given regarding the composition of the oil which was to be used. Of the anointing of kings, we have examples in David and Solomon. In allusion to this rite, Jesus was called the Messiah, or the Christ, to signify not that He was consecrated by the same rite, but that He was solemnly appointed to His office by His Father, and furnished with all the requisite qualifications.

The particular offices to which our Savior was anointed were the three which I have mentioned as existing among the Jews, and which were conferred by the ceremony of pouring or sprinkling oil upon the persons which were to be set apart for the prophetic, sacerdotal, or regal life. The thought of Jesus as a prophet is contained in the following passage, which, in the light of the New Testament, we can apply to Him: "The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15) The suggestion of Jesus as priest is found in the following passage: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4) And He is announced as a king when God says to Him: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psa. 2:6) It is unnecessary to bring any quotations from the New Testament to prove that all these offices belong to Jesus Christ.

It has been remarked that under the ancient economy these various offices of Prophet, Priest, and King were held by separate individuals, or at least that never more than two of them were united in the same person. There were kings and priests as Melchizedek; kings and prophets as David; prophets and priests as in some of the family of Aaron, but no person occurs who was invested with them all. This honor was reserved for our blessed Savior, who alone, can fulfill what was predicted in the various types.

It was necessary that Jesus should be a prophet, a priest, and a king, because all the duties of these offices were required for complete deliverance of His people from the circumstances in which they were placed by God's sentence upon sin and the sinner. The moral condition of mankind shows that not one of them could be dispensed with.

Humanity was involved in ignorance, guilt, and pollution. Their ignorance is removed by His prophetic office; their guilt by His priestly office; and their pollution by His kingly office. As a prophet, He dispels the darkness of ignorance; as a priest, he atones for our sins; as a king, He delivers us from the bondage of depravity. He reveals God to us as a prophet; He brings us near to God as a priest; He renews us after the image of God as a king. As a prophet, He illuminates our minds by the spirit of truth; as a priest, He tranquilizes our hearts by the spirit of peace; as a king, He sanctifies the whole man by the spirit of holiness. As these offices relate to both God and man -- God being the immediate object of the priestly, and man of the prophetic and kingly office, our Lord fills the place of a mediator by performing their duties; for He establishes peace between heaven and earth, and binds them together in intimate friendship.

In relation of His offices to one another, the priestly office must be considered as the foundation of the other two. If Christ had not been a priest He would not have been a prophet and a king, since unless salvation had been obtained for us, it could not be revealed and applied. It was necessary that, as a priest, He should fulfill the condition of the new covenant, before He could administer it as a prophet and king. In the salvation of the soul, as in the creation of our world, God commences with the diffusion of light, The knowledge of ourselves and of the Savior is necessary to produce faith, which is the only foundation of our acceptance with God. Conversion consists in the "opening of the blind eyes, and the turning of the soul from darkness to light." And this is the work of His prophetic office, we then come to Him as our priest, whose sacrifice has atoned for our guilt, and submit to Him as our king, whose service is joy and whose power is unlimited.

The word PROPHET is commonly understood to mean a person who foretells future events, and in this sense, it frequently occurs. But it also signifies a person who speaks by divine inspiration, whether the subject relates to the future, the present, or the past; a person who speaks in a solemn and extraordinary manner; and even a person who speaks in the name of another like himself. By some of the Jews, a prophet is considered to be "a man to whom God has revealed secret things."

It is not with the usual limitation of the term that we call Jesus Christ a prophet; but, we use it in its utmost latitude to denote that He is the great messenger of God, the revealer of His will; who has not only foretold future events, but has made known to us divine truths to be believed, promises to be embraced, and laws to be obeyed. It is the glory of Jesus Christ as a prophet that He has shed new light upon things of which men had possessed some previous knowledge, and has also revealed His Father to us as the God of love, and also revealed Himself in the character of a Savior.

Jesus Christ has said nothing concerning some topics which interest men, and which are intimately connected with their temporal lives, such as science, politics, and the various arts by which life is sustained and adorned. Of these He took no notice; not because they are unimportant, for in their own sphere, they are of great value; but because they bore no relation to the purpose of His mission, In the living of the present life, reason and experience are sufficient guides. We need no divine revelation to assist us in the study of nature, or the operations of business and commerce; in the constitution of civil government, and the enactment of laws for the security of our persons and property. There was no reason why Jesus should have interrupted His more important labors to descend to details about these inferior matters. He was something higher than a philosopher or statesman; He was a teacher of sublime mysteries, which it had not entered into the mind of man to conceive.

How welcome to us should be the words of a teacher who speaks the words of truth and grace! Whosoever sits down at the feet of Christ and receives His law, shall be made wise unto salvation. There was a general expectation that the Messiah would solve all questions in religion, and make a clearer and more perfect revelation than they enjoyed prior to His coming. "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things." These words have no divine authority in themselves, as they were spoken by an ignorant, heretical

woman, but they prove the state of opinion among the Samaritans, and no doubt also of the Jews. At any rate, we read that when Moses, by the order of God, had given laws and ordinances to his countrymen to regulate their worship and obedience, he added, "The Lord, thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." (Deut. 18:15) Now, we must believe that these words refer directly to Christ, or to a succession of prophets, and ultimately to Him, and that new communications of the divine will of God were to be made to men.

When the ministry of the prophets came to a close, the Jews received a commandment to adhere steadfastly to the law which was published from Sinai, but at the same time were directed to look for a dispensation of greater light. So the last of the prophets closes his book with a prediction of the appearance of the Son of Righteousness, and of His fore-runner, who would prepare the people for the day of the Lord. BUT THERE IS NO SUGGESTION OF ANOTHER DIVINE MESSENGER AFTER JESUS CHRIST, to supply what may be wanting, or to illuminate what may be dark in His revelation. By the books of the New Testament the canon is completed. God, when He spoke to us by His Son, spoke for the last time. The spirit of inspiration is withdrawn from the church, and men must now walk by the rule of the written Word of God, and revealed will of God as His Spirit makes known to us the meaning of God's Word and leads us into "all truth."

What is more plain than that there is one God, possessed of every natural and moral perfection?... That He is the Creator, and Governor, and Judge of the human race? -- That we are sinners, and Jesus Christ, His Son, is now our Savior? -- That He died for our sins, and now intercedes for us in heaven? -- That we are justified through faith in His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit? -- That we are bound to -- yield obedience to His law? -- That He will raise the dead, pronounce sentence upon the wicked and reward the righteous, and receive His faithful followers into His everlasting kingdom? True, there are mysteries in the Scriptures which no man can explain; there are passages which require a mighty intellect to explore, but in general, God has expressed Himself in simple terms.

This leads me to say just here, that He teaches men by His Word, so also He executes His prophetic office by the agency of the Holy Ghost on the minds of His followers. The promise of the Spirit which our Lord made to His disciples, relates primarily to them, but authorizes the expectation of His presence and operation in every age of the church. That His agency is needed for this purpose, none will deny; we must maintain, however, that the Holy Ghost is not sent to teach any new thing, but to enable us to understand in a spiritual manner the truths already revealed.

Now, let us think of Jesus in the office of a PRIEST. Throughout the centuries preceding the coming of Christ, as men looked for Him, they seemed to believe that He would be a prophet; for the words of Moses and other inspired men were too clear and positive to be mistaken. They believed also that He would be a king, who marching forth in the terror of His power, would subjugate the nations, and restore the kingdom to Israel. But they seemed not to have believed that He would be a priest, or if they allowed the title, they did not see the significance of such a priest, who was to redeem us to God by the sacrifice of Himself. He was,

as we have seen, not only to sit upon a throne, but also to minister at the altar; not only to exert His power for the destruction of His enemies, but to employ His power with God in our behalf.

That Jesus Christ is a priest, is plain from many passages of Scripture which it is unnecessary to quote, because whatever difference of opinion there is among His professed followers with respect to the import of the title, they all acknowledge that there is a sense in which the office belongs to Him. Notice the following passage, although it does not comprehend every particular of the office priest: "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Heb. 5:1) It is to the last part of this definition that I invite your attention. A priest is a person officiating in the name of others, who approaches to God, to make atonement for them by sacrifice; to avert God's wrath from men, and to procure their restoration to His favor.

It seems clear that the priest differs from a prophet, who treats with men in the name of God, making known to them His councils and commands; while a priest treats with God in the name of men, to prevail upon Him to admit them into friendship. It was in this sense of the word that Aaron and his successors were priests. Their proper work was not to instruct the people, but to serve at the altar, and lay those obligations upon it which the law required for the expiation of the sins of the people.

The Christian religion acknowledges only one priest, who was consecrated by God Himself, and is exalted to heaven. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, was made a priest "after the order of Melchizedek." The apostle explains, then, what is meant when he says of Melchizedek, that he was "without father, without mother, without descent," and that "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life he abideth a priest continually." (Heb. 7:3) It is certain that being a man, he was born and died like other men, and had a genealogy which was known to his kindred, but his history on these subjects preserves silence, and speaks of him only in his public character and in relation to his office. In this, he was like a man fallen from the clouds, who had no earthly connections, except that as he was priest and king, there must have been persons for whom he ministered, and over whom he reigned.

There is this similarity to be seen between Jesus and Melchizedek: First, He had no predecessor in office. He was indeed a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Christ did not succeed Melchizedek, but He is like him; and like him in this respect, that none was before Him. Aaron and his sons were not His predecessors, for He could not have succeeded them unless He had belonged to the family to which the legal priesthood was confined by the express commandment of God. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." (Heb. 7:14) Jesus succeeded them as the anti-type succeeds the type, but His priesthood was of a different kind. Theirs was the shadow, but His was the truth; theirs was an expectation, but His was the fulfillment; theirs consisted in offering animals upon the altar, but His in offering Himself; theirs averted temporal punishments from the Israelites, but His has delivered mankind from the guilt of sin, and from eternal perdition.

The design of the priesthood of Aaron was to prevent the dissolution of the covenant which God had made with the Israelites; the design of the priesthood of Christ was the

establishment of a better covenant, by which God would be glorified, and our lost world redeemed.

Secondly: Jesus Christ has no successor in the priesthood. When Aaron died, Eleazar, his son, stood up in his stead; and all the high priests of that family were succeeded by their sons and relations until the second temple was destroyed. But no person will ever succeed our Savior. A succession of the Aaronic priesthood was necessary, because it is evident that the sacrifices which they offered could not expiate sin. If any of them could have appeased divine justice by his oblations, there would have been no necessity for another to rise up in his stead. But Our Lord Jesus Christ "hath by one offering forever perfected them that were sanctified." His sacrifice removed the sins of His people in one day; it established peace between God and His offending creatures; it is the ground of an everlasting dispensation of pardon and mercy. So it appears that there was no reason why another priest 'should succeed Him, since no place was left for the ministrations of another which could serve no valuable purpose, as the great end of the office of priest had been already accomplished -- an offering for sin. The death of Christ was a sacrifice, not for one generation alone, but for men in every age. He ever lives to make intercession in the heavenly sanctuary; no other priest therefore can arise. There remains nothing for him to do. Christ has made sacrifice and oblation to cease, and has gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us.

Jesus Christ excelled all who were before Him in respect of the order of His priesthood.

First, He was superior to all other priests in personality. They were "men having infirmity," subject to disease and death, and also to error and sin, therefore they needed to offer sacrifice for themselves as well as for the people. How much superior is our High-priest! Considered as a man, He is distinguished from all other men, not only by His miraculous conception, His sublime wisdom and His mighty works, but by His immaculate purity which He retained among the strongest temptations. Surely He is the most glorious of all the ministers of God, and the office derives a luster from Him who sustained it!

Secondly, the manner in which He was invested with His office was peculiar, and readily demonstrates His superiority. He was made a priest with an oath from God, the Father. (It is not upon slight occasions that God binds a covenant with an oath.) This circumstance alone is sufficient to prove the pre-eminence of His priesthood. God did not swear when Aaron and his sons were set apart to the service of the altar, but He did observe this unusual solemnity in the consecration of His Son, so may we not conclude that there were interests of far greater importance depending upon His ministry?

Thirdly, the oblation which He presented was far more valuable than the ancient sacrifices. He did not offer the firstlings of the flock and the choicest of the herd, but -- Himself! He was the priest, and at the same time the sacrifice. He who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem was the Lord of glory, although the princes of this world did not recognize this in the manner of His appearance; the blood with which the church was redeemed was the blood of God, although the priests and rulers of the Jews who saw it streaming from His wounds, despised it as the blood of an impious impostor. Compared with this sacrifice, those which were offered with such pomp in the temple of Jerusalem were weak and childish things, and unworthy of notice,

were it not for the fact that God Himself appointed them, and that they derived a borrowed importance from their typical relation to the sacrifice of Christ, **THE ONLY SACRIFICE WHICH GOD ACCEPTED FOR ITS OWN SAKE**, and which met the demands of His law and justice.

Fourth, Notice for whom Jesus Christ officiated as a priest. The sacrifices of the Mosaic law were appointed for the Israelites alone; the annual atonement was made for none but the twelve tribes, and their names were engraven on the breast-plate which the high priest wore when he went into the Holy of Holies. Jesus Christ is the High-priest of the human race, and His blood was shed for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He suffered, not in the Temple, which was the sanctuary of the Jews, nor within the precincts of Jerusalem, the capital of their country, that it might be thought that they were the sole objects of redemption; but Jesus was crucified without the gates of the city to signify that He was the Savior of all mankind, and that there was salvation to those who should turn their eyes to Him from the ends of the earth.

It appears then, that the priesthood of Christ is not a speculative point, but that it is the foundation of all acceptable religion; and had He not sustained this office, intercourse between heaven and earth would have been forever suspended, and God and men would have been separated by irreconcilable hostility. As the sword of the cherubim waved dreadfully before the gate of Paradise, and our first parents could not have forced their way to the tree of life, the embodiment of immortality; so the curse of the broken law made access to the throne of grace impossible to us their descendants, but Christ is the "way, the truth, and the life," or the true and living way. And having Him as our High-priest over the house of God, we may draw near with true hearts in the full assurance of faith.

But Jesus Christ is also our KING! His kingdom is mentioned over and over again in the Scriptures, a kingdom to which He was anointed, a kingdom given Him by delegation of God, the Father, and a kingdom which is His by original right since He was Creator of all things, He is consequently their Governor and Ruler.

He is addressed in the Psalms, by the spirit of prophecy, in this manner: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Psa. 45:6-7) His kingdom is expressly mentioned in this passage, and described by the usual emblems of royalty -- a throne on which the Monarch sits, and a scepter which He holds in His hand as an emblem of authority. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom and each believer is a subject who is ready to serve Him and do Him homage. "My kingdom is not of this world," was His answer to Pilate when asked, "Art thou a king?" It is a spiritual kingdom, and was not built by force of arms, but by the persuasive influence of the truth, and the invisible operations of grace. As the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, His servants do not fight for Him; and it is only in a figure that the Church is represented as "terrible, like an army with banners." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are not ineffectual either. They are mighty, through God, to pull down the strongholds of wickedness and sin.

The kingdom of Christ on earth is represented by HIS church. On the Day of Pentecost a train of events commenced which will some day find its realization in the establishment of a kingdom which will cover the earth; a kingdom which shall not be destroyed, but shall stand forever. The kingdom of grace will have given way then to the kingdom of Glory. The repeated persecutions heaped upon the church in the first centuries are recorded in history. Everything was done by the combined power and wisdom of the Roman Empire to crush the religion of Christ, and hopes were entertained and expressed that the Christian superstition, as it was called, would be exterminated from the earth. In those days of the Roman persecution, when Nero published his famous edict: "Let there be no Christians," he and his successors, with no fear of God to restrain their cruelty and a great army to administer it, set to work to destroy the gospel of the risen Savior. The words of the executioners, blunted with slaughter, no longer fitted their sheaths, and the river of the Tiber ran red with blood, as if already one of the angels of the Apocalypse had poured his vial into it that turns all waters into blood.

But it emerged from the scene of suffering and blood with increased stature and renewed strength, still contending with paganism for the victory, and the struggle was closed momentarily by the conversion of Constantine, who planted the cross upon the capital of Rome. Then with the period of the Middle Ages we have read of how the faithful were driven into obscure retreats and compelled for a long season to "prophesy in sackcloth," of the torrents of blood that were shed, and the cruelties which were inflicted on the friends of truth; but at the Reformation the church rose from her ashes more glorious than ever. What has enabled the minority to maintain a contest so fierce, and so fatal to flesh and blood, and in which no human glory was to be gained? It was the grace of Jesus Christ, who defends His own against their enemies, giving grace for every trial and hope for every need.

The form of the church, under the present dispensation, is not delineated with the same minuteness which we observe in the law of Moses. There everything is prescribed: the place and the times of worship; the ministers of worship, the oblations to be presented, and the rites to be performed. In public and private, nothing is left to mere discretion. In the exercise of His authority, Jesus abrogated the law of Moses, which had been binding for fifteen hundred years, and was supposed by the Jews to remain perpetually. He published a new and spiritual law, which will continue in force until the end of time. He removed the priests and Levites from the altar, and established in their place, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. He associated the Gentiles with the Jews; He made all places sacred as well as Jerusalem, and ordained that from the rising to the setting of the sun, the incense of prayer and praise should be offered to His name.

As soon as Jesus had announced to His disciples that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth, He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." His glory will not always be concealed, He is king of the World, and will reveal Himself more fully at the appointed time. "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11)

It appears from this, and other passages, that nothing is exempt from His authority. He gives law to matter and things; He commands the armies of heaven; He claims the inhabitants of earth as His subjects; He rules over the spirits of darkness; He is the Lord of the living and the dead. He is the Head of His church, the One before whom saints and angels bow in reverence, the King of all kings; Sovereign of all sovereigns! Ruler of a kingdom that shall never pass away, but shall increase until the end of all things. Seated upon the throne, He sways the scepter of universal dominion, and wears a crown which will never fade away.

Christ was a Prophet during His earthly life in the days of His flesh; Now He is our High priest during this church age, the age of grace; He is to be King in the broadest sense, during the age which follows the tribulation period on earth, when He shall appear in the clouds of heaven to end the warfare, which has been going on for centuries between right and wrong, good and evil, and receive His people into His glorious eternal kingdom. Shall we not then, hear Him as prophet, acknowledge Him as priest, and worship Him as king?

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06 -- CALVARY AND YOU!

Three crosses were erected on the brow of the hill Golgotha, overlooking the city of Jerusalem; and upon the middle cross, amid the darkening skies, and above the clamor of the rabble throng, the sinless Son of God bowed His head and died. Died a voluntary, vicarious, and victorious death, taking the place of the guilty sinner that lost men might be reconciled to favor with God and live eternally.

This modern age recoils at the brutality of the scene of twenty centuries ago -- at the cross as a means of punishment; at the jealousy of Annas and Caiaphas, the greed of Judas, and the ambitious aims of Pontius Pilate, but we are witnessing again a reenactment of the scene of Calvary: Jesus may not be nailed to a cruel wooden cross; we are far too humane for that. No coarse mob is heard shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" It is unrefined to act so rudely. We no longer thrust Him out of our presence, but instead, we politely suggest that He is no longer needed in our homes or other affairs of life.

Christ is still on trial in the hearts of men, and every sin committed is only another act whereby Barrabas is preferred to Christ; there are still other Judases who betray Him with a kiss; there are other Pilates who condemn Him as an enemy of Caesar; there are still other Herods who robe Him in the garment of a fool; there are still other gambling idlers who east their dice, gambling away the riches of eternity for the trifles of time.

The heart of my message here is simply this: By the atonement of Christ upon Calvary all men are saved provisionally, but none is saved actually until he comes to Christ in true repentance, and accepts the sacrifice of God personally, and turns from sin to do the will of God.

Calvary is the conclusion of a drama whose opening scene is a withered garden, a forbidden tree, a subtle tempter, a fallen pair, an angry God, and a wooing love, until the whole

account ends in the horrors of an awful crucifixion. The sun of life, which had set in clouds behind Eden's guarded walls, arose and sent its beams in splendor over Calvary's crest and burst in glory over all the world.

Calvary! Here God laid bare His heart, uncovered by His emotions, and courted sinful man, paying the ransom to buy him from the awful slavery of sin.

Calvary! Here all the rivers of prophecy converge, and we see Christ emerge as the answer to all the types, sacrifices, and symbols of the Old Testament. Every antediluvian, patriarchal, and Jewish sacrifice was a type of Christ. As the ascending smoke of Abel's altar climbed toward God, he looked by faith to the promised Savior. Likewise the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, and the more diversified and systematic sacrifices of the Jews pointed like sign-posts along the highway of time to the sacrifice of Calvary.

Calvary was neither accidental nor incidental in any way.

Calvary! God's answer to man's rebellion and sin's ruin!

1. IN THE CROSS OF CALVARY WE SEE THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE that the world has ever known.

The atonement of Calvary is from the first to the last an amazing movement of God toward man. Salvation begins in God loving us, and ends in us loving God. Savanarola, Knox and Luther said that men were not worth the trouble they had given God to save them, and perhaps not, but only LOVE FOR LOST SOULS brought Jesus to the cross to die. Nothing but love; mighty, marvelous, matchless love could have led Jesus to die for our sins on the despised cross. Where is a person to find words to describe such love? Human language is beggared and vocabularies limited when faced with the overpowering expression of love in the dripping wounds of the cross.

It has been well said that the cross was in the heart of God long before it was in the soil of Golgotha, and centuries before a "blood-stained cross was erected on a skull-shaped hill," a cross had been envisioned in the mind and heart of God. "God so loved the world that He gave..." There it is! Written in unmistakable terms across the pages of God's dealing with men; written in the blessed words of the gospel; written in the agonizing description of Christ's death at Calvary.

The highest order of human love that is possible is for one to lay down his life for his friend; but Jesus went beyond that measure of love to give His life for those who were His enemies. He loved us before we ever loved Him, or sought His cross. This love caused Jesus to allow sinful men to put Him to death. He had power over death, and had power to lay down His life, and then to take it up again. He laid down His life willingly. The Jews, and Pilate did not kill Jesus. They merely put Him through a process by which an ordinary person dies. He said, "I lay down my life of myself. No man taketh it from me." Not all the power of armies or executioners could have taken His life if He had not chosen to die. The One who made the cross and the nails to begin with, could have dissolved them into nothingness if He had so willed.

And here I ask you to solve a mystery that has been oppressing me for many years. I have asked it of Doctors of Divinity who have been studying theology for half a century, and they have given me no satisfactory answer. I have gone through all the books of my library, but have gotten no solution to the question by what logic was the Lord Jesus Christ induced to exchange the ivory palaces of Heaven for the crucifixion agonies of earth? I shall wait until the morning after the resurrection to get the answer; but meanwhile, I take it as the mightiest and tenderest of all facts that Jesus Christ DID come; came with thorns in His brow; came with spikes in His hands and feet; came with a spear in His side, to save me, and only His love for me brought Him to Calvary's cruel cross.

2. The Cross of Calvary offers THE MOST WONDERFUL REVELATION OF GOD THAT THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

Uniting in Himself the nature of man and the nature of God, Jesus Christ gives us a better and truer picture of God than can be found in the writings of all the philosophers, prophets, theologians, and mystics since the world began. God stands revealed to us in the character of Him who cleanses the lepers, heals the sick, restores sight to the blind, forgives the woman taken in adultery, washes the feet of His disciples, and sheds His blood for the redemption of mankind. Certainly, the best picture we can ever acquire of God is that afforded us by the person of Jesus Christ, the "untarnished mirror of the Most High." In reply to the group who said, "Show us the Father," Jesus said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

The life, death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of Christ are all more or less necessary to the completion of redemption in its totality, as an effectual scheme for the salvation of sinners.

Jesus was physically immortal from three points of view:

(1) As God, He was naturally deathless in a physical sense as a human being. God is not subject to death;

(2) As a Jew, He was not subject to death, for He had kept the whole law without flaw. (It was only the transgressor of the law who was liable to death).

(3) As man, He was likewise immortal, for He had never sinned. Death has entered the world as a result of sin. The only possible cause of the physical death of Jesus was that He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

I chanced upon this story from a book, "Quiet Talks" by Gordon, which gives us a wonderful picture of God:

The setting is a New England parsonage, and tells how the wayward son of a New England clergyman loved to play truant from school. One day the teacher met the father and inquired about this son, Phil.

"Why," said the astonished man, "was he not at school today?"

"No, and he was not there yesterday nor the day before."

Sadly the father wended his way homeward. Arriving at his study, he conferred with his wife, telling her to send Phil to him as soon as he returned home. The boy, always keenly alert to everything around him, sensed an atmosphere of strain as soon as he arrived. Every fear in his heart was confirmed as soon as he saw his father's face. Marks of sorrow and disappointment were etched there.

Going directly to the point at issue, the father said, "My son, you don't need to say a word. You know how much I love you, but for the past three days you have been living a lie. Now, Phil, there is never a sin committed without a resulting punishment, and you must be punished. This punishment will be that for three days you must live on bread and water, and for three nights you will sleep in the garret in the dark -- as many days and nights as you have persisted in living a lie."

And that night, Phil went to his place in the dark attic without a light. His parents remained in the living room. Father tried to read, and mother was trying to knit. His eyes, moist with tears, failed to note that he was holding the newspaper upside down. She dropped stitch after stitch, as She tried to divert her thoughts from the boy upstairs. Finally the father said, "Wife, why don't you go to bed? It's past time." She answered, "Why don't you go?"

At last they retired. After several hours, noting an uneasy stirring beside him, the father said, "Why don't you go to sleep, wife?" She replied, "I just can't go to sleep. Why don't you sleep?"

Soon he leaped out of bed saying, "I can't stand it any longer! I'm going upstairs!" And he took his pillow and went up to the attic room, and there upon the floor, he took his place beside his son. Neither spoke, but the tears of Phil and his father wet the pillows of the bed as the father and son shared the penalty of his sin. And it seems to me that this is a very touching, human picture of a forgiving Heavenly Father who "shared our sins and our sorrows, and made them His very Own..." The sins that crucified Jesus drove the nails not only through the hands of a man, but into the heart of God as well.

Perhaps our ideas are not always distinct when we speak of the death of Christ as an atonement for sin. Jesus Christ was substituted in the stead of sinners; therefore His death was not merely the means, but also the price of our redemption. God dealt with Him as though our sins had been His own; He inflicted punishment on Him as if He had been the offender. Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He made peace with God for us by the atonement of Calvary.

A revelation of God is necessary to bring men to forsake the world and its sins, and constrain them to do God's will, and while we have a revelation of God in the life of Jesus, we reach the highest pinnacle, and find the best portrait of God's very self as we look upon the

sacrifice of the cross. It is a bankrupt religion that has no cross at its center; it is a powerless religion that does not focus upon Calvary.

3. IN THE CROSS OF CALVARY WE SEE THE GREATEST DELIVERANCE EVER OFFERED.

The greatest need of a sin-burdened race can be expressed in one word: Deliverance. I have seen a man bound hand and foot in sin, Satan his hard task-master, in a bondage from which no human power could deliver him, and with one look at the cross, one whispered prayer, his chains were severed, and he marched out forever free!

I have seen a man hardened in infidelity, defiant of God, reckless of an unending eternity, call upon the name of the Lord, and believe on Christ, and the finished work of Calvary. Deliverance from the prison of unbelief!

I have seen men overwhelmed with disaster, the last hope fled, the last light gone out, lost more surely than a derelict ship without a compass or chart, and then a ray of light, streaming from Calvary, brought hope, the clouds were scattered, and a sunburst of eternal gladness poured into his soul. Nothing but the glorious gospel of Christ can bring deliverance and hope to men!

I have seen the gospel of Christ penetrate to heathen lands, bringing to the benighted slaves of ignorance, and superstition, and lust, the glad news of a Savior, and salvation has changed their community completely and entirely!

It has changed cesspools of iniquity into flower gardens of grace, and wicked empires into kingdoms for our Lord. Salvation has bound up broken hearts, driven away sorrows, sweetened lives, broken chains, vanished clouds and given hope to all who have embraced it.

I have seen men's lives changed by the grace and power of God the drunkard made sober; the thief made honest; the liar made truthful; the vile made pure; the castaway made a queen, and **NOTHING BUT THE GOSPEL COULD HAVE DONE IT!** Thank God for a gospel such as this. I wish I might live a hundred years to preach it!

The cross divides all mankind into two main groups: those who love Christ and those who do not; His friends, and His enemies. There is no neutral position. What is your attitude toward the cross? Do you look on in wonder and amazement, or stand, as it were, with the rabble crowd and look at the middle cross and its Victim, even with contempt as you see Him hanging on that tree?

There is an old hymn which says:

"What will you do with Jesus, neutral you cannot be;
Someday your heart will be asking, 'What will he do with me?'"

You have heard of the warrior who went out to fight against Christ. He knew he was in the wrong, and while waging the war against the Kingdom of Christ, an arrow struck him and he fell, mortally wounded. It pierced him in the heart, and lying there with his face to the sun, his life's blood running away, he caught a handful of the blood, and threw it up towards the heavens, and cried out, "Oh Jesus, thou hast conquered!"

And if today, with the arrow of God's Spirit piercing your soul, you have felt the truth of what I am trying to proclaim, you would surrender now and forever to the Lord who bought you, and make Him yours. By the five bleeding wounds of Calvary, I beseech you, "be ye reconciled to God."

Shall it be told today in Heaven that, notwithstanding all those wounds, and all those tears, and all that agony, you would not accept Him? Let this be your answer: "Oh, Lord Jesus, we accept Thee. We all accept Thee now. There is no hand lifted to smite Thee on the cheek now! No one will strike Thee now! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

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07 -- THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST

Over the cross of the Nazarene, in Hebrew, and Greek and Latin, His title was written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." "Hebrew, the language of religion; Greek, the language of art; Latin, the language of law. It was prophetic that religion would crown Him Lord of all; that it would lay its tribute at His feet; and that law would acknowledge Him as Lord. Prophetic, too, that He would possess all tongues, and all tongues would confess Him. His story is told today in more than eight hundred languages and dialects of the world, and with the telling of that story has come to the peoples of the earth a new tongue. From the manger and the cross has streamed a new light and meaning into the world's language.

HE IS PRE-EMINENT IN REDEMPTION. His name stands for redemption! Arabia had its Mohammed; India its Buddha; China its Confucius; and in every age there have been those who have offered their quota of advice for solution of the world's ills, but the world has had only one Savior! "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." In spite of all the talk, creeds are good, churches are good, but Christ is better! Christ is the world's one and only Savior!

There have been many great scientists and statesmen, philosophers and prophets, but there is only one Savior! The need of all churches and creeds is Christ. That is the need of the whole wide world! Lincoln's name stands for patriotism; Bacon's name for philosophy; Milton's name for poetry; His name stands for redemption!

"Jesus, the name high over all
In earth, and sea, and sky;
Angels and saints before Him fall,
And devils fear and fly."

HE IS PRE-EMINENT IN THE REALM OF ART. The great pictures of the world are those that portray Christ. What is art without Raphael, Michael Angelo, Da Vinci, Titan, Reubens, Gustav Dore, Hoffman, and Warner Sallman? And their greatest paintings are: The Annunciation; The Transfiguration; The Last Supper; The Crucifixion; The Resurrection; The Ascension; The Good Shepherd; Jesus Blessing the Children and Knocking at The Door. Take Christ, and the influence that He has inspired, out of the art galleries, and you have left only bare walls and empty pedestals. In music He is pre-eminent. When the stars first sang together, it was of Him that they sang; and over His manger-cradle the angels broke forth in mighty song. Indeed, the song that fills all heaven, and will one day be sung by the hosts of the redeemed around the throne of God, is the Song of the Lamb.

Musicians tell us that in every musical composition there is a diapason, or a unity note. Christ is the unity note of all the world's great music that has lived through the centuries. Handel was a failure as a composer until he linked his name with the name of Christ, then he found himself linked with immortality. Handel's "Messiah;" Hayden's "Creation;" Beethoven's "Mount of Olivet," "Elijah" and other compositions that honor Christ are immortal. Then think of "Jesus Love of My Soul" by Wesley; "Rock of Ages" by Toplady, and "Nearer My God to Thee" by Adams -- these hymns have been sung around the world by millions, and will still be sung when the great and mighty of earth are forgotten. HE is the keynote of all music that lives!

HE IS PRE-EMINENT IN LITERATURE. More than sixty thousand different volumes have been written of Him. Take out of the libraries the books inspired by His life, His words, and His works and you have left only dust-covered shelves. If He had never lived, Sheldon's "IN HIS STEPS" would never have been written; if He had never died, Bryant's "Thanatopsis" would never have lived; if He had never risen, Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality" never would have been sung. The works of Milton, Dante, and Bunyan have Biblical foundation.

In the sixty-six books of the Bible -- the preeminent Book -- Christ is pre-eminent! Here He is given two hundred and forty-eight different names. His acts are plainly declared in every page of the great Book of Books. It took God and some forty different men fifteen hundred years to produce the Bible; it was written in prisons and palaces; by princes and peasants, but wherever written, and by whomsoever written, all told but one story -- the story of the One preeminent!

"There never lived anyone who has so deeply moved the hearts of men as Jesus Christ has done. The greatest monarchs that ever reigned, the greatest warriors that ever fought, the greatest masters in art, or science or literature, have never affected so many, and that, to so great an extent, as Jesus of Nazareth has done." He has changed the course of the world's history, and made its condition almost inconceivably different from what it would have been but for His coming. His teachings are received by the foremost nations of the earth. Millions of men call themselves by His name. He occupies the highest place in the esteem and affection of multitudes. For His sake men have lived as none others were able or willing to live; for His sake they have died as none others could or would have died. Along the blood-stained highway of human history Jesus comes as the Morning Star of hope for a dark and gloomy world.

However you may look at Jesus of Nazareth today, whether as a devout worshipper or as a confused skeptic, you cannot deny what history records. History declares that there was an

individual who actually lived and exerted a tremendous influence upon His own generation, and upon all succeeding generations. So powerful was His influence that an institution was formed shortly after His death to carry out His ideals and teachings, and that institution, the Christian Church, was never larger than it is today.

So tremendous was His influence that the gates of Time swing on His birthday as a hinge, and all calendars change in memory of what happened in Palestine nineteen hundred and forty-seven years ago. So great has been His influence since that day that the finest of art, music and literature has been that which found its inspiration in the life and message of Jesus.

JESUS IS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS! It is possible to match every great and good man the world has ever known with another, or many, equally as great or as good, but when we mention Jesus, there is no one to stand beside Him! HIS name is above every name, and with Him no mortal among the sons of men can compare. In all things, through all ages, He has had the pre-eminence and in all the Bible's types; in all the Bible's analogies; all the Bible's truths are so related that Christ alone explains them.

The life and death of Jesus of Nazareth offers to all men the key to the problem of the art of living, an art which many seek to practice and He alone mastered.

The records of that life have been subjected to the most rigid criticism and careful probing, and the white light of nearly two thousand years of scholarship and research has been brought to bear upon its pages, and not only do they bear the scrutiny, but from out their pages emerges the figure of a Man -- the God-man!

Every age of criticism only serves to release Him more completely from the fetters which have suppressed His influence, and reveals Him to us as the most knowable, lovable, and tellable of all the sons of men: Jesus, the Son of God, who became the Son of man that we, even we, might "become the sons of God!"

Should we not then acknowledge Him as Lord, and honor Him as our King? He rules over the triple realm such as no earthly monarch has ever known. The Kingdom of Power, in which He controls all, and will finally cast down every rebel and rival who rises up against Him; The Kingdom of Grace... His Church, in which He guides, protects and sustains His believing children so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them; The Kingdom of Glory, in which He will rule eternally over the resurrected and redeemed world, without end! Amen.

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08 -- A CHALLENGE TO FOLLOW JESUS

St. Paul, the great apostle said in his second letter to the Corinthians, the second chapter, "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It wasn't because he didn't have anything else to talk about, He could have spoken with authority upon a great many subjects. As a member of the Sanhedrin, and a renowned student of Gamaliel, he could have expounded volumes of the Jewish law. For a man of his day and time, he would

have been considered a world traveler hue he never had much to say about his globe-trotting. One day on a dusty Damascus road he met this Galilean, whom he had so vehemently persecuted, face to face, and from that day forward he had but one message -- Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

What could have wrought such a radical change? What could have transformed so vicious a persecutor into such a compassionate follower of this once-despised Christ? If you have met Him you know the secret. Where can we find one to compare with Him? Scale the utmost heights of human achievement; unclasp the musty volumes that tell of man's lofty endeavors; marshal the world's great and mighty men. Bring forth Aristotle and Socrates and Plato; Alexander and Caesar and Charlamagne; Michael Angelo, Lord Bacon and Shakespeare. Statesmen, generals, poets, priests and kings. The roster is full of men who made a lasting impression on the world by founding empires, leading victorious armies, contributing valuable things to art and literature, but did you ever stop to think that Jesus of Nazareth never wrote a book, never led an army, nor announced no new principle in nature? No one ever painted His portrait; no one ever sculptured His likeness in stone.

He was born in an obscure village, lived a simple life in a territory fifty by one hundred miles square, and never left that territory except once when He went to Egypt as a babe in His mother's arms. He lived for thirty years in obscurity and at the age of thirty-three," was condemned as a blasphemer of God and a traitor of Rome, and sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate, and was crucified upon a shameful cross.

Though His life and ministry were comparatively short, He was able to set in motion such forces for good that today every civilized nation celebrates His birthday, and men count time from the year of His birth. He entrusted a joyful message of hope and salvation from sin to a little band of fishermen and men of lowly occupations. He was of a despised race; He had but a handful of followers to begin with; the giant political powers were all against Him; but His gospel has conquered the learning of Greece and the armies of Rome. It leaped the Pyrennes and the Alps; it rolled through Brittany and Saxony and swept to the shores of America. Nothing could stop it.

The cross has been lifted over Rome with its shining eagles and mighty legions. It has triumphed over the pagan gods and goddesses of Greece, with its ignorance of the true God; It has been lifted over the winged lions and sacred bulls Of Assyria; It has towered above the towering pyramids and the silent Sphinx of Egypt, and over the atheism, the apathy, and apostasy of Babylon. Wherever the name of Jesus is known and honored, and nowhere else, there are hospitals fur the sick, asylums for the blind, and women are honored and little children are happier.

No mere man could have exerted such deep and lasting forces for good. These evidences are among the surest proofs that He was what He said He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Through faith in His name drunkards have been made sober, liars made truthful, thieves made honest. He changes night into morning. He makes the poor man rich and the rich man richer. He makes the sick well, the well better, and the dead alive. He holds out hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, and love to the loveless. He is bread to the hungry, drink to the

thirsty, and rest to the weary. He lives today -- the holiest among the holy, the mightiest among the mighty, and our eternal destiny is in the hollow of His nail-pierced palm.

I challenge you each one today to follow Christ in living a saved and surrendered life. He must be Lord of all or He will not be Lord at all. He said, "Not my will, but thine be done." This is to be our pattern for perfect obedience to the Father, a full surrender of our will to God.

I challenge you to follow 'Christ in loving -- not only in loving the one who loves us, our group, our race, but to love the unlovely, the sinner, our enemies. "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another even as I have loved you."

I challenge you to follow Christ in prayer, to the mountain top, alone all night, to the garden with its bloody sweat. Learn and live the prayer which He taught us: "Our Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done..."

I challenge you to follow Christ in witnessing, whether it be to the humble fisherman or the haughty Pharisee, the woman at the well or the ruler of the Jews; in the home and in the temple, beside the dusty road, in the busy marts of trade, at dawn or dusk, noon-day or mid-night; keep telling of God's love and reminding lost and sinful souls of a better life and of a glorious heaven above.

I challenge you to follow Christ in the use of the Scriptures. Know the Book. Search the Scriptures! Know how to use the Book as Jesus did! The Bible is not the revelation of God, but the record of that revelation in the virgin birth, virtuous life, vicarious death, victorious resurrection and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is our law and our guide.

It is true that Christ was born in Bethlehem in the days of Caesar Augustus, but it is no less true that He is born again in my heart and yours, and in the hearts of His followers in this modern day and age. It is true that God spoke to men in the flesh in the days past and gone, but it is also true that God speaks to us now by the Spirit in these latter days.

We have talked about going "back to Jesus" in one form or another, until it would seem that Jesus is back somewhere, perhaps covered with the dust of centuries, or hidden in the lines of a poem, or even yet hanging on a cross outside Jerusalem, when if we could but know it, He stands in our midst, "an Unseen Presence, and we know not of it."

I challenge you to follow Christ in sacrifice divine -- even to Calvary. Jesus said, "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Man does not live by bread alone, Life does not consist of the things we possess; the soul cannot be satisfied with material things. Jesus is the answer to the longing of every soul. Jesus: first last and always; Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Not a creed, not a code of ethics, not even a church, but Christ!

"Speak to Him now for He heareth,
And spirit with spirit may meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet."

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THE END