

The Great Doctrines of the Bible

by William Evans, Ph.D., D.D., Litt. D.

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CHAPTER TW0

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

II - THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

A. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

I. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

- 1. HE HAD A HUMAN PARENTAGE.**
- 2. HE GREW AS OTHER HUMAN BEINGS DO.**
- 3. HE HAD THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN.**
- 4. HE WAS POSSESSED OF A BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.**
- 5. HE WAS SUBJECT TO THE SINLESS INFIRMITIES OF HUMANITY.**
- 6. HUMAN NAMES ARE GIVEN TO HIM.**

II. THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

- 1. DIVINE NAMES ARE GIVEN TO HIM.**
- 2. DIVINE WORSHIP IS ASCRIBED TO HIM.**
- 3. DIVINE QUALITIES AND PROPERTIES ARE POSSESSED BY HIM.**
- 4. DIVINE OFFICES ARE ASCRIBED TO HIM.**
- 5. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ARE POSSESSED BY HIM.**
- 6. CHRIST'S NAME IS COUPLED WITH THAT OF THE FATHER.**
- 7. THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST AS MANIFESTED:**

- a) In His Visit to the Temple**
- b) In His Baptism**
- c) In His Temptation**
- d) In the Calling of the Twelve and the Seventy**
- e) In the Sermon on the Mount**

B. THE WORK OF CHRIST

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

I. THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

- 1. ITS IMPORTANCE**
- 2. THE SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION OF CHRIST'S DEATH**
- 3. UNSCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF CHRIST'S DEATH**
- 4. THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S DEATH**
- 5. THE EXTENT OF CHRIST'S DEATH**
- 6. THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH**

II. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

- 1. ITS IMPORTANCE**
- 2. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**
- 3. THE CREDIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**
- 4. THE RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

III. THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

- 1. THE MEANING OF THESE TERMS**
- 2. THE SCRIPTURAL DATA FOR THE DOCTRINE**
- 3. THE NECESSITY OF THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST**
- 4. THE NATURE OF THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST**
- 5. THE PURPOSE OF THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST**
- 6. THE RESULTS OF THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

A. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

"The close kinship of CHRIST with Christianity is one of the distinctive features of the Christian religion. If you take away the name of Buddha from Buddhism and remove the personal revealer entirely from his system; if you take away the personality of Mahomet from Mohammedanism, or the personality of Zoroaster from the religion of the Parsees, the entire doctrine of these religions would still be left intact. Their practical value, such as it is, would not be imperilled or lessened. But take away from Christianity the name and person of JESUS CHRIST and what have you left? Nothing! The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centers in JESUS CHRIST. Without Him there is absolutely nothing." - Sinclair Patterson.

"From beginning to end, in all its various phases and aspects and elements, the Christian faith and life is determined by the person and the work of JESUS CHRIST. It owes its life and character at every point to Him.

- Its convictions are convictions about Him.
- Its hopes are hopes which He has inspired and which it is for Him to fulfill.
- Its ideals are born of His teaching and His life.
- Its strength is the strength of His spirit."

- James Denney.

I. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The Scriptures Distinctly Teach that He had a Human Parentage: That He Was Born of a Woman - The Virgin Mary.

Matthew 1:18 - "**Mary . . . was found with child of the Holy Ghost.**"

2:11 - "**The young child with Mary his mother.**"

12:47 - "**Behold, thy mother and thy brethren.**"

13:55 - "**Is not his mother called Mary?**"

John 1:14: - "**The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.**"

2:1 - "**The mother of Jesus was there.**"

Acts 13:23 - "**Of this man's seed hath God . . . raised . . . Jesus.**"

Romans 1:3 - "**Of the seed of David according to the flesh.**"

Galatians 4:4 - "**Made of a woman.**"

In thus being born of a woman JESUS CHRIST submitted to the conditions of a human life and a human body; became humanity's son by a human birth. Of the "**seed of the woman,**" of the "**seed of Abraham,**" and of line and lineage of David, JESUS CHRIST is undeniably human.

We must not lose sight of the fact that there was something supernatural surrounding the birth of the CHRIST.

Matthew 1:18 - "**On this wise,**" and Luke 1:35 - "**The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**"

"**On this wise**" indicates that this birth was different from those recorded before it. Luke 1:35 is explicit about the matter. To assail the virgin birth is to assail the Virgin's life. He was of "**the seed of the woman,**" not of the man. (See Luke 1:34 - "**How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?**")

No laws of heredity are sufficient to account for His generation. By a creative act GOD broke through the chain of human generation and brought into the world a supernatural being.

The narrative of the virgin birth need not stagger us. The abundance of historical evidence in its favor should lead to its acceptance. All the manuscripts in all the ancient versions contain the record of it. All the traditions of the early church recognize it.

Mention of it is made in the earliest of all the creeds: the Apostles' Creed. If the doctrine of the virgin birth is rejected it must be on purely subjective grounds.

If one denies the possibility of the supernatural in the experience of human life, it is, of course, easy for him to deny this doctrine.

To one who believes that JESUS was human only it would seem comparatively easy to deny the supernatural birth on purely subjective grounds. The preconceptions of thinkers to a great degree determine their views. It would seem that such a wonderful life as that lived by CHRIST, having as it did such a wonderful finish in the resurrection and ascension, might, indeed should, have a wonderful and extraordinary entrance into the world.

The fact that the virgin birth is attested by the Scriptures, by tradition, by creeds, and that it is in perfect harmony with all the other facts of that wonderful life should be sufficient attestation of its truth. *

It has been thought strange that if, as is claimed, the virgin birth is so essential to the right understanding of the Christian religion, that Mark, John, and Paul should say nothing about it. But does such silence really exist?

John says "**the Word became flesh**"; while Paul speaks of "**God manifest in the flesh**."

Says L. F. Anderson: "This argument from silence is sufficiently met by the considerations that Mark passes over thirty years of our Lord's life in silence; that John presupposes the narratives of Matthew and Luke; that Paul does not deal with the story of JESUS' life. The facts were known at first only to Mary and Joseph; their very nature involved reticence until JESUS was demonstrated to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead; meantime the natural development of JESUS and His refusal to set up an earthly kingdom have made the miraculous events of thirty years ago seem to Mary like a wonderful dream; so only gradually the marvelous tale of the mother of the Lord found its way into the Gospel tradition and the creeds of the church, and into the innermost hearts of the Christians of all countries."

2. He Grew in Wisdom and Stature as Other Human Beings Do. He Was Subject to the Ordinary Laws of Human Development in Body and Soul.

Luke 2:40, 52, 46 - "**And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. And . . . they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.**"

Just to what extent His sinless nature influenced His growth we may not be able to say. It seems clear, however, from the Scriptures, that we are to attribute JESUS' growth and advancement

- to the training He received in a godly home;
- to the instruction given at the synagogue and the temple;
- from His own personal study of the Scriptures,
- from His fellowship and communion with His Father.

Both the human and divine element entered into His training and development, which were as

real in the experience of JESUS as in that of any other human being. We are told that "**Jesus grew, and increased in wisdom and stature.**" He "**increased,**" i. e., He kept advancing; He "**grew,**" and the reflective form of the verb would seem to indicate that His growth was due to His [55] own efforts.

From all this it seems clear that JESUS received His training along the lines of ordinary human progress - instruction, study, thought.

Nor should the fact that CHRIST possessed divine attributes, such as omniscience and omnipotence, militate against a perfectly human development. Could He not have possessed them and yet not have used them? Self-emptying is not self-extinction. Is it incredible to think that, although possessing these divine attributes, He should have held them in subjection in order that the HOLY SPIRIT might have His part to play in that truly human, and yet divine, life?

3. He Had the Appearance of a Man.

John 4:9 - "**How is it that thou, being a Jew.**" Luke 24:13. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus took Him to be an ordinary man. John 20:15 - "**She, supposing him to be the gardener.**" 21:4, 5 - "**Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.**"

The woman of Samaria evidently recognized JESUS as a Jew by His features or speech. To her He was just an ordinary Jew, at least to begin with. There is no Biblical warrant for surrounding the head of CHRIST with a halo, as the artists do. His pure life no doubt gave Him a distinguished look, just as good character similarly distinguishes men today. Of course we know nothing definite as to the appearance of JESUS, for no picture or photograph of Him do we possess. The apostles draw attention only to the tone of His voice (Mark 7:34; 15:34). After the resurrection and ascension JESUS seems still to have retained the form of a man (Acts 7:56; I Timothy 2:5).

4. He Was Possessed of a Human Physical Nature: Body, Soul and Spirit.

- John 1:14 - "**And the Word was made flesh.**"

- Hebrews 2:14 - "**Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.**"

- Matthew 26:12 - "**She hath poured this ointment on my body.**" v. 38 - "**My soul is exceeding sorrowful.**"

- Luke 23:46 - "**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.**" 24:39 - "**Behold my hands and my feet, that [56] it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.**"

By his incarnation CHRIST came into possession of a real human nature; He came not only unto His own, but came unto them in the likeness of their own flesh. Of course we must distinguish between a human nature and a carnal nature. A carnal nature is really not an integral part of man as GOD made him in the beginning. CHRIST's human nature was truly human, yet sinless: "**Yet**

without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

5. He Was Subject to the Sinless Infirmities of Human Nature.

- Matthew 4:2 - "**He was afterward an hungred.**"

- John 19:28 - "**Jesus . . . saith, I thirst.**" 4:6 - "**Jesus . . . being wearied with his journey.**"

- Matthew 8:24 - "**But he was asleep.**"

- John 19:30 - "**He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**"

- He mourns over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37);

- weeps over His dead friend Lazarus (John 11:35);

- craves for human sympathy in the garden (Matthew 26:36, 40);

- tempted in all points like as we are (Hebrews 4:15).

There is not a note in the great organ of our humanity which, when touched, does not find a sympathetic vibration in the mighty range and scope of our Lord's being, saving, of course, the jarring discord of sin. But sin was not an integral part of unfallen human nature. We speak of natural depravity, but, in reality, sin is unnatural. GOD made Adam perfect and without sin. Since Adam's fall, however, men are "**born in sin**" (Psalm 51:5).

6. Human Names Are Given to Him By Himself and Others.

- Luke 19:10 - "**Son of Man.**"

- Matthew 1:21- "**Thou shalt call his name Jesus.**"

- Acts 2:22 - "**Jesus of Nazareth.**"

- I Timothy 2:5 - "**The man Christ Jesus.**"

No less than eighty times in the Gospels does JESUS call Himself the Son of Man. Even when acquiescing in the title Son of GOD as addressed to Himself He sometimes immediately after substitutes the title Son of Man (John 1:49-51; Matthew 26:63, 64).

While we recognize the fact that there is something official in the title Son of Man, something connected with His relation to the Kingdom of GOD, it is nevertheless true that in using this title He assuredly [57] identifies Himself with the sons of men. While He is rightly called *THE* Son of Man, because, by His sinless nature and life He is unique among the sons of men, He is nevertheless A Son of Man in that He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

II. THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Divine Names Are Given to Him.

a) *HE IS CALLED GOD.*

- John 1:1 - "**The Word was God.**"

- Hebrews 1:8 - "**But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever.**"

- John 1:18 - "**The only begotten Son.**"

Absolute deity is here ascribed to CHRIST. 20:28 - "**My Lord and my God.**" Not an expression of amazement, but a confession of faith. This confession accepted by CHRIST, hence equivalent to the acceptance of deity, and an assertion of it on CHRIST's part. Romans 9:5 - "**God blessed forever.**" Titus 2:13 - "**The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.**"

I John 5:20 - "**His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.**" In all these passages CHRIST is called GOD.

It may be argued that while CHRIST is here called GOD, yet that does not argue for nor prove His deity, for human judges are also called "**gods**" in John 10:35 - "**If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came.**" True, but it is then used in a secondary and relative sense, and not in the absolute sense as when used of the Son.

b) *HE IS CALLED THE SON OF GOD.*

The references containing this title are numerous. Among others see Matthew 8:29; 14:33; 16:16, 17; Mark 1:1; 14:61; Luke 1:35; 4:41. While it may be true that in the synoptic Gospels JESUS may not be said to have claimed this title for Himself, yet He unhesitatingly accepted it when used of Him and addressed to Him by others.

Further, it seems clear from the charges made against Him that He did claim such an honor for Himself.

- Matthew 27:40, 43 "**For he said, I am the Son of God.**"

- Mark 14:61, 62 - "**Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? and Jesus said, I am.**"

- Luke 22:70 - "**Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.**"

In John's Gospel however, Jesus plainly calls Himself "**the Son of God**" (5:25; 10:36; 11:4).

Indeed, John's [58] Gospel begins with CHRIST as GOD: "**The Word was God,**" and ends with the same thought: "**My Lord and my God**" (20:28). (Chapter 21 is an epilogue.)

Dr. James Orr says, in speaking of the title Son of GOD as ascribed to CHRIST: "This title is one to which there can be no finite comparison or analogy. The oneness with GOD which it designates is not such reflex influence of the divine thought and character such as man and angels may attain, but identity of essence constituting him not God-like alone, but GOD. Others may be children of GOD in a moral sense; but by this right of elemental nature, none but He; He

is herein, the only Son; so little separate, so close to the inner divine life which He expresses, that He is in the bosom of the Father. This language denotes two natures homogeneous, entirely one, and both so essential to the Godhead that neither can be omitted from any truth you speak of it."

If when He called Himself "**the Son of God**" He did not mean more than that He was a son of God, why then did the high priest accuse Him of blasphemy when He claimed this title (Matthew 26: 61-63)?

Does not Mark 12:6 - "**Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son,**" indicate a special sonship? The sonship of CHRIST is human and historical, it is true; but it is more: it is transcendent, unique, solitary. That something unique and solitary lay in this title seems clear from John 5:18 - "**The Jews sought the more to kill Him . . . because he . . . said . . . also that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God.**"

The use of the word "**only begotten**" also indicates the uniqueness of this sonship. For use of the word see Luke 7:12 - "**The only son of his mother.**" 9:38 - "**For he is mine only child.**" This word is used of CHRIST by John in 1:14, 18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9, and distinguishes between CHRIST as the only Son, and the "**many . . . children of God**" (John 1:12, 13).

In one sense CHRIST has no brethren: He stands absolutely alone. This contrast is clearly emphasized in John 1:14, 18 - "**only begotten Son,**" and 1:12 - "**many . . . sons of God.**"

- He is the Son from eternity: they "**become**" sons in time. He is one; they are many.
 - He is Son by nature; they are sons by adoption and grace.
 - He is Son of the Divine essence with the Father; they are of different substance from the Father.
- [59]

c) *HE IS CALLED THE LORD.*

Acts 4:33; 16:31; Luke 2:11; Acts 9:17; Matthew 22:43-45. It is true that this term is used of men, e. g., Acts 16:30 - "**Sirs [Lords], what must I do to be saved?**" John 12:21 - "**Sir [Lord], we would see Jesus.**" It is not used, however, in this unique sense, as the connection will clearly show.

In our Lord's day, the title "**Lord**" as used of CHRIST was applicable only to the Deity, to God. "The ptolemies and the Roman Emperors would allow the name to be applied to them only when they permitted themselves to be deified. The archaeological discoveries at Oxyrhyncus put this fact beyond a doubt. So when the New Testament writers speak of JESUS as Lord, there can be no question as to what they mean[/b]." - Wood.

d) *OTHER DIVINE NAMES ARE ASCRIBED TO HIM:* "**The first and the last**" (Revelation 1:17). This title used of JEHOVAH in Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. "**The Alpha and Omega**" (Revelation 22:13, 16); cf. 1:8 where it is used of GOD.

2. Divine Worship Is Ascribed to JESUS CHRIST

The Scriptures recognize worship as being due to GOD, to Deity alone: Matthew 4:10 - **"Worship the Lord thy God, and him only."** Revelation 22:8, 9 - **"I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel . . . Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: . . . worship God."** John was not allowed even to worship GOD at the feet of the angel. Acts 14:14, 15; 10:25, 26 - Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter, and worshipped him. **"But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."** See what an awful fate was meted out to Herod because he dared to accept worship that belonged to GOD only (Acts 12:20-25). Yet JESUS CHRIST unhesitatingly accepted such worship, indeed, called for it (John 4:10). See John 20:28; Matthew 14:33; Luke 24:52; 5:8.

The homage given to CHRIST in these scriptures would be nothing short of sacrilegious idolatry if CHRIST were not GOD. There seemed to be not the slightest reluctance on the part of CHRIST in the acceptance of such worship. Therefore either CHRIST was GOD or He was an imposter. But His whole life refutes the idea of imposture. It was He who said, **"Worship God only"**; and He had no right to take the place of GOD if He were not GOD.

GOD Himself commands all men to render worship to the Son, [60] even as they do to Him. John 5:23, 24 - **"That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."** Even the angels are commanded to render worship to the Son. Hebrews 1:6 - **"And let all the angels of God worship him."** Philippians 2:10 - **"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."**

It was the practice of the apostles and the early church to render worship to CHRIST - II Corinthians 12:8-10 - **"I besought the Lord."** Acts 7:59 - **"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."** I Corinthians 1:2 - **"Them that . . . call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."**

The Christians of all ages have not been satisfied with admiring CHRIST, they have adored and worshipped Him. They have approached His person in the attitude of self-sacrifice and worship as in the presence of and to GOD.

Robert Browning quoted, in a letter to a lady in her last illness, the words of Charles Lamb, when in a gay fancy with some friends as to how he and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more - on the first suggestion, "and if Christ entered this room?" changed his tone at once, and stuttered out as his manner was when moved: "You see - if Shakespeare entered, we should all rise; if CHRIST appeared, we must kneel."

3. He Possesses the Qualities and Properties of Deity.

a) *PRE-EXISTENCE*

- John 1:1 - **"In the beginning"**; cf. Genesis 1:1.

- John 8:58 - **"Before Abraham was, I am."**

That is to say: "Abraham's existence presupposes mine, not mine his. He was dependent upon

me, not I upon him for existence. Abraham came into being at a certain point of time, but I am." Here is simple being without beginning or end. See also John 17:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:16, 17.

b) *SELF-EXISTENCE AND LIFE-GIVING POWER*

John 5:21, 26 - "**For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.**" "**For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.**" 1:4 - "**In him was life.**" See also 14:6; Hebrews 7:16; John 17:3-5; 10:17, 18. These scriptures teach that all life - physical, moral, spiritual, eternal - has its source in CHRIST. [61]

c) *IMMUTABILITY*

Hebrews 13:8 - "**Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.**" See also 1:12. All nature, which like a garment He throws around Him, is subject to change and decay; JESUS CHRIST is the same always, He never changes. Human teachers, such as are spoken of in the context, may change, but He, the CHRIST, never.

d) *ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD DWELT IN HIM*

Colossians 2:9. Not merely the divine perfections and attributes of Deity, but (*theotes*) the very essence and nature of the Godhead. He was not merely God-like; He was GOD.

4. Divine Offices Are Ascribed to Him

a) *HE IS THE CREATOR:*

John 1:3 - "**All things were made by Him.**" In the creation He was the acting power and personal instrument. Creation is the revelation of His mind and might.

- Hebrews 1:10 shows the dignity of the Creator as contrasted with the creature.

- Colossians 1:16 contradicts the Gnostic theory of emanations, and shows CHRIST to be the creator of all created things and beings.

- Revelation 3:14 - "**The beginning of the creation of God,**" means "*beginning*" in the active sense, the origin, that by which a thing begins to be.

- Colossians 1:15 "**first-born,**" not made; compare with Colossians 1:17, where the "**for**" of v. 16 shows Him to be not included in the "**created things,**" but the origin of and superior to them all. He is the Creator of the universe (v. 16), just as He is the Head of the Church (v. 18).

b) *HE IS THE UPHOLDER OF ALL THINGS:*

Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3. The universe is neither self-sustaining nor is it forsaken by GOD (Deism). CHRIST's power causes all things to hold together. The pulses of universal life are

regulated and controlled by the throbbings of the mighty heart of CHRIST.

c) *HE HAS THE RIGHT TO FORGIVE SINS:*

Mark 2:5-10. Luke 7:48 - "**And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.**" Certain it is that the Pharisees recognized that CHRIST was here assuming a divine prerogative. No mere man had any right to forgive sins. GOD alone could do that. Hence the Pharisees' charge of blasphemy. This is no declaration of forgiveness, based [62] upon the knowledge of the man's penitence.

CHRIST does not merely declare sins forgiven. He actually forgives them. Further, JESUS, in the parable of the two debtors (Luke 7), declares that sins were committed against Himself (cf. Psalm 51:4 - "**Against thee, thee only, have I sinned**").

d) *THE RAISING OF THE BODIES OF MEN IS ASCRIBED TO HIM:*

John 6:39, 40, 54; 11:25. Five times it is here declared by JESUS that it is His prerogative to raise the dead.

It is true that others raised the dead, but under what different conditions? They worked by a delegated power (Acts 9:34); but CHRIST, by His own power (John 10:17, 18). Note the agony of Elisha and others, as compared with the calmness of CHRIST. None of these claimed to raise the dead by his own power, nor to have any such power in the general resurrection of all men. CHRIST did make such claims.

e) *HE IS TO BE THE JUDGE OF ALL MEN:*

John 5:22 - "**For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.**" cf. II Timothy 4:1; Acts 17:31; Matthew 25:3 1-46. The Man of the Cross is to be the Man of the throne. The issues of the judgment are all in His hand.

5. Divine Attributes Are Possessed By Him

a) *OMNIPOTENCE*

Matthew 28:18 - "**All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth.**" Revelation 1:8; John 17:2; Ephesians 1:20-22.

Here is power over three realms:

- First, all power on earth: over disease (Luke 4:38-41); death (John 11); nature, water into wine (John 2); tempest (Matthew 8).
- Second, all power in hell: over demons (Luke 4:35, 36, 41); evil angels (Ephesians 6).
- Third, all power in Heaven (Ephesians 1:20-22).

Finally, power over all things (Hebrews 2:8; 1:3; Matthew 28:18).

b) OMNISCIENCE

John 16:30 - "**Now are we sure that thou knowest all things.**" 2:24, 25; Matthew 24, 25; Colossians 2:3.

Illustrations: John 4:16-19; Mark 2:8; John 1:48. "Our Lord always leaves the impression that He knew all things in detail, both past and future, and that this knowledge comes from His original perception of the events. [63]

"He does not learn them by acquisition. He simply knows them by immediate perception. Such utterances as Matthew 24 and Luke 21 carry in them a subtle difference from the utterances of the prophets. The latter spoke as men who were quite remote in point of time from their declaration of unfolding events. JESUS spoke as one who is present in the midst of the events which He depicts. He does not refer to events in the past as if He were quoting from the historic narrative in the Old Testament. The only instance which casts doubt upon this view is Mark 13:32. The saying in Mark is capable of an interpretation which does not contradict this view of His omniscience. This is an omniscience nevertheless, which in its manifestation to men is under something of human limitation." - Wood.

This limitation of knowledge is no argument against the infallibility of those things which JESUS did teach: for example, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. That argument, says Liddon, involves a confusion between limitation of knowledge and liability to error; whereas, plainly enough, a limitation of knowledge is one thing, and fallibility is another. The Apostle Paul says, "**We know in part,**" and "**We see through a glass darkly.**" Yet Paul is so certain of the truth of that which he teaches, as to exclaim, "**But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**"

Paul clearly believed in his own infallibility as a teacher of religious truth, and the Church of CHRIST has ever since regarded his epistles as part of an infallible literature. But it is equally clear that Paul believed his knowledge of truth to be limited. Infallibility does not imply omniscience, any more than limited knowledge implies error. If a human teacher were to decline to speak upon a given subject, by saying that he did not know enough about it, this would not be a reason for disbelieving him when he proceeded to speak confidently upon a totally different subject, thereby at least implying that he did not know enough to warrant his speaking. On the contrary, his silence in the one case would be a reason for trusting his statements in the other.

The argument which is under consideration in the text would have been really sound, if our Saviour had fixed the date of the day of judgment and the event had shown Him to be mistaken. [64]

Why stumble over the limitation of this attribute and not over the others? Did He not hunger and thirst, for example?

- As GOD He is omnipresent, yet as man He is present only in one place.

- As GOD He is omnipotent; yet, on one occasion at least, He could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of men.

c) *OMNIPRESENCE*

Matthew 18:20 - "**For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**" He is with every missionary (Matthew 28:20). He is prayed to by Christians in every place (I Corinthians 1:2). Prayer would be a mockery if we were not assured that CHRIST is everywhere present to hear. He fills all things, every place (Ephesians 1:23). But such an all pervading presence is, true only of Deity.

6. His Name Is Coupled With That of GOD the Father

The manner in which the name of JESUS CHRIST is coupled with that of GOD the Father clearly implies equality of the Son with the Father. Compare the following:

a) *THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION*

II Corinthians 13:14. Here the Son equally with the Father is the bestower of grace.

b) *THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA*

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38. "**In the name**," not the names (plural).

How would it sound to say, "**In the name of the Father**" and of Moses? Would it not seem sacrilegious? Can we imagine the effect of such words on the apostles?

c) *OTHER PASSAGES*

John 14:23 - "**We will come**": the Father and 17:3 - "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ.**" The content of saving faith includes belief in JESUS CHRIST equally with the Father. 10:30 - "**I and my Father are one.**" "**One**" is neuter, not masculine, meaning that JESUS and the Father constitute one power by which the salvation of man is secured. II Thessalonians 2:16, 17 - "**Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father. . . comfort your hearts.**"

These two names, with a verb in the singular, intimate the oneness of the Father with the Son.
[65]

7. The self-consciousness of Jesus Regarding His Own Person and Work

It will be interesting to search the Gospel records to ascertain what was in the mind of JESUS concerning Himself - His relation to the Father in particular. What bearing has the testimony of JESUS upon the question of His Deity? Is the present Christian consciousness borne out by the Gospel narratives? Is JESUS CHRIST a man of a much higher type of faith than ours, yet one with whom we believe in GOD? Or is He, equally with GOD, the object of our faith?

Do we believe with Him, or on Him? Is there any indication in the words ascribed to JESUS, as recorded in the Gospels, of a consciousness on His part of His unique relation to GOD the Father? Is it JESUS Himself who is responsible for the Christian's consciousness concerning His deity, or is the Church reading into the Gospel accounts something that is not really there? Let us see.

a) *AS SET FORTH IN THE NARRATIVE OF HIS VISIT TO THE TEMPLE*

Luke 2:41-52. This is a single flower out of the wonderfully enclosed garden of the first thirty years of our Lord's life. The emphatic words, for our purpose, are "**thy father**," and "**my Father**." These are the first recorded words of JESUS. Is there not here an indication of the consciousness on the part of JESUS of a unique relationship with His heavenly Father?

Mary, not Joseph, asked the question, so contrary to Jewish custom. She said: "**Thy father**"; JESUS replied in substance: "Did you say my Father has been seeking me?" It is remarkable to note that CHRIST omits the word "father" when referring to His parents, cf. Matthew 12:48; Mark 3:33, 34.

"**My Father!**" No other human lips had ever uttered these words. Men said, and He taught them to say, "**Our Father**." It is not too much to say that in this incident CHRIST sees, rising before Him, the great truth that God, and not Joseph, is His Father, and that it is in His true Father's house that He now stands.

b) *AS REVEALED AT HIS BAPTISM*

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21. Here are some things to remember in connection with CHRIST's baptism:

First, JESUS was well acquainted with the relation of John and his ministry to the Old Testament prophecy, as well as of John's own announcement that he was the Messiah's forerunner, and that he [66] (John) was not worthy to untie the latchet of CHRIST's shoes.

Second, to come then to John, and to submit to baptism at his hands, would indicate that Jesus conceded the truth of all that John had said. This is emphasized when we remember JESUS' eulogy of John (Matthew 11).

Thirdly, there is the descent of the Spirit, and the voice; what meaning did these things have to JESUS? If CHRIST's sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth is of any help here, we must believe that at His baptism, so much more than at the age of twelve, He was conscious that in thus being anointed He was associating Himself in some peculiar way with the prophecy of Isaiah, chapters 42 and 61: "**Behold my Servant . . . I have put my Spirit upon Him.**"

All, therefore, that must have been wrapped up in the thought of the "**Servant of the Lord**" in the Old Testament would assuredly be quickened in His consciousness that day when the Spirit descended upon Him. See also Luke 4:16-17; Acts 10:38; Matthew 12:28.

But what did the heavenly voice signify to CHRIST? "**This is my beloved Son**" takes us back to

the second Psalm where this person is addressed as the ideal King of Israel. The last clause - "**in whom I am well pleased**" - refers to Isaiah 42, and portrays the servant who is anointed and empowered by the endowment of GOD's SPIRIT.

We must admit that the mind of JESUS was steeped in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and that He knew to whom these passages referred. The ordinary Jew knew that much. Is it too much to say that on that baptismal day JESUS was keenly conscious that these Old Testament predictions were fulfilled in Him? We think not.

c) AS SET FORTH IN THE RECORD OF THE TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13. That JESUS entered into the temptation in the wilderness with the consciousness of the revelation He received, and of which He was conscious at the baptism, seems clear from the narratives. Certain it is that Satan based his temptations upon CHRIST's consciousness of His unique relation to GOD as His Son.

Throughout the whole of the temptation Satan regards CHRIST as being in a unique sense the Son of GOD, the ideal King, through whom the kingdom of GOD is to be established upon the earth. Indeed, so clearly is the kingship of JESUS recognized in the temptation narrative that the whole question agitated there is as to how that kingdom may be established in [67] the world. It must be admitted that a careful reading of the narratives forces us to the conclusion that throughout all the temptation CHRIST was conscious of His position with reference to the founding of GOD's kingdom in the world.

d) AS SET FORTH IN THE CALLING OF THE TWELVE AND THE SEVENTY

The record of this event is found in Matthew 10; Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-14. This important event in the life of our Lord had an important bearing upon His self-consciousness as to His person and work. Let us note some of the details:

First, as to the number, twelve. Is there no suggestion here with reference to the New Jerusalem when the Messiah shall sit upon the throne surrounded by the twelve apostles seated on their thrones? Is not JESUS here conscious of Himself as being the centre of the scene thus described in the Apocalypse?

Second, He gave them power. Is not JESUS here repeating what had been done for Him at His baptism: conveying super-human power? Who can give this power that is strong enough to make even demons obey? No one less than GOD surely.

Third, note that the message which He committed to the twelve concerned matters of life and death. Not to receive that message would be equivalent to the rejection of the Father.

Fourth, all this is to be done in His name, and for His name's sake. Fidelity to JESUS is that on which the final destiny of men depends. Everything rises or falls in its relation to Him. Could such words be uttered and there be no consciousness on the part of the speaker of a unique relationship to the Father and the things of eternity? Know you of anything bolder than this?

Fifth, He calls upon men to sacrifice their tenderest affections for Him. He is to be chosen before even father and mother (Matthew 10:34-39).

e) *AS REVEALED IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT*

Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:20-49. Two references will be sufficient here.

Who is this that dares to set Himself up as superior to Moses and the law of Moses, by saying, "**But I say unto you**"? Then, again, listen to CHRIST as He proclaims Himself to be the Judge of all men at the last day (Matthew 7:21). Could JESUS say all this without having any consciousness of His unique relationship to all these things? Assuredly not. [68]

B. THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

I. THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Its Importance

a) *IT HAS A SUPREME PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*

Christianity is a religion of atonement distinctively. The elimination of the doctrine of the death of CHRIST from the religion that bears His name would mean the surrender of its uniqueness and claim to be the only true religion, the supreme and final revelation from GOD to the sons of men. It is its redemption feature that distinguishes Christianity from any and all other religions. If you surrender this distinctive Christian doctrine from its creed, then this supreme religion is brought down to the level of many other prevailing religious systems. Christianity is not merely a system of ethics; it is the history of redemption through JESUS CHRIST, the personal Redeemer.

b) *ITS VITAL RELATION TO JESUS CHRIST*

The atonement is so closely related to JESUS CHRIST, so allied to His work, as set forth in the Scriptures, that it is absolutely inseparable from it.

CHRIST was not primarily a religious teacher, a philanthropist, an ethical example; He was all these, yea, and much more - He was first and foremost the world's Saviour and Redeemer.

Other great men have been valued for their lives; He, above all, for His death, around which GOD and man are reconciled. The Cross is the magnet which sends the electric current through the telegraph between earth and Heaven, and makes both Testaments thrill, through the ages of the past and future, with living, harmonious, and saving truth.

Other men have said: "If I could only live, I would establish and perpetuate an empire." The CHRIST of Galilee said: "My death shall do it." Let us understand that the power of Christianity lies not in hazy indefiniteness, not in shadowy forms, not so much even in definite truths and doctrines, but in the truth, and in the doctrine of CHRIST crucified and risen from the dead. Unless Christianity be more than ethical, it is not, nor can it really be ethical at all. It is

redemptive, dynamic through that redemption, and ethical withal. [69]

c) *ITS RELATION TO THE INCARNATION*

It is not putting the matter too strongly when we say that the incarnation was for the purpose of the atonement. At least this seems to be the testimony of the Scriptures.

JESUS CHRIST partook of flesh and blood in order that He might die (Hebrews 2:14). "**He was manifested to take away our sins**" (I John 3:5).

CHRIST came into this world to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). The very purpose of the entire coming of CHRIST into the world, in all its varying aspects, was that, by assuming a nature like unto our own, He might offer up His life as a sacrifice for the sins of men.

The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation. So close have been the relation of these two fundamental doctrines that their relation is one of the great questions which have divided men in their opinions in the matter: which is primary and which secondary; which is to be regarded as the most necessary to man's salvation, as the primary and the highest fact in the history of GOD's dealings with man.

The atonement naturally arises out of the incarnation so that the Son of GOD could not appear in our nature without undertaking such a work as the word atonement denotes. The incarnation is a pledge and anticipation of the work of atonement. The incarnation is most certainly the declaration of a purpose on the part of GOD to save the world. But how was the world to be saved if not through the atonement?

d) *ITS PROMINENCE IN THE SCRIPTURES*

It was the claim of JESUS, in His conversation with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, that Moses, and all the prophets, indeed, all the Scriptures, dealt with the subject of His death (Luke 24:27, 44).

That the death of CHRIST was the one great subject into which the Old Testament prophets searched deeply is clear from I Peter 1:11, 12. The atonement is the scarlet cord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere, and it bleeds; it is red with redemption truth. It is said that one out of every forty-four verses in the New Testament deals with this theme, and that the death of CHRIST is mentioned in all one hundred and seventy-five times. When you add to these figures the typical and symbolical teaching of the Old Testament, some idea is gained as to the important place which this doctrine occupies in the sacred Scriptures. [70]

e) *THE FUNDAMENTAL THEME OF THE GOSPEL*

Paul says: "**I delivered unto you first of all** [i. e., first in order; the first plank in the Gospel platform; the truth of primary importance] . . . **that Christ died for our sins**" (I Corinthians 15:1-3). There can be no Gospel story, message or preaching without the story of the death of CHRIST as the Redeemer of men.

f) THE ONE GRAND THEME IN HEAVEN

Moses and Elias, the heavenly visitors to this earth, conversed about it (Luke 9:30, 31), even though Peter was ashamed of the same truth (Matthew 16:21-25). The theme of the song of the redeemed in Heaven is that of CHRIST's death (Revelation 5:8-12).

2. The Scriptural Definition of CHRIST's Death

The Scriptures set forth the death of JESUS CHRIST in a fourfold way:

a) AS A RANSOM

Matthew 20:28; I Peter 1:18; I Timothy 2:6; Galatians 3:13.

The meaning of a ransom is clearly set forth in Leviticus 25:47-49:

To deliver a thing or person by paying a price; to buy back a person or thing by paying the price for which it is held in captivity. So sin is like a slave market in which sinners are "**sold under sin**" (Romans 7:14); souls are under sentence of death (Ezekiel 18:4). CHRIST, by His death, buys sinners out of the market, thereby indicating complete deliverance from the service of sin. He looses the bonds, sets the prisoners free, by paying a price - that price being His own precious blood.

To whom this ransom is paid is a debatable question: whether to Satan for his captives, or to eternal and necessary holiness, to the divine law, to the claims of GOD who is by His nature the holy Lawgiver. The latter, referring to GOD and His holiness, is probably preferable.

CHRIST redeemed us from the curse of a broken law by Himself being made a curse for us. His death was the ransom price paid for our deliverance. [71]

b) A PROPITIATION

Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; Hebrews 2:17.

CHRIST is the propitiation for our sins; He is set forth by GOD to be a propitiation through His blood.

Propitiation means mercy-seat, or covering. *The mercy-seat covering the ark of the covenant was called a propitiation* (Exodus 25:22; Hebrews 9:5).

It is that by which GOD covers, overlooks, and pardons the penitent and believing sinner because of CHRIST's death. Propitiation furnishes a ground on the basis of which GOD could set forth His righteousness, and yet pardon sinful men, Romans 3:25, 26; Hebrews 9:15.

CHRIST Himself is the propitiatory sacrifice, I John 2:2.

The death of JESUS CHRIST is set forth as the ground on which a righteous GOD can pardon a guilty and sinful race without in any way compromising His righteousness.

c) *AS A RECONCILIATION*

Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:18, 19; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20.

We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, by His Cross, and by the blood of His Cross - that is the message of these scriptures.

Reconciliation has two sides; *active and passive*.

In the active sense we may look upon CHRIST's death as removing the enmity existing between GOD and man, and which had hitherto been a barrier to fellowship (see the above quoted texts). This state of existing enmity is set forth in such scriptures as Romans 8:7 - "**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.**" Also Ephesians 2:15; James 4:4.

In the passive sense of the word it may indicate the change of attitude on the part of man toward GOD, this change being wrought in the heart of man by a vision of the Cross of CHRIST; a change from enmity to friendship thus taking place, cf. II Corinthians 5:20.

It is probably better to state the case thus: GOD is propitiated, and the sinner is reconciled (II Corinthians 5:18-20).

d) *AS A SUBSTITUTION*

Isaiah 53:6; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; II Corinthians 5:21.

The story of the passover lamb (Exodus 12), with I Corinthians 5:7, illustrates the meaning of substitution as here used: one life given in the stead of another. "**The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**"

God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.

CHRIST [72] Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree - this is substitution. CHRIST died in our place, bore our sins, paid the penalty due our sins; and all this, not by force, but willingly (John 10:17, 18).

The idea of substitution is well illustrated by the nature of the preposition used in connection with this phase of CHRIST's death: In Matthew 20:28 CHRIST is said to give His life a ransom for all (also I Timothy 2:6). That this preposition means *instead of* is clear from its use in Matthew 2:22 - "**Archelaus did reign in the room [or in the stead] of his father Herod.**" Also in Luke 11:11 - "**Will he for a fish give him a serpent?**" (See Hebrews 12:2, 16.)

Substitution, then, as used here means this: That something happened to CHRIST, and because it happened to CHRIST, it need not happen to us. CHRIST died for our sins; we need not die for them if we accept His sacrifice.

For further illustrations, see Genesis 22:13; GOD providing a ram instead of Isaac; also Barabbas freed and CHRIST bearing his cross and taking his place.

Upon a life I did not live;
Upon a death I did not die;
Upon another's death, another's life,
I risk my soul eternally.

3. Unscriptural Views of CHRIST's Death

There are certain so-called modern views of the atonement which it may be well to examine briefly, if only to show how unscriptural they are.

That the modern mind fails to see in the doctrine of the atonement what the orthodox faith has held for centuries to be the truth of GOD regarding this fundamental Christian doctrine, there is certainly no doubt. To some minds today the death of JESUS CHRIST was but the death of a martyr, counted in the same category as the death of John Huss or Savonarola. Or perchance CHRIST's death was an exhibition to a sinful world of GOD's wondrous love. Or it may be that CHRIST, in His suffering of death, remains forever the sublime example of adherence to principles of righteousness and truth, even to the point of death. Or, again, Calvary may be an episode in GOD's government of the world.

GOD, being holy, deemed it necessary to show to the world His hatred of sin, and so His wrath fell on CHRIST. The modern mind does not consider CHRIST's death as in any sense vicarious, or substitutionary. Indeed, it fails to see the justice as well as the need or possibility of one man, and He so innocent, suffering for the sins of the whole race - past, present and future.

Every man must bear [73] the penalty of his own sin, so we are told; from that there is no escape, unless, and it is fervently hoped and confidently expected, that GOD, whose wondrous love surpasses all human conception, should, as He doubtless will, overlook the eternal consequences of man's sin because of the great love wherewith He loves the race. The love of GOD is the hope of the race's redemption.

What shall the Christian Church say to these things, and what shall be her reply?

To the Word of GOD must the Church resort for her weapons in this warfare. If the so-called modern mind and its doctrinal views agree with the Scriptures, then the Christian Church may allow herself to be influenced by the spirit of the age. But if the modern mind and the Scriptures do not agree in their results, then the Church of CHRIST must part company with the modern mind.

Here are some of the modern theories of the atonement:

a) *THE ACCIDENT THEORY*

Briefly stated, this is the theory: The Cross was something unforeseen in the life of CHRIST. Calvary was not in the plan of GOD for His Son. CHRIST's death was an accident, as unforeseen

and unexpected as the death of any other martyr was unforeseen and unexpected.

To this we reply: JESUS was conscious all the time of His forthcoming death. He foretold it again and again. He was always conscious of the plots against His life. This truth is corroborated by the following scriptures: Matthew 16:21; Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34; Matthew 20:28; 26:2, 6, 24, 39-42; Luke 22:19, 20. Further, in John 10:17, 18 we have words which distinctly contradict this false theory: **"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."**

In addition to this we may make mention of the many, many references and prophecies of the Old Testament to the fact of CHRIST's death. Then there is CHRIST's own testimony to the fact of His death being predicted and foretold by the prophets (Luke 24:26,27,44). See also Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; 69.

b) *THE MARTYR THEORY*

It is as follows: CHRIST's death was similar in kind to that of [74] John Huss, or Polycarp, or any other noble man who has given up his life as a sacrifice for a principle and for truth.

To this we reply: Then CHRIST should have so declared Himself. Paul should have said so. That word was used for other Christian deaths, why not for CHRIST's? Then there is no mystery about the atonement, and the wonder is that Paul should have said anything about the mystery.

Further, if CHRIST died as a martyr He might, at least, have had the same comforting presence of GOD afforded other martyrs in the hour of their death. Why should He be God-forsaken in that crucial hour? Is it right that GOD should make the holiest man in all the ages the greatest sufferer, if that man were but a martyr?

When you recall the shrinking of Gethsemane, could you really - and we say it reverently - call JESUS as brave a man facing death as many another martyr has been? Why should CHRIST's soul be filled with anguish (Luke 22:39-46), while Paul the Apostle was exultant with joy (Philippians 1:23)? Stephen died a martyr's death, but Paul never preached forgiveness through the death of Stephen.

Such a view of CHRIST's death may beget martyrs, but it can never save sinners.

c) *THE MORAL EXAMPLE THEORY*

CHRIST's death has an influence upon mankind for moral improvement. The example of His suffering ought to soften human hearts, and help a man to reform, repent, and better his condition. So GOD grants pardon and forgiveness on simple repentance and reformation. In the same way a drunkard might call a man his saviour by whose influence he was induced to become sober and industrious. But did the sight of His suffering move the Jews to repentance? Does it move men today? Such a view of CHRIST's death does not deal with the question with which it is always connected, viz., the question of sin.

d) *THE GOVERNMENTAL THEORY*

This means that the benevolence of GOD requires that He should make an example of suffering in CHRIST in order to exhibit to man that sin is displeasing in His sight. GOD's government of the world necessitates that He show His wrath against sin. True, but we reply: Why do we need an incarnation for the manifestation of that purpose? Why not make a guilty, and not an absolutely innocent and guileless man such an example of GOD's [75] displeasure upon sin? Were there not men enough in existence? Why create a new being for such a purpose?

e) *THE LOVE OF GOD THEORY*

He died to show men how much GOD loved them. Men ever after would know the feeling of the heart of GOD toward them. True, the death of CHRIST did show the great love of GOD for fallen man. But men did not need such a sacrifice to know that GOD loved them. They knew that before CHRIST came.

The Old Testament is full of the love of GOD. Read Psalm 103. The Scriptures which speak of GOD's love as being manifested in the gift of His Son, tell us also of another reason why He gave His Son: "**That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16); "**Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (I John 4:10).

We believe that CHRIST's Cross reveals the love of GOD, and that throughout all these ages men have been bowed in penitence as they have caught a vision of the One who hung thereon. But if you were to question the multitudes that have believed in GOD because of the Cross, you would find that what moved them to repentance was not merely, if at all, certainly not primarily, that the Cross revealed the love of GOD in a supreme way, but the fact that there at that Cross GOD had dealt with the great and awful fact of sin, that the Cross had forever removed it.

"I examine all these views, beautiful as some of them are, appealing to the pride of man, but which leave out all thought of vicarious atonement, and say, 'But what shall be done with my sin? Who shall put it away? Where is its sacrifice? If without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, where is the shed blood?' These views are neat, measurable, occasionally pathetic, and frequently beautiful, but they do not include the agony of the whole occasion and situation. They are aspect theories, partial conceptions. They do not take in the whole temple from its foundation to its roof. No man must set up his judgment against that of another man in a dogmatic way, but he may, yea, he must, allow his heart to speak through his judgment; and in view of this liberty, I venture to say that all these theories of the atonement are as nothing, most certainly shallow and incomplete to me . . . As I speak now, at this very moment, I feel that the CHRIST On the Cross is doing something for me, that His death is my life, His atonement my [76] pardon, His crucifixion the satisfaction for my sin, that from Calvary, that place of a skull, my flowers of peace and joy blossom forth, and that in the Cross of CHRIST I glory." - Joseph Parker.

4. The Necessity of CHRIST's Death

The necessity of the atonement lay in a two-fold fact: The holiness of GOD, and the sinfulness of man.

The doctrine of the atonement is a related subject, and it cannot be properly understood unless it is viewed as such. It is related to certain conditions existing between GOD and man - a condition and relation which has been affected by sin.

It is necessary, therefore, to know this relation and how it has been affected by sin. This relation between GOD and man is a personal one. No other construction can legitimately be put upon the passages setting forth this relationship. "**Thou hast searched me, and known me.**" "**I am continually with Thee.**"

It is, moreover, an ethical relationship, and that which is ethical is at the same time personal and universal, that is to say, that GOD's dealings with mankind are expressed in a moral constitution of universal and eternal validity. These relationships are disordered by sin. No matter how sin came to be here we are morally conscious, by the testimony of a bad conscience, that we are guilty, and that our sin is not merely a matter of personal guilt but a violation of a universal moral law.

a) *THE HOLINESS of GOD*

We should carefully note the emphasis laid upon the doctrine of GOD's holiness in the Old Testament (see under *Attributes of GOD*, p. 37).

- the Levitical law,
- the laws of clean and unclean,
- the Tabernacle and the Temple with its outer court,
- its holy and most holy place,
- the priestly order and the high priest,
- the bounds set around Mt. Sinai, things and persons that might not be touched without causing defilement, sacred times and seasons.

These, and much more, speak in unmistakable terms of the holiness of GOD. We are thus taught that if sinful man is to approach unto GOD, it must be through the blood of atonement. The holiness of GOD demands that before the sinner can approach unto and have communion with Him, some means of propitiation must be provided. This means of approach is set forth in the shed blood. [77]

b) *THE SIN OF MAN*

Light and erroneous views of the atonement come from light and erroneous views of sin.

If sin is regarded as merely an offence against man, a weakness of human nature, a mere disease, rather than as rebellion, transgression, and enmity against GOD, and therefore something condemning and punishable, we shall not, of course, see any necessity for the atonement. We must see sin as the Bible depicts it, as something which brings wrath, condemnation, and eternal ruin in its train. We must see it as guilt that needs expiation. We must see sin as God sees it

before we can denounce it as God denounces it. We confess sin today in such light and easy terms that it has almost lost its terror.

In view of these two thoughts, the holiness of GOD and the sinfulness of man, the question naturally arises: How is the mercy of GOD to be manifested so that His holiness will not be compromised by His assuming a merciful attitude towards sinful men in the granting of forgiveness, pardon, justification?

The answer is: The only way in which this can be done is by means of the atonement.

c) *THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES*

We may add this third thought to the two already mentioned.

There is a sense in which the atonement was necessary in order to the fulfillment of the predictions of the Old Testament - predictions inseparable from the person and work of the Messiah. If JESUS CHRIST were the true Messiah, then these predictions regarding His sufferings and death must be fulfilled in Him (Luke 24:25-27, 44; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; 69).

5. The Extent of CHRIST's Death

Was the death of JESUS CHRIST for all mankind - for every human being in the world, or for man actually and ultimately regenerate only - the chosen Church? Was it for all mankind, irrespective of their relation to JESUS CHRIST, or must we limit the actual benefits of the atonement to those who are spiritually united to CHRIST by faith? That the death of CHRIST is intended to benefit all mankind seems clear from the following scriptures: Isaiah 53:6; I Timothy 2:6; I John 2:2, cf. II Corinthians 5:19; Romans 14:15; I Corinthians 8:11. The scriptures which to some seem to limit the effects of the atonement are John 10:15, cf. vvs. 26, 29; Ephesians 5:25-27. [78]

Certain it is that the doctrine of the atonement is presented in the Scriptures as competent to procure and secure salvation for all. Indeed, not only competent but efficacious to do this very thing. It might seem that there is an apparent contradiction in the above-named scriptures.

The atonement, in its actual issue, should realize and actualize the eternal purpose of GOD, the which is set forth as a desire that all men should be saved and come to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in JESUS CHRIST.

This is testified to be the general and universal invitation of the Scriptures to partake of the blessings of CHRIST's death. Thus the offer of the Gospel to all is not a pretence but a reality on the part of GOD. The divine willingness that all men should share the benefits of the atonement is all-inclusive, and really means what is offered. Yet on the other hand, we can not overlook the fact that, from another point of view the effects of the atonement - shall we say the purpose of the atonement? - seems to be limited to the sphere of the true Church, so that only those who are really united to CHRIST by faith actually share in the merits of the atonement.

Let us put it this way: "The atonement is sufficient for all; it is efficient for those who believe in CHRIST. The atonement itself, so far as it lays the basis for the redemptive dealing of GOD with

all men, is unlimited; the application of the atonement is limited to those who actually believe in CHRIST. He is the Saviour of all men potentially (I Timothy 1:15); of believers alone effectually (I Timothy 4:10).

The atonement is limited only by men's unbelief.

a) *FOR THE WHOLE WORLD*

The Scriptures set forth this fact in the following statements:

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). CHRIST's death was the ground on which GOD, who is absolutely holy, could deal with the whole race of men in mercy, and, pardon their sins.

John 1:29 - **"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** Not the sin of a few individuals, or of an elect race, like Israel, but the sin of the whole world. This was a striking truth to reveal to a Jew.

I Timothy 2:6 - **"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."** It is for this reason, as the context of this passage shows, that we may pray for all men. If all men were not capable of being saved, how then could we pray to that end? [79]

b) *FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL MAN*

This is but a detailed statement of the fact that He died for the whole world. Not a single individual man, woman, or child is excluded from the blessings offered in the atonement.

Hebrews 2:9 - **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."** Leo the Great (461) affirmed that "So precious is the shedding of CHRIST's blood for the unjust, that if the whole universe of captives would believe in the Redeemer, no chain of the devil could hold them."

General Booth once said: "Friends, JESUS shed His precious blood to pay the price of salvation, and bought from GOD enough salvation to go around."

c) *FOR THE SINFUL, UNJUST, AND UNGODLY*

Sinners of all sorts, degrees, and conditions may have a share in the redemptive work of CHRIST.

- Greece invited only the cultured,
- Rome sought only the strong.
- Judea bid for the religious only.

JESUS CHRIST bids all those that are weary and heavy-hearted and over-burdened to come to Him (Matthew 11:28).

Romans 5:6-10 - **"Christ died for the ungodly . . . While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."** I Peter 3:18

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."

CHRIST died for sinners - those in open opposition to GOD; for the unjust - those who openly violate GOD's laws; for the ungodly those who violently and brazenly refuse to pay their dues of prayer, worship, and service to GOD; for enemies - those who are constantly fighting GOD and His cause. For all of these CHRIST died.

I Timothy 1:15 - **"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."** Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious (v. 13), a murderer (Acts 22 and 26), yet GOD saved him; he was included in the atonement. Note also that it is in this very connection that the apostle declares that the reason GOD saved him was in order that his salvation might be a pattern, or an encouragement to other great sinners, that GOD could and would save them, if they desired Him to do so. [80]

d) *FOR THE CHURCH*

There is a peculiar sense in which it may be said that CHRIST's death is for the Church, His body, the company of those who believe in Him. There is a sense in which it is perfectly true that CHRIST's death avails only for those who believe in Him; so in that sense it can be said that He died for the Church more particularly. He is **"the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe"** (I Timothy 4:10). Herein lies the truth that is contained in the theory of a limited atonement.

Ephesians 5:25-27 - **"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."** Not for anyone particular denomination; not for anyone organization within any four walls; but for all those whom He calls to Himself and who follow Him here.

Galatians 2:20 - **"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."** Here the individual member of the Church, the body of CHRIST, is specifically mentioned as being included in the efficacy of the atonement. When Luther first realized this particular phase of the atonement, he was found sobbing beneath a crucifix, and moaning: *"Mein Gott, Mein Gott, Fur Mich! Fur Mich!"*

I Corinthians 8:11 - **"And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"**

Also Romans 14:15. Note the connection in which this truth is taught. If CHRIST was willing to die for the weak brother - whom we, perchance, sneer at for his conscientious scruples - we ought to be willing to deny ourselves of some habit for his sake.

How all-inclusive, all-comprehensive, far-reaching is the death of CHRIST in its effects! Not a few, but many shall be saved. He gave his life a ransom for many. GOD's purposes in the

atonement shall not be frustrated.

CHRIST shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Many shall come from the north, the south, and east and the west and sit down in the kingdom. In that great day it will be seen (Revelation 7:9-15).

6. The Effects of CHRIST's Death

a) *IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL OR MATERIAL UNIVERSE*

Just as the material universe was in some mysterious manner affected by the fall of man (Romans 8:19-23), so also is it affected by the death of JESUS CHRIST, which is intended to neutralize the effect of sin upon the creation.

There is a cosmical effect [81] in the atonement. The CHRIST of Paul is larger than the second Adam - the Head of a new humanity; He is also the center of a universe which revolves around Him, and is in some mysterious way reconciled by His death. Just how this takes place we may not be able definitely to explain.

Colossians 1:20 - "**And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven.**" Some day there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:13). See also Hebrews 9:23, 24; Isaiah 11 and 35.

b) *IN RELATION TO THE WORLD OF MEN*

(1) THE ENMITY EXISTING BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IS REMOVED.

Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-22. For explanation, see under *Scriptural Definition of CHRIST's Death* (p. 72). The ground of enmity between GOD and man-whether in the active or passive sense of reconciliation - is removed by CHRIST's death. The world of mankind is, through the atonement, reconciled to GOD.

(2) A PROPITIATION FOR THE WORLD'S SIN HAS BEEN PROVIDED.

I John 2:2; 4:10. See under *A Propitiation* (p. 72). The propitiation reaches as far as does the sin.

(3) SATAN'S POWER OVER THE RACE HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED.

John 12:31, 32 - "**Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**" Also John 16:9, 10; Colossians 2:10. The lifting up of CHRIST on the Cross meant the casting down of Satan. Satan no longer holds undisputed sway over the sons of men. The power of darkness has been broken. Man need no longer be the slave of sin and Satan.

(4) THE QUESTION OF THE WORLD'S SIN IS SETTLED.

It need no longer stand as a barrier between GOD and man.

Strictly speaking, it is not now so much of a sin question as it is a Son question; not, What shall be done with my sin? but, What shall I do with JESUS, which is called CHRIST? The sins of the Old [82] Testament saints, which during all the centuries had been held, as it were, in abeyance, were put away at the Cross (Romans 3:25, 26).

Sins present and future were also dealt with at the Cross. By the sacrifice of Himself, CHRIST forever put away sin (Hebrews 9:26).

(5) THE CLAIMS OF A BROKEN LAW HAVE BEEN MET, AND THE CURSE RESTING UPON MAN BECAUSE OF A BROKEN LAW REMOVED.

Colossians 2:14 - "**Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.**" Thus every claim of the holy law of GOD, which sinful man had violated, had been met.

Galatians 3:13 - "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.**" (See v. 10 for the description of the curse.) The wages of sin, and the curse of sin, is death. CHRIST by His death on the Cross paid that debt and removed that curse.

(6) JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION, SANCTIFICATION, ACCESS TO GOD, AN INHERITANCE, AND THE REMOVAL OF ALL FEAR OF DEATH - ALL THIS IS INCLUDED IN THE EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN THE BEHALF OF THE BELIEVER.

Romans 5:9; Galatians 4:3-5; Hebrews 10:10; 10:19, 20; 9:15; 2:14, 15. How comforting, how strengthening, how inspiring are these wonderful aspects of the effects of the death of our Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST!

c) *THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON SATAN*

See under (3) above. The devil must submit to the victory of CHRIST. The dominion of Satan, so far as the believer in CHRIST is concerned, is now at an end: his dominion over the disobedient sons of men, too, will soon be at an end. CHRIST's death was the pronouncement of Satan's doom; it was the loss of his power over men. The power of the devil, while not yet absolutely destroyed, has been neutralized (Hebrews 2:14). The evil principalities and powers, and Satan himself, did their worst at the Cross, but there they received their deathblow (Colossians 2:14, 15). [83]

II. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Its Importance

a) *IT HOLDS A UNIQUE PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY*

Christianity is the only religion that bases its claim to acceptance upon the resurrection of its founder. For any other religion to base its claim on such a doctrine would be to court failure. Test all other religions by this claim and see.

b) *IT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO CHRISTIANITY*

In that wonderful chapter on the resurrection (I Corinthians 15) Paul makes Christianity answer with its life for the literal truth of the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. That the body of the founder of the Christian religion did not lie in the grave after the third day is fundamental to the existence of the religion of CHRIST: "**And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain**" (v. 14). "**If Christ be not raised. . . ye are yet in your sins**" (v. 17). "**Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished**" (v. 18).

Remove the resurrection from Paul's Gospel, and his message is gone. The resurrection of JESUS CHRIST is not an appendage to Paul's Gospel; it is a constitutive part of it.

The importance of this doctrine is very evident from the prominent part it played in the preaching of the Apostles:

Peter - Acts 2:24,32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; I Peter 1:21,23.

Paul - Acts 13:30, 34; 17:31; I Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:21.

It was belief in such preaching that led to the establishment of the Christian church. Belief in the resurrection of CHRIST was the faith of the early church (Acts 4:33).

The testimony to this great fact of Christian faith was borne in the midst of the fiercest opposition. Nor was it controverted, although the grave was well known and could have been pointed out. It was in this fact that Christianity acquired a firm basis for its historical development. There was not only an "Easter Message," there was also an "Easter Faith." [84]

Our Lord's honor was, in a sense, staked upon the fact of His resurrection. So important did He regard it that He remained forty days upon the earth after His resurrection, giving many infallible proofs of the great fact. He appealed to it again and again as evidence of the truth of His claims: Matthew 12:39, 40; John 2:20-22.

Both the friends and the enemies of Christianity admit that the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST is vital to the religion that bears His name. The Christian confidently appeals to it as an incontrovertible fact; the skeptic denies it altogether as a historical reality.

"If the resurrection really took place," says an assailant of it, "then Christianity must be admitted to be what it claims to be a direct revelation from GOD." "**If Christ be not risen,**" says the Apostle Paul, "**then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.**"

The one tries all he can to do away with the proofs submitted for the accepted fact; the other plainly says that if the resurrection cannot be believed, then Christianity is nothing but a sham. If the resurrection of CHRIST can be successfully denied, if it can be proven to be absolutely untrue, then the whole fabric of the Gospel falls to pieces, the whole structure of the Christian

religion is shaken at its foundation, and the very arch of Christianity crumbles into dust. Then it has wrought only imaginary changes, deluded its most faithful adherents, deceived and disappointed the hopes of its most devoted disciples, and the finest moral achievements that adorn the pages of the history of the Christian church have been based upon a falsehood.

Nor must we ignore the prominent place the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST occupies in the Scriptures. More than one hundred times is it spoken of in the New Testament alone.

2. The Nature of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST

a) *JESUS CHRIST ACTUALLY DIED*

Some who disbelieve in the resurrection of CHRIST assert that JESUS merely swooned, and that pitying hands took Him down from the cross, thinking that He had died. The cool air of the tomb in which He was placed revived Him, so that He came forth from the tomb as though He had really risen from the dead. The disciples believed that He had really died and risen again. [85]

This theory is false for the following reasons:

JESUS CHRIST appeared to the disciples after the third day, not as a weak, suffering, half-dead man, but as a conquering, triumphant victor over death and the grave. He never could have made the impression upon the disciples that He did, if He had presented the picture of a sick, half-dead man.

From John 19:33-37 we learn that when the soldiers pierced the side of CHRIST, there came forth blood and water. Physiologists and physicists agree that such a condition of the vital organs, including the heart itself, precludes the idea of a mere swoon, and proves conclusively that death had taken place.

Joseph of Arimathaea asked permission to bury the body of JESUS because he knew that JESUS had been pronounced dead (Matthew 27:57, 58).

When the news was brought to Pilate that CHRIST had died, it is said that **"Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph"** (Mark 15:44, 45).

The women brought spices to anoint a dead body, not a half dead CHRIST (Mark 16:1).

The soldiers pronounced Him dead: **"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs"** (John 19:33).

JESUS CHRIST Himself, He who is the Truth, testifies to the fact that He had really died: Revelation 1:18 - **"I am he that liveth, and was dead."**

b) *THE FACT THAT CHRIST'S BODY WAS ACTUALLY RAISED FROM THE DEAD*

The resurrection of CHRIST is not a spiritual resurrection, nor were his appearances to the disciples spiritual manifestations. He appeared to His disciples in a bodily form. The body that was laid in Joseph's tomb came forth on that first Easter morn twenty centuries ago.

Some maintain that it is not vital to belief in the resurrection of CHRIST that we insist on a literal resurrection of the body of JESUS; all that we need to insist on is that CHRIST was ever afterwards known to be the victor over death, and that He had the power of an endless life.

So it comes to pass that we have what [86] is called an "Easter Message," as contrasted with an "Easter Faith" which believes in the literal resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead. "Faith has by no means to do with the knowledge of the form in which JESUS lives, but only with the conviction that He is the living Lord." - Harnack in *What is Christianity?*

According to this theory, belief in CHRIST's resurrection means nothing more than belief in the survival of the soul of JESUS - that somehow or other JESUS was alive, and lived with GOD, while His body yet saw corruption in the grave.

We reply: This cannot be, for all the facts in the Gospel narratives contradict such a theory.

Let us examine these narratives.

(1) WE ARE CONFRONTED BY THE FACT OF AN EMPTY TOMB.

Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:3, 12; John 20:1, 2.

The fact that the tomb was empty is testified to by competent witnesses - both friends and enemies: by the women, the disciples, the angels, and the Roman guards. How shall we account for the absence of the body of JESUS from the tomb? That it had not been stolen by outside parties is evident from the testimony of the soldiers who were bribed to tell that story (Matthew 28:11-15). Such a guard never would have allowed such a thing to take place. Their lives would have been thereby jeopardized. And if they were asleep (v. 13), how could they know what took place? Their testimony under such circumstances would be useless.

The condition in which the linen cloths were found lying by those who entered the tomb precludes the possibility of the body being stolen. Had such been the case the cloths would have been taken with the body, and not left in perfect order, thereby showing that the body had gone out of them. Burglars do not leave things in such perfect order. There is no order in haste.

Then again, we have the testimony of angels to the fact that JESUS had really risen as foretold (Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6). The testimony of angels is surely trustworthy (Hebrews 2:2).

(2) THERE ARE OTHER RESURRECTIONS MENTIONED IN THE GOSPEL RECORDS WHICH WERE UNDOUBTEDLY BODILY RESURRECTIONS.

Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-18; John 11:1-44.

These incidents throw light upon the resurrection of JESUS. Why did the officers say that they

were afraid "**that his disciples should come by night [87] and steal him away**" if they did not refer to the body of JESUS? They surely could not steal His soul.

(3) THOSE WHO SAW HIM AFTER THE RESURRECTION RECOGNIZED HIM AS HAVING THE SAME BODY AS HE HAD BEFORE, EVEN TO THE WOUND PRINTS.

John 20:27; Luke 24:37-39.

It is true that there were occasions on which He was not recognizable by the disciples, but such occasions were the result of the eyes of the disciples being holden in order that they might not know him. There was divine intervention on these occasions. Does CHRIST still retain the prints of the nails? Is He still the Lamb as though it had been slain? (Revelation 5 and 6).

(4) THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT OF THE FACT THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL BELIEVED IN THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The Corinthians, to whom the apostle wrote that wonderful treatise on the resurrection (I Corinthians 15), were not spending their time denying a spiritual resurrection; nor was the apostle spending his time trying to produce convincing arguments for a spiritual resurrection. (See also Romans 8:11).

(5) IT IS CLEAR ALSO FROM CHRIST'S OWN TESTIMONY BEFORE AND AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

Matthew 17:23; Luke 24:39; Revelation 1:18.

No other construction can legitimately be put upon these words than that CHRIST here refers to the resurrection of His body.

(6) THE APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY CORROBORATES THIS FACT.

Acts 2:24-32; I Peter 1:3, 21; 3:21.

Peter was at the tomb; he it was who stepped inside and saw the linen cloths lying. His testimony ought to be beyond question as to the fact at issue.

(7) THE RECORD OF THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST PROVES A LITERAL, PHYSICAL RESURRECTION.

Matthew 28:9, 10; John 20:14-18, cf. Mark 16:9; Luke 24:13-32; John 21, etc.

All these appearances bear witness to the fact that it was not an incorporeal spirit or phantom, but a real, bodily CHRIST that they saw. He could be seen, touched, handled; He was recognizable; He ate and drank in their presence. [88]

(8) LASTLY, MANY PASSAGES IN THE SCRIPTURES WOULD BE UNINTELLIGIBLE EXCEPT ON THE GROUND OF A BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM

THE GRAVE.

Romans 8:11, 23; Ephesians 1:19,20; Philippians 3:20, 21; I Thessalonians. 4:13-17.

c) *THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY OF CHRIST*

(1) IT WAS A REAL BODY: NOT A GHOST, NOR A PHANTOM.

That the resurrection body of JESUS was not a phantom, but a body composed of "**flesh and bones**" is evident from Luke 24:36-43. It could be "**touched**" (John 20:20), and bore the marks of His passion (John 20:24-29). The likeness to His earthly body was not wholly parted with. [NOTE: Does this throw any light on the matter of recognition in Heaven? Has JESUS CHRIST still this body in the glory? Shall we know Him by the prints?]

(2) YET THE BODY OF JESUS WAS MORE THAN A MERE NATURAL BODY.

It bore marks and possessed attributes which proclaimed a relation to the celestial or supra-terrestrial sphere.

For example:

- It could pass through barred doors (John 20:19), thus transcending physical limitations.
- It was not recognizable at times (Luke 24:13-16; John 20:14, 15; 21:4, 12; Mark 16:12).

This fact may be accounted for in two ways:

First, supernaturally - their eyes were holden;

Second, that in that risen life the spiritual controls the material rather than as here, the material the spiritual; so that the spirit could change the outward form of the body at will and at any given time.

[Yet, note how Jesus had power to make Himself known by little acts, such as the breaking of the bread, and the tone of His voice. Do we carry these little characteristics into the other life? Shall we know our loved ones by these things?]

Then again, JESUS was able to vanish out of sight of His friends (Luke 24:31; John 20:19, 26; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). And so He could be in different places at very short intervals of time.

Can we explain these facts? No, not fully. Yet we must not be so material as to totally disbelieve them. "Daily, indeed, are men being forced to recognize that the world holds more mysteries than they formerly imagined it to do. Probably physicists [89] are not so sure of the impenetrability of matter, or even of the conservation of energy, as they once were; and newer speculations on the etheric basis of matter, and on the relation of the seen to the unseen universe (or universes) with forces and laws largely unknown, open up vistas of possibility which may hold in them the key to phenomena even as extraordinary as those in question. - James Orr.

(3) CHRIST'S RESURRECTION BODY WAS IMMORTAL.

Not only is it true that CHRIST's body has not seen death since His resurrection, but it cannot die again. Romans 6:9, 10; Revelation 1:18, cf. Luke 20:36. [The lesson for us from this: CHRIST is the firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:20)].

3. The Credibility of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST

Credibility refers to the acceptance of a fact in a manner that deserves belief; it is belief based upon good authority, reliable facts, and competent witnesses. Credulity is belief in a thing without respect to the strength or weakness, reliability or unreliability of the authority, facts, or witnesses; it is a believing too readily, and with no reason for the faith or hope. The resurrection of CHRIST is a fact proven by competent evidence, and a deserving of intelligent acceptance and belief. It is a doctrine buttressed by "**many infallible proofs.**"

The lines of proof for the credibility of CHRIST's resurrection which may be followed in harmony with our purpose are as follows:

a) *THE ARGUMENT FROM CAUSE AND EFFECT*

Certain things, conditions, institutions exist in our midst today; they are effects of causes, or a cause; what is that cause? Among these we may mention

(1) THE EMPTY TOMB

That was an effect; what was its cause? How did that grave become empty? (See p. 87). The fact of an empty tomb must be accounted for. How do we account for it? Renan, the French skeptic, wittingly said, and yet how truly: "You Christians live on the fragrance of an empty tomb." [90]

(2) THE LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day is not the original Sabbath. Who dared change it? For what reason, and on what ground was it changed? Ponder the tenacity with which the Jews held on to their Sabbath given in Eden, and buttressed amid the thunders of Sinai. Recall how Jews would sooner die than fight on the Sabbath day (cf. Titus' invasion of Jerusalem on the Sabbath). The Jews never celebrated the birthdays of great men; they celebrated events, like the Passover. Yet, in the New Testament times we find Jews changing their time-honored seventh day to the first day of the week, and, contrary to all precedent, calling that day after a man - the Lord's Day. Here is an effect, a tremendous effect; what was its cause? We cannot have an effect without a cause. The resurrection of our Lord was the cause for this great change in the day of worship.

(3) THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

We know what a grand and noble institution the Christian Church is. What would this world be without it? Its hymns, worship, philanthropy, ministrations of mercy are all known to us. Where did this institution come from? It is an effect, a glorious effect; what is its cause? When the risen CHRIST appeared unto the discouraged disciples and revived their faith and hope, they went

forth, under the all-conquering faith in a risen and ascended Lord, and preached the story of His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again. Men believed these teachings; gathered themselves together to study the Scriptures, to pray, to worship CHRIST, and to extend His kingdom among men. This is how the Church came into existence. Its cause was the resurrection of CHRIST.

(4) THE NEW TESTAMENT

If JESUS CHRIST had remained buried in the grave, the story of His life and death would have remained buried with Him. The New Testament is an effect of CHRIST's resurrection. It was the resurrection that put heart into the disciples to go forth and tell its story. Skeptics would have us believe that the resurrection of CHRIST was an afterthought of the disciples to give the story of CHRIST's life a thrilling climax, a decorative incident which satisfies the dramatic feeling in man, a brilliant picture at the end of an heroic life. We reply: There would have been no beautiful story [91] to put a climax to if there had been no resurrection of the CHRIST of the story. The resurrection does not grow out of the beautiful story of His life, but the beautiful story of CHRIST's life grew out of the fact of the resurrection. The New Testament is the book of the resurrection.

b) *THE ARGUMENT FROM TESTIMONY*

(1) AS TO THE NUMBER OF THE WITNESSES

The resurrection of CHRIST as a historical fact is verified by a sufficient number of witnesses: over five hundred (I Corinthians 15:3-9). In our courts, one witness is enough to establish murder; two, high treason; three, the execution of a will; seven, an oral will. Seven is the greatest number required under our law. CHRIST's resurrection had five hundred and fourteen. Is not this a sufficient number?

(2) AS TO THE CHARACTER OF THE WITNESSES

The value of the testimony of a witness depends much upon his character; if that is impeached, then the testimony is discounted. Scrutinize carefully the character of the men who bore witness to the fact of CHRIST's resurrection. Impeach them if you can.

They are unassailable on ethical grounds. "No honorable opponent of the Gospel has ever denied this fact. Their moral greatness awakened an Augustine, a Francis of Assisi, and a Luther. They have been the unrivalled pattern of all mature and moral manhood for nearly two thousand years."

In law much is made of the question of motive. What motive could the apostles have had in perpetrating the story of CHRIST's resurrection upon people? Everyone of them (except one) *died a martyr's death for his loyalty to the story of CHRIST's resurrection*. What had they to gain by fraud? Would they have sacrificed their lives for what they themselves believed to be an imposture?

Nor are we to slight the testimony to CHRIST's resurrection that comes to us from sources other than that of the inspired writers of the New Testament. Ignatius, a Christian, and a contemporary

of CHRIST, a martyr for his faith in CHRIST, in his Letter to the Philadelphians, says: "Christ truly suffered, as He also truly raised up Himself. I know that after the resurrection He was in the flesh, and I believe Him to be so still. And, when He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, 'Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal phantom!'"

Tertullian, in his *Apolegeticus*, says: "The fame of our Lord's remarkable resurrection and [92] ascension being now spread abroad, Pontius Pilate, according to an ancient custom of communicating novel occurrences to the emperor, that nothing might escape him, transmitted to Tiberius, Emperor of Rome, an account of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead . . . Tiberius referred the whole matter to the Senate, who, being unacquainted with the facts, rejected it."

The integrity of this passage is unquestioned by even the most skeptical critics.

Alleged Discrepancies. *

* The following extract from Dr. Orr's book, *The Resurrection of JESUS*, will throw some light on the matter of differences in testimony, while maintaining the credibility of the fact itself. "An instructive example is furnished in a recent issue of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. A class in history was studying the French Revolution, and the pupils were asked to look the matter up, and report next day by what vote Louis XVI was condemned. Nearly half the class reported that the vote was unanimous. A considerable number protested that he was condemned by a majority of one. A few gave the majority as 145 in a vote of 721. How utterly irreconcilable these reports seemed! Yet for each the authority of reputable historians could be given. In fact, all were true, and the full truth was a combination of all three. On the first vote as to the king's guilt there was no contrary voice. Some tell only of this. The vote on the penalty was given individually, with reasons, and a majority of 145 declared for the death penalty, at once or after peace was made with Austria, or after confirmation by the people. The votes for immediate death were only 361 as against 360. History abounds with similar illustrations. As an example of another kind, reference may be made to Revelation R. J. Campbell's volume of *Sermons Addressed to Individuals*, where, on pp. 145-6 and pp. 181-2, the same story of a Brighton man is told with affecting details. The story is no doubt true in substance; but for 'discrepancies' - let the reader compare them, and never speak more (or Mr. Campbell either) of the Gospels!"

The seeming differences in the testimony of the witnesses to the resurrection may be largely, if not altogether, reconciled by a correct knowledge of the manner and order of the appearances of CHRIST after His resurrection.

The following order of appearances may help in the understanding of the testimony to the resurrection:

1. The women at the grave see the vision of angels.
2. The women separate at the grave to make known the news - Mary Magdalene going to tell Peter and John, who doubtless lived close by (for it seems that they reached the grave in a single run). The other women go to tell the other disciples who, probably, were at Bethany.
3. Peter and John, hearing the news, run to the grave, leaving Mary. They then return home.
4. Mary follows; lingers at the grave; gets vision of the Master, and command to go tell the

disciples.

5. The other women see CHRIST on the way.
6. CHRIST appears to the two on the way to Emmaus.
7. To Simon Peter.
8. To the ten apostles, and other friends.
9. To the apostles at Tiberias.
10. To the apostles and multitude on the mount.
11. To the disciples and friends at the ascension.
12. To James (I Corinthians 15:7).
13. To Paul (I Corinthians 15:8). [93]

4. The Results of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST

a) *AS TO JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF*

Romans 1:4 - "**And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**" To "**declare**" means to *mark off, to define, to set apart* (Acts 10:42; Hebrews 4:7).

NOTE: CHRIST was not made the Son of GOD by the resurrection, but declared such. Had CHRIST remained in the grave as other men had done, there would then have been no reasonable ground to impose faith in Him. The empty tomb testifies to the deity of CHRIST.

Matthew 12:38-42; John 2:13-22. In these scriptures JESUS CHRIST bases His authority for His teaching and the truth of all His claims on His resurrection from the dead. (See p. 84.) See also Matthew 28:6 - "**Risen, as he said.**"

b) *AS TO THE BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST*

(1) ASSURES HIM OF HIS ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.

Romans 4:25 - "**Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**" So long as CHRIST lay in the grave there was no assurance that His redemptive work had been acceptable to GOD. The fact that GOD raised JESUS from the dead was evidence that the Father was satisfied with the sacrifice CHRIST had made for the sins of men. "**Of righteousness, because I go unto my Father**" (John 16:10). Believing sinners may now rest satisfied that in Him they are justified. This thought is illustrated by the picture of the Jews waiting outside the temple for the coming out of the high priest (Luke 1:21), thereby indicating that their sacrifice had been accepted. [94]

(2) ASSURES HIM OF AN INTERCEDING HIGH PRIEST IN THE HEAVENS.

Romans 8:34 - "**Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**" Also Hebrews 7:25. Salvation was not completed at the Cross; there is still need of daily forgiveness, and so of the continual presenting of the shed blood before the mercy-seat.

The accusations of Satan still need to be answered (Zechariah 3:1-5; Job 1 and 2; Hebrews 7:25).

We need a Moses, not only to deliver us from bondage, but also to plead for us and intercede for us because of our sins committed in the wilderness journey. Herein is our assurance of forgiveness of sins committed after conversion - that our great High Priest is always heard (John 11:42), and that He prays constantly for us that our faith fail not (Luke 22:32). Our temporary falls shall not condemn us, for our Priest intercedes for us.

(3) ASSURES HIM OF ALL NEEDED POWER FOR LIFE AND SERVICE

Ephesians 1:19-22 - **"The exceeding greatness of his power. . . which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, . . . and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."** Also Philippians 3:10.

There are two standards in the Bible by which GOD's power is gauged:

- in the Old Testament, when GOD would have His people know the extent of His power, it is according to the power by which He brought Israel out of Egypt (Micah 7:15);

- in the New Testament, the unit of measurement of GOD's power is **"According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ . . . when he raised him from the dead."** The connection of Philippians 3:10 gives the believer the promise and assurance not only of present power and victory, but also of future glorification.

If we desire to know what GOD is able to do for and through us we are invited to look at the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

(4) THE ASSURANCE OF HIS OWN RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY.

I Thessalonians 4:14 - **"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose [95] again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."** II Corinthians 4:14 - **"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."** John 14:19 - **"Because I live, ye shall live also."**

c) *AS TO THE WORLD*

(1) THE CERTAINTY OF A RESURRECTION.

I Corinthians 15:22 - **"As in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive."** Paul is here discussing a bodily, and not a spiritual, resurrection (see p. 88). As in Adam all men die physically, so in CHRIST all men are raised physically. The resurrection of JESUS CHRIST guarantees the resurrection of all men (see under *Resurrection*, p. 245).

(2) THE CERTAINTY OF A JUDGMENT DAY.

Acts 17:31 - "**Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**" The resurrection of CHRIST is GOD's unfailing testimony to the fact of a coming day of judgment for the world. The one is as sure as the other.

III. THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The Meaning of These Terms

When we speak of the ascension of CHRIST we refer to that event in the life of our risen Lord in which He departed visibly from His disciples into Heaven. This event is recorded in Acts 1:9-11 - "**This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven,**" etc.

By the exaltation of JESUS CHRIST we mean that act of GOD by which the risen and ascended CHRIST is given the place of power at the right hand of GOD. Philippians 2:9 - "**Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.**" Ephesians 1:20, 21- "**Which he [GOD] wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power.**" See also Hebrews 1:3. [96]

2. The Scriptural Data for the Doctrine

Foregleams of this truth were granted to the prophets of the Old Testament times, Psalm 110:1; 68:18. They saw CHRIST in prophetic vision not only as the meek and lowly One, but as the ascended and glorified Lord.

Our Lord Himself, on many occasions, foretold His ascension and exaltation. These events were constantly before His mind's eye: Luke 9:51; John 6:62; 20:17.

The New Testament writers record the event: Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; John 3:13; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 10:12.

Stephen, in his dying moments, was granted a vision of the exalted CHRIST. He saw the "**Son of Man standing on the right hand of God**" (Acts 7:55, 56).

The apostles taught and preached these great truths: Peter, Acts 2:33, 34; 5:31; I Peter 3:22; Paul: Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 4:14; I Timothy 3:16.

3. The Necessity of the Ascension and Exaltation of JESUS CHRIST

The nature of the resurrection body of our Lord necessitated His ascension and exaltation. Such a body could not be subject to ordinary laws; it could not permanently abide here.

CHRIST's unique personality also required such an exit from the world. Should not the exit of CHRIST from this world be as unique as His entrance into it? Then, again, consider the sinlessness of His life. If a miraculous exit was granted to men like Elijah and Enoch, who were

sinful men, why should we marvel if such was granted to CHRIST? Indeed it seems perfectly natural, and quite in keeping with His whole life, that just such an event as the ascension and exaltation should form a fitting finish to such a wonderful career.

The ascension and exaltation were necessary to complete the redemptive work of CHRIST. His work was not finished when He arose from the dead. He had not yet presented the blood of the atonement in the presence of the Father; nor had He yet been given His place at the right hand of the Father as the bestower of all spiritual gifts, and especially the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

The apostles were thus able to furnish to an unbelieving and inquisitive world a satisfactory account of the disappearance of the body of CHRIST which had been placed in the tomb, and which [97] they claimed to have seen after the resurrection. "Where is your CHRIST?" the scoffing world might ask. "We saw Him ascend up into the Heaven, and He is now at the Father's right hand," the apostles could reply.

It was further necessary in order that CHRIST might become an ideal object of worship for the whole human race. We should not forget that CHRIST's earthly ministry was a purely local one: He could be but in one place at a time. Those who worshipped at His feet in Jerusalem could not, at the same time, worship Him in any other place. This was the lesson, doubtless, that the Master desired to teach Mary when she would fain hold on to Him, and when He said, "**Touch me not.**" Mary must worship now by faith, not by sight.

4. The Nature of the Ascension and Exaltation of JESUS CHRIST

a) *IT WAS A BODILY AND VISIBLE ASCENSION*

Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:51. It was the same CHRIST they had known in life, only glorified, who had tarried with them now for the space of forty days, who had delivered unto them certain commandments, and whose hands were even then outstretched in blessing that they saw slowly vanishing from their view up into the heavens. It was a body of flesh and bones, not flesh and blood. So will be our translation (I Corinthians 15:51, 52).

b) *HE PASSED UP THROUGH THE HEAVENS*

Hebrews 4:14; Ephesians 4:10; Hebrews 7:26. Whatever and how many created heavens there may be between the earth and the dwelling place of GOD, we may not know, but we are here told that CHRIST passed through them all, and up to the highest Heaven, indeed was made higher than the heavens. This means that He overcame all those evil principalities and powers that inhabit these heavenlies (Ephesians 6) and who doubtless tried their best to keep Him from passing through the heavens to present His finished work before the Father. Just as the high priest passed through the vail into the holy place, so CHRIST passed through the heavens into the presence of GOD. [98]

c) *HE TOOK HIS PLACE AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER*

He was exalted to the right hand of GOD. Ephesians 1:20 - "**Set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power.**" Colossians 3:1 - "**Christ sitteth**

on the right hand of God." This place was not taken by CHRIST without conflict with these evil principalities and powers. But "**He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it**" (Colossians 2:15). See also Acts 5:31.

What is meant by "**the right hand of God**"? Is it a definite place, or is it simply a figure of speech denoting a place of authority and power? Why can not both things be included? GOD has His dwelling place in Heaven, and it is not incredible to believe that from the throne there CHRIST exercises His divine prerogatives. Stephen saw CHRIST standing at the right hand of GOD in Heaven.

The "**right hand of God**" assuredly indicates the place of the accuser whom CHRIST casts out (Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10); the place of intercession which CHRIST now occupies (Romans 8:34); the place of acceptance where the Intercessor now sits (Psalm 110:1); the place of highest power and richest blessing (Genesis 48:13-19); the place of power (Psalm 110:5). All these powers and prerogatives are CHRIST's by reason of His finished work of redemption.

5. The Purpose of the Ascension and Exaltation of JESUS CHRIST

a) *HE HAS ENTERED HEAVEN AS A FORERUNNER*

Hebrews 6:20 - "**Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.**" The forerunner is one who enters into a place where the rest are to follow; one who is sent before to make observations; a scout, a spy. The Levitical high priest was not a forerunner; no one could follow him. But where CHRIST goes His people may go also.

b) *HE HAS GONE TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR HIS PEOPLE*

Hebrews 9:21-24; John 14:2. He is there making all necessary preparations for the coming of His Bride, the Church. In some way it seems that the heavenly sanctuary had been defiled by sin. It was necessary, therefore, that CHRIST purge it with His blood. What a home that will be if He prepares it! [99]

c) *HE IS NOW APPEARING BEFORE GOD IN OUR BEHALF*

Hebrews 9:24 - "**To appear in the presence of God for us.**" He is there to act as High Priest in our behalf; to present the blood of atonement. "Before the throne my Surety stands[/b]." And yet not so much before the throne as on the throne. He is the Kingly Priest. With authority He asks, and His petitions are granted.

d) *HE HAS TAKEN HIS PLACE AT THE FATHER'S RIGHT HAND THAT HE MAY FILL ALL THINGS, AWAITING THE DAY WHEN HE SHALL HAVE UNIVERSAL DOMINION*

Ephesians 4:10. He fills all things with His presence, with His work, with Himself. He is not a local CHRIST any longer (cf. Jeremiah 23:24).

Hebrews 10:12, 13; Acts 3:20, 21 - "**He shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the Heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.**" Having won His victory, CHRIST is now

waiting for all the spoils to be gathered. He is expecting, not doubting, but assuredly waiting; already His feet are upon the neck of the enemy. The Apocalypse pictures CHRIST entering upon the actual possession of His kingdom.

6. The Results of the Ascension and Exaltation of JESUS CHRIST

a) *IT ASSURES US OF A FREE AND CONFIDENT ACCESS INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD*

Hebrews 4:14-16 - "**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**"

Our great High Priest is before the throne to present petitions, secure pardons for His people, and to communicate blessings in answer to their faith and prayers. We may have a free and fearless confidence in our approach to GOD.

b) *AN ASSURED HOPE OF IMMORTALITY*

II Corinthians 5:1-8 describes the longing of the Christian to be clothed with a body after he has been called upon to lay aside this earthly tabernacle. He has no desire for a bodiless existence. The [100] ascension and exaltation of CHRIST assures the believer that like CHRIST he also will take his place in Heaven with a body like unto CHRIST's own glorious body.

c) *IT GIVES THE BELIEVER CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE TO BELIEVE THAT ALL THINGS ARE WORKING TOGETHER FOR HIS GOOD*

Seeing that CHRIST, the believer's Head, is exalted far above all things in Heaven and earth, it is possible for the believer to be master of circumstances, and superior to all his environment (Ephesians 1:22; cf. Colossians 1:15-18).

d) *CHRIST HAS BEEN MADE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS FOR THE CHURCH*

That is to say, everything is subject to CHRIST, and that for the Church's sake. Ephesians 1:22 - "**And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.**"

CHRIST is the fullness of the Father for the Church (Colossians 1:19; 2:9, 10).

CHRIST bestows the HOLY SPIRIT upon the Church (Acts 2:33-36; John 7:37-39).

He receives for and bestows upon the Church spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:8-12). [101]

~ end of chapter 2 ~
