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## THE CHANGELESS CHRIST

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"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Heb. 13:8.

This is a great utterance. What Jesus Christ was, that he is; and what he is, that he will ever be. The saying places him at the ever shifting center of history. As past and future from opposite directions converge on the present, so do they converge on Christ. God has summed up all things in him. (Eph. 1:10.) He is first in regard to all things (Col. 1:18), and in him all things hold together (Col. 1:17). The most impressive and wondrous personality of history, he centralizes "yesterday" in himself; the impulsive and attractive hope of humanity, he sways the future from both its poles, and encloses "forever" in the circle of his influence; a living and constant force for human good, he is found at the heart of the best progress of men "today." As his immediate personal contact with his own age, though necessarily limited in range, was intense with life and power, so amid the complexity and extent of our life today there are certain focal points of influence where Christ is intensely active. This is a wondrous thing; but it is true. Leaving out many elements of our complex modern life we can find at three essential points sufficient illustration of our theme: Science, morals, and religion. And so, fathers and brethren, as I have thought and prayed over what message I should attempt to bring you, it has seemed to me appropriate to emphasize the "today" of this text, so

that we might consider together the place of power held by our Lord Jesus Christ in the life of our own time, as manifested in its scientific, ethical and spiritual phases.

#### THE SCIENTIFIC PHASE

It is unnecessary to emphasize the large and influential place which "science" fills in the thought and life of modern times. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century the progressive mental forces among men have been under the dominating and driving impulse of the scientific idea. Every department of life and thought has been powerfully affected. Great and astonishing achievements in the discovery of truth have been recorded and the methods used in this field have been extended to well-nigh all departments of thought. The scientific world has become intoxicated with its knowledge and power, and has too often been arrogant in its intellectual pride. Religious leaders have been sometimes frightened and angered, and sometimes led astray, by the claims of iconoclastic "science"; and some men of science have been too hasty to conclude that their partial knowledge was really all there was to know, and have attacked religion too harshly. Thus, unhappily, needless conflict has arisen between religion and science, or rather between some scientists and some religionists. But now at last things are beginning to look better. Science is more respectful to religion, and religion is more friendly to science. And so it has become possible on both sides to consider, with thoroughness and candor, the true place which our Lord Jesus Christ occupies in regard to the science of our times.

And first of all we may say that Christ is a proper object of scientific investigation. The objects of scientific research and exposition are phenomena, facts and forces. With all reverence be

it said, Jesus Christ is each and all of these. In his historic appearance and abiding influence he is a phenomenon to be observed and explained; in his actual life and works and the effects still produced by him he is a fact beyond dispute; and in the great changes and results consequent upon his appearance and life he is a force to be reckoned with.

As a phenomenon, then, Christ demands observation and explanation. The first is easily conceded. He forces himself upon the notice of mankind. He cannot be ignored. Among the unusual, unique, impressive personalities of history he stands pre-eminent. His own query is, "Who do men say that I am?" The confident answer of discipleship to inquiry is, "Come and see!" Some explanation of so extraordinary a character must be attempted. Science is challenged and must make answer. If protoplasmic mud, or a fly's foot, makes appeal to microscopic biology; if planets and stars, nebulae and infinite spaces make appeal to telescopic astronomy; if mounds and monuments make appeal to ethnic archaeology; if documents and literatures make appeal to historic criticism; if thinkers and systems make appeal to philosophic scrutiny; if the evolution of human relations makes appeal to the study of sociology; can science be excused if it evades or declines consideration of the phenomenon of Christ? For that phenomenon two explanations are current. One is that Jesus Christ is, as other great men are, the product of human evolution. He was the child of human parents, gifted above the average, deriving his thought and character from his Jewish antecedents, influenced by his environment, moulded by the course of events, but impressing upon all these the mark of his peculiar genius. This may be called the natural theory of Jesus as a phenomenon. The other is the

super-natural theory. Mark, it is not an un-natural theory. That which ranges above the ordinary course of nature is not thereby contradictory to nature. The super-natural is neither impossible nor irrational. Therefore what may be called the super-natural theory of the Christ has, on a purely intellectual basis, as good claim to scientific recognition as the natural theory. The super-natural theory is, briefly, the belief that Jesus Christ as a phenomenon, is the expression of a direct divine interposition in the course of affairs; that he was born of a virgin by the immediate power of God; that so he is the Son of God in a peculiar sense; and as such is the mediator between God and man, being himself both God and man. Grant the existence, personality and activity of God, and the theory that Christ's appearance among men in his time and place was a real divine incarnation is rationally tenable as a scientific hypothesis. Choice between the theories, as in all such cases, must be determined logically by their relative ability to account for the facts in the case; and ethically by the character and inclinations of the person choosing. These last are usually the decisive factor, but at least reason demands a thorough and candid consideration of all the facts in order to see on which side the greater probability lies.

Science is also required to give careful attention to Jesus Christ as a fact, for in truth he is in the course of human affairs a momentous fact, and must be so accepted and dealt with. Some faint conception of his value as a fact may be formed by imagining himself and all that he stands for subtracted from history. So is he to be considered both as a historic and a present fact. The former is generally conceded, the latter may by some be questioned.

Further, in dealing with this double aspect of the matter we must bear in mind the obvious truth that Jesus as a fundamental and prime fact involves and subordinates a number of related facts. Not all of these are of equal importance, and some are less capable of convincing proof than others. Without going into details it is sufficient for our present purpose to say that the main facts of Christ's historic reality, and the general credibility of the accounts we have of his career, are such as to establish him permanently and immovably within the field of scientific study. Moreover, those observable indications of his activity among the elements of our modern life and thought make it impossible to ignore the fact of his abiding influence. Whether we are to account for that as only an impulse from the past, or additionally and continuously as a living force in the present, will depend upon our personal relations to Christ. But the fact of his influence is here among us.

And this brings us to think of Christ as a force. Whatever theory of his person we may hold, whatever fact or facts concerning him we may accept or reject, it remains and must ever remain undeniably true that Jesus Christ was and is a force of the first magnitude in the moral and spiritual progress of mankind. As we are more fully to develop these thoughts in what follows it is enough here to mention them in illustration of the position that in its study of great forces science cannot and must not ignore "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:24.)

There is also another point of view for regarding Christ scientifically, namely, that he is a contributor to scientific thought. What he added to the knowledge of mankind in the most important sphere of human interest surely claims comparison as to

value and effect with what any scientist has done in any field of research. When we think of how the great men of science have made their contributions to knowledge and thought, we shall find that the most obvious statements are in a measure true of Jesus. Every scientist is a traditionalist. The larger part of his science is derived from those who worked and taught before him. Absolute originality in the field of science would be an amazing mass of falsehood and folly. No science worth the name but rests on previous accumulation. Jesus recognizes the best religious tradition. He says, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill." This was true scientific method. It is today. (Let no sane man be terrified or more than amusingly angered by the epithet "traditionalist"; it is oftener a token of his critic's narrowness than of his own!) What was true in religious thought Jesus accepted and built on. But this was not all. Every scientist of note has made correction of previous mistakes and added new knowledge or new view. This was also what Jesus did. The truths which he gave to the world concerning God and the soul had a newness and a power which smote contemporaries with amazement, and which the lapse of centuries has not been able to tarnish or weaken. Today, as yesterday, he is the world's greatest master on these high themes. How these great truths came to him we may not know or be able to explain. His was not the way of laborious investigation such as we now call by eminence the scientific method. Whatever we may venture to think concerning his mental processes, at least his times and the thought material with which he was chiefly concerned did not demand exactly the methods now in vogue. But however arrived at, truth is of itself scientific material. Therefore, even though we have to

distinguish the processes of Jesus from those of the modern scientific mind, the great truths he taught must ever remain among the materials of scientific thinking on the subjects which he considered. Further, there is a finality and sureness about his teaching which have the true scientific ring. This is as far as possible removed from mere dogmatism and conceit, but it carried in its first impression as it does today the confidence of authority. When assured conviction has come to the scientific mind there has been joyous confidence; when the stamp of finality has been fixed the general intelligence rests with tranquil assurance. The scientific certitude of Jesus is one of his enduring marks of greatness. Another thing which illustrates his scientific position is his impression of his teachings upon others. It has been told of Sir Humphrey Davy that on being asked what he regarded as his greatest discovery he promptly answered, "Michael Faraday." The band of disciples and the school of thought are a testimony to the greatness of any thinker. The great names of past and recent times which throng to the memory when this statement is understood, illustrate its truth beyond the need of argument. Judged by this test Jesus stands in the front rank of scientific thinkers. The acceptance and propagation of his teachings through nineteen centuries, the great souls in whom that acceptance and propagation have been as life itself,--these point back to the Master as one whose contribution to enduring thought on the great themes which attracted him remains pre-eminent in power and worth. The best thinkers and thinking on those themes today owe alike their original impulse and their enduring authority to the mind of Christ.

## THE ETHICAL PHASE

One of the most heartening indications of true progress in our modern life and thought is what is called "the ethical note." Of course it is not new. It is the glory of humanity that moral action is one of its most cherished and firmly entrenched principles. Again, this does not mean that there are no drawbacks and sad disappointments in the way of moral advancement. Alas! no. But without one-sided or exaggerated optimism we still can heartily rejoice in the continued and perhaps increasing insistence laid by modern leaders of thought and action upon the ethical principle.

Even some current tendencies in Christian thought which we must deplore as perversions and watch as perils reveal this emphasis. The swing of thought from creed to conduct is one, and the subtle or open advocacy of the doctrine of salvation by character is another. Now there is no need to despise or even depreciate creed in the supposed interest of conduct. It is surely no difficult mental feat to establish a clear and consistent relation between what we ought to believe and what we ought to do. It is only half-thinkers, intellectual poseurs--of whom there is a multitude--who sniff at doctrine in their condescending laudation of conduct. The other error noted is far more serious, both in its meaning and consequences, since it cuts at the foundations of the Christian faith. Salvation by one's own goodness is certainly not a New Testament doctrine, but some who profess and call themselves Christians hold and teach it. Yet while we protest as strongly as possible against this fundamental and hurtful heresy, we cannot fail to recognize it as another decisive indication of the power-



ful hold which the ethical element in Christianity has taken upon the most recent thought.

Is Jesus Christ a potent force in the ethical life of the twentieth century? To ask the question is to answer it. Only ignorance or wilful blindness could fail to return an affirmative answer. Indeed perhaps the majority of thoughtful observers (not necessarily professed Christians) would even go farther and say that by all odds the most important and fruitful force in morals today is Christ. For us, brethren, this view is a glorious and fixed conviction. This great assemblage of men and women is on this point both an unanswerable argument and an uplifting inspiration to itself. I am but your mouthpiece, speaking for yourselves to yourselves, when I remind you that your very thoughts of moral goodness are those which have been instilled into your minds as the teachings of Jesus; that your highest ideal of possible human virtue is the adorable example of your Lord; and that the best help and hope for righteousness of which you are conscious is the influence of Christ. And you are not alone. Great as you are, you represent here a greater multitude whom you have left behind to come to this annual gathering. And we Southern Baptists, in our millions, are but a division of the vast army of believers in Jesus Christ in all the world who accept his teachings as their guide, his example as their inspiration, his influence as their help in the moral struggle. These are the key words which describe and exhibit the force which Jesus is in the ethical life of today; his teachings, his example, his influence.

It is a well-beloved commonplace of ethical and religious assertion that the moral teachings of Jesus are the best the world

has known. This is not to say that there are none good but his; nor that his precepts include every possible detail of conduct; but it is meant that in the principles of right action enunciated by Jesus Christ the highest and broadest level of moral teaching has been attained. In character it is correct and final. Instead of being judged by other standards it is the standard for judging others. In purity it is safe beyond the most prejudiced criticism. The sensuous and the selfish finds no place in Christ's teachings. Appeal is ever made to that which is highest and holiest in man and in God. But we must go deeper than the exquisite surface of quality which appears in the ethical teachings of Jesus, and get down to their inner character. There are two ultimates in these teachings: The ultimate of principle, and the ultimate of expression. Jesus touches the ultimate principle of righteousness in life when he refers it to the inner heart and motive, not to the outer deed and word. How he blighted with his infinite scorn the clean outside of the platter which inwardly was full of filth! the giving of alms that was a pretense; the tithing of mint that was an excuse for the neglect of weightier matters; the long prayers that were a cloak for covetousness and extortion. It is not the unwashed hands but the evil thoughts that defile; it is not merely the adulterous deed that is impure, but the purposed unchaste look; it is not the cruel act or work alone that hurts, but the unkind thought and feeling of the heart. Jesus did not originate this principle; it is as self-evident in morals as are some of the mathematical axioms, and it had long before found immortal expression in the saying, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." But the emphasis, the clearness, the illustra-

tion which this eternal principle of conduct finds in the teachings of Jesus fix it forever in human thought as an ethical ultimate. The other ultimate is that of expression. This appears in the great summary of the law which Jesus gave in answer to an inquiry: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart... and thy neighbor as thyself." In putting together these two precepts of the law of God to Israel, in summing up thus the message of the prophets to mankind, Jesus has given succinct expression to the thought of God on every possible phase of conduct. Details indeed are not given--this was not the place for them--but the all-comprehensive and final statement of human duty is here. The mind of man can go no further in its expression. To love God supremely over himself and man equally with himself is the ideal and the limit of moral obligation. Every particular of ethical conduct is referable to this general law. It recognizes the true Source and the eternal Authority of morals in God; it exhibits the immediate field and scope of morals in our relations to each other; it defines the real motive and conquering force for morals as love. There is nothing more to be said.

But granting that the moral teachings of Jesus exhibit the highest character and rest upon the ultimate principles of right the question arises: Are these teachings applicable and practical amid our modern conditions? Here we are beset by the extreme of literalism on the one hand and by that of repudiation on the other. As usual, the truth lies between. Let it be borne in mind that the question is only possible as to a few details and not at all as to the comprehensive principle of the Master's teaching. Then in regard to such detailed precepts as may seem to be in our cases of doubtful applicability, several things must be said--though time

does not admit of full discussion. Some of these particular precepts necessarily grew out of the circumstances and habits of the age in which Jesus taught, and therefore in the special form and expression of them may admit of some modification. But in all such cases the underlying principle of action or character involved is to be sought and applied. Another consideration is that in many cases our Lord evidently gave a partial or extreme statement of a neglected and important truth in order to give it much needed emphasis, leaving the modifying condition to be sought either in other statements of his own or in the obvious converse of what he was at the moment stressing. Thus, when he says that in order to be his disciple one must "hate his father and mother," it is evident he meant no contradiction to the fifth commandment, but only to show with startling emphasis where supreme allegiance was owing. But making the fullest possible allowances for all these things, it remains that one of the most remarkable features of the moral teachings of Jesus is their wondrous applicability to all ages, races and times. Never has this truth received fuller illustration than in our own day of world wide propagation of the gospel.

It is another glorious commonplace of Christian thought to say that the exalted moral teachings of Jesus were most powerfully illustrated and are therefore for all time reinforced by his own example. The great impression made by his life upon his contemporaries, and the utter failure to discredit his character, are matters of record. The effect of that peerless character upon the imagination and love of men throughout all ages since he lived is historic. The acceptance of the example of Jesus as a moral force in the modern world is easily seen by those who read and observe. Even among thoughtful

unbelievers this is conceded. The oft-quoted passage from John Stuart Mill (Three Essays on Religion, page 253ff.) may well stand as one of the most telling and instructive of its kind. This great and representative skeptical thinker of the middle nineteenth century says: "The most valuable part of the effect on the character which Christianity has produced, by holding up in a Divine Person a standard of excellence and a model for imitation, is available even for the absolute unbeliever and can never more be lost to humanity.... And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teachings.... When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." Other skeptics, who have admired the moral character and teachings of Jesus could be quoted in similar strain; while among believers there have been many to extol the example of the Master as a powerful force in the development of character. Contemporary Christian literature and even some occasional injudicious movements emphasize the great truth that the example of Jesus is still a live and potent force in the production and maintenance of the highest types of character known in modern life.

And so both his teachings and example sum and perpetuate them-

selves in the abiding and powerful influence of Jesus. Certainly that influence is not supreme in contemporary life--would that it were!--but it is potent and recognized. It appears in the individual Christian life and character. Though there is a multitude of unbelievers and of unworthy nominal believers, it yet remains true that real Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It also appears in the immense quantity of good Christian literature that is still produced and read. This is said with full recognition of the greater immensity of bad and pseudo-Christian literature, which finds publishers and readers. Nor must we slight the organized and conventional methods by which the moral influence of Jesus is continued and enforced in our modern life. I mean the churches and their varied institutions and agencies. Say all that we sadly have to say about the neglect of worship, the decline of the power of the church, the disregard of preaching, the decay of family piety, and all the other talk of that sort, the fact remains that though not what they ought to be either in character or effect, none of these are dead things, and they still extend and enforce the moral influence of Jesus. In these and other ways that influence often receives some recognition even where it is ostensibly disavowed and denied. One may be an unbeliever, even a bad and blatant one, and yet such moral aspirations and sentiments as he has will plainly show traces of Christ. Often, too, persons who have no ethical principles of their own will admire those which in others exemplify the influence of Jesus. It is said that many of the grossest men, who swear at the church and deride all professing Christians, yet proclaim their admiration of Christ himself.

We must not omit one other important matter in this connection, and that is, our duty as Christians to assert and maintain the rightful place of Jesus in the ethical life of today. That duty is enforced upon

us by two considerations which require fuller notice than can be given here: The current confusion as to moral standards, and the awful laxity in moral practice characteristic of our social life today. Taking Christ as the representative of God, and his summary and endorsement of the law of God as the ultimate authority in morals, the Christian has an advantage which it is his duty to press with all vigor and earnestness. An article by Mr. Harold Bolce in a recent number of The Cosmopolitan Magazine gives an appalling account of what is taught on this vital matter in some of our leading colleges and by some of the most eminent teachers upon social and moral questions of our times. Making due allowance for whatever garbled and sensational statements may characterize the article, even if a part of what it says is true it is time for us Christians to take notice. Teachings repudiating the authority of God and Christ in morals, boldly rejecting the sanctity of the home and the ethics of marriage in the interests of pleasure, sneering at the foundations of Christian conduct, are, according to this writer, openly taught even in some institutions professedly Christian! This is no time for timidity and truckling to so-called "advanced thought," which is oftentimes a fine name for abominable principles. If we dethrone and repudiate the God who speaks in Christ as the supreme and ultimate authority in morals, what is left us? Confusion worse confounded! The easy-going theory of evolution--whatever is right; the loose and lustful theory of pleasure--whatever we like to do is right; the narrow and selfish theory of utilitarianism--whatever seems best for the majority is right; the variable theory of custom--whatever happens to be common anywhere is right; the gone-mad theory of individualism--whatever

comes to me as right is right; the desperate theory where the extreme of despotism and anarchism meet--nothing is right and everything is wrong, and might is right. Take these, or Christ! Martineau has done valuable service to the cause of theistic ethics in his great work, Types of Ethical Theory, in which he trenchantly and profoundly criticizes all the erroneous and partial theories and founds the ethical principle in the nature of God as intuitively reflected in the moral nature and consciousness of man. To this we only have to add--and the addition is both rational and easy--that in Jesus Christ, His Son, God has spoken the authoritative word on moral good and moral duty. Be it ours to catch and exemplify the apostolic exhortation: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The need of taking and holding this high ground is terribly emphasized for us in the hideous immoralities which such teachings as have been indicated condone and encourage as they exist among us. We need be no hopeless pessimists to open our eyes and see where the festering sores of our modern sins--which alas! are only ancient sins continued--appear. They infest our whole social life, polluting our pleasures, cankering our politics, corrupting our business, defiling our homes, ruining our youth, debauching our men and women! This is no time to listen to the voice of academic charmers charming never so wisely, when they insinuate into the minds of eager youths the insidious and all too welcome doctrines of living as they like. It is time to hold up the Christ as Guide of the conduct and Lord of the will. It is time for prophets in



the pulpit and saints in the social life, for the voice that cries aloud and the salt that has not lost its savor.

#### THE SPIRITUAL PHASE

There is general recognition of a decided recoil from the materialism which marked much of the philosophic and scientific thought of the nineteenth century. Not only in the theories of thinkers is this apparent, but also in the less profound and more common ways in which the mind of an epoch expresses itself. That there are perils and evils even in such a healthy recoil as this may be granted without denial of its value upon the whole. The reaction may go too far, it may carry absurd and injurious excrescences upon its back, it may even trample some pearls of precious truth under the feet of its grossest perversions, or it may take aerial flights on gossamer wings of mysticism and be lost to the sight of ordinary mortals. Yet such distortions are common in the history of thought, and should not unduly distress us. Every extreme has its reaction to the opposite pole. Men will doubtless long continue to be foolish and say some foolish things even on the side of real truth and progress. But on the whole, this recurrence to the realm of the unseen and the spiritual from a too exclusive application to material facts and forces is a wholesome and hopeful phase of modern life and thought. That in the universe and in us which cannot be seen nor handled, weighed nor counted, but yet is, and is mighty, has come to be thought of once more as entitled to respect. This state of things is opportune for the enforcement of religious truth; for the recalling of men's minds to the eternal verities which are in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore notice with gratitude and conviction the place of our Lord Jesus Christ in the spiritual life of today.

One thing of primary importance here, as well as of deep and apparently ever deepening interest, is the relation of Jesus to religious experience. It is almost startling, in view of conditions existing after the middle of the last century, to see how leaders of thought are beginning to recognize religious experience as a field for scientific induction and generalization. We greet the inductions with some degree of hope, but are naturally somewhat cautious yet as to the generalizations! But making every qualification which common prudence may suggest, we hail the entrance of science upon this task. Truth will bear investigation, and religious experience is certainly one of the most important possible departments of research. The inductions of science only confirm and emphasize what Christian thinkers already knew, and they leave no doubt that religious experience is a tremendous fact and force in the psychic and social life of mankind--a fact and force which the best science can not afford to ignore. One of the conclusions to which scientific investigation is surely pointing, and on which Christian conviction assuredly rests, is that the Source of true religious experience is our Lord Jesus Christ. We can not here go far in the discussion of this great topic. It has been taken up on the scientific side by such men as James, Starbuck, Coe, and others; and on the evangelical side by our own Dr. E.Y. Mullins in a luminous and spirited discussion in his Why is Christianity True? by H.W. Clark in his Philosophy of Christian Experience, and a number of others. Leaving out that wide field of general religious experience which the study of comparative religion and the future inductions of science may open up, and confining ourselves to distinctively Christian experience as described in the New Testament

and in Christian literature, and as observed and exchanged in the fellowship of believers, we discover--as we should expect--both a remarkable variety of detail and an equally remarkable unity of origin. Conscious Christian experience unanimously refers to Christ as its Source. Now this must not be regarded as a sort of necessary verbal truism only, for we must remember that in this deliverance of the believer's consciousness Christ stands for God--God made manifest as personal, historic, real. God comes into the Christian consciousness by the personal contact of the individual believer with Christ. In him the two sides of that contact unite; the divine origination, the human acceptance; in more familiar words, regeneration and faith. So far as the doctrine of the Trinity is concerned, that also finds splendid illustration in this meeting place of the soul with God. Paul gives the fitting expression when (Eph. 2:18), speaking of Jew and Gentile, he says: "Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." Thus God in Christ, or Christ in God, is today as yesterday and forever the one Source of true religious experience.

The next step in unfolding the relation of Jesus to the spiritual life of our time brings us heart to heart with the sweet old gospel story. Even now, as when he first came into the world, and as he evermore will be, is Jesus Christ the Saviour from sin. Fallen but not hopeless humanity heard of the Seed of the Woman who should bruise the serpent's head. Expectant prophecy dimly foretold of One who should be wounded for our transgressions, upon whom should be laid the iniquity of us all, whose soul should be made an offering for sin, who therein should justify many because he should bear their iniquities. An angelic evangel proclaimed the Christ as "Jesus"

because he should save his people from their sins. The forerunner's voice acclaimed him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. His own consciousness of the supreme purpose of his mission found utterance in the tremendous claims that the Son of Man had come to seek and to save that which was lost, that he would give his life a ransom for many, that if a man believed not in him he should die in his sins, that he was the way and the truth and the life and no man could come to the Father but through him. Apostolic preaching proclaimed that there is no salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. Apostolic theology affirmed that there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus. Apostolic experience witnessed that it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Apostolic vision described amid the glories of the heavenly state a Lamb on the throne, by whose blood the happy saints have been redeemed and purified. And before Revelation ends history begins, and through nineteen centuries has been borne constant testimony through thousands of hearts and lives that the way of salvation lies through Jesus Christ. The present age sets its seal upon this historic witness and adduces its millions to aver that today in every land and nation, be it to many or to few, the Christ is proclaimed and accepted still as the Saviour from sin.

Familiar, indeed, and dear to our minds and hearts, are the implications of this doctrine. Jesus saves us from dominion and the penalty of sin. The cross purposes of our spiritual life, "the divided self," of which modern psychology talks, which Paul had so powerfully described in the seventh chapter of Romans, we

know only too painfully well. The sad scenes of falling short of our own possible best, the remorse and almost despair which sometimes assail us in view of our sins, the bitter consciousness of remembered fault, and the ceaseless fight against indwelling evil--all this we know. Ah, yes! And we know, too, how Jesus cares and helps! From that first glad hour when the sense of pardon overcame with resistless joy the deep grief of penitence, through all those ups and downs of the spiritual struggle till this very hour, we, my brethren, need no philosopher or scientist to tell us whence we got our help. Our business is to tell him. If we know anything at all we know that our highest inspiration to constant conflict with evil, our best help in whatever success we have had in the fight, and our comforting hope of final and enduring victory, are found in Jesus and in Jesus only. But under and over and all through this present help in our trouble with sin comes the precious doctrine of the Cross! It is that Jesus has offered a sufficient sacrifice for our sin. Not only its power in and over us is counteracted by his gracious presence, but its dreadful penalties now and hereafter are met for us in his atonement. He died for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification. His blood not only cleanses our consciences from the guilt of sin, but satisfied before God's judgment seat for that guilt. It is time, it always is time, to preach with sureness of conviction and experience the doctrine of the Cross. It is the world's greatest need in the twentieth as it was in the first century. If the Graeco-Roman civilization, rotten at heart, needed the preaching of Jesus Christ, no less does our modern society, with all its abounding evils and crimes, need it. Sin is no more without

penalty now than it ever was. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is as true a dictum for the modern as the ancient world. We may change our language and our views of hell, but hell does not cease to be the inevitable and bitter penalty of a sinning and impenitent soul. We may shift the emphasis in our theology from the justice to the love of God, but God Himself does not cease to be just. We may vary our theory of the origin of sin, but the fact of sin can not be averted by averting our looks from it. No less today than in all human todays, yesterdays and tomorrows, the fact and the penalty of human sin emphasize the need of a divine redemption; and for every today as it comes and goes that redemption is once for all provided in Jesus Christ. Red lined across the awful verdict of conscience and of God is written the gracious and sovereign pardon: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Our final illustration of the place of Christ is the spiritual life of today is found in the glorious truth that he is the Giver of eternal life. Nothing has been more efficacious in redeeming thought from the deadly grip of materialism than the irrepressible yearning for immortality. To live, to live on, and to live better-- what a deep desire! But who shall tell us whether? and how? In the face of this infinite longing philosophy becomes poetic, and science sentimental; but they bring us no certain word. It is still Jesus who speaks with sanity and with authority upon this momentous question of the real and the enduring life of the spirit. And he speaks with a serene and firm confidence which invites and encourages our own calm and sure trust. His voice is the hope of the world. "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, and believe in me";

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It was thus the early disciples understood and accepted him. For John tells us: "We have seen and bear witness and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." And Peter writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." And Paul declared that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord"; and further, that our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. His word to them is their sure word to us.

We recall that on one occasion, after Jesus had spoken words hard to be understood, many that had believed him to be the Messiah, but were not prepared to take him at his full meaning, went back and walked no more with him. Then, turning to the Twelve he asked, "Will ye also go away?" Then Peter, answering for them and for all, even for us, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." This is our case. To whom shall we go for assurance of life eternal? Not to the hard materialist who cynically rejects it; not to the frivolous sensualist who ignores and scorns it; not to the gloomy fatalist who will merely bow to the inevitable, whatever it may be; not to the philosophic poet who sings sweetly of it as a joy of the imagination; not to the rationalistic scientist

who says that he can neither prove nor disprove it, and that a reasonable man may believe in it if he so chooses; no, not to these, but to Jesus Christ. His is still the voice of clear conviction: "I am the way and the truth, and the life"; his is still the voice of tender invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; his is still the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to reassure his timid but trusting sheep: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

Thus, O Jesus, do thy people here assembled accept and hail thee, the same yesterday, and today, and forever! While tumultuous today crowds with stress and strain into yesterday, and swiftly gathering yesterdays lengthen into forever past, we come around again to face forever future; and still we see and salute thy commanding presence amid them all. "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." O incomparable Teacher, we would think thy high and holy thoughts after thee! O matchless Guide, we would follow thy strong and confident leadership in pursuit of purity and righteousness! O divine Saviour, perfected through thy human suffering, we would trust thee alone for salvation and immortality! To thee we bring our baffled yet eager minds for truth on things beyond our ken, to thee we bring our wayward and oft bewildered hearts for help in daily duty, to thee we bring our hurt and sorrowing souls for healing from sin and for hope of life evermore! Here at thy pierced and hallowed feet we rest until the day dawn and the shadows flee away!