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The Deity of Jesus

Text: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."—Matt. 16:16.

INTRODUCTION

There have in reality been but two views of Jesus. No matter how many shades of meaning we have regarding the person of that mighty one who has wrought so powerfully in the history of the world, in the last analysis there are but two views of him. Whether it be the Ebionites or Gnostics, the Neo-Platonists or Arians, the Socinians or the Unitarians, there have always been but the two views of the person of Christ.

The first view maintains that he was just the son of man, "He was a great man, truly wonderful, but only a man, a bright and shining light like John the Baptist, a sensitive tender-hearted patriot and martyr like Jeremiah, an intrepid messenger from the courts of Heaven like Elijah, a beautiful Heraclitus or Socrates, a noble Seneca or Epictetus, a Palestinian Confucius or Buddha, very great, very wonderful, but still a man." (Jefferson, *The Fundamentals*.) As we are men with passions and temptations so also

he was a man, a little better than we are or perhaps ever can hope to be, but after all only a man. Emerson held this view when he said,

"I am the owner of the sphere, Of the seven stars and the solar year, Of Caesar's hand and Plato's brain, Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain."

How little did he understand the man of Galilee. What a travesty that upon the same level with Plato and Caesar he should place the Lord Christ.

Charles Lamb held the opposite and far more noble view when he said, "If Shakespeare should come into this room we would rise to greet him; but if that person (Christ) should enter here, we should fall upon our knees and kiss the hem of his garment."

If Christ was only a man, we are duty-bound by the urge of the "Categorical Imperative," to surpass him. We cannot stand still, we must be better men than he was a man. If, however, he was more than a man and better than we are now, we are duty-bound to obey him. If he was only a man, we can master him in every respect for we are men; and after almost two thousand years of experience we should be able to understand him thoroughly, and make him a part of us. But have we mastered him? The church has been endeavoring to do this for almost twenty centuries; but how sadly she has fallen short of the shining character which so long has been her inspiration ! To Peter he well said: "Flesh and blood hath

not revealed it unto thee but my Father who is in heaven." Paul said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Horace Bushnell says that the character of Jesus forbids his possible classification with men. If he was only a man, why are we not turning out better men today? We have every facility today in our great colleges and universities for surpassing anything that his age could produce. And yet, with all these facilities we are falling far short of the standard set by him. What a wondrous miracle; he was raised in an obscure and despised province of the Roman Empire, of poor parents and without the means of education, and yet he is the most colossal figure in all history.

The second view of Christ, and it is the triumphant one, the one held by all the redeemed saints of God throughout the centuries, is that he was the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It was only by coming and dwelling in flesh among men that God could demonstrate love to them, and by the demonstration of that love win them unto his own heart. Let us examine minutely these two views of Christ.

ARGUMENT I.

CAN WE EXPLAIN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JESUS

BY THE VIEW THAT HE WAS ONLY A MAN ?

First of all let us notice what kind of a picture the disciples paint for us in the gospels.

(1) He is the physically transcendent one.

He has absolute power over nature, which he can command whenever needed to show the glory and

power of his heavenly Father. He heals the sick, he gives sight to the blind and they go on their way rejoicing in the new world before their delighted eyes. He cleanses the leper and returns him to his loved ones. He stills the tempest, speaking to the winds and the roaring waves, and they are still. He feeds the five thousand, and walks on the water. Yea, even more than all this: he has power to bring back the dead from the depths of the tomb. He has absolute power over the forces of earth, sky, and sea. The earth is his, and he rules it according to his will.

(2) He is ethically and spiritually transcendent This is by far the most beautiful and amazing part of the picture. Jesus is a member of our race, subject to all its sorrows and temptations, to all its trials and heartaches, and yet he is without sin. There never has been in all the world another of such entrancing loveliness as this one. Those who knew him best and thus had every opportunity of observing taint, if such there had been, testified without one dissenting voice that he was the purest of our race. He is represented as being spotless in conduct and character. John the Baptist, the most outspoken of his contemporaries and the one who would have been the first to denounce sin, believed him pure and recognized his moral preeminence. When Jesus demanded baptism at his hands he protested vehemently: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14). In the presence of Christ's moral beauty Peter felt condemned, and falling down before his Lord, cried out: "Depart from me, for I

am a sinful man, oh, Lord!" (Luke 5:8.) There never was one of his disciples—and they lived with him and knew him intimately for more than three years—who ever accused him of sin. They believed in his moral spotlessness with all their hearts.

The enemies of Jesus testified that he was pure. Pilate, looking upon him with the cold, critical eye of a magistrate, said, "I find no fault in him." While he was hanging on the cross, those who were murdering him testified to his spiritual and ethical beauty when they said, "He trusted in God." The dying thief, rebuking the blatant, angry words of his suffering partner in crime and knowing that the man who died between them was one of superlative excellence, said: "This man hath done nothing amiss." The Centurion, touched by the death of the Lord and realizing that he had died unjustly, cried out at the very foot of the cross: "Truly this was a righteous man."

Jesus was never conscious of sin in his own life. He never confesses it; he never asks for pardon from it; he never seems to have one thought that aught he had ever said or done made him an alien from God. There is nowhere any change of heart or conversion in his life as a beginning of his clean, beautiful years. While he commands men to repent, and his words come with the power of a mighty storm, yet he nowhere shows that he himself needs the message. He clearly considers himself as not belonging to the category of "sinner," a thing which the boldest men have not essayed to do.

The fact that Jesus forgave sins implies moral perfection, for how could he tell men that the past was blotted out unless he himself was so perfect that he had the power to forgive the sins of all? Because of this sinlessness he said unto the sick of the palsy: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." To the scribes the assumption of this authority was tantamount to a declaration of divinity; for they protested, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Their meaning was that if Jesus could forgive sins he was God and morally perfect; for only God has the power to forgive the transgressions of men. To forgive sins against oneself is one thing; but to forgive sins which concern God, and which God alone can know, implies a moral excellence equal to that of God.

Thus we have the evangelists' portrait of Jesus Christ. It is the most original, the most unheard of, the most amazing picture ever painted. The life portrayed is the most beautiful, the most charming, and the most beneficent life that has ever been lived. The work accomplished by this mighty figure is the most stupendous ever accomplished. How can we explain it? What conclusions can we logically draw from the marvelous array of facts presented to us?

II. CAN WE EXPLAIN THESE FACTS BY THE CLAIM THAT THE LOVE OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST CAUSED THEM TO INVENT THE DEISTIC VIEW?

(1) Was this sort of invention a natural thing to the Hebrew mind?

We have before us the most wonderful and original creation that the world has ever seen. These men were Jews, and as Jews they had inherited a great idea of God, the finest and noblest idea of the ancient world. Now, one of the most amazing things about their portrait of Jesus is the fact that they are able to paint him as the Son of God, the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth,—and yet not lower God to the level of men. The Greeks had thought of sons of God, and they had tried to imagine such an one as the character that the evangelists give us; but in so doing they had brought Zeus down to the level of men with all the follies and weaknesses of men. But not only do the evangelists not bring God down to the level of mankind but in their picture they have actually exalted and ennobled our very idea of God, a work that no other piece of historical literature has ever done or even approached.

But there is something still more remarkable in the view of Jesus as given by the evangelists. "Jesus is conceived as one who has never appeared in history before; he is no ordinary person and yet he is to be portrayed in a history. We should be tempted to represent all that he did as gigantesque and all that he said as oracular and mysterious. The more stupendous the representation grew, the more abnormal, contra-natural, incredible would the conception become and we should be forced to abandon the task, confessing that the work was impossible to literary art. How do the evangelists deal with this problem? In a most surprising way. The highest speculation is embodied in the simplest history. He who is conceived as the

Son of God is represented as the most natural character in all history." (Fairbairn.)

Now, could the disciples of our Lord have invented this wonderful view and in their own power have solved the perplexing theological and historical problems presented by such a conception? If there is anything historically certain about the Hebrew it is that this type of literature was wholly foreign to his mind. He gave to the world no dramas. This type of literature was far more natural to the Greek mind; and had these writers been Greeks, with the same high moral and spiritual conception as that of the Hebrews, we might have credited the position that they had invented the deified Jesus. But, remember that these men were Jews with all the training of Jews, with all the prejudice and beliefs of Jews. We have some very fine specimens of the literature which they did produce in the Old Testament Scriptures, the apocryphal books, the Targums or comments of the scribes upon the sacred writings, and the works of Josephus. In these writings we find the trend of the Hebrew mind and that trend was toward morals and not toward art. In the Laws of Moses there were stern prohibitions against the making of graven images, hence the Hebrews produced no statues or paintings. To do this would have been to break the very commandments of God. In frequent lapses into idolatry they did deify stone or wood, but never a man. This was the Greek idea, but not the Hebrew. Not only so, but the wonders which Jesus did would not have caused the disciples to invent a deictic view of

him because they were used to the prophets who did similar things.

(2) What type of men would the evangelists have needed to be to produce the deictic view?

It is certain that they were not of the literary or book-making classes. They were the common people, unlearned and unskilled in any kind of literature of even the simplest form. But the literature which they produced is the noblest of earth. How can we explain the miracle? Matthew was a tax collector under the Roman government. Mark was a friend and companion of the Apostle Paul. More of his early history we do not know. Luke was a physician. John was a fisherman. These were men without university training and yet they give us the greatest and most astonishing piece of literature in the world.

And how brief and calm is the record that they give of that beautiful life. This characteristic may be better appreciated if we compare it with the uninspired Lives of Christ. Andrews' Life of Christ contains 615 pages, Geikie's more than 1200, Hanna's over 2100, Edersheim's 1500, or a total of about 5490 pages, and it would take months of reading to go over it all but one time. Bagster prints the gospel in 82 pages, The Oxford Edition is in 104, the American Revision in 120. In Bagster, Matthew has but 23 pages, Mark 13, Luke 25, John 21. Thus simple and brief is the inspired record. The inspired writers do not enthuse over the story; they simply tell it. While they are filled with wonder and admiration for the marvelous things that Jesus did and said, yet they

never dilate on his works or unduly emphasize the character that inspired them; they simply give a dignified record of his life.

To invent this wonderful view of Jesus the disciples must have had the depth and the breadth and the wisdom of Jesus, for not only must they have been able to draw the portrait, but they must have been able to think out the mighty, universal doctrines which Jesus taught. The philosophers of Greece and Rome have not done this and they were men of great elevation of intellect. They have always felt their incapacity. Plato sighed for the coming of a great teacher who could make light what to him was dark. If the evangelists had invented Jesus as the Son of God, there would have been four Christs instead of one, for there were the four and differing types of intellect. Not only would it have been necessary to think out the doctrines of Christ, but it would have been just as necessary to conceive one who could live them to the letter.

There is nothing so true as the commonplace statement that "every effect must have an adequate cause." We see a delicate piece of machinery showing the results of a marvelous ingenuity and skill. We know immediately that somewhere there must have been the master mechanic, the cause adequate to the production of the great effect. Alone and unaided, the disciples of the Lord could never have produced their portrait of him; they could never have invented the deictic view. A work of art which thrills us and brings us to tears can only be the work of a master artist. None but a Michelangelo could carve a Moses, none

but a Raphael could paint the transfiguration, none but *a*. Milton could give us Paradise Lost; and none but the Spirit of our God could give us Jesus Christ. How true are the words of Theodore Parker "None but a Jesus could forge a Jesus."

III. CAN WE EXPLAIN JESUS BY THE VIEW THAT HE WAS ONLY A MYTH ?

This has been a position frequently advocated in the past by those who would get away from the miraculous. These shallow thinkers would class the Lord with the Greek Zeus, the Egyptian Isis and Osiris, the Scandinavian Thor and Odin, the Hindustani Vishnu or Buddha. He never really lived upon the earth, and all the stories that have arisen about him are but the accretions of the years, those that naturally cling to the mythical character. The folk soul, feeling throughout the years the need of one like unto Jesus, has invented this view of him; the historic Christ never really lived.

But we should notice that there are certain well-defined laws according to which myths grow just as there are laws of trees and plants. If the story of Christ cannot come under the laws of myths we must conclude that the character which it portrays is not in any sense a mythical character. Let us consider these laws.

(1) Myths originate and as conceptions are complete before written history.

Nothing of a mythical character is ever given credence for any length of time after the history of a

nation has been written. It may flourish for a time as a rumor, but it does not become a myth. The great myths of the world have all arisen before written history. Away back before the dawn of history man dreamed of great gods and goddesses. Rude pictures tell us of the myths. They antedate all letters and records. But Jesus appears after the history of his people has been written. He does not come at the dawn of the history of Israel, but at the twilight, after the greatest and most eventful part of it had been written. According to this first law, then, he cannot be considered a mythical character.

(2) About all myths there is something grotesque if not monstrous.

The mythical character shocks our common sense. He is a gross exaggeration. He does impossible and unnecessary things. There is a myth concerning the love of Buddha. While traveling along the road one day he met a hungry peasant. The heart of Buddha was touched and he resolved to feed the man by turning himself into a rabbit. But before doing this great act of kindness he became even more magnanimous in that he carefully shook off a flea so that the flea might not suffer from the heat of the frying pan. This type of miracle amuses us because it is so preposterous, so unnecessary.

While in myths human characters are gigantic and impossible, in the historic character there is sanity and sobriety. And this is the character of Jesus. While he is a supernatural being, yet his supernaturalism is a sane supernaturalism. He appears as other men appear, and there is nothing in his personal appearance

or general actions to set him apart from other men. There is nothing of the monstrous or the grotesque in his life.

In the mythical character there is also invariably an attempt to describe the personal appearance. Contrary to this law of myths, the evangelists nowhere describe the features of the Lord. They are concerned about his teaching and his mission and not about his appearance.

(3) Myths reflect the coloring of the time, race, and place.

Zeus is Greek in every action and in every thought; Odin and Thor are Scandinavian in every detail; Isis and Osiris reflect the coloring and carry with them the atmosphere of old Egypt; Bel-Merodach is Chaldean. Jesus, however, while a Jew, is not Jewish in teaching, in his conceptions of life, or in his view of man. He is the first and only universal man.

(4) In all cases myths defy chronology, they are without dates.

Some time away back in the past a certain thing happened. "Once long, long ago," or "once upon a time," these are the introductions to the myths. Their origin is always clothed in mystery. But of Jesus we know the time of his coming and the place of his dwelling. Herod was king in Judea.

(5) Myths also defy topography, they are without definite localities.

They originate far away from the place of their first telling. We know the place of the dwelling and of the life and actions of Jesus. The Bible places are

exact. It was said of Jesus. "As to this man we know from whence he is."

(6) Myths are never completed at one telling.

A story is told and then repeated over and over again. The fathers die, and their children tell it to their children's children, and, thus, after centuries, perhaps, we have the well-defined myth. But this is not true of the story of Jesus. Any story told about him which is not in the New Testament is given but little credence. It is only the inspired record which is today believed.

(7) Myths belong to the infancy of a nation and never to its age.

Suppose, for illustration, that 2000 years from today someone should discover one of the cartoons of the late Colonel Roosevelt which were recently so popular. As the finder would look at the large teeth, the broad smile, and the big stick he might think that no such man had ever lived in the twentieth century ; but he would have no trouble proving that such a character did live, for Colonel Roosevelt lived after a large and eventful history of his country had been written. And so with Jesus, we can have no trouble proving that he was not a mythical character at all, because of the large place which he has taken in the life of his time and city. He lived only a few years from Vespasian and after Julius Caesar. The nation which gave him birth was old, its youth had been long passed.

(8) The results of Christ's life in the world could never have come from a myth.

The Church of Christ was not founded upon a myth. It should be remembered that the very first church was organized in the same city in which Jesus had suffered and died and within seven weeks after the terrible event. If it had been founded upon a myth, its Pentecost would never have been in the same city where the hero of the myth had had his great humiliation. The Pentecost of a false religion would have been a thousand miles removed from this place. In other words, if the story preached by the apostles had been false, it could very easily have been proven so because all the facts were at hand. But instead of this, the first church was formed of those who just a few weeks before had been such enemies of Christ that they had nailed him to the Cross. There had not been enough time for a myth to arise before Peter preached his great Pentecostal sermon, and as evidence of the fact that the people realized this there were three thousand converts the very first day. This number rapidly increased until the church had conquered the empire. Rabid enemies, as were those who crucified the Christ, are not converted to the one whom they had so ardently persecuted on insubstantial evidence. The most rigid and searching examination of the facts had been made before they decided to abandon their old position and acknowledge their faith in the one whom they had so lately beaten and taunted even to the moment of his death.

Then, also, the work of the Christian religion in the souls of men could not be the result of the life of a mythical character, but could only have its foundation in sober fact. When we think of all the benef-

icent effects of the religion of Christ, we are constrained to say that if this is the result of a myth, then myth is better than fact. It is a travesty upon the intelligence of modern Christian scholars to say that, as they date their letters and legal documents, they are dating them from a phantom Savior who never can and never did save a soul because he never really lived. No, Jesus is not a myth, but the most colossal and mighty character that has ever trod the earth. (9) The only position which will explain the facts of Jesus is that he is the Son of God, and in a sense in which no one else has ever been or ever can be the Son of God.

I. His CLAIMS ARE THE CLAIMS OF GOD

The amazing thing about these claims is the fact that they are claims that only God would make. No mere man would make such claims at all. We have heard the claims of men and we are not surprised at them, for as long as the race has lived such claims have been made. But the claims of Jesus are so strange, so original, so godlike that they make us intuitively realize that only God would make them.

(1) He claimed to be above the Scriptures.

Several times he said, "It hath been written" or, "Ye have been told of old time" and added, "but I say unto you." His claim thus to be able to add to the teaching, or to include in it things that were not before included, caused astonishment among the people. They well realized that this was a claim to deity: for God had given the Scriptures and only God was greater than that which he had given.

(2) He considered himself greater than the most sacred institutions of the nation.

The Sabbath was the great and holy day to the Hebrews, yet he claims that, "The son of man is Lord of the sabbath." The Law and the Prophets were sacred to Israel, yet Jesus claimed that he had come to "fulfill the Law and the Prophets." He considered himself greater than the Temple, the house in which Jehovah met his people. There was but one conclusion from these claims: that he was the one who had given these institutions to the people and, therefore, had the right and the power to do as he pleased with that which belonged to him.

(3) He set himself above all men, living or dead. Abraham was the father of the faithful, and every

Jew was proud of the fact that he was the son of Abraham; but to the amazement of those who heard him, Jesus said: "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58.) This was a claim to divinity, and the Jews knew it; hence immediately after this claim they took up stones to stone him.

(4) He claimed to be greater than Solomon, the wisest man that had ever lived.

In his great sermon recorded in the eleventh chapter of Luke, Jesus rebukes the cravings of the multitudes, for a sign and their failure to believe the works which he had already done among them, saying: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall

stand up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." (Luke 11:31-32.)

(5) He claimed pre-existence.

In his great intercessory prayer he pleads with the Father: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5.) In his discourse on the bread of life he says: "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.)

In the great third chapter of John we have another instance of this claim when he says: "And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the son of man, who is in heaven." (John 3:13.) His claim is, then, that before the world came forth from chaos at the command of God he was with the Father in eternal delight. This is a claim of deity.

(6) He claimed to be sinless.

Of the Pharisees he asks the question: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" To this they were silent, for like Pilate they could find no fault in his life. He, in his living, is always the same: "the lily of the valley and the fairest among ten thousand." Knowing that none was good save God alone, the Jews at once recognized in this claim of Jesus a claim to equality with God. For this reason, although they could find nothing amiss in his life, they condemned him as a blasphemer. If he was absolutely pure in conduct and character he was God.

(7) He claimed all authority in heaven and on earth, and that he would some day judge the world.

Just before he gives the great commission, he says to the disciples: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." (Matt. 28:18, 19.) He is the head of all things, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." In the awe-inspiring message in which he is describing to his wondering disciples the coming judgment, he tells them of his own position as judge when he says: "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." (Matt. 25:31.) He claims, therefore, not only to be the creator of the world, but its highest authority and judge as well.

These are the claims of a god or an impostor. They cannot be the claims of an impostor because Jesus had nothing to gain by making this type of claim. He knew that he would lose the attention of the multitudes of followers which accompanied him wherever he went, for he was striking at the very foundation of the things which they believed; yet he preaches these things about his own person. These claims are those which we would expect from God if he were to manifest himself among men and in the form of men. They are the claims of one who had the right to make them.

II. HIS TEACHING IS THE TEACHING OF GOD

Increasingly is the teaching of Jesus impressing itself upon the minds of men as his greatest miracle. There is enough in this alone to demonstrate to the

world that he was God in flesh. He was wonderful in a multitude of ways, but in this he towers above all others.

(1) He was wonderful in the method of his teaching.

Jesus was absolutely extemporaneous. There is never a moment of hesitancy. He speaks forth the words of truth without any apparent effort; speaks them as though he had always known them. He claimed to be the truth, and if this claim was justified his words were the words of truth.

He was not only extemporaneous in his teaching, but he was also strongly dogmatic. He never says, "I think" or, "it is my opinion," but his words are positive and to the point. Truth is essentially dogmatic in nature. "Two plus two is four" is a very dogmatic proposition because it is true, and is always true. There is never any exception to the rule. The teaching of our Lord is of the same type. The words he utters are true, have always been true, and will always be true. He speaks the eternal truth. It is only when we have the truth that we can be dogmatic; but since he always spoke the truth, his teaching was always given in the dogmatic manner and in positive tone.

He was marvellously simple as a teacher. The common people heard him gladly. And why? Because they could understand him. The most wonderful truths in all the world are couched in such simple words that "the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, cannot err therein." What a splendid example Jesus set for modern teachers in this respect! If we would

have men accept our message, we must make it one that they can readily understand; and as they gladly received his word so with joy they will heed our teachings.

(2) Jesus was also wonderful in the enduring quality of his teachings.

Human teachers are out of date in but a few years. Hugh Miller was once a great authority on geology, but no one reads him now. His work is out of date. Adam Smith wrote "The Wealth of the Nations" and it was thought by some that the last word in the realm of political economy had been spoken; but no one reads his work today save as he desires to have history of the science. I was asked recently what I thought of the theory of evolution, and my questioner was amazed when I asked in return, "Which one?" If Charles Darwin were to arise from the dead today, he would not know the theory which he fathered because of the many modifications through which it has gone. A few years ago I remember standing before an audience and showing by every possible argument that "the United States should reduce her armament to a minimum necessary for police duty only." The arguments were then well received; but if that same speech were to be given today, the one giving it would be hissed from the platform. How soon are our theories out of date!

But this is not true of the teachings of our Lord. He himself said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away." His words are eternal, they are always abreast of the times, they are never surpassed. He has said the last word in ethics

and in morals. To this testify John Stuart Mill, Renan, and Rousseau. And yet, in the light of this fact, behold a marvel! Christ was totally unschooled. He never attended a great university. He never left the land of Palestine, a small, down-trodden province of the Roman Empire. He never wrote anything and never studied any ancient learning. From the standpoint of the world Paul was far more learned than Jesus. And yet he spoke words that have shaken the world. As the years roll on, the world is more and more coming to see that the only cure for its sorrows, its heartaches, and its strifes is the teaching of the Man of Galilee.

(3) Jesus was wonderful in the composure of his teaching.

We are told that when Isaac Newton by mathematical calculation had discovered the law of gravitation, he was so overcome by the marvelous discovery that he went out and wept for more than an hour. Jesus utters words which are to be the foundation of civilizations yet unborn with a calm majesty and without surprise, showing that he had always known them, and that they are to him nothing new. One time Louis Agassiz was introduced to a large audience as "the great teacher." As he arose, he said: "I am a teacher, but not the great teacher. There is only one great teacher and that is the Lord Jesus Christ." Truly, Jesus was "a teacher come from God."

III. HIS PLAN IS THE PLAN OF GOD

(1) Notice the originality of it.

We have found that no mere man would claim to be

what Jesus claimed to be. His claims are absolutely original. So, also, no man would plan to do what Jesus planned to do. We can understand the plans of men. We can understand how an Alexander, a Napoleon, or a Kaiser could plan a world-empire and execute that plan by the assembling of great armies with which to crush all opposition to their wills. We can understand how a Mohammed could plan to subdue by the power of his sword and force his religion upon men. There have been many attempts at world-empire and they have all been built upon force. But Jesus plans an empire different in every respect from all these. His is to be an empire of hearts; the hardest empire in all the world to build. He is going to take the "down and outs," the sinners of the world, and build them into one mighty and universal kingdom which shall eventually conquer the earth. He proposes to take the "trash heaps of society" and make of them men after God's own heart.

(2) Notice the catholicity of this plan.

I wish to quote here a wonderful passage from a wonderful work, "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" by Fairbairn: "Jesus of Nazareth is the least local, sectional, or occasional type of moral manhood in all literature. In their ideals race differs from race and age from age. The typical manhood of Greece, while under the spell of Homer, is the swift-footed Achilles or the crafty and far-traveled Odysseus ; but when under the spell of Plato, it is the sage that loved truth, praised virtue, and studied how to know and realize the good in the state. The saints in the East would not be canonized in the West, while

the qualities which the cultured West most admires the civilized East holds in disdainful contempt. Few things, indeed, are more permanent or more prohibitive of moral sympathy and appreciation than racial characteristics. A good man in a black skin may be pitied and helped, or patronized and misunderstood by white men, but he certainly would not be hailed as a savior to be believed or as a master to be revered and followed. We may say, 'Beauty is only skin deep/ but as a matter of fact there are few things deeper than skin; it represents not so much a physiological or racial difference as an intellectual, a moral, and social cleavage between man and man. The fields of religion and history teem with illustrations. Confucius is a sage China worships, but the Hindus would despise his ostentatious ignorance of the only being they think worth knowing and his indifference to the only life they think worth living. The ascetic community which is Buddha's social ideal for his saints, a Greek would have conceived as the final apostasy from good of a person destined by nature to live as a free citizen in a free state. The status Mohammed assigns to woman is an offense to the domestic ideal of the Teuton; and the way he indulged his sexual appetite makes him even more deeply distasteful than even the 'necessary fiction' which he compounded with the 'eternal truth' that 'there is only one God.' But the character of Jesus transcends all racial limitations and divisions. He is the only oriental that the Occident has admired with an admiration that has become worship. His is the only name that the West has carried into the East

which the East has received, and praised, and loved with sincerity and without qualification. And this power it has exercised ever since it has made its appeal to human thought: it overcame the insolent disdain of the Greek for all things barbarian; the proud contempt of the Roman for a crucified malefactor sprung from a hated and conquered people; the vain conceit of a commercial race, which before the moral majesty of a moneyless peasant has almost wished to forget its passion for gold. And this catholicity endures because it is based upon nature. What seemed to His own day to be disastrous to His claims—the want of rank, of name and fame and honor—has saved the ideal from death, emphasizing the fact that His transcendence was due to nothing adventitious, but to Himself alone. If He had appeared as Caesar, the majesty of the man would have been sacrificed to the ostentation of the emperor; if as the Roman Augustus, He would not have seemed so sublime and kingly as He does as Jesus of Nazareth. But though all men may see this now, few saw it then. Their ignorance and simplicity saved the evangelists from the temptation to make Him appear more royal than He was. If they had known imperial Rome, they could hardly have refrained from borrowing some of its purple and fine linen for His cradle or His grave. If they had known how the Gentiles would regard His birth and state, they might have tried to hide them under the shadow of the pomp He had despised. But knowing Him, and knowing nothing else, they told what they heard and described what they saw, and so created the most immortal work of art in all

literature,—a character so complete and catholic in its humanity that to it alone belongs the distinction of having compelled the homage of universal man."

Jesus is the great cosmopolite. He is the one man for all men. There is nothing about him that limits him to race or class. His feelings, sympathies and plans overleap all barriers. He was indeed the child of the race, "the son of man." His plan for the building of an empire of souls is universal in that it is to include all races and tribes and tongues. All time past, present and future is to be his, in that all that have lived or will live will belong to his kingdom. His, indeed, is the plan of the ages.

(3) Notice the method which he employs to accomplish this plan.

We can understand how a Caesar, an Alexander, or a Mohammed could try to found an empire on force, for this method has been repeatedly attempted; but how different and original is the method which Jesus uses. He will not force men to be religious; he will draw them, and by the power of divine love. Some men have a peculiar power about them to draw men unto themselves. When Napoleon came back from Elba, 250,000 men sprang to arms to follow him and to die for him upon the battlefield. But Jesus had no wealth or position to offer men. His was a martyr's cross and a martyr's crown. To follow him meant suffering and death. He had won no victories, he had no palaces or money to offer, and yet men left their all and followed him. What is the secret of it all? What is this wonderful power? It is the power of divine love, the irresistible power of an uplifted cross.

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," is Christ's own statement of the most marvelous power that has ever been known to man. Throughout the centuries he has been drawing men until now his is the mightiest empire under the heavens.

Truly this plan of Jesus to regenerate the whole world and make it fit for the abiding of God the Father, and to do it by the power of divine love, is the plan of God himself. No man would attempt it or even think of it. His very plan, therefore, witnesses to the fact that he is Deity in flesh.

IV. HIS MIRACLES ARE THE ACTS OF GOD

They are exactly the acts which we would expect from such a being as God in flesh. All of the evangelists tell of these works or power apart from the ordinary course of nature. All of these miracles were performed after He had entered upon his personal ministry and none before that time. While some of these were acts upon external nature, the majority of them were works of mercy and love such as healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, the power to walk to the lame, and cleansing the leper. Three times we are told that he raised the dead. It is plain that all of these acts were works of mercy and that they sprang from the heart of Christ, touched as he was by human need as it manifested itself in human suffering.

The attitude of the Master as he did these wonderful works was that of absolute calmness and without ostentation. He acts as though they were entirely

natural to him, as natural as the ordinary actions of life are to the ordinary man. There is no place where we are told that he considered these acts as the most important in his life, in fact he tells us that faith which is based upon them alone is an inferior faith. While it is commonly held that the miracles of Christ were for the purpose of attesting his divine mission, and while they are in reality for this purpose, we should not forget that they are just the works that would spring from his heart. They are thus best understood when they are viewed as first of all deeds of love and kindness that come from his compassionate heart. He had more than human power, and more than human love; and that more than human love could only express itself in such deeds as would alleviate the sufferings and agonies of the miserable and sorrowing around him. His miracles were even more expressions of character than of power. They flowed unchecked from a great heart of love.

There is also a sobriety and sanity about the miracles of Jesus which cannot be found in the mythical miracle. The mythical miracle "reflects a morbid temper, it is commonly the creation of a fancy grown fantastic and even childish," but there is nothing so foreign and so distasteful to the gospels as wonders for wonders' sake. This is more to be wondered at when we consider the fact that the religious imagination, when allowed to work freely in the realm of the supernatural, does not at all work sanely. Fairbairn gives some fine illustrations of the morbid character of the religious imagination. He quotes from Jerome, one of the most highly educated and devout of the

Ancient Fathers, in his "Life of Hilarion." Hilarion by his prayers made a barren woman to bear, he answered the prayers of a certain Italicus whose horses raced in the circus, that he might win the victory over his heathen rival. By letting them drink out of the cup from which he used to drink, the horses of Italicus were made to fly to the goal far ahead, while those of the rival stuck to the spot. He tells also how the saints cast out a lascivious devil from a maid who had been bewitched by certain forms and figures beneath the threshold of her house; how he disposed of another devil, a gigantic camel, which thirty men with strong ropes could hardly hold; how he commanded a mighty serpent, which had been devouring oxen, to ascend a funeral pyre and be burned to ashes before all the people; how, months after his death, his body was conveyed from Cyprus to Palestine as perfect as if alive, and fragrant with sweet odors; and how at the places alike where he had been and where he was buried great miracles were daily performed, in one case as it were by his body and the other by his spirit. In the "Four Dialogues" of Gregory, even more wonderful miracles are recorded. He tells how the Italian monks could treat water as if it were dry land; how great showers of gold pieces, as if fresh from the mint, fell down from heaven; how terrible floods which rose round the churches till they came to the tops of the doors did not enter, though the doors stood open; how the arm of an executioner was held rigid and fixed as it was upraised to strike off the head of a monk, but its power was restored to it on the promise never again

to use it against a Christian. Thus there are hundreds of illustrations of the insanity of the mythical consciousness when allowed to work freely in the religious field.

The miracles of Jesus do not, however, have any taint of the morbid, the grotesque, or the impossible about them, but they are just what we would expect of him, and they are as sane and sober as he is sane and sober and natural in his life. While they are supernatural they are not contra-natural. A comparison of the things which he did with the reported miracles of the Church Fathers or even with some of the modern so-called miracles of healing brings out strongly the fact that they are but the transcripts of his character, a character which might well be termed a sort of "embodied beneficence, creating health and happiness." To quote once more from Fairbairn, as he remarks upon the way in which the evangelists have described the mighty works of Jesus: "The evangelists are the most modern writers of Christian antiquity; and we may add, without fear of contradiction, that with the most absolute and august idea of the supernatural to be found in the whole literature of religion, they have given it an expression so objective and realistic as to be without any parallel."

The mightiest miracle of all, the resurrection, witnesses to the Deity of Jesus. All the gospels tell of the glorious event, as does also Paul, the apostle to the gentiles. The accounts are fragmentary and the precise order of the events cannot always be clearly traced; but the great fact remains that the disciples claim that early on the morning of the third day after

the crucifixion the body of Jesus was missing from the tomb. As an explanation of its disappearance they claim that he appeared unto them and that they ate with him, and talked with him, and knew him, as the same one who had died upon the cross such a short time before. Yet in this representation they do not claim that Jesus returned to his former life. Although bodily actions were possible to him yet he was independent of them, for he appeared at any place at will. He did not dwell with his friends in the same manner in which he had dwelt before, but appeared to them and talked to them from time to time and was unseen at intervals. At the beginning of Acts of the Apostles we are told that the appearances lasted for a space of forty days and that at the expiration of that time he was received up into heaven, after he had given commandments to his disciples regarding their work in bringing the world to him. Fifty days from the Passover on which he died there came a wondrous new force into the church in the advent of the Holy Spirit. This, in brief, is the record.

There have been a great number of theories concerning the resurrection, but the fact of the matter is that no one can clearly understand all about it because it lies in the realm of the spirit world and that realm is essentially a mystery to all. With what body Jesus rose, has been discussed again and again, but the materials for a clear answer do not exist. If we take just the gospel account we will see that his resurrection was the rising into a new and glorious

spiritual life with the power to manifest himself at will to men in this world.

There is every reason to accept the scriptural accounts as true. While the records are not complete they nevertheless report the resurrection as an observed fact. Those reporting it do not seem to think that it needs any proof, but deem sufficient the mere testifying to what they saw. It should be remembered just here that those giving the record are not so much concerned about giving a detailed history of the events as they are to give their testimony to it as an historical fact. Blackstone, commenting upon this testimony, says: "No event in history is more amply substantiated than the resurrection of Christ."

The great events which followed the disappearance of the body of Jesus from the tomb, argue for the truth of the testimony of the disciples. Just three days after the death of their beloved Lord, the disciples who had been filled with gloom at the tragedy suddenly take on new life and boldness, and from the ashes of defeat they rise to the mountain-top of victory. Some wonderful power must have been given them, some wonderful event must have transpired in their lives to bring them from the depths of depression to such amazing confidence and enthusiasm. The problem as presented by the testimony of these men that they knew that Jesus had risen from the dead because they had seen him after his resurrection, is ably summed up by Edersheim. The following words give a resume of his statement of the problem:

Considering their previous state of mind and the absence of any motive, how are we to account for the change of mind on the part of the disciples, and the sudden change at that, concerning the resurrection? There can be no doubt that they came to believe, and with most absolute certitude, in the resurrection as an historical fact; nor yet that it formed the substance and basis of all their preaching even to martyrdom.

For the fact that all the gospels and Paul give detailed accounts of this wonderful event.

For the fact that Paul, an inveterate enemy of Christ and an ardent persecutor of the church, and one to whom the story of a risen Lord was absolutely abhorrent, became after a searching examination a devout believer in the resurrection as an historical fact, believing it so firmly that he could say: "If Christ is not risen then is our faith vain." The gibes and coarse sneering objections of the Greek scholars spurred him on to the most rigid examination of all the facts.

We may well add a fourth fact just here, and that regarding those who were just a little while before enemies of Christ. How can we explain the fact that only fifty days after Jesus had died, in the same city in which he had suffered and had been put to death, three thousand of those who were guilty of murdering him confessed their faith in him and became the first members of his church? For it should ever be remembered that the first Christians were enemies of Jesus when they heard the sermon concerning his

resurrection They at least believed that the apostle were telling the truth.

There is only one way to explain these facts and that is to freely acknowledge that the disciples actually had seen Jesus after his resurrection, or in other words, that the resurrection is a fact, the most wonderful and sublime fact that the world has ever known. These men could not have been deceived, because he was seen on too many different occasions, by too many different persons, and by some of these persons too many different times. There could have been no possibility of mistake. The disciples had every opportunity to identify him as the same one who had before lived with them, and talked with them, and taught them the way of life. We cannot now disclaim it all by saying that these men were dishonest men in that they were trying to palm off an imposition on the world. There was absolutely no inducement to dishonesty, because to tell such a story could bring them no money or fame. Then, also, the story that a crucified Jew was the savior of the world was the most unwelcome story that could be preached at that time. Men will not knowingly and willingly suffer and die for a lie. Yet it is significant that these men preached their story even though the preaching of it meant stripes, imprisonment, and death. Even to the last drop of their blood they told the story and never one of them recanted. Honesty can demand no more than that a man seal his testimony with his own blood. The lives of these men were among the finest and purest that the world has ever seen. If

they were not honest men then the world has never known even the meaning of the term honesty.

The church was founded upon the story of the resurrection, and as long as this stands there is hope for a world lost in sin and longing for the positive hope of immortality. That hope can be given by a resurrected Lord alone, one who has come back victorious from the darkness of the grave, bringing the keys of death with him. Thus the resurrection of our Lord, "the most amply attested fact of history," witnesses for the deity of Jesus.

V. HIS SINLESS LIFE IS THE LIFE OF GOD

It is, of course, an impossibility to prove a negative here and demonstrate that he never committed a sin, but we can accept the record of those who knew him best, for after all, those who know a man most intimately are best qualified to judge as to the worth of his character. And those who knew him best tell us that he was clean in conduct and pure in character. He himself challenged his critics with: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46), at the same time claiming that the Father was with him, "because I do always the things that please him" (John 8:29). There never was the consciousness in the life of Jesus that he was a sinner, and though he taught his disciples to ask for forgiveness he himself never prays such a prayer. He is nowhere conscious of the struggle "between the beast and the angel." He stands before the world as the only man for whom it have even been claimed that he was without stain of wrong in character or conduct. Defects

in the moral character are not found, and it is frankly agreed upon by all that this one was the perfect man. The one thing in which Jesus' life is strong as an evidence of sinlessness is the absolute consistency between his conduct and his teachings. Here we all fail, and miserably. The philosopher may teach men what they should do to be happy, but he need not do it himself. But Jesus never tells us to do one thing while he himself does another. His words are, "Follow me;" for he always leads us. Take any doctrine that the Lord taught and examine his own life pertaining to it and note that not only does he teach it, but he lives it. His teaching regarding the value of the soul is an illustration in point. He says that the soul is the most valuable creation in all the universe. How valuable, Lord and Master? Of such priceless value that he was willing to preach a sermon to the woman at the well, a woman who was wicked in her life, so low indeed that the majority of men today would have passed her by without one word. But Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, was willing to put forth the effort to save her from her degradation. He tells us to forgive our enemies, yea, even to love them. Impossible, Lord Jesus! But is it impossible? Upon a cross, lifted above a howling, angry multitude, with the clouds darkening over him and the very earth quaking in shame beneath him this same Lord cries out: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He prays for those who were murdering him. Here is the sublime example of forgiveness. Thus it is ever: he is consistent always. His doctrines and life coincide.

The sinlessness of this life witnesses for the deity of Jesus. No mere man has in this world, so full of sin as it is, been able to live pure and holy, clean in conduct and character. Every tree may be known by its fruits. The time in which Jesus was born was the most corrupt time in the history of the world, and yet from it came forth the only sinless man who has ever lived. There is but one conclusion: his life was the life of God upon the earth.

VI. HIS MIGHTY WORK IN THE WORLD IS THE WORK OF GOD

(1) How marvelous is Jesus in his triumphs!

I love to think of him not only as the meek and lowly Nazarene, but also as the conquering Christ, the one before whom the nations bow in joyful submission. From human standpoints alone, the work of Jesus was bound to fail. The founder was a despised Nazarene, born in the poorest and most downtrodden province of the world's greatest empire. He was poor and without political prestige. The religions around him were powerful, wealthy, and strongly entrenched. Can his work succeed with all this opposition? It can conquer only if it is the work of God in the world. No man alone can do it, for the odds are too great. But Jesus has been victorious in every battle. Fifty days after he had suffered a shameful death, the first gospel invitation was extended and three thousand of those who had stood at the cross and mocked him as he died were converted to the position that he is the Lord and King. In three centuries the new faith

had conquered the Roman Empire. Judaism, always a determined enemy, found itself absolutely impotent before the on-marching legions of the conquering Christ. Paganism fought hard; but it, too, was defeated and the banner of King Jesus waved in triumph over the former strongholds of Zeus and all his tribe of corrupt gods and goddesses. The barbarians swept down from the north, engulfing Rome in their mighty flood, and though they destroyed the empire they did not destroy the Church. When the struggle was over, once more the Christ was victorious. From the south a black cloud hovered over the earth and then came the swarms of Mohammed; but on the field of Tours, Charles Martel and his Christian hosts once again won gloriously the battle which has been going in favor of Jesus since the first Pentecost. Modern heathenism has been absolutely powerless before Christ, and the time is soon to come when Christ will be crowned King from sea to sea. Soon in the very center of heathenism is to be held a great gathering of Christians from all over the world; and as the capital of paganism so long ago fell before the power of the conquering Christ, so now will the capitals of the modern heathen world bow the knee to him who is Lord of all. The "Christ view" has been victorious over the "mere man view" throughout all the centuries. Voltaire thought that he could laugh Christ to defeat; but only a few years after his death, from the same room in which he had died 'thousands of copies of the holy Scriptures were carried out to an eager and waiting world. Strauss in his "Leben Jesu" tried to destroy the "Christ view"—but how miserable and ab-

solute was his failure! And so it has ever been. Those who have tried to reduce him to the ranks of "mere man" have failed and have been forced, as they see the world coming to his feet, to acknowledge their failures.

How wonderful has Jesus been in his achievements for the good of the world! He has Christianized the calendar of the world. The Greek tried to date time from the Olympiads, but he failed. The Roman tried to begin dates from the founding of his immortal city, but was unsuccessful. La Place tried to date from the conjunction of certain stars, but he failed. The French revolutionists tried to date from the beginning of the revolution, but failure attended their efforts. What the Greek could not do, what the Roman failed to accomplish, what La Place and the French revolutionists could not do, Jesus did. He stamped his name on the calendar of the world. Every time we date a letter or a legal document we acknowledge the Christ. And this is true in every city in the world today.

In art and literature how mighty is Christ! Take Christ out of Shakespeare, and how insipid are his writings. Take the Master out of art, and the flower of it is gone. Take Christ out of the moral life of the race, and it sinks into slime and decay. He is the very life of our modern world. Emerson is right when he says that Jesus "has plowed his name into our world." Lecky is right when he says: "The simple record of those three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhorta-

tions of moralists." Renan is right when he says that Christ has been made "the corner stone of our race." Jefferson is right when he says: "He walks down the centuries with the tread of a conqueror."

(2) How wonderful is Jesus in his power to save! This was the great purpose of his coming. It is greater than that of any man that has lived: to regenerate the world and make of men the beings that God would have them to be. He came healing the sick, but this was not the purpose of his coming. He came cleansing the leper, but more wonderful was his mission than this. In his own words, "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." He came as a savior. If we fail to realize this concerning him we have not known him at all. Christ's power to save is more easily understood if we note his estimate of man and of his value as man. Christ is the great individualist. Science is cold and hard; yes, even cruel. She considers the class, "the common herd," the mass of mankind. Christ is concerned about the individual man. The kings of old thought of man as so much cannon fodder; Christ thinks of the priceless value of the individual soul before God. And how is he to bring men to himself as savior? We have already considered this. He draws them by the power of divine love. Everywhere we can hear, and from countless thousands of lips, the song of praise that rises in mighty volume. It is the song of the redeemed. From rich and beautiful America it rises, from Europe torn by strife and sorrow it peals as a song of hope, from India—sad India—and from the depths of darkest Africa. It is the song of those

who have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus saves, this we know. It is not a matter of opinion. It is a certainty, the argument from experience. There have been in my own life times when I doubted, for those times come to all of us, but my doubts have been swept away by the facts and those facts are unanswerable. A great effect must have an adequate cause. That cause is the power of God, for nothing else could accomplish the results.

Give the winds a mighty voice Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Let the nations now rejoice,— Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Shout salvation full and free,
Highest hills and deepest caves;
This our song of victory:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!