

WHY JESUS ?

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CHAPTER I

WHY ANOTHER BOOK?

John the Apostle tells us in the closing words of the last chapter of his Gospel that if all the things which Jesus did should be written every one, even the world itself could not contain the books. So we are given to understand that what we have of the sayings and works of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels is but a mere fraction of the whole. However, John declares it sufficient that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name.

The Apostle was indeed right. The world is full of books whose theme is Jesus the Lord. The day does not pass without some new title, some fresh witness to the glory of the Son of God. Pulpits without number proclaim His glory. Sacred songs in ever increasing volume and fervor exalt His Name. Poets cannot find words with which to express their devotion to Him who died and rose again. Preachers by the thousands never weary of announcing the glad tidings of His redeeming grace. All that is great and lovely and wonderful in our culture springs from this Fountain.

Were we to bring together all the gems of earth and the combined fragrance of the world of flowers

and the refulgence of suns and stars and moons—yea, whatever there be of beauty and glory in whatever realm of nature—even so there would still be an utter sense of insufficiency in any effort that might be made to express the unspeakable loveliness of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Millions upon millions declare that they owe Him an infinite debt of gratitude, for at His Feet they have found forgiveness of sins, freedom from guilt, peace of heart, happiness beyond compare, and a veritable heaven upon earth, not to mention eternal life for all the ages to come.

However, in recent years there has been a strong movement within the church itself to disrobe the King as, in another sense, did the blasphemous Roman guard following the betrayal of Judas, leaving us a purely human Jesus.

It is in answer to this trend, emanating primarily from ecclesiastical circles, that another book is added to this, the greatest theme that can address the mind of man. The world is full; there is hardly room for another. But much that is written today smacks of the traitor's kiss; it savours of the realms of darkness; it dishonors the Lord of Glory. It would not brashly say that Jesus lied when He affirmed His equality with God, assuming divine prerogatives. Nevertheless it comes to this, inasmuch as it is a purely human Jesus, shorn of His majesty and glory as God manifested in the flesh, who is held up before the needy hearts of men.

Here we have the reason for another book. *Why*

Jesus sums it all up. It is my purpose to give an answer; which brings me to a personal testimony that I feel I must give. Needless to say, it is with no thought of making a big to-do over a few insignificant attainments. If I have anything to boast of, it is only because of Christ. It is only in order that my readers may observe how the author came to look upon Jesus as he does and from what background he draws.

I had been cruel to my father who had been all that a Christian father could be. He passed away very suddenly. The blow brought me to my senses. Still more it brought about a terrible crisis. I spent hours, day after day, beside Father's grave weeping. There I conceived the idea (although I had been brought up in a Christian home) that philosophy might have the answer, and so bring relief to my sorely stricken soul. I had been studying science and had taken a degree, but now I shifted to philosophy.

How great was my delusion. My world got darker day by day. The theories of men regarding life and the universe left me cold. I would come home from my classes, throw myself on a couch, and groan like a dying man. Oh the agony of those days of an insatiable thirsting, I knew not what for. I only knew that what a thousand voices of my soul cried out for, and what my famished heart wept for, was not to be found in philosophy.

One day, wandering about in the University library in the midst of a world of books, suddenly a title caught my eye: *The Life of Christ*, by Frederick Farrar. I took down the book and began

to read. What I read gripped me. I was given permission to take the book home. I had not read more than four or five chapters when suddenly I experienced such joy that it seemed as though I were sitting in heaven. It was the risen Christ revealing Himself to me. I got down on my knees and said: "Lord, I am Thine."

It was like passing from icy polar waters and darkness to some balmy South Sea island redolent with flowers and the song of birds. My joy was unspeakable. I wrote to my professors and told them what had happened.

That was fifty years ago. You may be inclined to ask, has it lasted? Indeed it has. To sum it all up in a few words: Jesus the Lord has been my theme, first with soldiers in France in World War I, then in many lands as a missionary of the Cross. Twenty-seven years were spent in seminary teaching, preparing fledgling preachers for their work; ten years proclaiming Christ to prisoners in Mexico City's Federal Prison; five years to soldiers gathered in knots of twelve to fifteen to keep order along the highways of the Republic after the revolutions, and many other forms of service with Christ as their center.

The years with an ever deeper searching of the Sacred Scriptures and an ever fuller participation of the glory of my Saviour and Lord have increased my faith and conviction to where it is no longer just hope, but rather an absolute certitude. *Jesus Christ is all He claimed to be, all that the Apostles affirmed; indeed all that the church over the centuries has so confidently borne witness to.*

And so it is from this background that I write, not with any thought of personal glory. My Saviour has become my very life. And it is because I am so sure that He is the Alpha and the Omega of creation, the beginning and the end of history, the first and the last of the Bible itself, yea the all in all of humanity's redemption and hope, that I am overcome by the urge to give my answer to this the greatest question that can confront the mind of man: "Why Jesus?"

CHAPTER II

WHY BETHLEHEM?

The question may sound a bit absurd, as if one were to ask, "Why Chicago, or why New York, or why Tokyo?" But such is not the case. I may well have been born in Chicago, or New York, or Tokyo. There was no divine *must* determinating the place of my birth. You who read these lines may have been born in Shanghai or Jerusalem or London.

But it just was not possible for Jesus our Lord to have been born in any other place than Bethlehem. In this case there was a divine "*must*" determining not only the place of birth, but all else that was to follow. This alone sets this One, whom we rightly call Saviour and Lord, apart from among men and places Him in a position so lofty that all others pale into insignificance to become mere moles beside an Everest. And that, of course, is putting it mildly; just how mildly we shall try to state in the following pages.

"Why Bethlehem?" will take us far into the history of Israel and the divine councils. Man had fallen from his high estate because of sin and had become alienated from the God who formed him. His destiny was death, from which there could be no escape in view of the divine decree; namely,

that the soul that sinneth it shall die. And all have sinned. But the mercy of God intervened in the promise of a Saviour: One who would bruise the head of that old serpent, the devil, and set man free; One who would bring him back to God and wipe out the tragic, yea catastrophic, results of his fall.

Abraham is chosen, whose seed would be, according to the Promise, like unto the stars of heaven and like the dust of the earth. From him was to come One in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. From him would come the Seed who would fulfill the hopes of every sin-besmirched son of Adam.

Now we make the bold statement that the supreme glory of what is called the Old Testament, our Bibles containing as they do the Old and the New, is found in the fact that it was forever pointing to this One, Israel's Messiah, who was to bring redemption not only to Israel but to the whole world. The "messianic hope," as Bible students are wont to call it, burns as a holy flame from Abraham to John the Baptist and across the pages of the Old Testament.

It is like the bronze tablet in Washington upon which the Constitution is written. As one reads, suddenly it is no longer mere words but the face of George Washington which emerges, filling the tablet. Just so, as one reads anywhere in the Old Testament, which covers so many centuries of the history of God's chosen people (whose election is to deny the fact of Christ), suddenly it comes to pass that the infinitely adorable face of the

Redeemer appears while the letter of Holy Writ seems to fade, so glorious is the revelation of the coming King, earth's Redeemer.

There is no possibility of exaggerating or overstating the significance of this fact nor of its bearing upon the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord. To answer the question which stands as the title of this book, "Why Jesus?" without taking into account the great lights of prophecy regarding His coming, Person, and work, would be folly of the deepest dye. It would be like pronouncing a verdict regarding some machine without a knowledge of the nature of the materials which form it. We cannot give a right judgment as to the Person of Christ without taking into account these prophetic elements which are so vitally a part of the total image.

We must not allow ourselves the luxury of a detailed account of the foregleams of the "tender plant" (see Isaiah 53:2) which was to grow out of Israel's "dry ground." That would mean a volume of no mean dimensions in itself. There are books given to the study of Christ in the Old Testament, as He is revealed in the declarations of prophets chosen of God to herald the Saviour's coming centuries before it became a fact in Bethlehem's manger. We shall limit our account to the most outstanding affirmations as found in the voices of prophecy regarding the coming King, the world's Saviour.

Abraham was told that in him all of the families of the earth should be blessed (see Genesis 12:3).

As Balaam beheld the Israelites on their triumphant march from Egypt to the land of promise,

he uttered a most significant prophecy: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17).

The prophet Isaiah, six centuries before the coming of the Messiah, described the major facts of His life with such precision that he (the prophet) is called the evangelist of the Old Testament.

He declared that the Saviour would be born even as the angel who spoke to Mary said He would: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

He makes the astounding statement referring to the Virgin's Child that His Name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace upon whose shoulder the government should be, and whose reign of peace should have no end (see Isaiah 9:6, 7).

The miracles to be wrought by Messiah are described with such clarity, it would seem as though the prophet had been present to look upon the Saviour as He healed the blind, the lame and the halt, the leper, the deaf, and the dumb. (See chapter 35 of the book of Isaiah.)

We are told that the coming King should be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that He would bear the chastisement of our peace and that by His stripes we should be healed (read chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah).

This One would abolish death and wipe away tears from off all faces, and upon His appearing the cry would be: "This is our God: . . . we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in

his salvation" (see Isaiah 25:8-9).

The Psalms are full of prophetic utterances regarding the Coming One who should redeem mankind, the 22nd being the most significant inasmuch as it gives us a foreview of the sufferings of the Crucified.

In Psalm 16, verses 9-11, we have the Saviour's resurrection foretold. In the book of Acts chapter 2:25-31, the Apostle Peter refers to this passage as being fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ.

The work of John the Baptist, Messiah's forerunner, was foretold as we see in the book of Isaiah chapter 40:3-5.

To the prophet Daniel the exact time of Messiah's coming was revealed; also that He would be cut off (referring to the Cross). The prophet significantly adds, "but not for himself" (see Daniel 9:20-25).

To Zechariah it was revealed that for 30 pieces of silver the traitor would betray his Master, and that the money would be cast to the potter in the house of the Lord even as in the Gospels we read it took place. (See Zechariah 11:12-13.)

It is altogether fitting that Old Testament prophecy should close as it does, with the fulfillment of the long heralded appearing of the Messiah, likened to sunrise. Of the many titles given to the Redeemer, there is none so eloquent and so revealing as Malachi's pronouncement: "But unto you that fear the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

It is quite the fashion today, especially in

ecclesiastical circles (great is the shame) to attempt to bypass all this as something poorly grounded if not altogether untenable. We are told that we read into the Sacred Script what after all is not there. How strange when the writers of the four gospels unanimously (and of course in a special way Matthew who is the bridge between the Old Testament and New showing how the Messianic Hope with its vast array of prophecies were all fulfilled in Jesus) link up the great events in our Lord's life with the voices of the prophets. We have type and antitype, promise and its fulfillment, foreshadowings and their stark reality in Jesus.

What makes such a procedure yet more strange is the fact that our Lord Himself was forever pointing to the prophetic words of the Old Testament as being fulfilled in Him. He dared say: Search the Scriptures for they are they which testify of me (John 5:39). This when never a line of the New Testament had as yet been written.

Finally, what will those who will not hear of prophecy as being fulfilled in Jesus do with our Lord's Word after His resurrection to His disciples saying: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses,

and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:44-45).

Blaise Pascal has rightly been judged as the foremost intellectual, scientifically and philosophically, of his day in all Europe. His *Meditations* have been given a place among the fifty books which are called the Harvard Classics. Pascal states that to him the greatest proof of the deity of Jesus was to be found in the fact that centuries before He appeared, it was all foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament.

Why Bethlehem? For the very simple reason that Micah the prophet had said: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

How else answer the question of the Wise Men who sought the new-born King but by going to the prophets of the Old Testament? Nothing concerning Messiah but what had been foretold.

CHAPTER III

WHY A VIRGIN?

The question may well be asked. It would surprise no one. To account for man, be he who he may be, the answer, needless to say, is father and mother, man and woman. But you cannot account for Jesus that way, though the number of preachers and so-called believers who think that this is possible, seems to be greatly increasing. It would be as reasonable to attempt to account for the oceans by saying that there had been a local shower, or for the sun that an angel had lit a candle which had never gone out.

Matthew was not lying, nor was Luke who was more explicit. Says the sacred writer: "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18). It is no wonder that Joseph seeing what was happening minded to put Mary away. What an agonizing time he must have had. But even greater must have been Mary's agony seeing that she could not convince Joseph, her fiance. Nor would she ever have convinced him had it not been that an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying unto him, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary

thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Joseph's army of doubters has received a vast number of recruits of late. But there is hope for them if they will only listen to the voice of reason. Why do I say that? Because we not only have the testimony of Holy Writ. There is every *reason* to believe. Logic and Reason are absolutely on the side of Revelation. Without the Virgin birth, nothing in the Life of Jesus can ever be explained. A thousand questions arise that can never be answered, and you will forever be trying to pour the oceans through a tiny funnel.

It is refreshing to listen to a Christian philosopher Horace V. Du Bose who in his book, *The Consciousness of Jesus*, says: "The Galilaean consciousness was not a traduction, not a refinement of racial life, but the finding in the Christ unity of the perfect and full divinity of Godhood, prenatal and veiled in the stages of infancy but instant in revelation at the first movement of consciousness in the life of the young Child." And now this from the pen of a great philosopher. Oh, that I might shout it from the housetops: "Nothing but the procreation of immanent Godhood and Virgin conception can answer in any conceivable way the miracle of that consciousness which became the Christ of history." Du Bose was convinced as a logician and philosopher that all the weight of reason was on the side of revelation as manifested in the Virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us look into this matter and see why

it is so unreasonable to deny what the Sacred Scriptures so plainly affirm regarding the birth of Jesus. First of all, is it not reasonable to accept the fact that the Omnipotent God for the redemption of a lost world should come forth and appear on the stage of history in the manner which, through the prophets of the Old Testament, He had said He would? Is He bound by the course of nature? May He not, He being the author of nature and above it, redirect its course, should He for reasons of infinite love, and mercy, as regards man, resolve to do so?

We must view this matter from the ascended, glorified, enthroned position of Christ. The Virgin birth is not an isolated miracle. It is all of the same cloth, if I may so speak, from beginning to end. Look down over the entire process, not as viewed from the beginning but the end. By the Christ of God, our Redeemer, all things were made both in heaven and upon earth. He is before all things and by Him all things consist. All things were created by Him and for Him (Col. 1:16-17). It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. All authority has been given to Him both in heaven and upon earth.

Looking back from the ascended glory of Christ, a glory which was His with the Father from all eternity, save the crowning glory resultant from the Cross and the empty tomb, the supreme manifestation of God's moral excellencies—looking back over the miracles and the astounding declarations of Jesus regarding His Person, affirming that when He the Son of man shall appear and all the

holy angels to sit upon the Throne of His glory, with all nations gathered before Him to be judged, we come to the birth of the Christ Child. Now at this point, is it reasonable for us to balk and say it is too much to believe that He was born of a Virgin, having been conceived by the Holy Ghost? Indeed it is all of a piece. It blends into one harmonious whole. Nothing is more unreasonable than to accept the supernatural, the divine, all along the royal line of redemption and then to deny it at the fountainhead.

How easy it is to accept the fact of the Incarnation when the Christ is accepted as He ever appears in the Scriptures; namely as God manifested in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16). How unreasonable not to say how abhorrent to the believing heart that has experienced redemption, having received God the Redeemer, any thought of His purely natural '*entree*' into the life of the world would be.

The denial of the Virgin birth of Jesus quite naturally results in a purely human Saviour. Those who feel that the Incarnation, as the Church rightly speaks of the birth of our Lord, puts too great a strain upon faith, unconsciously involve themselves in problems which put a far greater strain upon faith. Imagine a *man* standing at the grave of one who already stank and saying: "Come forth I am the Resurrection and the Life." Imagine such a one saying: "I am the bread of life, he that believeth on me shall never hunger." Think of such a one saying, "Before that Abraham was I Am." I Am that I Am being the Name

by which the Lord made Himself known to Israel in the days of Moses. Conceive of such a one saying, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." What would have happened to mere man making the claims that Jesus made? Of all the insane souls that have ever lived, this one would have been the worst. Never such a monster, for never were such claims made. I might think and speak of myself as Napoleon and keep out of an insane asylum. But to speak of myself as God and invite all the world to come unto me and find rest, to come unto me and be saved, would brand me as the world's biggest fraud, a hoax shunned by all.

Finally, to deny the Virgin birth of Jesus is to imply that the sacred writers were not telling the truth. They were liars. Nor is it possible to state that at this point the Word as we have it in the Gospels has been tampered with. Error has crept in. But this breaks down in view of the fact that there is no document which has come to us from antiquity as to the purity of whose text we are so sure as the New Testament. No other writing from ancient times has awakened such a passionate interest, the result being that we have over a thousand Greek manuscripts, a few going back very close to the first century. The purity of the text of the New Testament has been established by each word being filtered through a thousand manuscripts. What Matthew and Luke affirm regarding the birth can never be impeached.

Of course none of those who feel that they cannot accept what is written in Holy Writ regarding the

birth of Jesus would want to voice the opinion that Mary, the Virgin mother, simply failed to tell the truth, that is to say, she lied. Strange that all that is greatest in our culture, all that is loveliest in poetry, all that is sublimest in music, all that is most wonderful in architecture and painting, all that is most glorious, most inspiring and most comforting in the experience of men, not to mention the testimony of so many millions over the centuries regarding their deliverance from sin's guilt and power through their faith in Jesus—it all should stem from a lie.

I once heard a man say that Jesus was the son of a Roman soldier; that is to say, Mary a harlot, and her son a bastard. You fall back in horror. Well you may. Still the denial of the Virgin birth of Jesus in its cold logical issues takes us to just such a conclusion.

No, Christmas may still be celebrated with no subtraction of its joy and song and adoration, and immeasurable assurances as regards the believer's eternal blessedness!

CHAPTER IV

WHY THE STAR?

History had suddenly come to a clear focus. Until now, with the exception of Israel formed as she was under God for the wonderful purpose of bringing the Messiah into the world, all had seemed to be confusion with no overruling purpose. The rise and fall of nations forever at each others' throats, animated by the greed of power and of gain, was all that could be seen.

But with the appearing of the Messiah, foretold as it was across the centuries by Israel's inspired prophets, it became clear to what goal the God of history had been moving in the midst of seeming chaos. The great Paul sums it all up with one word in chapter 4 of his Galatian Epistle: "In the fullness of time God send forth his Son made of a woman." There had been a long period of preparation. But now the stage was set, so to speak, for the performance of the Drama of the Ages, sublime beyond compare. Rome, though actuated by the lust of power, had unconsciously set the stage. One law, one language, one culture, good roads all under the title "Pax Romana" had made it possible for a rapid spread of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Little wonder that a Roman Emperor should

have given the signal for the curtain to go up, if I may continue with the figure, for the opening scene. "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." And now we have Joseph and Mary wending their painful way, for Mary was great with child and it was winter, to Bethlehem, for the decree was that everyone must go to his own city.

But there was a higher decree at work. God had spoken as we have seen through the prophet Micah that it needs must be Bethlehem where Christ should be born. It was a stable where cows munched their fodder, and pariah dogs sought shelter from the inclement night that history's golden hour struck. Yet when Christ was born, a multitude of the heavenly host appeared to shepherds as they kept watch by night over their flocks and praised God as only angels can. Was there ever such a scene? So the humiliating manger was completely offset. The reception was indeed cold, a presage of the Cross that was to follow, but lo, a Star appears, the Star of Bethlehem, heralding the glory of the new-born King.

Which brings us to the chapter's theme, Why the star? Is it only poetic license to add beauty to the oncoming Christmases? Or is it stark reality? Of course if you hold to a purely human Jesus with no miraculous birth, no miracles in behalf of lepers and the blind, no raising of the dead (how could there be these with a purely human Jesus who, by the way, would need saving himself?)—I repeat, if what you think of Jesus

is spelled in terms of man and no more, the star quite naturally becomes a myth, along with many other mythological accretions. And really for a purely human Jesus whose parents had nothing in which earth's teeming millions of men and women might not also glory, then, of course, the star, though it does add to the charm of Christmas, simply fades out of the picture.

Again I quote Du Bose, who says in his deeply philosophical work on *The Consciousness of Jesus*: "A consciousness in the shepherds and in the wise men made the angel chorus and the star each alike possible. Could Annas or Caiphas have heard the song? Had either been that night in the field of Bethlehem? Did Herod see the star? Did the chief priests and scribes see it? The conditions of hearing and seeing were found in the kinship of the hearers and seers with the unifying power of the Christ consciousness. . . . It was not the result of a series of astrological calculations on the part of the Magi nor the climax of pastoral fancies or prophecies with the shepherds, but the sudden conjunction of the double movements of the Christ sense, downward from the heights and upward from the age-long desire of the nations." All of which is only another way of saying, as our Lord said to the Pharisees, "How can ye believe which seek honor one of another?" The same could be said of the risen Christ. Not all saw Him! But the Magdalene saw Him, John the beloved disciple saw Him, Peter saw Him, and Thomas, who doubted and yet loved, saw Him.

And so it is with the star. If you do not believe

in Jesus and in the testimony of Holy Writ regarding His Person, then of course the star of Bethlehem quite naturally may be relegated to the realm of myth. And let it be said, there would be no particular virtue in believing. However, if you have embraced the Christ of God, the crucified and risen Saviour as your Lord, then, of course, the star presents no problem. The glorious witness of the star becomes a very natural event (though supernaturally directed); for Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of all things. He calls the stars by name. He is their author and sustainer. Should one fail to herald His advent, it would be most strange.

The wise men rejoiced when they saw the star. So do we who believe. Think for a moment. Are not kings, as they go forth on a journey, heralded in a manner befitting their majestic station? Do not armies move and cannons roar? Do not ambassadors stand at attention and princes bow? Is not their pathway prepared and adorned? Are not royal welcomes beautifully arrayed? Does it surprise anyone that extraordinary phenomena take place in the arrival of the Messiah, Christ our Lord?

Now in view of Christ's adorable Person as God manifest in the flesh, upholding all things by the Word of His power, as it is in Hebrews 1:3, does the testimony of the Scriptures regarding the star, which heralded the Saviour's appearing, put undue strain upon faith? Indeed not. The truth of the matter is that if there had not been something so signal, so great, so arresting, one might be led to doubt the everlasting glory and divine majesty of

the Visitant invading earth with heaven's beauty and glory and power.

He who calls forth the stars, as we read in the Psalms, might have written the story of His love in the very skies. In a sense God did, when upon the appearing of His beloved Son to redeem mankind, He so ordered the movements of suns and moons and stars as numerous as the grains of sand on the shores of the seas, that one given the lofty name, The Star of Bethlehem, should shine forth with an effulgence never before seen in a star, on the little town of Bethlehem where Christ was born.

Little wonder that the wise men when they saw the star should have rejoiced. Little wonder that they should have fallen down when they entered the house of Mary's abode and worshipped the newborn King.

If you have not done so, do it now. Let no one disturb you as to the reality of the star, fitting symbol of Him who in the Apocalypse is called The Bright and Morning Star.

To see the Star you must love the Star which Balaam said would arise out of Jacob.

It all goes back to your view of Jesus. If with Isaiah the prophet, we can say of the Messiah: "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"; if with Paul we adore God's only begotten Son as the One by whom all things were created, both visible and invisible and not only by Him but for Him; if with the beloved disciple who in the upper room rested on the Saviour's bosom, we can testify: "This is the true God and eternal life"; if with Thomas we can wor-

ship with the cry: "My Lord and my God"; then, of course, the star becomes as natural as the rising of the sun, morning by morning, acts of the Omnipotent God.

CHAPTER V

WHY TEMPTATION?

Jesus once asked His disciples the question: "Whom do men say that I am?" Here you have the most intriguing, the greatest question that can engage the mind of man. Sooner or later we must all come to grips with the problem. Peter's answer was: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Saviour's answer was that he had had a revelation from God the Father, and that upon this rock He would build His church.

"Why Jesus?" I challenge you, kind reader, to give your verdict. But bear in mind, only the Father by His Spirit can enable you to rightly estimate the Person of His Son.

Christ was truly God (John says, this is the true God and eternal life). The question is, was He also truly man? Must we think of Him as a man tempted in all points like as we?

The Scriptures answer that though He came down from heaven, God manifest in the flesh, yet His humanity was as real as yours and mine, with one exception: He knew no sin; He was sinless; as free from the stain of sin as the freshly fallen snowflake from all impurities.

The Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger; the Babe Mary took to her breast,

singing cradle lullabies common to all mothers, could weep for its milk as all babies do. The Boy who brought wood to Joseph's shop and helped with the chores could laugh and run and play as all boys do. He could be "lost and found" as every boy in the days of his boyhood has been. He could feel the thrill of a day's work well done as He hammered and sawed and hewed and wrought in the fashioning of a chair or a plough, as He labored by Joseph's side, an apprentice in the fine art of carpentry.

He could go to church (synagogue) with His brothers and sisters and listen quietly as the rabbi read the Word. He could romp and play with James, Joseph, and Jude (Mark 6:3) and run a race to see who could win. He could be sad because a sister was ill. He could take orders from Mother and go to the bakery to buy bread. (See Luke 2:51.)

Any attempt to rob Christ's babyhood, boyhood, and manhood of the stark nature common to babyhood, boyhood, and manhood as these are universally known, infringes upon the truth regarding our blessed Redeemer as revealed in Holy Writ.

He was so human that He could in utter exhaustion sit by a well and ask for a drink from an unknown woman who came to draw water. He was so human that He could ride on a donkey (an ass, the foal of an ass, see Matthew 21:5), which brings the matter really down to earth. He could feel the awful pangs of hunger and the devastating pain of cold as night came on, for as He said, He had not where to lay His head.

He was so very human that He could feel more

deeply than anyone has ever felt. For His sensibilities had never been dulled by sin, the heartache caused by hatred and misconceptions and the twisting of His words and the indignities heaped upon His Person. Peter's denial hurt; Judas' betrayal hurt; the mock trial before the high priest hurt; Pilate's siding in with His enemies hurt; the scourging by brutal soldiers hurt. He could fall beneath the wood of His Cross on the way to Calvary, for it was more than a "Man" exhausted by an all night's vigil and torture could bear. Never was death more real than when this One who hung between two thieves in unspeakable ignominy and shame, shed His blood drop by drop, drenching the ground at the foot of the accursed tree.

Ah yes, His humanity was real. It is safe to say that no one in all the annals of history was ever so human, because in Him was no sin. For it is sin which makes man inhuman; it is sin which steals away his manhood, leaving him a mere caricature of the divine ideal.

He was "the Son of man," that august title which He Himself assumed; the very Child of our humanity; the sublimest, yea, the only perfect flowering of manhood such as God intended. Bismark may be called a son of Germany; Lincoln, a son of America; Cromwell, a son of Britain; Juarez, Mexico's truest son, etc. But it is not possible to identify Jesus with any race or clime or age or party. Israel may claim Him as a son, yet He so stands before us in such majestic manhood that no race can claim Him, for He belongs

to all and immeasurably surpasses the noblest and best in all, even as He will forever be the inspiring ideal of all, whether statesman, poet, scientist, laborer, mother or father, son or daughter.

It is impossible to conceive of a virtue, a beauty of character, an ideal to be realized in manhood or womanhood, that is not perfectly expressed in Jesus; yea more. Nothing will ever be found in the thoughts and deeds of men worthy of praise which has not already been shown forth in the manner and deeds of Jesus, with but one difference: in Jesus it reaches the absolute of perfection.

I would go even beyond this and say that this holds true not only in manhood but also in womanhood. As regards any other man, this would be an offence. Let me be a man and not a woman. But not so the Son of Man. His humanity is so great, so universally all inclusive, that what is highest and noblest in woman—her sympathy, her patience, her courage in matters that affect children and home and education, her willingness to suffer and die (she often does in giving birth to a child) that others might live—is found in Jesus in its perfect bloom.

But the chapter bears the title, Why Temptation? Can this be reconciled to the perfect, sinless humanity we see in Jesus? Indeed it may. It is precisely here that our humanity (flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone) is most emphatically embraced by the Son of Man. Had He not been tempted, He could not be my Brother, He could not comprehend my lot, He could not be the Saviour I so desperately need.

Indeed He was tempted, and not only during the forty days of fasting in the wilderness. This was a crisis in an all-out attack from Satan, coming out, as it were, into the open. It was the enemy under conditions extremely favorable to his infernal cause, striking, better said alluring, along three lines. Sorely in need of food after such a long fast, Jesus was being enticed to satisfy His famished body by the use of supernatural power. He stoutly rejected Satan's suggestion. He had come (see I John 3:8) to destroy the works of the devil and this could only be done by meeting the enemy as a man, triumphing where the first man had failed.

Then came the thrust, as the enemy suggested a display of faith in Jesus' casting Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Was it not written (Psalm 91) that the Father would send His angels to protect those who trusted in Him? It would make an overwhelming impression on the multitudes and so be an easy road to gain a following, a victory which would cost little or nothing. But Jesus willed to take the hard road of the Cross. He would not tempt God by expecting deliverance where mere caprice was in control. Again the evil one was unmasked and routed.

Finally, the kingdoms of the world with the glory of them were marshalled before Jesus' mind's eye. All would be given Him if He would only fall down and worship Satan. Ah, here is where men fall into the enemy's hand! Oh how many there be who are ready to pay him a moment's homage if the wealth and glory of the kingdoms

of the world would be theirs in return. Yea, but this One is different. He will gain what He is after by means of a Cross. "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," was the Son of Man's rebuttal. And so this Man comes forth from the wilderness in triumphant, majestic fashion.

This was but a skirmish. The mighty Waterloo was yet to come. What I am getting at is that temptation was not foreign to Jesus. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations" (Luke 22:28), said our Lord as He drew near to His hour, which was Golgotha. Ah yes, tempted in all points like as we (Heb. 4:15). And though the Scriptures do not affirm it, yet instinctively we know that He was tempted in a way we can never be. To be tempted as was Jesus in the Garden where He sweat blood—so awful was the attack of the adversary and his hosts, so dreadful the prospect of being made sin, a curse (Gal. 3:13) that we who are under the bondage of the curse of sin might be set free—one needs be as great as He and fulfill a mission as great as His. Furthermore, for temptation to be as poignant for little man hardened by sin, as it was for Jesus with sensibilities that had never been blunted, or in any sense marred by sin, man would have to be another Christ.

But does not all this—Jesus having been perfected by the things which He suffered (Heb. 2:10) and identifying Himself in such absolute fashion with the lot and condition of men—detract

from His glory? No, it only adds. If temptation were sin, then of course it would. Is it not written, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation"? (James 1:12). Ah, it is a glorious thing to be able to be tempted, for without temptation the lofty faculties of our nature as moral agents would never be brought into play, and we would be little better than "beasts of the jungles."

No, Jesus must be tempted, the last Adam as was the first. Only let us observe again. In the case of the last, every advantage seemed to be given to the enemy: a wilderness, wild beasts, loneliness, hunger with its weakness, thistles and thorns, a world under the curse of sin, all of which infinitely sharpened the devil's weapons. Whereas with the first man all was immeasurably on the side of faith and of loyalty to God. The glory of Eden should have sufficed for man to be able to reject Satan's lies.

But Satan offered man a crown. Man would be his own god, answerable to no one but himself.

However, Jesus, the second Man, the last Adam, would be answerable in all things (obedient even unto death, the death of the Cross) to the Father, and as Man be as a bonds slave in an obedience which was tested as only Calvary could light the fires of the crucible. Here is One who is more than a match for Satan. Little wonder that Paul, the mighty apostle to the Gentiles, says that we are more than conquerors through *Him* who loved us.

CHAPTER VI

WHY AN IMPOSSIBLE CODE?

"Why Jesus?" naturally brings you face to face with the Master, who, "seeing the multitude, went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them" (Matt. 5:1-2). Whereupon follows what is called "The Sermon on the Mount," which is really not a sermon but instructions to the disciples. Our Lord was a teacher rather than a preacher. Yes, He came preaching, but first and last He was a teacher.

Now as a teacher the Master poses a problem of vast proportions. At first flush there would seem to be no solution. The Lord, it would appear, places Himself in a very bad light, one which utterly disqualifies Him. I shall put it this way: What would you think of a teacher of mathematics attempting to teach advanced trigonometry to youngsters who had not yet mastered the multiplication table? Or to put it even stronger, for whom two and two were five, or two times four, ten? How could anyone be so stupid?

Yet, this *seems* to be the case with the Master. We have Him burdening His disciples with a code of ethics as far beyond their powers as the most distant star stretches above the earth. Nothing is

so impossible for men as what Jesus demands in the Beatitudes. The Sermon on the Mount only brings man to despair. What? Love my enemies? Why, I do not love my dearest friends as I should. What? Bless them that curse me? Why, I do well if I can keep from striking them. What? Do good to them that hate me? Why, I do well if I can hide my feelings and appear not to hate them in return. What? Pray for them that despitefully use me and persecute me? Why, I cannot think of them without revulsion and a secret loathing creeping over me.

Here we have a problem which if no satisfactory solution is found will be a veritable "knock-out" to the Name which we say is above every name. Why does the Master not judge rightly the possibilities of human nature and accommodate, at least in a measure, His ethical demands to the moral capabilities of feeble men? Why talk about trigonometry to children who have difficulty counting, to say nothing of adding or multiplying?

Great is my joy, for the problem has a solution which more than satisfies. In the first place, let us observe that what we have in the Sermon on the Mount is no attempt to bring ethics, or shall I say, conduct down to man's level. This is the way Christ felt and lived and reacted. He was well aware of man's moral bankruptcy in the face of such demands, and that no one save His very own self could ever measure up and embody in actual life such principles. Full well did He realize that His very own disciples, far from "measuring up," would stumble about in ignominious fashion and

finally desert Him. Their very leader would deny Him with curses, while another too vile to mention his name would sell Him for thirty pieces of silver. This was not even being decent, much less perfect, as their Father in heaven (Matt. 5:48).

No, it was not that He was not aware of all this. Now, here we have it. The Master was teaching in the light of His total work. From the beginning He had His eyes on the Cross. His hour had not yet come. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." He would transform the bitter waters of man's corrupt way into the wine of a divine way capable of the very highest, such as is found in the Sermon on the Mount. How? The answer of course is in Christ's Masterpiece, the Cross.

Here He would not only remove man's guilt as we have it in our Lord's Word when He instituted the Eucharist, so sacred to Christians, saying, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." But He would put an end to man's old corrupt nature and bring to life the new in the power of His resurrection.

It was Paul, the risen Christ's chosen vessel (Acts 9), who was not only to bear His Name before kings, but who was to become His foremost interpreter, revealing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as he does in his epistles, that when Christ died, His Cross was the end of the old creation, and that the empty tomb was the dawn of a new age. The believer shares the power of His Lord's resurrection even as he was involved in His death.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creation (see the Amplified Bible II Cor. 5:17); the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come."

The Redeemer would not pour the wine of Redemption into old wine skins, as He Himself remarked, but into new. It will not do to object that when He expounded the Beatitudes, all this lay in the future. He was moving toward Calvary from the beginning of His ministry; it would be better to say from eternity. John the Apostle says that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world. The great lights of prophecy converge on the Cross. We will never see the Lord Jesus in His truest light as He is portrayed in the Gospels unless it be from the ground of Redemption's Consummation. We cannot understand the beginning unless it be viewed from the end.

Jesus was under no delusion regarding man. "He needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man," writes John. He knew full well that unless the "New Man" were, if I may be permitted the expression, hammered out on the anvil of the Cross, and brought to light in the power of the Resurrection, there was no hope for man's deliverance. To patch him up was useless. The malady was too disastrous. He must be able to say with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

It is all deftly implied in the Upper Room as our Lord, entering now upon His Passion and turn-

ing His face toward Calvary, makes the amazing declaration that it was expedient that He should go away—otherwise the Comforter would not come (John 16:7).

The Lord was really not getting anywhere with His disciples. In spite of His mighty works of healing, in a sense, all was failure. How far the disciples were from realizing how very small they as yet were! Some quarreled with the Master and went so far as to reprove Him for allowing a woman to break an alabaster box and anoint His head with precious ointment of spikenard. "Why, how shameful," they remonstrated, "how selfish. It should have been sold and the three hundred pence given to the poor." They were indignant. (See Mark 14:3-9.) They went from bad to worse. In a most disturbing frame, fresh from heated arguments over who was to be the greatest, they came into the Upper Room where the Master washed their feet. In the hour of trial, behold them fleeing! They could not brook the dark shadows of the Cross. Betrayal and denial mark the close of Jesus' ministry.

Now all this would come to an end with the coming of the Comforter. In the power of His Resurrection He would convict them of their sin. They would be baptized into the Saviour's death and come forth from a sharing of the power of the Cross into a oneness with their Lord which they had not known before. Simon is now Peter, a Rock. He who could not brook a simple maid's reproach, accusing him of being a disciple of Jesus, and with oaths declared he never knew Him, comes

forth from prison rejoicing in the privilege of suffering for the Name. Before all was defeat, now all is victory. Read the Acts of the Apostles and see. Nothing now is too hard to bear for Jesus' sake.

Peter sums it up in his first epistle in this fashion: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we *being dead to sins*, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

No, it was not that the Master was under a delusion regarding the disciples' moral capabilities when He laid down an impossible code as we have it in the Sermon on the Mount. He knew what He was doing. He was looking beyond to the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit to baptize believers into His Body, participants of His death and resurrection. Now the Sermon on the Mount, with all its demands so lofty as to be infinitely beyond man's reach, is nothing more nor less than the "modus operendi" of the life which is Christ. "Christ within, the hope of glory" can operate in no other way. "It is no longer I but Christ," as Paul puts it. This "I," which is Christ operating, does not struggle from within to attain and fulfill such divine precepts any more than the branch in the vine struggles to bear fruit or a flower struggles to shed abroad its fragrance. "Apart from me," said Jesus our Lord, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Nothing—much less what is required in the Beatitudes.

Blessed verdict. It throws the believer wholly back on his Lord in the most absolute dependence,

finding in Him his all in all.

Watchman Nee tells of a Chinese Christian who came to the officials of his church complaining of a neighbor who early each morning drained off water from irrigation channels that belonged to him. What was he to do? It was a great injustice. He was told that justice had nothing to do with the matter, that there was no law but the Cross. He was advised to get up earlier than his neighbor and to first drain off water to his neighbor's rice paddies, and then to go to him and to testify to him of Christ. The good brother accepted the verdict and did as he was told. The result was the conversion of his neighbor and, of course, perfect peace. The Sermon on the Mount without the Cross can do nothing for the Christian save to lead him to despair.

CHAPTER VII
WHY SO SEVERE? WHY SO
TENDER?

As the question, "Why Jesus?" is before us, we come upon another matter of deep concern which issue greatly enhances His glory and serves to enable us to rightly judge His character. I refer to the seeming contradictions in His person and His way of dealing with people. In Him opposite poles meet, seemingly irreconcilable attitudes are merged.

Let us put it this way. No one was ever so severe; no one was ever so tender. Look upon Him as He faced Pharisees and priests and scribes and pronounced invectives so devastating that one may safely say that there is nothing so severe, so utterly annihilating in all literature. Read Matthew chapter 23 and hear the thunders of judgment roll, and see the lightnings of holy wrath flash. Never were hypocrites castigated in such scathing fashion; never were priests making capital of religion so censured, stigmatized; never were religionists who make a big to-do over the letter while devoid of the spirit of love for God and man so sharply dealt with or so mercilessly exposed. If one would see hypocrites unmasked, go to Jesus.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how

can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:3).

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

"Woe unto you Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:14, 27).

"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make a proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:15).

If you have been thinking of Jesus as "soft," somewhat on the "molly-coddish" side of things, you had better overhaul your thinking. If you have imagined it was all love and light and sweetness with the Son of God, you should read your Bible once more and look upon the Man Christ Jesus. If you admire strong men who are not afraid to denounce evil, let the consequences be what they may, here is your hero, your ideal.

Now, what are we to think of this? Are we a little doubtful that such an attitude can form an integral part of manhood in its fullest flowering or ought these things to have been toned down? Was our Lord too wrought up? Did He lose control and overstep?

If such should be the judgment of some, I dare say that they are laboring under a false concept

of manhood. If I could look upon some great injustice, let us say the abuse of a lovely child by some monster rapist, a man who is no longer a man but a beast, and not tremble with wrath, I am not worthy of so noble an epithet as man. No! Anger is as essential to real manhood as courtesy or truth or love or valor or purity. Jesus could never have revealed the glory of perfect manhood without what we find in Matthew 23.

His indignation had to be commensurate with the depth of shame which such hypocrisy should arouse in noble men. If there be those who feel they cannot be enthusiastic over this sort of thing, let them be honest with themselves. They will have to admit that if Jesus could have looked upon men who, like greedy dogs, devoured widows' houses, swallowed up the pittance of some poor widow and then to cover up their shame, went to the temple and made long, flowery prayers, without a tempest of holy wrath sweeping through His breast, He could never have been the object of universal adoration. Statesmen, soldiers, athletes, and adventurers and mountaineers scaling their Everests, and mothers and doctors and nurses, and all breasts in which beats a heart of true manhood would long since have repudiated Him.

We turn now to what at first flush might seem to be a flat contradiction of all this. I refer to the lambhood nature of Christ. He is presented in the Scriptures as a Lion— "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Also as a Lamb— "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He was bold as a Lion and gentle as a Lamb. We have just looked

upon Him as a Lion; now let us with holy awe and amazement (not that the former is less worthy of admiration) look upon Him as a Lamb.

He was so great that He could integrate in His infinitely adorable Person virtues as far removed one from the other as the east is from the west. Who ever heard of a lion being a lamb? But Jesus was so great that He could bring together characteristics apparently contradictory in the most absolute sense. Men, however, for the most part, are so small that if they have a virtue, others being wanting, the former often becomes repulsive. I knew a judge, famous for his integrity, who was cold as Alaskan glaciers. It was well known in the community where he lived that his favorite pastime was to sit at his front door with a pail of rocks to pelt every dog that happened to appear.

Now in Jesus we find all the virtues that should adorn perfect manhood. What is more, they are in such lovely relation one with another, which is even more wonderful, that He has become the great arch-type (prototype) of ideal manhood for all the ages. There is no virtue unduly accentuated at the expense of another. No artist ever brought together colors in a more perfect blending. Between Christ's lionhood nature and His lambhood are all the rest. No Rembrandt could ever have conceived of ought so harmonious.

The truth of the matter is that the deeper you look at Jesus' humanity, the more convinced you are of His deity. Not only is this latter found in the mighty signs of which John writes, which only Omnipotence could have wrought, but in that

marvellous blending of different facets of personality in the expression of a perfect manhood.

It is not possible to read the sacred story, as we have it in the Gospels, without being stirred to the deepest depths of one's being. We are overcome with awe and admiration as we look upon the Son of Man surrounded by the blind, lame, and halt; lepers and maniacs, the offscouring of society; the harlot, the publican, sinners of every stripe; and one and all receiving the forgiveness and healing that sent them on their way with joy unspeakable and full of glory (to use Peter's word regarding the early Christians). They were all drawn to Him as bees to flowers' nectar. Nor was there one, however sunken in an abyss of shame and disgrace, who was not received to become the object of boundless love. Not one was lashed, as was the hypocritical Pharisee. Why? Because his unbounded pride forbade him taking the sinner's place in the acknowledgment of a sinner's need.

Look upon the scene of the woman taken in the very act of adultery by the Pharisees and brought to Jesus for judgment. They did not bring her because they were concerned about the moral order, but because they wished to put the Master in a perilous position where He might overlook the demands of the Mosaic law, the fulfillment of which might cause an uprising. If they could not catch Him there, they would cause Him to jeopardize His Saviourhood, at which they mocked, by His failing to be gracious and forgiving in a strict adherence to Jewish custom. It was all a trap so

that they might accuse the Master. But oh, the wonder of it, as we see our Lord graciously protecting the woman from further shame by writing in the dust so that she might not be compelled to look into eyes so pure. And then, exploding a bomb in the face of the hypocrites, He turned on them with the awful charge that he who considered himself without sin was to be the first to cast a stone.

Truly Jesus our Lord is altogether lovely. You cannot know Him and not be overcome with awe and admiration of the absolute beauty of His manhood. "Behold the Man," cried Pilate as he faced the angry Jews to whom Jesus was anathema because He was to them as a great mirror into which they looked to see (by contrast) all their sins. "Had I not come, ye had not had sin," the Master Himself had said. Pilate, in spite of all, could only wonder before One so majestic, so pure, so compassionate, so meek, so lofty.

All the ages are summoned to "behold the Man." You will never see anything in heaven or on earth—the universe does not hold anything, anyone—so utterly adorable. He is the Wonderful One of Isaiah 9:6. Here words fail. Better to be still and adore. "Behold the Man."

CHAPTER VIII

WHY NO MIDDLE GROUND?

We come now to a most crucial question regarding the Person of Jesus. The number of those who feel that they are privileged to take middle ground is greatly on the increase; chiefly, it seems, among the clergy. Their arguments follow:

"There is no need of going all the way in an all-out acceptance of the claims of Jesus," say they. "Such a childish credulity would be altogether unbecoming a scholar, a scientist, a preacher, indeed, a Christian. One need not lose one's head over these things! A bit of discretion is always in order. There are certain claims that Jesus made as to His Person which must be discounted. One can do that and still be a Christian."

"There is no doubt that Jesus is the most wonderful person that has ever lived. His impact for good upon the life of men the world over has been such as to constitute itself the foremost force in all history in bringing about justice and mercy and love and truth and well-being. One cannot but observe that with His coming, came the dawn of a new age for all mankind. One shudders to think what society would be without His example and doctrine. One would have to be stone blind not to see that He towers so far above men in the

matchless beauty of His character and the incomparable manner of His life and work that He will forever stand a lonely Everest among the very greatest of earth's heroes, reformers, and benefactors. To the fact that no flaw has ever been found in His crystal clear example of goodness one must give a hearty assent and seal the witness. Beyond this, however, it is not possible to go."

This is their seemingly beautiful acceptance of our Saviour.

But all this, good as it sounds, must be denounced. It cannot be repudiated too severely, because you cannot take middle ground with Jesus. You either go all the way or you dare not begin. The Galilean made claims which only deity can fulfill. He assumed prerogatives which only the Most High God may assume. He spoke as though He were the Almighty God. He took to Himself the very title, that most sacred Name by which Jehovah made Himself known to His ancient people. Only He could say, "I Am that I Am." But Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I Am."

Now all this is most true. Let us summarize the deeds and sayings of Jesus which so many find they cannot accept, while they hold to a purely human Jesus to whom they pledge their devotion and loyalty and whom they own as their Saviour.

Jesus took it upon Himself to forgive sins which the Pharisees, in a sense, rightly objected to, declaring that only God could forgive sins.

Jesus declared that to see Him was to look upon the Father.

Jesus affirmed that those who did not believe

on Him would therefore die in their sins.

Jesus said that He was the light of the world and that to reject Him was to walk in darkness.

Jesus—in words which in the mouth of anyone short of the Most High would be folly of a most blasphemous order, too great for any hope of forgiveness—said that all needy souls of earth should come to Him to find rest. He invited all peoples everywhere to come to Him with the burning thirst of their souls to drink from the Fountain of Life.

He did not hesitate to say that He was the Resurrection and the Life, and that those who believed on Him should never die.

He affirmed that He had come down from heaven as the very Bread of God to give Himself to the world.

Perhaps the most astounding utterances of Jesus are to be found in Matthew 25 where He sets Himself up as the final Judge of the nations and of the souls of men—the One who will pronounce the divine verdict which will determine the everlasting destiny of all the millions, indeed billions, who have ever lived.

Jesus accepted worship from one who said he would not believe that He had risen from the dead unless he could see the print of the nails in His hands and could thrust his hand into His wounded side, which when granted to Him caused him to cry, "My Lord and my God."

Jesus said that though heaven and earth should pass away, His words would never pass away. He could look down the ages and tell what things would come to pass, some of which we are seeing after

the passing of nearly twenty centuries. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This which we are seeing today, Israel surging afresh as a nation, with Jerusalem as the center of its life, Jesus foretold long, long ago.

Jesus said that all authority had been given to Him both in heaven and upon earth, such being the glory of His Resurrection. He bade His disciples to go forth and make all the nations His disciples, giving them the promise ever to be with those who believed on Him.

According to the testimony of those who walked with Him and were His witnesses, He healed every form of disease and distress known to man. He multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the hungry multitudes. He raised the dead and among them one who already stank in the grave. He commanded the storm to abate and there was a great calm, causing His disciples to exclaim, "Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey?" He could at a wedding feast, when wine had given out, command the servants to fill the water pots with water, and lo, never was such wine served to kings of earth.

Now all this poses a problem of immeasurable proportions. What are they who adhere to a purely human Jesus, shorn of all claims to deity, to do with such affirmations? That the apostles embraced them there is no denying. That the early disciples accepted them and found them real and altogether trustworthy sacred history makes very clear.

The truth of the matter is that the apostles later enlarged upon these utterances of their Lord: Paul told the Colossians, "All things were made by him," not only the visible but the invisible; things not only on earth but in heaven. St. John, referring to Jesus, says, "This is the true God and eternal life." In the epistle to the Hebrews it is declared that the universe was made by Jesus Christ and that He upholds all things by the word of His power. The great apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, declares that the risen, ascended Christ, having accomplished the great work of Redemption, fills all things. The Christ consciousness in cosmic fashion sustains worlds which are like the grains of sand on the shores of the seas.

Why is it that Jesus was not relegated to a madhouse? Such claims as He made, were He not able to make them good, would have resulted in such monstrous lunacy as the world has never known. Had He not been able to verify such claims, Jesus would not be the world's Saviour but its most heinous fraud.

No one can call a purely human Jesus Saviour. If He was not all that He claimed to be, and if He could not do what He claimed, assuming, as He did, divine prerogatives, then with iron-clad logic, as sharp as the finest blade ever honed, this One whom so many millions adore the world over should be scorned as the world's most contemptible impostor. Were this Man not God, He would be the most astounding freak of nature in the annals of history.

No, you can take no middle ground with Jesus.

You must accept Him as God as well as Man, or the ground you stand on is filled with ten thousand contradictions that can never be resolved; and it follows that the sanest Man that ever lived was at the same time the most insane; the noblest Man in the history of mankind, the most ignoble.

Ah, but history *has* pronounced her verdict, a thunderous Amen to the claims of Jesus. And all those unnumbered millions who have received Him as Saviour find in Him a glorious fulfillment of His promises. The forgiveness of sins and eternal life and the rest promised to needy, weary souls is so real that they never cease to praise and adore His holy Name.

You must go all the way with Jesus or you dare not begin. There is no middle ground.

CHAPTER IX

WHY THE CROSS?

Nothing is more inconceivable than that One so lovely, so good, so tender, so compassionate, so given to the care and service of others, should have come to such an end. Good men do not end their days in such fashion. Even bad men are not put to death for their crimes without a goodly measure of respect and kindly treatment as human beings. Whatever their deeds, when taken to their execution, if to the gallows they must go, there is not wanting human regard, if not sympathy.

Jesus' execution was the most terrific expulsion from society's embrace that this world has ever known. It went better with the two thieves whose crosses clustered about His. They were not mocked and jeered and made a laughing stock. They could die "in peace." No one reminded them of their sins. No one cried: "You deserve to die." Not so with Jesus. Had He not said that He would destroy the temple and in three days raise it up, and here He is unable to help Himself? "Come down from the cross and we will believe," they jeered.

I once had described to me the shameful end of a soldier who because of misdemeanors and

a betrayal of his country was, as the saying goes, drummed out of the army. One trembled before such a spectacle of degradation. Every sign of insignia was stripped away, even to shining buttons. With immeasurable shame this one, once a soldier, was expelled, drummed out of the army, all in sight of comrades who could never again be such.

I thought of Jesus. It went a lot harder with Him. Why, the soldier was having (may I so speak?) a good breakfast with bacon and eggs when compared with Jesus. He was not drummed out. The very earth seemed to shake with revulsion. Not only earth but hell itself seemed to move against this One. The very sky at noonday grew dark. The very sun refused to shine on such a scene. Did He not cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Was it not written (Deut. 21) that the hanged one—one nailed to a tree to die—was accursed of God? Even more, such a One, once death had taken over, must be removed ere the setting of the sun lest the earth be defiled.

One's soul cries out with anguish which cannot be measured. Why? What He had to the very end affirmed regarding His Person must be a lie. John's declaration that all things were made by Him must be the craziest illusion ever to cross man's mind. Paul's assertion that not only things on earth but things in heaven were made by Him and for Him, and by Him exist, must be the words of a madman bereft of the faintest trace of reason. What we read in the Gospels of this crucified monster (such in the eyes of the congregated host

that stood to mock and to shake their heads with glee) must be a colossal fabrication of deranged disciples, so called.

What did they assert? He healed the blind, restored to health lepers, innumerable victims of maladies whatever their nature?

He raised from the dead one who already stank?

He raised up fallen women, forgiving all, women who kissed His feet and washed them with tears of gratitude?

He transformed execrable publicans who, once forgiven and redeemed, gave half their goods to the poor and all whom they had defrauded, four-fold?

He who washed the feet of His followers and claimed to be one with God, the Father, His beloved Son, sent to earth to redeem mankind?

No, no, no, this cannot be. Either this is all a lie of the deepest dye; or if not, if it all be true, then the other, the unspeakably shameful death of which we have spoken, could never have been. Yet, we know that both are true. How will we ever find a way out of such a dilemma?

There is only one way. From the purely human viewpoint there is no way out. It was simply a miscarriage of justice such as has never been known or ever will be known. Something so incongruous in the realms of divine government (if justice there be) as to put an end to all faith in such a thing. Who could ever believe in a loving, just God watching over the affairs of men, and seeing to it that men might be judged according to their

deeds, when His beloved Son appearing upon earth to redeem mankind should come to such an end?

Things taken in this way lead to stark despair. All faith is annihilated. The Cross becomes forever the end of hope. Mankind is left in greater misery than before Jesus came. Such disorder in the divine order, such an inversion of values in the government of God would bring about a universal anguish as would crush hoping hearts and make of the world a despairing madhouse.

I was saying that from a human point-of-view the dilemma has no solution. But when we look at it from God's viewpoint, all is order and light and justice and love. We see why instead of the Cross begetting despair, it has been a fountain of joy which has inspired the great things of earth. It is not by chance that gravestones of the millions of dead in many lands are marked by Christianity's essential sign—the Cross. I looked upon a vast cemetery where the bodies of soldiers lay, my countrymen, all marked by crosses. An error? No. I looked upon the spires of ten thousand temples where men worship God and offer praise, all marked by crosses. A mistake? No! I was led to the bedside of dying souls, souls that could not be numbered, all clinging to the Cross (simply to Thy Cross I cling, nothing in my hands I bring). An anchor that cannot hold in life's final storm? A hope which death will blast as it blasts all others? No!

And now we come to God's solution of the dilemma—a dilemma which to man's mind assumes infinite proportions.

It is really very simple though theologians, many at least, stumble and find it hard to accept. The "offense of the Cross" still stands, but the "offense" is to pride. The sinner, convicted and humbled by the Spirit of God, is not offended. He believes, and his joy is unspeakable and full of glory, for the burden of his sins has rolled away; and like Pilgrim of Bunyan's great classic, he is now on the way to the Celestial City.

I was saying that it is really very simple. The principle operates in our homes. A child may understand. I read of a mother who had pleaded in vain with her boy who had the habit of coming from school with things that were not his—pencils, notebooks, knives, and what not—and who finally laid down the law. "If you come again with something which is not yours, you see this knitting needle? I will heat it until it is white-hot, and then I will pierce your hand, your hand which takes things that are not yours." For a month the lad's hands remained clean. And then one day the good mother became aware that the old habit had reasserted itself. She found that her fears were not without foundation. She took her boy's hand and told him that the sentence had to be executed. But when the needle, stuck into a flame, was aglow with heat, she plunged it through her own hand and not her boy's. Years later, the boy, now a man, testified to the fact that his mother's sacrifice was the turning point of his life. His hands had been clean ever since.

Indeed the principle is just that simple, and the Bible states it in terms as simple as that. The

law of God reads, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Now we have all sinned. I need not say how, when, or where; for each man's conscience will back me up. Even though the law of God, as we have it in Holy Writ, did not condemn us, we would condemn ourselves, for conscience is a fiery thing with the sting of a viper.

What is God to do with the thundering of His holy law? Sinai, where the law was given, might well flash as it did with lightning, for to approach it was to die. The Lord says that He cannot justify the wicked. If He were to do that, passing over the demands of law, it would mean chaos, a veritable undermining of His government. If He were to say, "Well, let us forget it; I do not think sin is so heinous and offensive," you would have a right to laugh at the Most High. Even so, conscience would not let you off. No, God cannot be bribed, as some judges are wont to be. He says He cannot justify the sinner. Ah, but He found a way whereby all the demands of a holy, righteous government would be satisfied. Justice would be meted out and the sinner released. It is the way of the Cross.

It is so wonderful that the eternal ages will never be able to tell out all its glory. This is the supreme revelation of the Holy Bible from beginning to end. When Jesus arose from the grave and appeared to His disciples, whose hopes were blasted by the Cross. He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scrip-

tures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 27), meaning, of course, His sufferings. It was the Cross which had caused them to stumble; and now the Cross, as interpreted by the risen Christ, would put them back on their feet.

It is the song of the redeemed in mansions of glory. They sing saying: "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The great Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, called on God to forbid that he should glory in ought but the Cross. He stated it (writing to the Romans) in terms so simple that the Hottentot, along with the rest of us benighted folk, may grasp its significance. That is, if pride does not stand in our way to befuddle us and cause us to say that we do not understand, when the truth of the matter is we are not willing to be humbled and have our sins exposed and dealt with in this fashion.

Listen to Paul as he sums it all up: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:8, 10).

John, the beloved disciple, declares most emphatically that it is the blood of Christ which cleanseth the believer from all sin.

Let preachers and theologians quibble over the exact meaning of such terms. Some, swelled with pride (they call it divinity, or theological erudition), will react violently and say that they will

have nothing to do with "slaughter house religion."

My answer will be given by means of an experience from life. I happen to be attending a spiritual retreat as I write in moments of rest. A speaker of no small note in the ecclesiastical world told the following story for which truth he vouches.

A little girl shabbily dressed, a tattered shawl about her shoulders, unkempt and evidently from some hovel of the poor, came to the office of the pastor of a wealthy church. Received kindly, as she was, said that her mother had sent her to beg the pastor to come to her in order "to bring her in." The pastor wondered what it all meant, for the girl could say no more except that her mother wanted the pastor "to bring her in." The pastor took the little one's hand and followed her. She led him to the alley of the poor and up a tottering stairway to a grimy hole, where a dying soul, all worn and haggard, awaited him. The pastor learned later that she had been a prostitute. As he looked down on the pale, emaciated face, he understood. He took the poor woman's hand and told her of Jesus' teachings. But the dying one shook her head and said, "No, this was not for one the likes of me." The pastor then told her of Jesus' lovely deeds, going about as He was wont, doing good. But again he was told that this was not for the likes of her.

The pastor then reached back into memory's treasure house to a matter he had discarded as not being apt for fashionable folk to whom he preached—the Cross. He told the poor creature how Jesus had died for sinners to set them free.

Then it was that the worn face of the once prostitute lighted up, and she nodded. That was it. The pastor said the dying soul "entered in" and he with her.

Read Isaiah 53:6 "... The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The sacrifice of Jesus our Lord outweighs the sins of the world. Oh the glory of it. Let us believe and at the foot of the cross find forgiveness and peace.

CHAPTER X

WHY THE RESURRECTION?

There is something so very reasonable and so very logical about the Resurrection of our Lord that even though the witness of the New Testament were lacking, one would be compelled to believe in the empty tomb. How could One who was God manifest in the flesh, who in the days of His public ministry healed every form of sickness—the blind, the lame, the leper, the demon-possessed, who raised the dead among whom was one whose body had already entered upon decomposition—how could such a One be holden of death?

The Resurrection of Jesus bears the same relation to what went before, the Incarnation, the miracles, the Cross, as a flower to its stem and stalk and root. It is all of one piece. Though our Lord was truly the Son of man, it was all supernatural, it was all of a divine order. Death must needs be overcome, as sin and Satan and all the ills that afflict humanity and the world were overcome.

The prophet (Isaiah 25:8) had said that Christ would swallow up death in victory and wipe away tears from off all faces. The Lord Himself affirmed over and over that the Cross would give way to the empty tomb. His mighty declaration to the

Jews that though they should destroy the temple (His flesh) in three days, He would raise it up (John 2:19), could not fail to be fulfilled.

I was saying that apart from the testimony of eyewitnesses whose integrity could never be questioned, namely, the early disciples who were ready to seal their witness with their very lives, the Cross makes inevitable the Resurrection. How else explain the glory and the power of the Cross? Nothing could ever have offset its shame, its immeasurable ignominy, its awful disgrace, save the Resurrection. The Scripture itself declared that the hanged one, hanged on a tree for his sin, was accursed of God. He was to be buried that same day lest the land be defiled. The enemies of Jesus felt quite secure. They had placed Him in such an ignominious position, one so awful in its shame and disgrace because of His blasphemy (to them His claims to deity were such) that from every purely natural angle this was the end. And oh what an end it was!

Why is it that so many millions down the centuries have seen in the Cross of Christ a glory no words can ever tell? Why do we have Paul, the greatest of the apostles, saying, God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross? Why is it that a never-ending series of testimonies affirm that peace and forgiveness of sins, yea and a new life of joy and victory, were found at the foot of the Cross? It is because there the Saviour bore the curse of man's sin and through the shedding of His most precious blood put it away. But it took the Resurrection to prove this. Without the

Resurrection, Paul says, we are still in our sins; we have no proof that Calvary was for the expiation of the sin of the world.

The Cross and the Resurrection are one. They form the "death-resurrection-mid-process." The power of the Resurrection was in the death, as the glory and immeasurable power of the death (the Cross) is in the Resurrection.

We do not for a moment mean to say that the Resurrection is lacking in what I would call unimpeachable evidence. There is no event in all history so thoroughly substantiated. The evidences are overwhelming. The Saviour, so Luke writes in Acts 1:3, "was alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Nothing short of this would ever have transformed these discouraged, defeated, oppressed disciples, overwhelmed with confusion and fear and dismay over the terrible end to which their Master had come, and made of them the dynamic soldiers of the Cross whose victorious testimony turned the world upside down.

The historian who is honest will admit that nothing short of the Resurrection of Jesus can ever explain the tremendous impact the early Christians made on the pagan world. They were thrown to the lions in the Roman circus; they served as torches to illuminate Nero's gardens by night; they were forced to dig down into the bowels of the earth (the catacombs still bear their silent witness) in order to survive; they were crucified on every hill, tortured and slain, but there

was no stopping the onward march of the followers of the Crucified. For their Lord and Saviour was alive. His tomb was empty. He, the risen Christ, marched at their side. His "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" sustained them. They rejoiced in the privilege of suffering for His Name.

There was one of the twelve, not being present when the Lord appeared to the apostolic band behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, who hearing of the appearing of Jesus said, "No!" He would not believe except he should see the print of the nails in the Saviour's hands and be able to thrust his hand into His wounded side. The Saviour eight days later again appeared to the apostles, Thomas being present. Ah, what a scene. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" is the Saviour's word to the doubting apostle. "My Lord and my God," answers Thomas. We may be sure he did not thrust his hand into wounds so sacred.

And now comes the recommendation which is for us all even in this day of doubting Thomases: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

We are all involved (those who truly believe) in the power and glory of the Resurrection of Christ. The church is the body of Christ. What happened to the Head happened to every member of the body.

"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love

wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2: 4-10).

CHAPTER XI

WHY THE AMEN OF HISTORY?

History gives an exact appraisal of its leaders. Her judgments are as final as any mathematical proposition. It might be otherwise, at least as regards short periods of time. Millions might fall victims of the spell of a Hitler, exalt him to the very skies and worship him as a god, quite sure that there never was such a man. They might be sure that he would usher in an order such as no other would have done. But just wait. Give history a chance to do her work. It will be something similar to the threshing floor of the ancients. When the sifting is over and the winds have carried the chaff, the kernel will appear and be garnered. So with history's sifting and the winds of time—they leave things naked for the eyes of all to see him who, in spite of all, was only a monster of greed and falsehood, a monumental egotist whose folly and wickedness could never be measured.

No, you cannot deceive the judge we call history. The secrets of men's hearts are eventually laid bare; their deeds are photographed before the eyes of the world; their aims and purposes are weighed in the balance and judgment is pronounced. Socrates is known for what he was. His greatness (for truly he was great as a philosopher

and a martyr) is measured with an exactness such as obtains in a scientific formula. Alexander the great is called such only because of ambition and military skill; his real self is as clearly defined as any mountain. If there is any doubt about the intrinsic nature of Lincoln, it is only because the voice and verdict of history have not been heeded. If you would know who Moses was—his worth, the fruit of his labors, his contribution to mankind—let history speak, both sacred and profane. If you have any doubts about Livingstone's place in the halls of fame, you have not attended to the voice of history.

Now when we come to Jesus the same rule obtains. There were those who in the days of His humiliation felt very sure that He was a fraud of unlimited proportions, a pretender king, a liar who claimed to be the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy, an abominable deceiver of the people who claimed to be able to forgive their sins and make things right with the Father in heaven. They believed him to be as false as the tricks of a magician, a monster of cunning deceit whose affirmations regarding His person as one being equal with God were blasphemy of such heinous nature that they could not rest until such a One was dealt with in a manner befitting His "crimes."

Ah yes, the most ignominious, the most shameful, the most execrable execution known to men. They could not find "peace" until this One was dealt with in a manner that would prove to the world that He was accursed of God. Their own law avowed that a "hanged one" was so. The Cross

would put an end to the claims of this blasphemer forever. The whole world would see Him as He was. The shame of such a disgrace would be as final as the sinking of the sun in the west at the close of day.

Yes, but the sun is wont to rise again. Let us turn now to history: Some will say, but that is Sacred History. I reply, only because Jesus made it so. We can bypass Sacred History and still prove our point. The Bible throughout the centuries has been the best seller; and translations go on, with the goal being all the languages of the world. But we will, for the sake of force which our argument will thereby obtain, overlook the greatest historical document in the world's literary treasury.

We shall turn simply to history. I mean the kind that judged Hitler and Socrates and Alexander the Great and Lincoln and Livingstone. This impartial judge from whose awful siftings of the facts and fallacies of life no leader among men can escape. She will give you utter and absolute truth; that is, if you will give her time.

Take Joan of Arc. There are those who are still attempting to color facts for the sake of racial or national or religious advantage. We all want our particular party to shine. If at the expense of truth, then be it so. But history eventually takes care of it. It is like washing a dirty shirt: if you keep at it long enough, the shirt will come out clean.

I repeat, let us now turn to history for her verdict. Jesus stands before her; what does she say?

(I tremble with delight. Forgive me, for of

course I am biased. However, history is not.) She speaks with lily-white purity—that is, if you give her time.

And, of course, as to Jesus, she has had almost twenty centuries of sifting the judgment she has passed down to men, which each day that passes becomes more final. Evidence pours in from all lands (yea, even those which follow Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius) with the force of a mighty Amazon adding proof to proof. Even though history had not long since cried Amen to the claims of Jesus, she would at last be compelled to do so. You can no more challenge the right of Jesus Christ to stand as the center of history than the sun's right to govern day.

We take it without giving the matter any thought. It is just one of those things, and that is about all. But no, it did not just happen. It obeys a law as reliable and as inflexible as the movement of the planets. History has done her work and so whether you will or no, you have no other recourse. You must bow to her will. It is her verdict. I refer to A.D. and B.C. There are those who would belittle Jesus. I took a course in ethics in one of our great universities. His Name was never mentioned. But there it stands. Jesus stepped into the stream of history and changed her courses for good as no one who has ever lived. He as naturally became her center, from whose appearing all things are measured, as when the dawn and the sun rise. There was no blare of trumpets, no decree of kings, no moving of armies, no struggle, as is wont among nations for supremacy.

The sun does not need to struggle for supremacy. She silently does her beneficent work and her supremacy no one need defend; no one can contest that Jesus' place in history is of that order. The Cross shakes empires and towers over the wrecks of time with such majesty and glory, that, though nothing of earth's pomp and glory has ever been enlisted to rise up in its defense, inasmuch as it was for the overthrow of all pride and vanity, it still enthralls and draws hearts within its captivating sphere in absolute subjection as the combined charms of earth could never do.

You cannot fix a date on any document without acknowledging this. Your heart may be a thousand miles from Christ, as to faith and love and obedience, but the cold facts of life oblige you to say Amen to history's verdict every time you affix a date.

Now come, be reasonable and inquire into the why of all this. History is a severe judge. She bows to no one. Give her time and she will hand down an utterly incontestable judgment, for she will obtain the facts. Her verdict springs compulsively from incontrovertible evidence.

Could anyone think for a moment that had not the claims of Jesus as to Saviourhood been abundantly verified, history would have given her Amen? Though ten thousand voices of thunder had spoken, it could not be more clear or final. If Jesus' claim to deity and the assertion of the Sacred Scriptures that all things were made by this One who is called the Christ and by Him are upheld—if this were not true, what would history's

answer have been? What has history's answer been to all those whose claims to greatness have gone beyond the facts of life?

Some students once challenged their teacher of law, Professor Greenlief, the greatest legal mind of America and author of *The Laws of Evidence*, to apply these laws to Jesus. He decided to do so. Months later he met with his students and said that he had done what they had challenged him to do and that he was ready to give his verdict. "Jesus," he said, "was either the greatest fraud of all history, or he was God." He could not have been the former as the greatest things in our culture spring from Him. That left the eminent teacher of law with but one alternative: Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh.

Indeed, the loveliest, the most wonderful things in the world's culture, whether in music, poetry, architecture, or life, no matter what form life may take, all spring from the Lord Jesus Christ. History has said Amen, and as time passes her verdict will only become ever more final.

CHAPTER XII

WHY NOT NOW?

This is the final, the great Why. It brings the foregoing right down to where you are. It brings it all right to the door of your heart and life. Without this, what has been said, though eternally true in the very councils of God, remains in the realm of doctrine or facts of history. The question now is, what are *you* going to do about these facts?

It may be stated thus: The risen Christ, as we have it in Revelation 3:20, stands at the door of your heart. He is knocking and requesting permission to enter, in order to be your Saviour and King. Perhaps you have long since received Him as such and your name is written in the Book of Life. You have been born again and you rejoice in Him with full assurance that your sins have been forgiven and that you are a member of the family of God. If this be true, you may close the book and leave chapter 12 for others.

But you may belong to the class who have no hope, without God, groping through life's dark maze, yearning for a better day—a blessed time of peace and rest and joy everlasting in the great eternity of endless ages which awaits us all. Or it may well be that you have allowed yourself to become entangled with the false doctrines of our

age as regards the Person of Christ: You may have believed Him to be the very best of men, history's supreme flowering, far beyond earth's great, but still only a man. You need to come to the true Christ, the Christ of Christian experience, the Christ of the Bible, the Christ of history, the risen Christ who redeems, the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified, reigning King, who upholds all things by the word of His power, who having by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3). He comes by His Spirit, humbly seeking admission into your heart and life where He wishes to reign. Of His Kingdom there will be no end. He seeks you not merely to bring you under His yoke, but to bring you into His love. He is the Great Lover, and as such must be loved. As all true lovers, He needs to be loved. If as Augustine says in his classic work, "He made us for Himself and we cannot rest till we rest in Him," at the same time He likewise, in a sense, cannot rest until He rests in us. Had you thought of that?

It may be that you have been kidding yourself, hiding behind the false assumption that such an intellect as yours is not easily satisfied. The evidence we have may do for the common herd, but you are something very special. You need to be convinced, and that on the ground of reason and logic, through a thoroughly scientific inquiry. There are contradictions in the gospel narrative which need to be cleared up. You belong to that honored class of intellectual highbrows who cannot be satisfied with anything short of absolute proof. The Bible makes statements about miracles which

put too great a strain on one's credulity. Our age is a scientific age, etcetera.

However, you are deceiving yourself. The evidence is so overwhelming that no honest seeker can fail to be convinced. There are honest doubters and dishonest doubters. No one who honestly investigates the claims of Christianity will continue to doubt the great historical fact of Christ as evidenced in the Bible, and in history, and in the experience of Christians.

No, your real difficulty lies deeper. It is found in the will. Your pride will not let you face up to the demands of the Cross where the Redeemer in infinite mercy dealt with your sins. You are not willing to accept the humbling which the Cross involves. It is a very bitter thing to have come to the realization that our sins have been so heinous in the sight of God that no other remedy could be found save in the awful sufferings of His Beloved Son, who, to free us from guilt and sin's issue, which is death, was willing to bear the curse for us, dying on Calvary's ignominious tree of infinite shame.

Then there is another aspect of the matter which we must not fail to consider. It is the fact that it is not you who are judging the merits of the case. It is you who are being judged. History has said its Amen to the claims of Christ. He is the Light of the world. If such light does not draw you to itself, there is but one alternative. You prefer darkness. Christ is the Truth about God and man, and right and wrong, and the final issue of all things. If truth does not draw you, error will have

to be your lot. Christ is the supreme expression of God's love. If such a love as manifested in Christ coming to a perfect flowering on Calvary's Cross does not enthrall you and utterly captivate you, then of course you pass judgment upon yourself. Your sense of appreciation of what is highest and best in life is so appallingly deficient as to brand you forever with the mark of spiritual blindness.

Christ is the expression of God's matchless purity, a purity never marred by even the shadow of a blemish. Now if such sainthood (He the King of saints) and such purity does not awaken a responsive note in your breast and a desire for such beauty of life and character, then the opposite will be your portion. Christ is the final Word as regards perfect manhood while, at the same time, the full-orbed revelation of the nature of God—it being true that nothing that might be expected of an ideal man, perfect manhood, is lacking. Now it follows, as a logical sequence, that not to be overwhelmed with admiration (not to say, faith and love) is simply to pass judgment upon oneself, and to condemn oneself to the darkness all error entails.

One might go on in this strain. The Saviour Himself said it in this fashion: "I have not come to condemn the world. This is condemnation, that Light is come into the world, but men love darkness." To the Jews, Christ the Lord said: "If ye will not believe that I am he (the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world), ye shall die in your sins." There is something axiomatic about that. It follows as certainly as twice two are four. If we reject

Him, we cannot but die in our sins, which are the opposite of all that Christ *is*.

Paul the Apostle said it in a most amazing fashion. At first flush you may not see the relation, but it really sums up what we have been saying. Here you have it: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22). Paul is not hurling curses at Christ's enemies, nor is he damning his own. The logical consequence of not loving Jesus is just this. You bring upon yourself all the error and darkness and shame and death which such an attitude involves. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. There is no other fountain.

But what did Paul mean by the word, Maranatha, added to the pronouncement: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha"? The word coming from the Aramaic was used by Christians to identify themselves in that early day of persecution as a Mason identifies himself by his manner of handshake. The meaning of the word is that Christ is here, also that He is coming again; and also according to Chrysostom, that Christ came and died for the sins of men. It is a mystic word that holds within its confines all that Christ is and wrought. Can it be possible Paul is saying that you do not love this One who being on an equality with God as His Beloved Son left His throne to take the form of a man in the Virgin's womb and to die for you on an accursed tree that you might be freed from sin and death? Well this involves you in the meshes of the curse

of immeasurable ingratitude. You simply judge yourself unworthy of eternal life.

Or, on the other hand, you might be a member of the class who consider themselves as unredeemable, too *bad* to hope for anything so glorious as a place in the Saviour's arms. Lady Huntingdon, Wesley's friend, said she could be willing to wade through a thousand hells to arrive at the Saviour's feet. You may feel that way, but oh, your sins!

May I say to you that the enormity of your sins is your greatest claim on Christ. If you had none, you would not need Him. In that case He died on the Cross in vain—you have no sins to be atoned for. Can you not see that your lost and undone condition is just what Christ needs in order to be just what He is—a Saviour?

It is not your "badness" that can keep you out of heaven but your "goodness." The Lord said that He had not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners. The Pharisees were *so* religious, *so* righteous (on their own self-centered ground) that they rejected Christ. Now *His* ground is the Cross where not only your sins were answered for, but your sin as a law and governing principle was canceled. So, you, bowed down with grief and shame, look no longer at your sins. Look up to Jesus, the crucified, the risen Lord, the great Sin-bearer, who pleads with you to come to Him and open your heart to receive Him as your Saviour and Lord.

Many are held at a distance, failing to receive Christ as Saviour, fearing that it would not be possible to hold on. The demands of the Gospel of

Christ on the one hand are so high, and on the other sin is so prevalent, the world so enticing, and the devil so mighty, that those doubters throw up the sponge, as the saying goes, before ever attempting the first step. But they who thus surmise, fail to realize that to enter upon the Christian life, is to answer the call of an almighty Saviour whose sheep follow Him, is to rest in the promise that they shall never perish and that no one shall ever be able to pluck them out of His hand. If it were a question of our own strength we might well, one and all, give up.

Ah, but such is not the case. When Christ comes into the heart, one is born again. What one loved before of sin is now hated, and what before was hated now is loved. The Christian rests in the arms of an all-sufficient Saviour who, according to the Word of God, "is able to keep (him) from falling, and to present (him) faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 25). And should he fall, the good Shepherd will be hot on his trail, even as He was with Peter when he fell, to bring him back to sweet communion with Himself.

"Him that cometh to me," says the Saviour with arms outstretched to receive all who will come, "I will in no wise cast out."

Oh, do come to receive the forgiveness which He wrought through the Cross, for it was there that He bore all your sins to put them away forever. Receive the living Christ. The all-triumphant risen Lord and Saviour pleads at the door of your heart, that you might open the door and let Him in (Rev.

3:20) that He might reign in you and you in Him.
(See Romans 5:17.)