

Our Evangelical Faith

by Harold John Ockenga

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revelation and inspiration in understanding the Bible and the role of Jesus Christ in fulfilling the older parts of revelation.

Scripture: Exodus 31:18, Matthew 1:23, Luke 11:20, John 1:1, John 2:11, Acts 1:9, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Evangelical Theology", "Christian Doctrine"

Description

Harold John Ockenga preaches about the core beliefs of the National Association of Evangelicals, emphasizing the importance of the Statement of Faith forged in 1942, which includes the belief in the inspired, infallible Word of God, the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father. Ockenga highlights the significance of these doctrines in defining evangelical Christianity and the need for faith in the deity of Christ, His sacrificial death, and triumphant resurrection for salvation and eternal life.

Transcript

PREFACE

The Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals was forged from the collective convictions of evangelical leaders from many denominations assembled at St. Louis in April, 1942. It was unanimously adopted at the Constitutional Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals at Chicago in 1943. The statement represents the Christian faith held in common by evangelical Christians ranging from high Calvinists to Pentecostals. It does not embody the entire system of doctrine held by any denominational group in constituent membership in the National Association of Evangelicals. Each body has doctrines beyond this common precious faith. The movement emphasizes the agreements -- not the differences -- of its members.

Since these truths are affirmed by all, I felt it incumbent upon me to interpret them to my people. Consequently, this series was preached in the Park Street Church at the evening services, which are broadcast to all New England. They were well received. Dr. Murch, editor of United Evangelical Action, requested me to print them in that publication. These messages are being published for wider distribution in response to the demands of enthusiastic readers.

My own theological views are presented in these discourses which are not to be construed as the official interpretations of the National Association of Evangelicals.

HAROLD JOHN OCKENGA

Boston, Mass.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS

Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people,¹ regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.²

* * * * *

Webmaster's notes: What I've published here is the Statement of Faith as it exists today at NAE.

1. Original version reads: "man" ;
2. Original version reads "in Christ."

These are the only two changes in the statement since the publication of this book in 1946.

FOREWORD

There was a need for this book and Dr. Ockenga was best qualified to write it.

The author's public utterances and written words always command deep respect for the scholarship they reflect, the integrity and sincere conviction that fill his words, and his clear definition of the essentials of conservative belief.

It is especially fitting that Dr. Ockenga permit the publication of these discourses which give his elaboration of the doctrinal witness of the National Association of Evangelicals. He was a leader in organizing evangelical forces, was the Association's first president, and has been recognized as the movement's intellectual and doctrinal interpreter.

The author of this book has skillfully drawn upon his wide experience with evangelical groups and his thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine and history to set forth the heart-center of evangelical belief.

This book is no drab residuum of dogma reached by cancellation of all doctrinal variations among evangelicals, for Dr. Ockenga has poured into these pages his own emphatic personality and has high-lighted them from his own doctrinal angel. Fellow Calvinists may feel that the author's Calvinism is too moderate at some points, and at other points Arminians of the Wesleyan tradition will question the implications of his Calvinistic slant. But Our Evangelical Faith will serve to define for evangelicals their agreement in essentials and the frontiers beyond which each group has developed its distinctive pattern.

We predict that this book will clarify doctrinal preaching in many pulpits and will guide the study of conservative groups which seek a clear understanding of the common heritage of evangelical Christianity and the relationship of their respective emphases.

LESLIE R. MARSTON

Past President

National Association of Evangelicals

THE FINGER OF GOD

And He gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him on Mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).

The finger of God is a figure for the inspired Word of God. It is a phrase which represents the power of God, the direct action of His own immediate energy.

The magicians of Egypt recognized this energy of God working in the plagues and they announced in reference to the plague of lice, "This is the finger of God." Similarly, when the Lord Jesus Christ exorcised demons, men questioned the power by which He accomplished this, and accused Him of doing it through the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. In answer, He said, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Matthew 12:28 records the same incident by saying, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Hence we conclude in the equation of these two, the finger of God and the Spirit of God, that the activity of the finger of God is the activity of the Spirit of God. This affords an adequate explanation of a troublesome and current problem regarding the law and it gives an illustration of the principle of inspiration which is applicable to all the Scriptures.

The law was given through Moses in three stages. First, there was the oral stage recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the book of Exodus. We read, "Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying . . ." Also, "And Moses

Page 14

returned the words of the people unto the Lord." And, "God spoke all these words, saying I am the Lord thy God . . ." Moses brought this law back to the people, standing at the base of the mountain, who had heard the thunderings, seen the lightnings, heard the noise of the trumpet, and witnessed the mountain smoking. They said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." This was the first stage in the giving of the law.

The second stage was a work of God; He wrote the law upon tablets of stone. Exodus 31:18 says, "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him on Mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." When the sinful Israelites interrupted the communing of God and Moses by worshiping the golden calf, Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of testimony in his hand. The Scripture says, "And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tablets . . . and it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount." This was the second stage of the giving of the law. Moses destroyed this record by breaking it in pieces.

The third stage is initiated by the Lord's order to Moses following his effective intercession in behalf of the people. God said, "Cut out for yourself two tablets of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tablets the words that were in the first tablets, which you broke." Then the Scripture hastily adds in the twenty-eighth verse of the thirty-fourth chapter, "And he (Moses) was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights: he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. And it came to pass,

Page 15

when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony in his hand, he didn't realize that the skin of his face shone from talking with God." Here we are told that Moses wrote the tablets of the law and yet they are called the writing of the Lord. Moreover when Moses summarized this in his speech in Deuteronomy 10:1-4, he referred to it in the following words, "The Lord said unto me, Cut out for yourself two tablets of stone like the former ones, and come up to Me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood for yourself. And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered, and you shall put them in the ark." It is very clear that what Moses wrote is called the writing of the Lord. Obviously God has no finger, for that is anthropomorphic language, but he exercised his power through Moses to whom he communicated his law "face to face."

This leads us to see that God spoke to Moses so that he received a revelation; that Moses wrote so that his writing was God's writing; and that this infallible revelation is authoritative -- God's Word. On a larger scale, that is the story of the whole Bible.

The inspiration of the Bible as the work of God written by the finger of God is the dividing watershed of all Christian thinking. The modern mind is afraid of the charge of literalism. This fear has led to all kinds of erroneous thought and speculation concerning the Bible. Some of our most prominent modern writers reason toward Biblical conceptions without the Biblical authority. They do not want to quote the Bible lest the stigma of literalism be placed upon them. Can we still believe in the doctrine of an authoritative book? The National Association of Evangelicals says, "We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God."

Page 16

I. REVELATION -- GOD SPOKE

The fact of revelation is clearly stated in the Bible. Hebrews 1:1 says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." The important thing is that God has spoken. An objective series of events stands behind

the record called God's revelation. God did something in the creation, in the flood, in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, in the care of the Israelites during the wilderness and their entrance into Canaan land. God did something on Mount Sinai. These may be called the redemptive deeds of God and they culminated in the atonement of Calvary and the giving of the Holy Spirit. Those redemptive deeds of revelation are not yet completed, for Christ is yet to be revealed from heaven, and will take vengeance on those who know not God. That is a redemptive act and constitutes a revelation of God.

God supplemented these redemptive deeds by conversation with Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and others of His chosen prophets whereby they came to know Him. An interpretation of these redemptive deeds was given in the prophetic word through holy men of God under the influence of the Holy Spirit. How that revelation was given will be discussed later, but the revelation itself originated in God and made itself known unto receptive men. Either this is true or men such as Moses, Samuel, David and Ezra exploited their imaginations in passing off myths and fables as revealed from God. The moral tone of the Bible forbids that as it commends itself to our own conscience.

The possibility of such a revelation depends upon our theistic belief, namely our belief in a God who created, governs and controls the universe. The acceptance or

Page 17

rejection of that is arbitrary, but it is simple to see that he who rejects theism can have no place for revelation and must explain it away. His predisposition would be against revelation.

The form of revelation is as essential as the fact of revelation. Revelation is a communication of supernatural knowledge from God. His purposes, the secrets of grace, the future of His church in the world and the life of the soul after death. There is no way of learning about these things except through God's revelation. Hence, the Bible assumes that conversation between God and man is possible, God spoke to Moses with a voice out of the cloud. He spoke with Samuel and he spoke with the Lord Jesus Christ and he spoke with Paul. This conversation is no doubt the highest form of revelation.

Another form of corresponding revelation, however, came in the appearances of God before the incarnation. God appeared to Abraham in the Plain of Mamre, to Lot in the city of Sodom, to Joshua before the gates of Jericho; to Gideon by the threshing floor. These we hold to be the temporary appearances of the Second person of the trinity in human form before the incarnation, called epiphanies. Through them revelations were made unto men. There is also the form of vision. Elisha had his vision of the chariot of fire. Daniel had visions. The vision of the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's palace was given to many. In these ways god revealed himself.

Another form is dreams. Jacob dreamed of the ladder going from Bethel to heaven. Joseph dreamed concerning himself, concerning the future of the butler and the baker, concerning the famines in Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of the times of the Gentiles and his dream was interpreted by Daniel. Even heathen, such as Abimelech, learned the will of God through dreams. Still another form is the direct mental suggestions made unto individuals

Page 18

whose capacities were heightened by the Holy Spirit. The forms of revelation are numerous.

The finality of revelation rests in Jesus Christ. In Him, God Himself became flesh and dwelt among us. He was seen, handled, looked upon and heard. He exegeted the Father and he made God known unto men. Therefore his words, deeds and life were the words, deeds, and life of God. The teaching of Christ filled and completed the older parts of revelation. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Nevertheless, these deeds of God in Christ had to be interpreted. So He remained for forty days after His resurrection to instruct His disciples in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, namely, the meaning of His death, His burial, His resurrection, the nature of His church and the work which they were to do. He communicated unto them the truth which they as the authoritative spokesmen of Christianity were to propagate.

II. INSPIRATION -- MOSES WROTE SO THAT HIS WRITING WAS GOD'S WRITING

That is the meaning of inspiration. Inspiration does not refer to revelation, but to the recording of revelation. In its original sense, it certainly applies unto the receiver of revelation who was an inspired man, but in its accepted sense it refers to the individual who wrote the revelation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Inspiration, according to the Bible, is the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the writers of the Bible so that they correctly recorded the revelation of God's mind and will.

This does not assume that everything in the Bible was received from revelation, but that everything taught in the Bible is true. The historical writers such as Ezra and

Page 19

Luke may have had no revelation, but they were rendered infallible teachers by inspiration. Moses may have received much of his information from tradition taught to him by his mother in the Nile Valley, and yet the activity of the Holy Spirit enabled him to teach the truth.

God set these holy men, selected providentially and prepared over the years for this purpose, apart as "inspired," so that they were qualitatively distinct from other believers of the Old and New Testament who were merely illuminated by the Holy Spirit. According to Paul the Holy Spirit has diversities of gifts. Some men became the organs of God so that what they taught, God taught.

The method of inspiration has always been a matter of controversy. "Mechanical dictation" is the one method to which most objections have arisen. This comes from the fact that men think mechanical dictation means God dictated to men who passively received his dictation as amanuenses. I am sure that if God did the dictating, I would be very glad to receive the dictation and I would have no objection to that theory, but the Bible does not teach this. Nothing, in fact, is farther from the truth, for the various writers of the Bible used their different vocabularies, gifts, methods of thought and logical processes. These forty different writers can easily be distinguished as farmers, shepherds, priests and musicians. If God had dictated this mechanically, the words of the Bible, the vocabulary, would have been the same throughout. Furthermore, verbal inspiration often is confused with dictation. However, unless a clear distinction is made, verbal inspiration implies only one vocabulary, one style, one form in the Bible, and that is not what we find. Verbal inspiration, therefore, must mean something else.

Men were the intelligent, voluntary, cooperative agents of God, and were so affected by the Holy Spirit that in their thinking, willing and living they became the organs

Page 20

of God. Their human faculties were not suspended, but heightened and elevated. Hence, the various parts of the Bible are extremely different one from another.

"Moved upon" actually described the elevation and superintendence of the Holy Spirit, so that in writing they were preserved from error and they infallibly taught what God intended should be taught. This is the doctrine of the Bible. Jesus said, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, everything I have told you." Paul said, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory . . . But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." He also said to the Thessalonians, "When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you who believe." He wrote to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Peter declares, "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." And the Lord Jesus Christ said, "The Scripture cannot be broken."

The manifestation of inspiration is found in the fact that the Bible is variously called, "The Scripture," "Scriptures," "The Word of God," which suggests that they are plenary inspired. Christ said that David by the Spirit called Messiah Lord, in Matthew 22:43. The writer of the book of Hebrews says that David's words in Psalm 95, "Harden not your hearts . . ." are the words of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 3:7). The apostles attributed in Acts 4:25

Page 21

the words of David in Psalm 2 to God saying, "Who by the mouth of your servant David has said. . ." Paul claimed that Isaiah's words were the words of the Holy Spirit. "Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Isaiah . . ." (Acts 28:25).

The inspiration of the Bible extends not only to certain revealed truths but also to all factual portions of the Bible. There is no need for an endless search for what is true or false, myth or history, accommodation to error of the day or permanent truth. Such a search leaves us without any certainty concerning God's guidance, will, purpose and teaching for us.

The very words as originally written were chosen under inspiration. Otherwise, we never could have had the thought that God intended to convey. They were the writer's own words, but were selected by God. In this sense, we have no objection to the meaning of verbal inspiration or plenary inspiration. The view that because we lack the autographs (the originals) such verbal inerrancy is useless, is not valid. Historical criticism has remarkably reconstructed those autographs so that we may be sure that today we have the teaching of the original writers. There is no question of text that exists which would change a single doctrine of the Church. Christ Himself so accepted the Scriptures when He said, "If you call them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken . . ."

III. AUTHORITY -- GOD'S WORD IS AUTHORITATIVE FOR MAN WHETHER HE ACCEPTS IT OR NOT

The Bible is a growing revelation. Little did David think when he wrote "All things" in the eighth Psalm that "all things" meant the whole universe as the writer of the book of Hebrews says that it does. The Bible writers knew so little of the full meaning of their own writings that

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they searched diligently to understand (1 Peter 1:10). Little were men able to comprehend the full meaning of Scripture in their day, but as time goes on things which were read into the Scripture are being cast aside as new light dawns upon them or breaks from them. The church has often slowly relinquished views which it read into the Scriptures, but later saw that other views were consistent. Had God not used the phenomenal language for physical events of the world as the best of scientists do today, saying that the sun rises and the sun sets, the Bible would have been cast aside by people as error when they thought in the terms of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Now we find that the new discoveries of science do not conflict with the Bible, for the Bible uses the language of the man on the street. To argue against the Bible by saying that the sun stood still and therefore the whole solar system stopped instead of the world stopping on its axis according to the Bible is cavil (a trivial objection), for how else would the men of that day have described the sun standing still or how should I say the world stood still in order that the day should be lengthened? They used the phenomenal language of their day. They described it as they saw it. Today we understand what they mean, even though we have to apply modern terms of science. The discoveries of science are not inconsistent with the Bible.

The Bible is an accurate and infallible record. Wherever the Bible has been tested it stands. Archeology has been the greatest evidence of the accuracy of historical data in the Scripture. I have read a number of books on archeology and I have yet to find one book which proves that the Bible is wrong historically. Sir William Ramsey approached his investigations of the historical accuracy of Luke in a hostile attitude. When he finished, he was a firm believer and a great defender of the Bible's accuracy.

Geology cannot be shown to be contrary to the creative days of Genesis, though men may have held and still do hold those views contrary to geology. Moreover, there are often great claims made in the name of geology which go beyond any proven scientific data.

Anthropology is still a very open question, but God must be held to have initiated the process and to have differentiated man from all other existing creatures when He breathed into him the breath of life. That there may have been a Peking man, a Neanderthal man and other pre-historic specimens may be proved true and yet have no bearing upon the book of Genesis. We hold that God had to create man and He certainly separated man from all other kinds when He breathed into him the breath of life.

The Bible commends itself to the conscience of men as no other book does. The revelation within our own souls corresponds to the revelation without and we recognize the voice of God.

The Bible has elevated, delivered and enlightened men and women wherever it has gone. It has demonstrated that it is from God.

Hence the Bible is an authoritative guide for human life today. If you would know of God, the world, man, sin, salvation and immortality, turn to the Bible, for in it God speaks and it is His word. If you would be saved from your sins, be assured of eternal life and enjoy victory over the world; obey God's word in the Bible. If you want the church to prosper, people to be changed, God's work to go on apace, align yourself with those who acknowledge the Bible to be God's word, infallible and authoritative.

Whether you are troubled over inspiration or not, God's word and voice may be heard in the Bible. Hear it and obey.

THE NATURE OF GOD

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19,20).

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is the common faith of all Christians. The Apostles' Creed declares, "I believe in God the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord . . . and in the Holy Spirit." The next major universally accepted creed was the creed of Nicea and of Constantinople. This says, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty . . . and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God . . . light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made . . . and I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets." In the year 451 the Chalcedon Creed reaffirmed Trinitarian Christianity and defined the dual nature of Jesus Christ as both God in His fullness and man in his fullness. I repeat, therefore, that Trinitarian Christianity is the common faith of all Christians.

As the belief in Scripture as the Word of God differentiates "evangelical" from "liberal", so belief in the Trinity distinguishes a Christian from those who forfeit the name Christian. There are monotheists who are not Christians. Christians believe in the unique deity of Jesus Christ and in the person and deity of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the apostolic benediction declares, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Page 25

Trinitarian Christianity is the stumbling block of the unbeliever. Natural reason fails when a rational explanation of the Trinity is undertaken. It transcends the natural powers of man, as God transcends men. If we were able to comprehend God with our minds we would cease to worship Him. Hence the folly of attempting to explain the Trinity by reason. The superrational nature of the Trinity is evidence of God's revelation in the Bible, for no man could have invented the doctrine of the Trinity. No illustration can represent the Trinity perfectly, although threeness is stamped upon everything in nature. The natural world is composed of time, space and matter, no more, no less. Time is composed of past, present and future, no more no less. Matter is composed of substance, attributes and relationship, no more, no less. He who studies nature ought to find many suggestions of the nature of God. However, the Scripture declares that the natural man cannot comprehend the Spirit of God, for He is spiritually discerned. At these mysteries of the Trinity, of the presence of evil in the world, of the dual nature of Christ as God and man, the natural mind reels, for it is unable to apprehend them. The next step is rebellion. The natural man wants discovery to be the means of knowledge, but Christian truths, especially this truth, are received by revelation.

The natural man repudiates essential Christian truth which centers around the Trinity. He rebels. He asserts his intellectual independence and he subjects God to the forms of his own mind. He is not willing to receive the revelation.

Yet Trinitarianism is the satisfying portion of Christianity. The relationship, offices and work of the persons of the Trinity constitute the ground of a full-orbed, redemptive theology. He who denies the deity of the Holy Spirit or the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ truncates his

Page 26

theology and is left with a bare theism that cannot satisfy the mind or heart. Revelation is enriched by the distinction between the Father and the Son. The fact of the Trinity makes atonement meaningful because satisfaction can be made by one person to the other person. Regeneration would be a mystery if the agency of the Holy Spirit did not make it understandable. The same is true of prayer, the church, inspiration and other doctrines of the Scripture. A realization of the redemptive work of each person of the Trinity establishes the believer. Security is received from the elective purposes of God, salvation from the atoning work of Christ and sanctification from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The Christian faith is Trinitarian faith.

I. ONE GOD

God must have substance, attributes and relationships and according to the Scripture these are interconnected. Baptism is in one name, that of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are three persons, but one name, for they share one nature. Therefore when we speak of the Trinity we must remember that we believe in one God.

Christianity is a dualism, and is therefore expressive of matter and of spirit, as distinguished from materialistic monism on the one hand, and spiritualistic monism on the other. Christianity declares that there is more to the world than matter and there is more to the world than spirit. The world is real and spirit is real. We live in a dualistic universe instead of a monistic universe.

Christianity believes that God is, that He exists. He has being and therefore attributes of that being can be known.

Christianity affirms that man may know God, for God breathed into him the Spirit or breath of life. By

Page 27

correspondence he may know God's revelation, for an infinite spirit has spoken to a finite spirit.

The attributes of Deity are infinity, eternity and permanence. When we say that God is infinite we mean that there is no limitation upon His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. If God is unlimited or infinite in being, he is omnipresent. There is no place where God is not present every moment. Some manifestations of the presence of God are more clear than others, but God is everywhere at once. When we speak of God being infinite or without limitation in His wisdom, we refer to His omniscience. There is nothing which God does not know. The Scripture says of Christ, "He needed not that any man should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." When we speak of God's infinite power we mean the omnipotence by which He can do all things, for example, create the world, sustain it in orderly processes and ultimately bring it into judgment. He can also interfere with the laws of the world if He so desires. We have an infinite God and all Three Persons of the Godhead are infinite.

God is eternal. This is the answer to the question "Who made God?" Nobody made God. He always was, is, and will be. He is Alpha and Omega. In the concept of the eternity of God the mind finds rest in its

search for an ultimate. God is that ultimate.

God also is permanent. He is unchangeable. Nothing can be added to or detracted from these attributes of God. God has neither grown nor changed His purposes nor been taken by surprise, nor has He relinquished His control of the world. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

God sustains certain relationships. The primary relationships which are love, position and activity, exist within the Godhead itself. The Godhead is self-sufficient. Creation was not a necessity for the self-expression of Deity.

Page 28

That is one of the great values of Trinitarian Deity in our thinking. God's relationships are within Himself.

Secondary relationships are without the Godhead. In these God is independent, antecedent and supramundane. The world cannot affect God, but God can affect the world. God is independent of the world, but the world is dependent upon God.

The tertiary relationships are involved in the creation of men. This assumes a voluntary self-limitation on the part of God making men free moral agents or gods like unto Himself. In John 10:35 Jesus said, "If the Scripture calls them gods . . ." It was of this Scripture that He said, ". . . it cannot be broken." Consequently, it is obvious that God has voluntarily limited Himself in the creation of man. He became involved in this relationship in a more real sense through the incarnation. Therefore we believe that a voluntary change took place in Deity which involved taking other beings into the divine family.

The question may be raised, "How may this be harmonized with such Scripture as Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6; James 1:7?" We dare not sacrifice the immutability of God. That was the error manifested in the Christological controversies of 250-450 A.D. and in the Kenosis doctrine of the last two centuries. The solution of the apparent conflict between the incarnation and the immutability of God lies in the distinction of the ancient theologians between the indwelling and the outgoing works of God. In the indwelling works of Deity, the Father, Son and Spirit share equally in all aspects of Redemption from the eternal decrees to ultimate restoration of all things. In the outgoing works of Deity, the Father does not become incarnate, nor does the Son indwell the human personality. The Son has works which the Father does not have and the Spirit has works not ascribed to the Son.

There can be no doubt that in the Son's incarnation,

Page 29

assumptions of human nature and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, a transition and change took place in the outgoing works of God. Certainly humanity was not the experience of Deity before the incarnation and certainly the Redeemed are to commune with Deity after Redemption is completed. Thus the Scripture says, "We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

II. THREE PERSONS

The second phase of our Trinitarian creed speaks of believing in one God and Three Persons: Father, Son and Spirit.

The Father is the ultimate. He is the absolute. He is known as "God our Father." In the salutations of the epistles He is called, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and to Him are ascribed the plan, decree, election and purpose of the world.

This absolute God is unknown unless He is revealed by the Son. Christ said, "No man knows the Son, but the Father; neither does any man know the Father, except the Son, and those to whom the Son reveals Him." He also said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father . . . the words that I speak to you I speak not of myself: but the Father who dwells in me, he it is who does the work." Christ made the Father known. He "exegeted" the Father. He taught, did and said only what the Father willed, saying, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me." In praying, Jesus Christ taught us to call God "Our Father." Such a conception would never have come to man if the Son had not revealed it to us.

God, therefore, is unapproachable unless we approach Him through the reconciliation of the Son. God loved us

Page 30

and gave His only begotten Son for us, but God is holy and just and cannot be approached except through His son. Jesus said, "No man comes to the Father but by me." God in Christ reconciled the world unto Himself; He did not impute unto them their trespasses. Therefore God gives us access to Him through Christ and Christ's death upon the cross. Praying in Christ's Name we are heard. Coming to God through Christ we have access to His throne.

The second person of the Trinity is the Son. The Son is the eternal word, the logos of God, who was God and was with God from eternity. This is the teaching of John 1:2, Proverbs 8:22 ff., Colossians 1:18-21, Philippians 2:6 ff., etc. The Son is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Of Him the Father says, "This day have I begotten you." The Son is subordinate only in position. He is of the same nature and He possesses similar attributes. These are the claims that He makes when He tells us that He came to do the works of the Father, that before Abraham was He existed and that He and Father are one. The church has always taught that Christ is of the same nature as the Father and therefore is one in being.

Christ is the executor of the Trinity in the redemptive plan. The incarnation took place, so that the God-Man was true God without sin and error. Yet He was true man in representing the redeemed. He was very God of very God and also the Son of Man. He performed His miracles which demonstrate supernatural power. He went to the Cross that He might make an atonement for our sins, so that in Him there is a propitiation through faith in His blood. He became the sovereign head of a people whose representative is in glory while they are still upon earth. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the redemptive plan of the Father.

The Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is

Page 31

called The Spirit, yet the adjective Holy is properly prefixed to Him. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God, promised by God and by the Lord Jesus Christ, so that He could say, "I will pray the Father and He will send you another comforter . . . it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I do not go away the Comforter cannot come . . . you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." The great event of Pentecost was the advent of the Holy Spirit in His high office of comforter. It was the fulfillment of the

promise of the Father. The coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by the gift of power for the believers. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of love, power and of a sound mind."

The Holy Spirit is the present agent of the Trinity in the world. He is God, omnipresent according to Psalm 129, omniscient according to 1 Corinthians 2:11, eternal according to Hebrews 7:14, omnipotent according to Genesis 1:2 and Luke 11:20 compared with Matthew 12:28. The Holy Spirit is a person and personality and powers are attributed unto Him. The Holy Spirit speaks. He is grieved. He wills. He has all the attributes of personality and He does God's work in the world today. The work of enlightening the minds of men, of converting men to Jesus Christ, of sanctifying the believers and of preserving them unto the coming of the Lord is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the source of all power in the Christian life. If we would know the presence and nearness of the Triune God it must be through the Holy Spirit, for He takes of the things of God and shows them to us. The Holy Spirit is the secret of all victory. The one great need of the church is the Holy Spirit.

Page 32

III. TRINITARIAN FAITH

We believe in one God, eternally existent in three persons. Do you believe it? "He that comes to God must believe that he exists." Without faith in a Trinitarian Godhead, we simply forfeit the name "Christian."

Therefore we must bow our heads in worship before the mysterious but adorable Trinity. How three persons have the same being and attributes, how the Father and Son are one, how God was in Christ reconciling the world I know not, but I bow before that revelation in acceptance and worship. That God loved, gave, suffered, died, redeemed, I know from His revelation in which He has made known His redemptive deeds and His prophetic words. That God may be known by a loving heart where reason staggers is true and is the experience of us all. In praying for the Ephesians St. Paul said, "That you . . . may be able . . . to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." How can we know that which passes knowledge? Such language is paradoxical and yet it is the language of experience because we do know in our hearts that which our reason cannot comprehend.

The Lord Jesus said, "Believe in God, believe also in me." A bare theism is sterile and valueless. It cannot stand alone. It must progress into revelation That revelation came in the prophets of old, in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the New Testament prophets and apostles appointed for this purpose. It culminated in Calvary and in Pentecost. There we behold the Trinity in its full work, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit redeeming the world. A personal trust will lead one to accept what the Trinity has done for us. This trust is saving faith.

The blessing of the Triune God upon the believing soul is wonderful. It brings election unto salvation. It

Page 33

brings redemption from sin's penalty and power. It brings regeneration and new faith. Repentance therefore is toward God. Faith is toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The witness is a relationship toward the Holy Spirit. Salvation is of the Triune God and not of any one Person of the Trinity.

We have need of these three works on earth to correspond with the blessed Trinity in heaven. St. John said, "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." Have you exercised repentance toward God, faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and do you possess the witness of the Spirit that you are a child of God? All these are necessary to your Christian salvation. Your Christian experience is not complete until the Holy Spirit has done His work in you. Yes, we believe in one God, eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE CHRIST OF GOD

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of this discourse. The deity of Christ describes His nature as being the same substance with God, "God of very God," uncreated, underived, coequal with God, coeternal, immeasurable and worthy of worship. The divine being of Christ is circumscribed by the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, one God in three persons, having the same being, attributes and relationship. It was this unity of being to which Christ referred when He said, "I am in the Father and the Father in me." Again, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Again, "I and my Father are one." The declaration of the same essence or oneness of being or consubstantiality of the Son of God with God is basic to historic and orthodox Christianity. It is included in all of the great creeds. Athanasius is honored as the great defender of this truth against those who would degrade Christ to half creature and half God. He declared Christ to be inseparable from God as light is inseparable from fire or as the stream of water is inseparable from the fountain. Light is not fire and fire is not light, but they are of the same substance, just as a ray from the sun is composed of the same elements as the sun and yet it is not the sun. Thus the same water which comes from the fountain forms the stream, but the stream is not the fountain and the fountain is not the stream. Our statement of faith says, "We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His

Page 35

bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory."

This ancient and orthodox view is to be differentiated from the modern views of Jesus of Nazareth. A commonly accepted view of the deity of Jesus Christ is based upon the hypothesis of the divinity of all men. Christ is declared to be divine because all men are divine. This view is the result of evolution applied to religion. It takes the hypothesis of a developing humanity and declares that Jesus Christ was the unusual in that developing process. He is that to which all men aspire in developing religious consciousness, but instead of exalting man to be the object of worship this view degrades Christ to human stature where He does not deserve worship. All non-trinitarians are able to accept this kind of divinity of Jesus. Often the phrase "the divinity of Jesus" is used to confuse real believers on the essential deity of Christ which non-trinitarians do not believe.

Another modern view declares that Jesus became identified with God through His religion and that by our practice of the religion of Jesus we may have the same religious experience and thus also become divine. This view does not qualitatively separate the deity of Jesus Christ from the divinity of men. On the other hand Biblical Christianity presents to us a religion about Jesus in which He became the object of our worship because He is uniquely God.

Still another view from which we must differentiate the deity of Christ is the theory that Jesus is God because all is God and God is all. This is a basic pantheism based upon a spiritualistic monism. We are told that the world is spirit, that God is spirit and spirit is all. Jesus according to this theory realized His divinity, but we do not realize our divinity because we are in error. As we conquer our error we realize our spiritual unity with God. No comment

Page 36

is necessary to point out the gulf which separates this from Biblical teaching concerning the deity of Christ.

The Christian view of the deity of Christ is delineated in our worship. We Christians worship Jesus Christ as the object of our faith. To worship a creature or anything less than God is idolatry, no matter how elevated that creature may be. This is illustrated by the experience of John the Beloved in his apocalyptic vision. He said, At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." No creature is worthy of worship.

A confession of the deity of Christ is delineated in our relationship to Him. Jesus Christ is Lord, unique, unparalleled, exalted and the object of our faith. We have a servant-master relationship to Him. We never place Him on the level of the creature.

Our faith in Jesus Christ is declared by our confession which involves areas in which the God-Man is utterly different from any other man in history. Each of these declares Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ of God. Each of the topics merits a full dissertation, but we can only refer to the series briefly at this time.

I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The deity of Christ was manifested by His virgin birth which was the means of the incarnation of God in human flesh. In Jesus of Nazareth God assumed flesh, entered this world, experienced time, space and relationship to material things, none of which could be postulated of Him before the incarnation. Far from being one of many incarnations, Christianity believes this to be the only incarnation. Here alone God became real man. There are many legends from

Page 37

mythology of the love affairs of the gods with the daughters of men, but these are so far below the level of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ that they are Satanic counterfeits which attempt to discredit the incarnation of Deity. That which is affirmed of Christ in the Scriptures could apply to none but Deity. The eternal Word became flesh. He is declared to be with God, to be God, to manifest the Father and to be of eternity. In Jesus Christ we have the invisible God become visible before men.

That incarnation took place by a miraculous birth from a virgin. The virgin birth is clearly and unequivocally taught in the Bible. Luke 1 tells us that the power of the highest over-shadowed the virgin Mary and the holy thing that was born was the Son of God. Jesus was born of a virgin mother without a human father. This fact brings us face to face with the supernatural. The virgin birth is a device to bring about the God-Man. It is not a device invented on the part of men, but the product of the infinite wisdom of God. In Jesus there was the infinite nature of Deity and the blood of Deity, for the blood of any child is received from his father and not from his mother. Since Jesus was without a human father, infinite value is imparted to the blood of this God-Man. Jesus derived the nature and flesh of man from His mother Mary. If the

Saviour were to be of essential deity and without sin a virgin birth was the only possible way in which He could come into the world. We are aware that there are those who hold this to be non-essential, but if the virgin birth is not a part of the experience of Jesus Christ we could hardly declare Him to be unique deity.

The virgin birth produced what Simeon called the apparatus of salvation. Jesus Christ is true God in the source of life. Hence an infinite being, sufficient in value for all men. Moreover, He is true man in nature received from Mary and therefore adequate to represent men.

Page 38

There is no fiction about the reality of His humanity or the reality of His deity. He had two natures in one person. Only such a being could become the Mediator, the Substitute and the Redeemer of men. Thus it was when Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms, he said, "Now let your servant depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation." The word salvation is in the neuter, referring to the apparatus of salvation. It was by this God-Man that salvation was destined to be wrought for the human race.

II. THE SINLESS LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

When we declare that we believe in the sinless life of Christ we are speaking of its perfection. The definition of perfection depends upon our definition of sin, but no matter what your definition of sin, Christ is still perfect, and such perfection cannot be postulated of men.

Christ was perfect according to the law. He said concerning the law, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . . I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Christ was blameless according to the law under which He lived. Paul said He was "made of a woman, made under the law." The writer of Hebrews describes Him as "without spot." Jesus could challenge His enemies to convict Him of any sin. According to the law He was presented in the temple and He submitted to the rite of baptism saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus Christ carried the curse of the law judicially, for it is written, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." However, ethically and morally He was free from transgression of the law.

Jesus Christ yielded a perfect obedience unto the Father. There was no lack of conformity to the law or to

Page 39

the will of God, even unconsciously, in the life of Christ. This is the testimony of the Scripture. The angel said, "That holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God." Christ said, "The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me." The writer of Hebrews declares, "He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin." John the Beloved wrote, "You know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." He gave active obedience unto God. He is described as saying to the Father when He came into the world, "Lo, I come to do your will, O God." When He was teaching the people, He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Christ actively obeyed God. He never joined His disciples in praying, "Forgive us our sins," and never made a confession of moral error. He yielded a passive obedience when He endured the shame of the cross which was brought upon Him by His enemies. Thus the Scripture says, "For he (God) hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Peter joins His sinlessness with His sacrifice saying, "Who did no sin . . . who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Christ also was the perfect ideal of humanity. It is in this sense that "The Son of Man" as a title is conferred upon Him, for it intimates that He answers to the perfect ideal of humanity. The Scripture portrays Him as an ideal man. The writer of Hebrews tells us that He fulfills the description of the ideal man in the Second Psalm saying, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels by the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Paul declared, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Jesus was able to say to His disciples, "Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and

Page 40

follow me." Only the ideal man could say "Follow me." He is the standard. By the Spirit we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." And He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body." Christ is the perfect man, the ideal man.

III. THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

The deity of Christ is manifested by His miracles. The apostles appealed to the record of His miracles as evidence of His deity. Peter said at Pentecost, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves know." Such miracles, wonders and signs were startling, supernatural, significant works performed by Christ Jesus which amazed the people. They may be separated into works pertaining to mental imbalance, to physical sickness or to the controlling elements of the world, but over all these things He exercised absolute power. That supernatural aspect of His nature is strongly attested in the incarnation and the resurrection, but the miracles wrought by Him give further evidence that He was approved of God.

They witnessed to His person. Jesus said, "Believe me for the very works sake." These mighty wonders, miracles and signs are a constituent part of the evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. Obviously, the miracles alone would not establish Him as the Son of God, but when taken in conjunction with the whole picture of Christ as pre-existent, fulfilling prophecy, virgin born, living a sinless life and ultimately rising from the dead, they add evidence to the whole proof of His deity. The miracles, of course, are historically validated by the kind of person

Page 41

which Christ was, for if He had been an evil person using His miracles for His own glory, the presumption would be against them. The alternatives must be faced that miracles declare the messenger to be from God or Satan, but at least they involve the operations of laws unknown to the average individual.

These miracles manifested His power and reemphasized that such power was always going out from Him. The Bible declares that creation was by Him. "By him were all things made that were made and without him was not anything made that was made." And again, "All things were made for him and by him." He is the executor of the Godhead in the sustaining of the universe through providence and if He has the providential sustaining of the universe, why should He not have special providences in the form of miracles? Even the healing processes of the human body are natural processes, but they may be speeded up by the Giver of all life. All of these, however they may be explained, are miracles of Christ.

IV. THE VICARIOUS DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe . . . in the vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

The shed blood represents the sacrifice of the Cross. To this we attach no value because of martyrdom or the moral example of love or the manifestation of governmental law in action. The value of the shed blood of Christ is in giving divine life which was in the blood as an atonement for the souls of men. That blood was shed and left in this world for our sins. It is the only thing that Christ did not take back to glory with Him. The shedding of His blood involved the suffering of the Cross in all of its cruelty, ignominy, shame and despicable aspects.

This shedding of blood was "atoning." That means that it was a death on account of and for sin. God's justice was satisfied in the death of the Lamb of God. The life is in the blood. God has given us the blood for a sacrifice upon the altar. It was the blood of the perfect God-Man incarnate Deity, shed upon the Cross that made a sufficient satisfaction for our sins. From this sacrifice the sins of the world are forgiven in accordance with divine justice. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

This sacrifice was vicarious, that is, a substitution for others. To say that it was vicarious adds nothing to what the Scripture says, for the Scripture tells us that Christ died for sinners. "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all," for "he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This infinite sacrifice was sufficient for all who believed. Christ took their place literally and effectively. What a wonderful realization that this sacrifice was for me and that it was my sin that sent Him to Calvary. If Christ had died for no one else, He would have died for me. He "loved me, and gave himself for me."

V. THE BODILY RESURRECTION

It is the plain teaching of Scripture that Christ rose from the dead. Paul said, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." There is evidence from the Old Testament that Christ was to rise from the dead. In appeal to this, Peter quoted the Sixteenth Psalm written by David in which he said, "Neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption"

Page 43

which is applied unto the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ Himself made many prophecies concerning His death and resurrection, beginning at the time of His transfiguration and continuing until His death. Concerning these Matthew says, "From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples how he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Until the death and resurrection of Christ the New Testament apostles did not understand it, but in their subsequent writing the New Testament abundantly declares the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

The proof of reason attests this resurrection and to it we may logically appeal. There are psychological proofs in the transformation of the disciples.

There are historical proofs in the appearances of the resurrected Christ. There are logical proofs in the open tomb which are able to convince an unprejudiced mind concerning concerning the resurrection of

Christ. An illustration of this may be given in the conversion of two of England's most brilliant men who in the days of the triumph of deism denied the supernatural. They were the eminent legal authorities Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton. These two men who were put forward to crush the defenders of the supernatural in the Bible had a conference together. One of them said to the other that it would be difficult to maintain their position unless they disposed of two of the alleged bulwarks of Christianity, namely, the alleged resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the alleged conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Lyttleton undertook to write a book to show that Saul of Tarsus was never converted as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, but that his alleged conversion was a myth, if Gilbert West would write another book to show that the alleged resurrection of Christ was a myth. West said to Lyttleton, "I shall have

Page 44

to depend upon you for my facts for I am somewhat rusty in the Bible," to which Lyttleton replied that he was counting upon West, for he too was somewhat rusty in the Bible. One of them said to the other, "If we are to be honest in the matter, we ought at least to study the evidence," and this they undertook to do. They had numerous conferences together while preparing their work. In one of the conferences West said to Lyttleton that there had been something in his mind for sometime that he thought he ought to speak to him about. As he had been studying the evidence, he was beginning to feel that there was something in it. Lyttleton replied that he was glad that West had spoken about it, for he, too, was somewhat shaken, as he had been studying the evidence for the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Finally, when the books were finished the two men met. West said to Lyttleton, "Have you written your book?" He replied that he had, but he said, "West, as I have been studying the evidence and weighing it by the recognized laws of legal evidence, I have become satisfied that Saul of Tarsus was converted as is stated in the Acts of the Apostles, and that Christianity is true, and I have written my book on that side." The book is entitled, *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul* [1748], which can be found today in first class libraries, including Bethel Seminary [see double volume which includes *Skepticism Assailed* by Britton Tabor - 1895].

"Well," said West, "as I have studied the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and have weighed it according to the acknowledged laws of evidence, I have become really satisfied that Jesus really rose from the dead as recorded in the Gospels, and have written my book on that side." West's book was entitled, *Observations on the history and evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ* [1747]. This book can be found at Oxford University and other libraries. In addition, both books were published in one volume in 1929 and entitled: *Lord Lyttleton on the conversion of St. Paul and Gilbert West on the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. If you have questions in your mind about this subject, take the great evidence of the open tomb and reason from it to the deity of Christ.

It is this truth which has the power to comfort, for it declares unto us that we are not in our sins and Christianity is true. It declares that we shall see our loved ones again and death is not the end. It tells us that our bodies shall

Page 45

rise from the dead and we shall know an individual immortality.

VI. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe . . . in His ascension to the right hand of the Father. This describes the place of triumph. The victory of Christ on Calvary is differentiated from His triumph in the heavenlies. It was the victory, not the triumph, which cost the blood, the sweat and the tears. But the victory deserves the triumph and the triumph came before the heavenly hosts in honor, acknowledging Christ's attainment. In the triumph He made an open show of His enemies, as Colossians 2:15 tells us. The spoils of victory were in His hands. He took the keys of death and hell and He became the Lord of His people.

Christ ascended to the place of intercession, for He ever lives to make intercession for us. There He entered upon His eternal priesthood as advocate and divine helper. That was the beginning of His mediatorial kingdom as priest-king over His people and in that intercession He guarantees the security of His people through His own prayers. What He said to Peter may be said to us, "I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail." Thank God for the prayers of our great Intercessor.

The place of triumph was the place of power. From there He exercises sovereignty. In His resurrection form He said, "All authority in heaven and earth is given to me." He has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, above all principalities and powers and every name that is named. There He has the restored glory which was His before the foundation of the world, comparable to the glory s

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/harold-john-ockenga/our-evangelical-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net