

Revelation and Reason

by Martyn-Lloyd Jones

The gospel is rejected by modern men because their approach to it is entirely wrong, starting with man himself and ruling out the supernatural and divine.

Duration: 55:00

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 2:16, 1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 3:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:19

Topics: "Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the inadequacy of human reason and scientific knowledge when it comes to understanding the message of the Gospel. He highlights the vast difference between the eternal, holy Trinity and the limited abilities of mankind. The message of the Gospel is that despite humanity's rebellion and the chaos it has brought upon itself, God had a plan from the beginning to bring glory to believers. The preacher urges the audience to consider the character of God and the subject matter of the Gospel, which is beyond the realm of science and human understanding.

Transcript

I would like to read some verses again in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and in the third chapter, beginning to read at verse 16, beginning at the 16th verse, in the third chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. I want in particular to call your attention to verses 18, 19, and 20.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Now last night we were considering together the great statement found in verse 11, where the apostle says other foundations can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.

And we try to show something of what is possible for us all if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw that of God he is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. We took a glimpse at the great and the glorious salvation that is taught in the New Testament.

Now this is still the gospel, and as we were emphasizing last night, there is no other. It is the only gospel. It is the only thing that can do anything for us in this life and in this world.

And that immediately raises a question in our minds. Why is it then that everybody doesn't believe in it? I feel at the present time there are three questions that surely should be agitating the mind of every thinking, thoughtful person. And the first is just this.

Why is it that the modern men, who has been so astounding in so many respects in this present century, I refer especially to the realm of science. Men has conquered the force of gravity. He's able to send men up into outer space.

He can harness the oceans and all the various things with which we are familiar. Now here's the first question. Why is it that men who display such astounding ability in so many respects, is such a miserable and a tragic failure in the whole question of life and of living? Why is that? What's the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon? That men with always genius and brilliance should fail in the most important thing of all? Or I can put that question in a second form.

And the second form is this. Why is it that the modern men, who face to face with his problems and his difficulties, is prepared to listen to almost anybody that offers him a solution? Whether as regards his physical health or his general health and well-being, men is ready to listen to anybody who speaks almost with confidence. Why is it that men in his terrible need at the present time refuses to consider this one and only solution to his problems? Why is that? I suggest it's a problem that should really cause us all to think.

Or let me put it in its third form. Modern men is characterized above everything else perhaps by his obvious fear of worship. It's one of the great characteristics of the age.

Well, the question I ask is this. Why is it that men who's so ready to fall at the feet even of film stars and people like that, will have nothing to do with the greatest person that this world has ever known, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God? Now, surely this must be, we'll all agree, the most urgent problem confronting the entire human race this evening. Why does man reject this gospel? And especially with his world as it is this very night? Well now, in these verses that we're going to consider together, we are given one of the answers to that question.

And the answer that it gives, of course, is this. That man's whole approach to the gospel is entirely wrong. Now, the difficulty that the modern man gets with the gospel of the New Testament is not a matter of details.

I know there's a lot that they say about the details. But the real difficulty is not with regard to details or particulars. It is with regard to the whole thing, the whole approach.

Modern man's approach to the gospel is such that he cannot possibly believe it. And this is such a serious and terrible matter that I'm calling your attention to it. I trust that I established last night that there is no hope for any individual, no hope for the world, except in Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And yet people will have nothing to do with him. Why not? This is the most urgent problem confronting the human race at this moment. That doesn't say that there are not other problems, and I'm not here to detract from their importance.

The politicians call our attention to many problems, and it's right that we should be interested and concerned about them. But at their best, they only deal with our life in this world. They can't affect it in the next world.

And yet we've got to face that next world. And here is the only message that can help us with respect to that. And indeed, as I tried to show last night, the only message that can even help us in this life and in this world at the present time.

Now, this therefore is above all other questions, the most urgently important one. Man's approach, I say, is entirely wrong. Now the apostle deals with this.

There were people you see in those days, in Corinth and in other places, who said that the gospel was nonsense, rubbish, nothing in it. He keeps on saying this. He says it in the first chapter, the Greeks require a sign, the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

He says the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. In the second chapter he puts it, the natural men receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. And that was the attitude of the cultured learned Greeks.

They were a very intelligent people, but in their leaders especially, their great philosophers, they regarded this gospel as just nonsense, folly, foolishness. And they'd have nothing to do with it. You see there's nothing new about rejecting the gospel.

There is nothing that is quite so pathetic as that many people think today, that in rejecting Christianity they're doing something new. And that it's the hallmark of modernity. My dear friends, if you read the New Testament, you will find that the gospel has been opposed and rejected from the very beginning.

The very son of God himself was crucified on a cross and entirely rejected. And this apostle Paul constantly had opposition to meet. And here he deals with this most urgent question.

Men were rejecting the gospel because they regarded it as utter folly, complete foolishness, something unworthy even of their consideration. Now why did they do this? Well I want to put this matter to you in two main propositions. The difficulty is this.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is entirely different from everything else that's being offered to the human race. Indeed it presents a complete contrast to every other type and form of teaching. Now here is the fundamental principle that the apostle establishes here.

He is contrasting, you see, the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God in the gospel. He says this is the trouble. He says you're deceiving yourselves if a man, any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world.

And because he is wise he rejects the gospel. Let him become a fool that he may be made wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

You see there is a complete contrast between the message of the gospel and the wisdom of men in this world. What is this contrast? Well let me indicate its main elements to you as briefly as I can. Let's start with man's wisdom.

Let's start with the way in which the intelligent man of the world approaches the whole problem of life and living. What are its characteristics? Well I think you'll agree with me that they're the same. He always starts with man himself.

His whole thinking is circumscribed by man. He rules out the supernatural, the divine, that's just ruled out. Indeed today they're telling us increasingly that it is even insulting to ask the modern educated scientific men to believe in any category such as the supernatural or even of God at all.

It's what's called humanism. Man is the beginning and the end and the center of everything. That's the first characteristic.

You start immediately with man and man's condition. And then of course this view goes on to say that man, while he has problems and troubles and is indeed in grievous trouble at the present time, that man nevertheless is essentially good in and of himself. Now this is a part of the whole modern outlook, the part of the reason then why men and women have no use for this gospel and reject it.

They say man is essentially good. They don't like the biblical teaching about sin and about the fall of man. They say that's all wrong.

This is something that has depressed the human race throughout the centuries. It's been the kind of dolparopium of the people. It's made people depressed and have a false view of themselves.

We're living in an age that believes in self-confidence, self-expression, and that man is essentially good. And indeed that by a process of evolution he is inevitably advancing in the direction of perfection. That's a part of the belief.

And another part of it of course is to say that man's problem is mainly intellectual. They don't like this talk about the moral. It's the intellect.

Man's great need, we are told, is knowledge. It is education. It is information.

You're familiar with all this, I'm sure, as we are in Great Britain. We are being told constantly that the way to solve the great problem of modern immorality is to give children teaching concerning sex in the schools. It's all due to ignorance, you see.

There's nothing really wrong, only that it's your ignorance, and if people are only given the information they will stop doing these things. The problem is an intellectual problem. And then they go on to say that man has it in him to respond to this good and exalted teaching, and that as the result of so doing he will apply it and he will lift himself out of his problems and difficulties and begin to live the kind of life that he should live.

So you see it comes to this. What man needs is a bit of help, a bit of advice, a bit of encouragement, a bit of exhortation. Now this I could quote to you many authors who taught this thing.

Some of the great humanists, the great classical humanists, people like H.G., the late H.G. Wells or Professor Gilbert Murray at Oxford, they were constantly saying this. All man needed was to rub his mind

against the great minds of the centuries, the great philosophers, the great teachers, the great thinkers, and the great scientists. Very well, that is what man needs.

So that all man has got to do is to set out in this great quest, this great search for truth, for knowledge which will lead to deliverance. And here I come to what is of the very essence of this modern attitude. I can put it to you quite simply.

The modern man is very proud of science. We are living in a scientific age and modern man is very fond of boasting about this. He pities our forefathers.

But we have arrived and we have got this great, this tremendous knowledge. And the whole outlook and the mentality of the modern man is this scientific outlook. And this is the thing by which he lives.

Now I want to try to show you that it is because he is governed by this scientific outlook. Even the ordinary man who has never been trained in science, he hears lectures on the television or in academies and he is a great believer in this. He believes that science is the key to the solution of our problems if only we can get this knowledge.

So his whole outlook is governed by this scientific approach. What is this scientific approach? Well, I needn't waste any time in describing it to you. You are perfectly familiar with it, every one of you.

The scientific approach, of course, is the approach of investigation and experimentation. This is how science works. A man observes certain facts in nature or somewhere else and then he gathers his material together.

He then examines it and he sees that there are certain laws visible here. So he discovers what he calls the laws of nature. One thing always leads to another.

Very well, he has got this information. He sees that there is system, there is order. But then he doesn't stop at that.

He begins to think. He says to himself, if this always leads to that and that always leads to that, well that in turn must lead to something else. Now, that is how all these great discoveries have come.

That's how radio was discovered. That's how electricity was discovered. That is how all our great scientific discoveries have come into being.

Man observes in this way. He uses his eyes. He gathers his information.

He collects it, collects it, reasons from it. Then he begins to put up a theory, a supposition. He says, surely that must happen.

Then the next step, of course, is to try out his theory. This is experimentation. Now, this is the whole method of scientific research.

Take, for instance, the sending of people up into the outer space. You remember how that first Sputnik was sent up by the Russians about ten years ago. How did they achieve it? Well, it was just a process of reasoning like this.

A man had sent up a rocket and he found that a rocket went up to a certain point. He then argued, if I put a second rocket in the first and arrange for that to start where the first one ends, it'll go up to there. If I put another inside that, it'll go up there.

And on and on it'll go until we conquer the force of gravity and send the men into outer space. Well, they did this. They made their rockets, but the first one went wrong.

It exploded, but they didn't give up. This is science trial and error. You've got your theory.

You say it must be true. So you try it and go on and on and on until at long last you've achieved success. Your Sputnik is up in outer space and you follow it by sending a man up.

That, I think you'll agree with me, is the essence of the scientific method. And that is the basis of what most people regard today as the greatness of modern men and the greatness of modern life. Following the scientific method, we've made our great and momentous achievements.

You see what it's based on? It is based upon belief in man's ability, man's understanding, man's essential goodness, man's capacity and power, man's ability. It's all based on that. And as the result of applying this and experimenting, you arrive at your great and your tremendous results.

Now I'm here to suggest to you tonight that it is because men and women are so wedded to that outlook, so governed by it, so controlled by it, that they reject this gospel. Why? Well, because the gospel is so entirely different. It's a complete contrast.

Now, this is the great tragedy of the modern world to me, that people will come to the Bible with this scientific, outlook and approach. And of course, as the result of so doing, this appears to them to be utterly ridiculous, quite monstrous, even an insult to the modern men. Why? Well, because it is, as I say, a complete contrast.

In what respects? Well, the first respect is this. Here is a message that doesn't start with men. It always starts with God.

That's the great difference. The Bible, you remember the first verse in the Bible, in the beginning, God. You see the modern man never does that.

He starts with men as he is today. He doesn't ask the question, why is men as he is? What is men? What's the world in which he lives? Where's it come from? What's its origin? No, no. He just starts with men.

Humanism. Man's the beginning and the end. Not so with the Bible.

In the beginning, God. The Bible is a great record of the activity of Almighty God. And man is humbled and put into his place.

Of course, he doesn't like that. You see, he's confronted by a position which is a complete reversal of everything that he not only believes, but of everything that he rejoices in. Everything of which he boasts.

Man, modern man, come of age. Man standing firmly on his feet. What's impossible to man? Nothing.

But here is a book that starts with God. Turns away from men as it were for a moment. And says if you want to understand life, you don't start with yourself.

You start with God. For without God you understand nothing. And without God you can do nothing.

But then you see it follows from that of course directly. That because everything is of God and from God, that the whole principle of getting to understand life and to be delivered from its problems, is the exact opposite of the scientific method of research, of trial and error, and men's endeavor and men's confidence, until at last you arrive at a knowledge of the truth. In other words, over against this human confidence in men's reason and logic and ability and understanding, the Bible asserts this tremendous category of revelation.

And that means just this. That all that is of value to us, is something that is given to us. Not something that we arrive at as the result of our seeking and searching.

But something that is shown us. Something that is manifested unto us. Now I'm so concerned about this, that I'm going to make no apology at all for taking you through the 16 verses of the second chapter of this great epistle.

For what the apostle is doing here in the verses that we are looking at tonight in the third chapter, is just summing up as it were or reminding them of what he's told them in the second chapter. Listen to it. Now watch the contrast in every single verse.

And I brethren, he says, when I came to you. He's talking about these Corinthians. They were Greeks remember, and though the majority of them were poor people, there was the university in Corinth, as there was in other cities in Greece, and they were all more or less governed by this wonderful outfit that characterized the life of the Greeks.

But listen. I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech nor of wisdom. That's what they liked.

They were famous for it. Their academies, their parches, the great teachers, and they were wonderful orators, they were rhetoricians. And they spoke and they argued and debated and the Greeks enjoyed it.

It was one of their favorite pastimes. He says, I didn't come with excellency of speech or of wisdom. What? Declaring unto you the testimony of God.

He said, when I came to you, I didn't come to join in the debate. I didn't come to join the research team to search for truth. No, no.

I came to declare to you the testimony of God. The attested truth of God. And then look at the second verse.

He says, I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Now, he says that, remember, to people who were searching out for knowledge. That was their great interest.

I mentioned that last night in passing. They were all in the seeking for this knowledge, interested in a thousand and one subjects. They hadn't got printing presses in those days.

If they'd had, they would have been buying encyclopedias, exactly as the modern man does, wanting to know about everything. Paul says, I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

Not much self-confidence about that, is there? I remember a foolish man once preaching on those words and saying, how ridiculous all this is. Can you imagine a man, he says, applying for a job, going up to the chief of the business in weakness, fear, and much trembling. How ridiculous.

But here it is, he says, this is Christianity that has always depressed the human race. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom. It wasn't men's wisdom, says Paul.

What was it? Oh, in demonstration of the spirit and of power. You see, it's something quite different. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

You see the contrast all along. It's not human wisdom, he says. This is entirely different.

And if you don't realize that, of course, you're bound to get into trouble over all the details. But on he goes. How be it, he says, we do speak wisdom among them that are perfect.

Ah, says somebody, he's contradicting himself now. Having said that he doesn't speak wisdom, he now says that he is speaking wisdom. But listen, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught.

But 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 have they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

What a tremendous statement. He means by princes of the world, not only princes belonging to royal families. He means the great men, the outstanding leaders, in every department of life.

And he says, when the Son of God came into this world, the princes, the leaders, they didn't recognize him. They said, who is this fellow? And they crucified him. Now these men, these princes, they can recognize a great scientist, a great philosopher, a great musician, a great anything.

But when the Son of God stood before them, they couldn't recognize him. They didn't realize who he was. What, well this is entirely different.

But as it is written, he says, I have not seen nor heard, neither hath entered into the heart of men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. I always feel that that verse seems to have been written especially for the modern scientific men. Notice the terms.

I have not seen. What's the essence of the scientific method? Well I told you that it always starts with observation. Using your eyes.

I remember when I was a medical student, how this was always drummed into us. The teachers used to say to us, now don't rush at the patient and start examining. Look at the patient first.

Observation. It's the first rule in science. You look, you observe.

You observe spring, summer, autumn, winter. You use your eyes. You see the flowers growing, the animals developing.

Observation. The eye. The human eye.

What a wonderful thing it is. You know, in England we've got a great telescope at Jodrell Bank. I believe it's the most powerful in the world.

It can see further into outer space than any other single telescope, and we are tremendously proud of it. You can see so far with it. It's no use here, says the Apostle Paul.

I have not seen. You can multiply your telescopes. They'll never get there.

The thing is beyond. I have not seen. Nor ear heard.

You listen. The scientist listens. He gathers his knowledge and information by listening.

It's no use here, says Paul. Ear hath not heard. And then he says, but some of you are poets, and you go by your feelings and by your instincts and your intuitions and intimations.

It's of no value here. Neither hath entered the heart of men. The things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

All the faculties and propensities of men at their highest and at their very acme are totally inadequate here. But then he goes on to say this, and here's the essence of the teaching. But God hath revealed them unto us, those who believe, by his Spirit.

For the Spirit searches all things. Yea, the deep things of God. There's the message.

Revelation. God revealing to men the things that his eyes, his ears, his heart, and all his powers can never arrive at. It's given.

But then he goes on, for what men he says knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of men which is in him. Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. What does that mean? Well let me put it in modern language.

He says how does a man know a man? The answer is because they've got the same spirit in them. A dog can't know a man as a man knows a man. A dog may be very intelligent, but still he's only a dog, he's got a different spirit.

There are realms, there are gradations. And so he says in exactly the same way, the things of God knoweth no man at his best and highest, but only the Spirit of God. Then for us to be perfectly clear in verse 12, he says now we have received, watch the negative, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of or from God.

In order that we might know the things that are freely given to us of or by God. Could any contest be greater? The whole of the scientific output of modern man is seeking, searching, struggling, trying, error, going on and at last arriving as a result of your own efforts. But here we have received things which are given to us and given freely.

We just hold out our hands and do no more. Which things, he says, also we speak. Not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches.

Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Here again is a great word for the modern man. Paul says, you know these things about which I am speaking, they're not only different in their nature, but because they're

so different in their nature, I have to speak about them in a special way and in special language.

Otherwise you can't follow what I'm saying. We all know this don't we? Take for instance the scientists. They've got their own jargon, their own terminology.

You may sometimes see a program on the television set and a man writes a formula or a number of formulae and they mean absolutely nothing at all to you. Why not? Because you're not a trained scientist. But the scientist understands.

The science has its own language, its own categories and terminology. Poetry is entirely different. Poetry again has its own approach, its own method.

And what the apostle is saying is this. Every branch of learning and of knowledge has its own appropriate language. He says it's exactly the same with this.

You can't speak of this in the way you speak of other things. Because it is different, the language must be appropriate. We speak these things in spiritual terms, not in worldly terms.

Let me illustrate it by putting it like this. Imagine a man who's a poet going into a scientific laboratory. It's all nonsense.

He doesn't understand anything at all. And very often the scientist feels that the poet is just a fool, who's just playing with words and saying nothing. Or what would you imagine, what would you think of a man, a young man, a scientist, who falls in love with a young lady and sends her a letter of proposal in scientific formulae? Well you're quite right, the thing is ridiculous, it is laughable.

When you're expressing your love, the language must be appropriate. The apostle says it's exactly the same in the spiritual realm. We speak these things not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

But here is the ultimate statement. But the natural man, now the natural man is every one of us as we are born by nature. Man without the Spirit of God.

Man left to himself. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. There's no need to prove that, is there? The modern man is proving it for us.

He ridicules it all. Why? Their foolishness unto him. He says this is stuff and nonsense.

Fancy asking a modern intelligent man in 1967 to listen to some old message like that, that may have been all right a hundred years ago, or a hundred and, what was it, a hundred and fifteen years earlier when this Knox Chapel was founded in 1820. But to ask a modern man to believe this, it's nonsense, it's folly. It's foolishness unto him.

Neither can he know them. Why? Because they are spiritually discerned. It's not surprising that the modern man doesn't believe this gospel.

He may be a great scientist, a great philosopher. He says nonsense. Yes well they're not surprised this poor, he cannot do it because these things are only spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual, the man who's received the Spirit, he can judge and estimate all these things, yet he himself is judged of no men. The other people don't understand him. They say what's happened to you? You used to be a nice and a decent fellow and I could talk to you, but since you've become a Christian, I don't know, I don't understand you.

You're different. You seem to be talking a different language. You're thinking in a different way.

Quite right. He's become spiritual. He's got a new understanding.

Nobody else can understand him. And so he winds up by saying, who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? And this amazing answer, we have the mind of Christ. We human beings, as we are, believing in him, having his Spirit, we have something of the understanding of the Blessed Son of God himself.

Now then, there you see I've demonstrated to you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is entirely different from the teachings and the wisdom of men at their very best and at their very highest. It is a complete contrast. But why should it be a complete contrast? Let's consider that as a second point.

I accept the question. Somebody may say to me, why should this be an exception to everything else? Why are the things that I do in other realms of no value in this realm, as you're trying to say? Why should this be so essentially different and a complete contrast to anything else? Well there's no difficulty about answering that question. The first answer to the question is this.

The very subject matter with which we are dealing is so essentially different. I'm not here to say a word against science. All I'm here to say is that science goes so grievously wrong when it includes into this realm.

Science is all right, as long as it keeps to its own realm. What's the business of science? Well it's to discover new gadgets. We work less, press buttons, that's all right.

That's the realm of science. Speaking, this helps me to speak. Yes, send your man up into outer space, he can discover things.

It's all right, but it's all still in the realm of the material. Man and his knowledge and his science never gets outside that realm. And his powers and his abilities are competent within that realm.

But that's not the realm that we are interested in here. What are we here to consider this evening? What is the message of the gospel? What is the content of this matter? Well the apostle has put it there in that striking verse in the second chapter in the tenth verse. But God, he says, hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.

For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. What is Christianity about? Is it merely a matter of behavior and conduct? No, no. The subject matter of the Christian message is about the triune God.

I came to you, says the apostle, declaring unto you the testimony of God. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Three blessed persons in a trinity.

Three persons, but only one God. What on earth has that got to do with me, says someone? That's why I'm not interested in your Christianity. That's a subject surely for theologians.

I'm a practical man, I'm a man of affairs, I'm a man of business. I want something to help me in life. What's all this got to do with me about the blessed Holy Trinity? My dear friend, I can easily answer your question.

Your world and mine is as it is tonight, because men and women are ignorant of the blessed Holy Trinity. I can tell you why your world is as it is. It is because people don't know God.

You know there was a time in Israel which we read of in these words, in those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And how true it is of today.

Why is there all this trouble industrially, and morally, and internationally? The answer is quite simple. Man starts with himself. He makes a god of himself.

And we're all gods. And as a god I demand things, but the other man is also a god, and he demands them. Hence the quarrelling and the fighting.

Hence your divorce, hence your separations, hence all the tragedies of life. Man is not subject to God. He has no law, he has no understanding.

He's lawless, he's disobedient. Here is the reason therefore why we should consider these things. Yes, but look at the things that we are considering.

The everlasting, eternal, blessed Holy Trinity. What do you know of God my friend? Immortal, invisible, God only wise. In life inaccessible, hid from our eyes.

Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days. Pavilion in splendor and girded with praise. What's the use of your sputniks when you're dealing with such a being? What's the value of your Jodrell Bank telescopes? It's useless.

God dwelleth in a life which is unapproachable. No man hath seen God at any time. God is spirit.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Here's the subject matter. What's the value of your science here? What can your research team do for you in this respect? What's the value of your scientific formulae at this point, or even the highest inspiration of your poets? It's totally inadequate.

God is in heaven and man is on earth. You see, once you stop to consider the subject matter with which we are dealing, you see immediately how man's reason and all his powers are of necessity, totally inadequate. But he doesn't stop at that.

What is the message of the gospel? It is this. Is to tell us that this eternal God created the world and created men in his own image. That men disobeyed and rebelled and fell and brought chaos down upon himself.

The chaos that we know tonight. Can nothing be done about it? Well this message tells us that before the very foundation of the world this blessed Trinity evolved a plan. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Can you understand a thing like that? The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit having a great counsel concerning fallen men and the fallen world. This is the message. What's the value of your human reason when you come to this realm? And then it all centers in the person of this Jesus Christ.

I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Here's the mystery. A babe born in Bethlehem.

Helpless little babe put in a manger. Who is it? The Son of God. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Can you understand that? Two natures in one person. Both God and man yet unmixed. This amazing person.

Can you understand it? It's impossible. What else? The miracles that he worked. Science can't understand miracles.

That's why men no longer believe the gospel. But miracles are God acting. The God who normally acts through the laws of nature, acting independent of them.

It's miraculous. It's supernatural. And then this extraordinary doctrine of the death of the Son of God for the sins of men, Jesus Christ and him crucified.

No, says the modern man, I can't believe it. I can't accept that. It seems immoral to me that my sins should be punished in another.

I don't understand this. Of course you don't. How can you? Isn't man mad that he tries to understand such things? But these are the very terms of this gospel.

And then that a man can be born again. That a man can have a new start. A new nature.

A new heart. A new life. A new beginning.

But he doesn't happen like that in this world, says the modern man. A man is what he makes himself. And if you make a fool of yourself, well you bear the consequences.

But here you're telling me that I can start afresh. I can have an entirely new nature. Yes, it's the doctrine of the rebirth, and man doesn't understand it.

And finally the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, even of the body, and man restored completely into a perfect harmony standing before God. Now my dear friends, don't you see that the moment you begin to consider the real content of this message, it is sheer madness to come to it with your human abilities and powers. Let Charles Wesley state this for us.

It is mystery all. The immortal dies. That's what's called a paradox, isn't it? The immortal dies.

Who can explore his strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tried to sound the depths of love divine. Tis mercy all. Let earth adore.

Let angel mind inquire no more. You see what Charles Wesley is saying there is this, that not only should men in his folly try to give up understanding this, he even addresses the angels in heaven. He says you might as well give up as well.

Let angel minds inquire no more. What God has done for men and his salvation is the mystery of mysteries. Tis mystery all.

From beginning to end. Or as Isaac Watts puts it, where reason fails with all her powers, faith and love come in. Faith perceives and love adores.

Now can't you see that the moment you begin to understand what all this is about, it is utterly ridiculous to bring the other method into this realm. Now if men were perfect that would still be true, because men at his best is finite and he cannot possibly understand the infinite. But when you add to that that men is no longer perfect, that men have sinned, that his very nature has fallen.

Indeed the apostle Paul tells us this, the natural, the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. It's impossible. Our Lord himself says this is the condemnation.

That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Men says where is the light, if only light came. The Son of God replies and says the light has come, I am the light, I am the light of the world, and this is the condemnation that the light has come.

Why doesn't everybody believe in it? Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. And this is true of the modern men. He says his difficulties are intellectual, they're not, they're moral.

Man by nature hates God. The natural mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So men's very mind is twisted, it's perverted, he makes excuses for himself, he's clever, he resists the light, he resists the truth.

But a further reason why men can never understand this gospel by his natural reason is this, that it is a very part of his punishment meted out by God, that he should not understand it. Paul has dealt with this at the end of the first chapter. He says you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men are for the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that no flesh should glory in his presence. It's a part of men's punishment.

Men's ultimate sin is intellectual pride, and God's way of salvation humbles him to the very dust, and robs him of all his foolish glory. But the final answer I would like to give you for saying that this is something that is entirely beyond men's understanding is this, and it's a very wonderful thing. It's something for which we ought to thank God.

Have you ever considered this? If this were something that the natural men could understand, if men's salvation really does depend upon his reason, his brain, his logic, his understanding, his research, his endeavor, do you see the result? This would be a salvation for only certain VIPs. You know the vast majority of us are not gifted with great brains. So if my salvation depended upon my ability, my understanding, and my reasoning, I would be entirely undone.

There'd be just a handful of great philosophers who'd be able to delve into the mystery, and they'd have an understanding. But what about Tom, Dick, and Harry? The vast majority of us are not so gifted, and there'd be no hope for us whatsoever. Or look at it like this.

If a man's salvation depends upon a man's own brain, and reason, and understanding, and ability, well then why do you send foreign missionaries out to the heart of Africa to preach to people who can't read

and can't write, who would be totally incapable of reading a textbook of science or of philosophy? It's a madness. But thank God it isn't madness. This is a way of salvation that holds out a hope for everybody.

It is man. It's God giving. It is man seeking and finding.

It's God of his free grace and love giving freely of these glorious things in Jesus Christ his Son. Have you realized that my friend? So many people say to me, I don't understand this. That's what they say.

I don't understand the doctrine of the Trinity. I don't understand what you say about the two natures in the person of Christ. I don't understand this doctrine of the Trinity.

And if they don't understand, they're not going to believe. Because they're utterly inconsistent. They use electricity.

But you still don't understand electricity, you know. You use many other things that you don't understand. But they won't do it here.

But my dear friend, can't you see you're denying the very essence of the gospel? We're all human beings and we're all lost. And God reduces us all to the same level. And every one of us has to receive it as a gift from God.

It's the only way. And thank God it is. Because it holds out a hope for any man.

However dull, however stupid, however ignorant, however vile. It doesn't matter. It is the free gift of God's grace.

By grace received, through faith, that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. We are his workmanship.

Well then, I ask in a closing word. Why is it that men reject such an amazing and such an astonishing thing? You know there's only one answer to that question. It is pride.

Nothing else. You, says Paul to some of these Corinthians, are rejecting this gospel because you say it's insulting to your intellect. You say it's foolish.

You say it's nonsense. Pride. Pride.

Man rejects it because of his foolish pride. What a fool man is. I want to repeat the words of the apostle to anybody who may be in that condition here tonight.

If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be made wise. He means this. You say you're a wise man.

How are you getting on? Are you managing your life very well? Are you free from sin? Do you always conquer temptation? Are you an easy man to get along with in the home and in the business? How are you getting on, you wise men of the world? You're a miserable failure. But do you want to be wise? Very well. Become a fool.

Believe this gospel. Humble yourself. Become as a little child.

Our Lord has said it all. Accept to be converted and become as little children. Ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

When you enter into a place like this, you forget what you are in the world. We're all the same here. We're all one.

Our knowledge is useless. We're all helpless sinners. And we all must wait for the gift divine.

But this is the thing, you see, that is offensive to men. And because it is offensive to men, he not only jeopardizes his life in this world, but also in the next. Listen to this again.

In the sixth verse of the second chapter. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught. And that is what they come to.

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