

The Lord's Day Morning

September 9, 1945

“The Realism of Christianity”
Scripture Lesson – Romans 7:7-14
Text – Romans 7:13

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Introduction

1. Some people have said that Christianity is an opiate which lulls people to sleep in a seeming complacency.
2. As we look at the lives of many people who belong to the church we may have to admit this seems to be true.
 - a. So many seem to have little or no consciousness of such a thing as evil.
 1. They do as they please with no thought of what God considers right.
 - b. Some seem to have little concern for their own soul and none for the souls of others.
 1. I am reminded of the story told of an English clergyman who years ago went to see a man in prison. This man was condemned to death. The clergyman told him of the awfulness of hell and how Christ had died to save men from this awful fate. The condemned man asked, “Do you believe this?” When the clergyman answered he did, the man replied that if he believed that he would crawl on his knees from one end of London to the other to tell men about it.
 2. Yet many of us go on seemingly unconcerned that men are lost and going to hell.
 3. Yes, as we look at many we must feel that Christianity does not face some of the realities of life and that it doesn't care.
3. No matter how true this may seem to be as we look at the lives of some people no one can read the New Testament even casually without being made conscious of the fact that this most certainly is not the attitude of that revelation of God.
 - a. It most certainly faces and faces squarely the three great issues of life.

I. Evil

1. The world and at times even the Church may pass over lightly the problem of evil. The New Testament nor the Christian doctrine ever do this.
2. They do not pretend that it does not exist.
3. Christ surely recognizes evil as existing.
 - a. Man brought to Him borne of four
 1. He saw this man's trouble as more a problem of evil than merely physical and so says, “Thy sins be forgiven.”
 - b. Woman taken in adultery
 1. He does not say to you, “You have been wronged more than you have done wrong.”

2. Rather, He says, "Go and sin no more."

c. So we might go on through the accounts of the life of Christ and we find He takes the attitude that evil is not the fancy of the imagination or something to be denied, but rather it is an awful thing which has wrecked and ruined the lives of men.

4. Paul

a. He describes the evil of the world in such terms that it defies even the imagination of a modern novelist to make it worse.

5. No the Christian revelation and the Christian theology faces squarely the presence and power of evil.

a. It lays the blame for the troubles of the world at the feet of evil which is calls sin.

b. No amount of modern preaching nor writings or present day philosophers can refute the idea that the Christian revelation does not pass over lightly the problem of evil.

II. Death

1. Again the New Testament faces the problem of death seriously.

2. There is no gay optimism which declares there is no such thing as death.

a. That is does not matter

3. Christ

a. Wept when death came to a friend

b. He spoke no light word regarding it

4. Paul declares it to be an enemy and the last enemy to be destroyed

III. Life

1. The New Testament faces too the matter of life with a stark reality and a serious consideration.

2. It is in life that men determine their future.

3. The most precious thing a man has is life.

4. The living of life is the most serious business a man can face.

5. Men can either make a glorious success or a complete failure of life.

6. We may look upon life lightly but the New Testament looks at it seriously and informs us it is to be considered as of the utmost importance.

IV. The Christian religion not only faces the three great problems with a serious realism

1. But it is even more concerned with the solution to the problems that it is with the problems themselves.

a. Let us look at them

2. Evil

a. If it has much to say about the problem of evil it has much more to say about the cure.

1. All through the Old Testament it tells of the coming of one who is able to deal with this problem.

2. And in the New Testament the cross appears so prominently that no amount of criticism has been able to remove it from the whole warp and

woof of the teachings of the Christian revelation to say nothing of from the Christian philosophy of life.

- b. Here at the cross, evil and God came to death grips.
- c. Here He showed men He loves them in spite of their evil nature.
 - 1. No one can say God does not care
- d. Here at the cross we see consummation of evil.
 - 1. Evil would put good to death
 - 2. It literally took perfect goodness personified in a perfect character and crucified it upon a cross.
- e. Here showed the divine method whereby men could be forgiven for their evil.
 - 1. Christ the perfectly good one dying for the sin of the world.
- f. Here then at the cross we find not only the problem of evil but we find too the solution.
 - 1. The problem is not the fantasy of the human mind.
 - 2. The solution did not come from the mind of men but from the infinite mind and loving heart of God.

3. Death

- a. Christianity would not ignore the problem of death.
- b. It would show that sin brought forth death.
 - 1. It stood for a time the seeming conqueror
- c. But Christ arose triumphant
 - 1. Could say “because I love, ye too shall live.”
 - 2. Paul could write, “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope.”
- d. So Christianity with a seriousness born of realism faces the problem of death.
 - 1. But thank God it has a glorious solution.

4. Life

- a. It does face the issues and problems of life
 - 1. Its temptations, uncertainties and sorrows
- b. But it has a solution here, too
- c. Again Christ the very center of Christianity brings that solution
- d. You will be tempted
 - 1. But He says, “I will give you the power to overcome.”
- e. You will face the changing conditions of life
 - 1. But “I will not leave you orphans. I will be with you.”
- f. I will not leave you orphans
 - 1. I will guide you
- g. I will not leave you alone in sorrow
 - 1. I will walk the way of sorrow with you
- h. Here He says should be the central thought, ambition, and desire of your life
 - 1. Father, glorify Thy name
 - 2. He will empower you to do that

Conclusion

- 1. Peter
- 2. Paul

3. From, "Anecdotes and Illustrations" – Torrey, page 28 – "The Other Half of the Gospel"

"A man came to me one day in Chicago and said, 'I want to talk with you.' Mr. Moody was away, so I took him into Mr. Moody's room, and asked, 'What do you want to talk with me about?' He said, 'I am a Scotsman. When I was seven years old over in Scotland, I started to read my Bible through. Before I had read long, I came to a place where it said that if a man should keep the law of God a hundred years, and then break it, he was under the curse of a broken law. Is that right?' 'Well,' I said, 'The Bible does not put it in just those words, but it amounts to that. It says, 'Cursed is every man that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them.'" 'Well,' he said, 'that is what I found, and I knew I had already broken the law of God, though I was only seven years old, and I was under the curse of a broken law. I was plunged into the deepest distress. Though I was only a child of seven, I wept over my sins often by day and often by night. I was in distress of soul for a whole year, but I kept on reading my Bible and at last I got over to the new Testament, and read John 3:16. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' I saw that Jesus had died for my sins, and my burden all rolled away, and I was pretty happy. Was I converted?' 'Well,' I said, 'that sounds like an evangelical conversion.'

'Wait a moment,' he said, 'and listen to the rest of my story. I grew up to manhood; I moved to America; I came over here to Chicago; I went to work in the stockyards, and live down there. You know it is a hard place. I have got to drinking and every little while I go off on a drunk. Now, what I want to know is this, is there any way I can get victory over drink and over all sin?' 'You have come to just the right place to get an answer to your question,' I replied. 'I can tell you the way. You have only believed half the Gospel, and therefore, you've got only half a salvation. Listen to the whole Gospel.' I opened my Bible to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and I read, 'This is the Gospel that I have preached unto you...that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.' That is the first half of the Gospel but it is only half. Listen as I read on and you will see the other half. 'And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' Do you believe that half of the Gospel also? You have already believed in Christ crucified and found pardon and peace, but the rest of the Gospel is that Christ rose again. Do you believe that?' 'Oh, yes,' he said. 'I believe everything in the Bible.' I said, 'Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose again?' He said, 'I do.' 'Do you believe He has all power in heaven and on earth as he said he had?' He said, 'I do.' 'Well, if He has all power in heaven and on earth, He has power to set you free from the power of sin. Do you believe that?' 'Yes, I do.' 'Will you trust Him to do it now? You have believed half the Gospel, you have got half of salvation. You have believed in a crucified Christ and got pardon; now will you believe in a risen Christ and get victory? Will you trust Him now as the risen Savior to set you free from the drink and other sin?' He said, 'I will.' 'Let us kneel down and tell God so.' We knelt down and I prayed and he prayed. After he had prayed, he looked up and said, 'Lord Jesus, I have believed half the Gospel that Thou didst die in my place and I have found pardon and peace through believing it. I now believe the other half of the Gospel that you rose again and have all power in heaven and on earth and have

power to set me free from drink and sin and I trust you to do it. Set me free now.' When he had finished, I said, 'Do you really trust Him to do it?' He said, 'I do.' We got up. I gave him a few words of advice and we separated. In a few weeks I received a letter from him, a very short letter, but very much to the point. He said, 'I am so glad I came to see you. it works.' Thank God it does work. A crucified Christ brings pardon; a risen Christ brings deliverance from the power of sin the moment you believe."