

The Difference Between God's Sacrifice and Man's

by P.T. Forsyth

The sermon highlights the difference between the Church's value and authority, and human society's natural basis, emphasizing the supernatural basis of faith in Christ.

Scripture: Romans 5:8, Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Christ's Sacrifice", "Christian Edification"

Description

P.T. Forsyth preaches about the essential balance between instruction and edification in the Christian life, emphasizing the Church's need for both to thrive. He highlights the Church's value as a vehicle of Christian grace, truth, and power, contrasting it with the secular world's reliance on natural goodness versus supernatural faith. Forsyth delves into the profound difference between human heroism and the sacrificial death of Christ, underscoring the transformative power of Christ's death in creating a new humanity and reconciling mankind to God.

Transcript

What I am going to say is not directly unto edification, but indirectly it is so must certainly. Directly it is rather for that instruction which is a need in our Christian life as essential as edification. We cannot do without either. On the one hand instruction with no idea of edification at all becomes mere academical discourse. It may begin anywhere and it may end anywhere. On the other hand, edification without instruction very soon becomes a feeble and ineffective thing.

I think a great many of us would be agreed that part of the poverty and weakness of the Church at the present moment is due to the fact that edification has been pursued to the neglect of instruction. We have been a little too prone to dwell upon the simple side of the gospel. All our capital is in small circulation. We have not put by a reserve, as it were. And therefore the simplicity itself has become unsettled and ineffectual, confused and confusing. I ask your attention to certain aspects of our Christian faith which perhaps do not lie immediately upon the surface, but which are yet the condition of the Church's continued energy and success in the world.

I suppose there is nobody here who does not believe in the Church. At any rate, what I propose to say will be said entirely from that standpoint. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church. My contention would be that, apart from such a position as I desire to bring to your notice - some real apostolic belief in the real work of

Jesus Christ - apart from that no Church can continue to exist. That is the point of view which I take at the outset. The Church is precious, not in itself, but because of God's purpose with it.

It is there because of what God has done for it. It is there, more particularly, because of what Christ has done, and done in history. It is there solely to serve the Gospel. It is impossible not to observe at the present day that the Church is under a cloud. You cannot take any division of it, in any country of the world, without feeling that that is so. Therefore I will begin by making quite a bold statement; and I should be quite prepared, given time and opportunity, to devote a whole week to making it good.

The statement is that the Church of Christ is the greatest and finest product of human history. It is the greatest thing in the universe. That is in complete defiance of the general view and tendency of society at the present moment. I say the Church is the greatest and finest product of human history; because it is not really a product of human history, but the product of the Holy Spirit within history. It stands for the new creation, the New Humanity, and it has that in trust.

The man who has a slight acquaintance with history is ready to bridle at a statement like that. He says: "Consider what the Roman Church has done; consider how obscurantist many sections of the Protestant Church are; consider the ineffectual position of the Church in modern civilization - and what nonsense to talk about the Church as the greatest and finest product of human history!" True enough, the authority of the Church is failing in many quarters. And that does not mean only the external authority of what you might call a statutory Church, a great institutional Church, a great organized Church like Rome, for example.

It means much more than that. It means that the authority of the whole Church is weakened in respect of the inward and spiritual matter which it contains and preaches, and which makes it what it is. The Church is there as the vehicle of the power of the Holy Ghost and of the authority of the saving God - a God, that is, who is saving not groups here and there, but the whole of human society. But a spiritual authority for man altogether is at a discount. Perhaps we have brought that in some measure upon ourselves.

Perhaps, too, it was historically necessary. But, necessary or not, it is a matter of fact that our Protestantism has developed often into a masterless individualism which is as deadly to Christian life as an over-organized institution like Rome. Many spiritual people today find it difficult to make their choice between the two extremes. Without going into the historic causes of the situation, let us recognize the situation. Spiritual authority, especially that of the Church, is for the time being at a great discount.

The Church is valuable as the organ of Christian grace, and truth, and power. But what do we find offered us in place of the Church? Those who attack the Church most seriously, and disbelieve in it most thoroughly, are not proposing simply to level the Church to the ground in the sense of destroying any religious society. What they want to do is to put some other kind of society in the place of the Church. For they say, as we all say, that it is impossible for religion, certainly impossible for Christianity, to exist without a social body in which it is cultivated and has its effect.

Therefore, those who are opposed to the Church most bitterly are yet not prepared to make a total desert. But they put all kinds of organizations, fancy organizations and fancy religions, in its place. Take the great movement in the direction of Socialism. Take the Socialist programs that you find so plentifully everywhere. What do these various organizations mean? What do all these organizations mean which profess to embody human brotherhood, and are represented by Trades Unions, Co-operation, Fraternities, Guilds, Socialism?

What is it they all confess? That some social vehicle there must be. You cannot promote Anarchy itself without associations for the purpose. So that the very existence of these rival organizations is a confession of the one fundamental principle of the Church, namely, that the human ideal, that religion in the true sense of the word, cannot do without a social habitation. They put in their own way what we put in our way (and we think a better way), that there must be a Church builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Our individualisms have been troubling and weakening us so much that everybody is looking away to some form of human life which shall have the advantages of individualism without its perils. The pietistic form of individualism did in its day great service. But it is out of date. Rationalistic individualism, again, taking shape in political radicalism, has done good work in its day. That also seems going out of date. The value of the new movement is its - shall I say - solidarity; which is a confession of that social, fraternal principle which finds its consummation really, and its power only, in the Church of Christ.

When we look at these rival organizations (and they are many, and some will occur to you which I have not named), we can, I think, gather most of them under one head. In contrast with the Church the various social forms that are offered to us today would build society upon a natural basis, the basis of natural brotherhood, natural humanity, natural goodness - on human nature. And the issue between the Church and the chief rivals of the Church is an issue between society upon this natural basis, and society upon a supernatural basis.

Our Christian belief is based upon the work of Christ; and we hold that human society can only continue to exist in final unity upon that same supernatural basis. It is an issue, therefore, between human nature deified and human nature saved; between mere sympathy and faith - faith taken in a quite positive and definite sense. We think that a brotherhood of mere sympathy, however warm it can be at a particular moment, has no stay in it, no eternal promise. The eternal promise is with supernatural faith.

Do you ever believe otherwise? I hope you have been so tempted; because having got over it you will be very much better for having gone through it. I wish much more of our belief had gone through troubled scenes and come to its rest; we should make far greater impression upon men if we gave them to feel we had fought our way to the peace and power we have. Well, were you ever tempted to believe that Christianity is just human nature at its best? That is the most powerful and dangerous plea that is put forward just now in challenge of our Christian position and Church.

Is the Kingdom of God just our natural spirituality and altruism developed? Is it just the spirit of religion or self-sacrifice, which you often find in human nature, developed to its highest? Is that the Kingdom of God? I trust you believe not - that human nature is not capable, by all the finest sacrifices it might develop, of saving, or ensuring itself, and setting up the Kingdom of God. Take the best side of human nature, that side which moves men to unselfishness and sacrifice, the side that comes out in many a heroic battle, in the silent battles of our civilization, where the victims get no applause and no reputation for their heroism whatever.

Take the best side of human nature, illustrated in every coalpit accident and every such thing, in countless quiet homes of poverty, where lives are being worked down to the bone and ground to death toiling and slaving for others. Take the vast mass of fatherhood and motherhood living for the children only. Take that best side of human nature, make the most of it, and then put this question: "How does man's noblest work differ from Christ's great work?" That is the question to which I desire to attract your attention today.

How does man's best work differ from Christ's great work? Let me begin with a story which was reported in the Belgian papers some years ago. Two passenger trains were coming in opposite directions at full speed. As they approached the station, it was found the levers would not work, owing to the frost, and the points could not be set to clear the trains of each other. A catastrophe seemed to be inevitable; when a signalman threw himself flat between the rails, and with his hands held the tie-rod in such a way that the points were properly set and kept; and he remained thus while the train thundered over him, in great danger of having his head carried away by the low-hung gear of the Westinghouse brake.

When the train had passed, he quietly rose and returned to his work. I offer you some reflections on this incident. It is the kind of incident that may be multiplied indefinitely. I offer you certain reflections, first, on some of its analogies with Christ's work, and secondly, on some of its differences. 1. This man, in a very true sense, died and rose again. His soul went through what he would have gone through if he had never risen from the track. He gave himself; and that is all a man can give at last.

His deed had the moral value which it would have had if he had lost his life. He laid it down, but it did not please God to take it. Like Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, it was complete and acceptable, even though not accepted. The man's rising from the ground - was it not really a resurrection from the dead? It was not simply a return to his post. He went back another man. He went back a heavenlier man. He had died and risen, just as if he had been called, and had gone, to God's presence - could he but remain there.

This is a death and rising again possible to us all. If the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ do not end in producing that kind of thing amongst us, then it is not the power of God unto salvation. These moral deaths and resurrections are what make men of us. "In deaths oft." That is the first point. 2. The second point is this. Not one of the passengers in either of those trains knew until they read it what had been done for them, nor to whom they owed their lives. It is so with the whole world.

Today it owes its existence, in a way it but poorly understands, to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the permanent element in Christianity -the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And yet it is nothing to all them that pass by. Under the feet of those travelers in Belgium there had taken place one of those deeds that are the very soul and glory of life, and they had no idea of it. Perhaps some of them were at the very moment grumbling at the staff of the railway for some small grievance or other.

It is useful to remember, when we are inclined to grumble thus, what an amount of devotion to duty goes to make it possible for us to travel as safely as we do - far more than can be acknowledged by the payment of a wage. These people were ploughing along in safety over one of the railway staff lying in a living grave. I say it is so with the whole civilized world. Its progress is like that of the train; it seldom stops to think that its safety is owing to a divine death and resurrection, much more than heroic.

The safety of that train was not due to the mechanism. The mechanism had gone wrong. It was not due to organization, or to work done from fear of punishment. Heroic duty raised to martyrdom saved the whole train. And the world's progress is saved today because of a death and resurrection of which it knows little and mostly cares to know less. "Propter Jesum non quærimus Jesum." The success of Christ hides Him. It is the death of Christ that is the chief condition of modern progress.

It is not civilization that keeps civilization safe and progressive. It is that power which was in Jesus Christ and culminated in His death and resurrection. When people read the Bible, and get behind the Bible, and that principle comes home to them, it may sometimes be like the shock that those travelers would receive when they read in the newspaper of their risk and deliverance. 3. Another point. And I am now coming on

to the difference. This man died for people who would thrill with the sense of what they owed him as soon as they read about it.

His act appeals to the instinct which is ready to spring to life in almost every breast. You felt the response at once when I told you the story. Some of you may have even felt it keenly. Do you ever feel as keenly about the devoted death of Christ? Perhaps you never have. You have believed it, of course, but it never came home to you and gripped you as the stories of the kind I instance do. You see the difference between Christ's death and every case of human heroism. I am moving to answer that question I put a moment ago as to whether the development of the best in human nature would ever give us the work of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

I have been illustrating one of the finest things in human nature, and I am asking whether, if that were multiplied indefinitely, we should yet have the effect which is produced by the death of Christ, or which is still to be produced by it in God's purpose. No, there is a difference between Christ's death and every case of heroism. Christ's was a death on behalf of people within whom the power of responding had to be created. Everybody thrills to that story I told you, and to every similar story.

The power of response is lying there in the human heart ready - it only needs to be touched. There is in human nature a battery charged with admiration for such things; you have only to put your knuckle to it and out comes the spark. But when we are dealing with the death of Christ we are in another position. Christ's was a death on behalf of people in whom the power of responding had to be created. We are all afraid of death, and rise to the man who delivers us from it. But we are not afraid of that worse thing than death from which Christ came to deliver us.

Christ's death was not a case of heroism simply, it was a case of redemption. It acted upon dull and dead hearts. It was a death which had to evoke a feeling not only latent but paralyzed, not only asleep but dead. What does Paul say? "While we were yet without strength, Christ died for us" - without power, without feeling, as the full meaning is. Let me illustrate. Take a poet like Wordsworth. When he began to publish his poetry he was received, just as Browning was received later, with ridicule and contempt.

The greatest critic of the time began an article in the leading critical organ of the day by saying, "This will never do." But it has done; and it has done for Jeffrey's critical reputation. Lord Jeffrey wrote himself down as one who was incapable of gauging the future, however much he might be capable of understanding the literature of the past. Some of you may remember - I remember perfectly well - the same kind of thing in the penny papers about Browning when he was fighting for recognition.

I remember, when I was a student, reading articles in luminaries like *The Standard* which sneered and jeered at Browning, just as smaller men today would sneer at men of like originality. But Wordsworth and Browning have conquered. I take another case. Turner was assailed with even more ridicule when he exposed his works to the British public. What would have happened to Turner if Ruskin had not arisen to be his prophet I do not know. His pictures might not even have been moldering in the cellars of the National Gallery.

They might have been selling at little second-hand shops in back streets for ten shillings to any one who had eyes in his head. Wordsworth, Browning, and Turner were all people of such original and unprecedented genius that there was no taste and interest for them when they appeared; they had to create the very power of understanding themselves. A poet of less original genius, a great genius but less of a genius, like Tennyson, comes along, and he writes about the "May Queen" and "The Northern

Farmer," and all those simple, elementary things which immediately fetch the handkerchiefs out.

Now no doubt to do that properly takes a certain amount of genius. But it taps the prompt and fluent emotions; and the misfortune is that kind of work is easily counterfeited and abused by those who wish to exploit our feelings rather than exalt them. It is a more easy kind of thing than was done by those great geniuses I first named. Original poets like Wordsworth and Browning had to create the taste for their work. Now in like manner Christ had to make the soul which should respond to Him and understand Him.

He had to create the very capacity for response. And that is where we are compelled to recognize the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well as the doctrine of the Saviour. We are always told that faith is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. The reason why we are told that, and must be told it, lies in the direction I have indicated. The death of Christ had not simply to touch like heroism, but it had to redeem us into power of feeling its own worth. Christ had to save us from what we were too far gone to feel.

Just as the man choked with damp in a mine, or a man going to sleep in arctic cold, does not realize his danger, and the sense of danger has to be created within him, so the violent action of the Spirit takes men by force. The death of Christ must call up more than a responsive feeling. It is not satisfied with affecting our heart. That is mere impressionism. It is very easy to impress an audience. Every preacher knows that there is nothing more simple than to produce tears.

You have only to tell a certain number of stories about dying children, lifeboats, fire escapes, and so on, and you can make people thrill. But the thrill is neither here nor there. What is the thrill going to end in? What is the meaning of the thrill for life? If it is not ending as it should, and not ending for life, it is doing harm, not good, because it is sealing the springs of feeling and searing the power of the spiritual life. What the work of Christ requires is the tribute not of our admiration or even gratitude, not of our impressions or our thrills, but of ourselves and our shame.

Now we are coming to the crux of the matter - the tribute of our shame. That death had to make new men of us. It had to turn us not from potential friends to actual, but from enemies into friends. It had not merely to touch a spring of slumbering friendship. There was a new creation. The love of God - I quote Paul, who did understand something of these things - the love of God is not merely evoked within us, it is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us."

That is a very different thing from simply having the reservoir of natural feeling tapped. The death of Christ had to do with our sin and not with our sluggishness. It had to deal with our active hostility, and not simply with the passive dullness of our hearts. Our hostility - that is what the easy-going people cannot be brought to recognize. That is what the shallow optimists, who think we can now dispense with emphasis on the death of Christ, feel themselves able to do - to ignore the fact that the human heart is enmity against God, against a God who makes demands upon it; who goes so far as to make demands for the whole, the absolute obedience of self.

Human nature puts its back up against that. That is what Paul means when he speaks about human nature, the natural man - the carnal man is a bad translation - being enmity against God. Man will cling to the last rag of his self-respect. He does not part with that when he thrills, admires, sympathizes; but he does when he has to give up his whole self in the obedience of faith. How much self-respect do you think Paul had left in him when he went into Damascus? Christ, with the demand for saving obedience, arouses antagonism in the human heart.

And so will the Church that is faithful to Him. You hear people of the type I have been speaking about saying, If only the Church had been true to Christ's message it would have done wonders for the world. If only Christ were preached and practiced in all His simplicity to the world, how fast Christianity would spread. Would it? Do you really find that the deeper you get into Christ and the meaning of His demands Christianity spreads faster in your heart? Is it not very much the other way?

When it comes to close quarters you have actually to be got down and broken, that the old man may be pulverized and the new man created from the dust. Therefore when we hear people abusing the Church and its history the first thing we have to say is, Yes, there is a great deal too much truth in what you say, but there is also a greater truth which you are not allowing for, and it is this. One reason why the Church has been so slow in its progress in mankind and its effect on human history is because it has been so faithful to Christ, so faithful to His Cross.

You have to subdue the most intractable, difficult, and slow thing in the world - man's self-will. You cannot expect rapid successes if you truly preach the Cross whereon Christ died, and which He surmounted not simply by leaving it behind but by rising again, and converting the very Cross into a power and glory. Christ arouses antagonism in the human heart and heroism does not. Everybody welcomes a hero. The minority welcome Christ. We do resent His absolute command. We do resent parting completely with ourselves.

We do resent Christ. 4. I go back to the word I spoke about the tribute of our shame. The demand is unsparing, remorseless. It is not simply that you are called on by God for a certain due, a change, an amendment, but for the tribute of yourself and your shame. When you heard about that heroism of my story, when you thrilled to it, I wonder did you pat yourself on the back a little for being capable of thrilling to things so high, so fine? When you thrilled to that story you felt a certain satisfaction with yourself because there was as much of the God in you as allowed you to be capable of thrilling to such heroisms.

You felt, If I am capable of thrilling to such things, I cannot be such a bad sort. But when you felt the meaning of Christ's death for you, did you ever pat yourself on the back? The nearer the Cross came to you, the deeper it entered into you, were you the more disposed to admire yourself? There is no harm in your feeling pleased with yourself because you were able to thrill to these human heroisms; but if the impression Christ makes upon you is to leave you more satisfied with yourself, more proud of yourself for being able to respond, He has to get a great deal nearer to you yet.

You need to be - I will use a Scottish phrase which old ministers used to apply to a young minister when he had preached a "thoughtful and interesting discourse" - you need to be well shaken over the mouth of the pit. The great deep classic cases of Christian experience bear testimony to that. Christ and His Cross come nearer and nearer, and we do not realize what we owe Him until we realize that He has plucked us from the fearful pit, and the miry clay, and set us upon a rock of God's own founding.

The meaning of Christ's death rouses our shame, self-contempt, and repentance. And we resent being made to feel ashamed of ourselves, we resent being made to feel ashamed of ourselves, we resent being made to repent. A great many people are afraid to come too near to anything that does that for them. That is a frequent reason for not going to church. 5. Again, continuing. You would have gone a long way to see this Belgian man. You would have gazed upon him with something of reverence, certainly with admiration.

You would have regarded him as one received back from the dead. You think, If all men were like that, the world would be heaven. Well, there are a great many more like that than we think, who daily imperil their

life for their duty. But supposing every man and woman in the world were up to that pitch, and supposing you added them all together and took the total value of their moral heroism (if moral quantities were capable of being summed like that), would you then have the equivalent of the deed and death of Christ?

No, indeed! If you took all the world, and made heroes of them all, and kept them heroic all their lives, instead of only in one act, still you would not get the value, the equivalent, of Christ's sacrifice. It is not the sum of all heroisms. It would be more true to say it is the source of all heroisms, the foundation of them all. It is the underground something that makes heroisms, not something that heroisms make up. When Christ did what He did, it was not human nature doing it, it was God doing it.

That is the great, absolutely unique and glorious thing. It is God in Christ reconciling. It was not human nature offering its very best to God. It was God offering His very best to man. That is the grand difference between the Church and civilization, even when civilization is religious. We must attend more to those great issues between our faith and our world. Our religion has been too much a thing done in a corner. We must adjust our religion to the great currents and movements of the world's history.

And the great issue of the hour is the issue between the Church and civilization. Their essential difference is this. Civilization at its best represents the most man can do with the world and with human nature; but the Church, centered upon Christ, His Cross, and His work, represents the best that God can do upon them. The sacrifice of the Cross was not man in Christ pleasing God; it was God in Christ reconciling man, and in a certain sense, reconciling Himself. My point at this moment is that the Cross of Christ was Christ reconciling man.

It was not heroic man dying for a beloved and honored God; it was God in some form dying for man. God dying for man. I am afraid of that phrase; I cannot do without it. God dying for man; and for such men - hostile, malignantly hostile men. That is a puzzling phrase where we read in a gospel: "Greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." There is more love in the phrase of the epistle, that a man should lay down his life for his bitter enemies.

It is not so heroic, so very divine, to die for our friends. Kindness between the nice people is not so very divine - fine and precious as it is. To die for enemies - that is the divine thing. Christ's was grace that died for such for malignant enemies. There is more in God than love. There is all that we mean by His holy grace. Truly, "God is love." Yes, but the kind of love which you must interpret by the whole of the New Testament. When John said that, did he mean that God was simply the consummation of human affection?

He knew that he was dealing with a holy, gracious God, a God who loved His enemies and redeemed them. Read with extreme care 1 John 4:10. 6. Let me gather up the points of difference which I have been indicating. First, that Belgian hero did not act from love so much as from duty. Secondly, he died only in one act, not in his whole life, dying daily. There have been men capable of acts of sacrifice like this hero; loose-living men who, after a heroism, were quite capable of returning to their looseness of life - heroes of the Bret Harte type.

There have been many valiant, fearless things done on the battlefield by men who in the face of bullets never flinched, never turned a hair; and when they came home they could not stand against a breath of ridicule, they could not stand against a little temptation, and were soon wallowing in the mire. One act of sacrifice is not the same thing as a life gathered into one consummate sacrifice, whose value is that it has the whole personality put into it for ever. Third, this man could not take the full measure of all that he was

doing, and Christ could.

Christ did not go to His death with His eyes shut. He died because He willed to die, having counted the cost with the greatest, deepest moral vision in the world. Fourthly, the hero in the story had nothing to do with the moral condition of those whom he saved. The scoundrel and the saint in that train were both alike to him. Again, he had no quarrel with those whom he saved. He had nothing to complain of. He had nothing from them to try his heroism. They were not his bitter enemies.

His valour was not the heroism of forgiveness, where lies the wondrous majesty of God. His act was not an act of grace, which is the grand glory of the love of Christ. Christ died for people who not only did not know Him, but who hated and despised Him. He died, not for a trainful of people, but for the whole organic world of people. It was an infinite death, that of His, in its range and in its power. It was death for enemies more bitter than anything that man can feel against man, for such haters as only holiness can produce.

Here is the singular thing: the greater the favour that is done to us, the more fiercely we resent it if it does not break us down and make us grateful. The greater the favour, if we do not respond in its own spirit, so much the more resentful and antagonistic it makes us. I have already said that we speak too often as though the effect of Christ's death upon human nature must be gratitude as soon as it is understood. It is not always gratitude. Unless it is received in the Holy Ghost, the effect may just be the other way.

It is judgment. It is a death unto death. I conclude by saying what I have often said, and what often needs saying, that it is not possible to hear the gospel and to go away just as you came. I wish that were more realized. We should not have so many sermon-hunters. If people felt that every time they heard the gospel they were either better or worse for it, they would be more careful about hearing. They would not go so often, possibly; better they should not perhaps. I am not speaking about hearing of sermons.

That is neither here nor there. A man may hear sermons and be neither the better nor the worse. But a man cannot hear the gospel without being either better or worse, whether he knows it or not. When you come to face the last issues, it is either unto salvation or unto condemnation. The great central, decisive thing, the last judgment of the world, is the Cross of Christ. The reason why so many sermons are found uninteresting is not always due to the dullness of the preacher.

God knows how often that is the case, but it is not always. It is because the sermons so often turn, or ought to turn, upon the miracle of the grace of God, which is so great a miracle that it is strange, remote, and alien to our natural ways of thinking and feeling. It seems foreign to us. It is like reading a guide-book if you have never been in the country. I take down my Baedeker in the winter and read it with the greatest delight, because I know the country. If I had not been there I should find it the dreariest reading.

Why do not people read the Bible more? Because they have not been in that country. There is no experience for it to stir and develop. The Cross of Christ, the infinite wonder of it - we have got to learn that. We have got to learn the deep meaning of that by having been there, by the evangelical experience whose lack is the cause of all the religious vagrancy of the hour. We have got to learn that it was not simply magnificent heroism, but that it was God in Christ reconciling the world. It was God that did that work in Christ. And Christ was the living God working upon man, and working out the Kingdom of God.

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