

The Great Sacrificial Work Is to Reconcile

by P.T. Forsyth

The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to the Bible and understanding its original sense and historical context, and the need for a deep understanding of Christian theology to build a Church that can last.

Scripture: Romans 5:1, 1 Corinthians 6:1, Ephesians 2:16, Colossians 1:10

Topics: "Bible Study", "Ministry Preparation"

Description

P.T. Forsyth emphasizes the urgent need for a return to the Bible in the religious world today, highlighting the neglect of personal Bible study and the significant advantages of modern scholarship in understanding the Scriptures. He stresses the importance of expounding the Bible in ministry, encouraging young ministers to delve into long passages for deeper understanding. Forsyth discusses three ways of reading the Bible: focusing on the historic sense, reading for edification, and seeking to understand God's purpose in the text.

Transcript

Corinthians 5:14-6:2; Romans 5:1-11; Colossians 1:10-29; Ephesians 2:16

The great need of the religious world today is a return to the Bible. That is necessary for two reasons, negative and positive. Negatively, because the most serious feature of the hour in the life of the Church is the neglect of the Bible for personal use and study by religious people. Positively, because we have today enormous advantages in connection with that return to the Bible. Modern scholarship has made of the Bible a new Book. It has in a certain sense rediscovered it.

You might say that the soul of the Reformation was the rediscovery of the Bible; and in a wider sense that is true today also. We have, through the labors of more than a century of the finest scholarship in all the world, come to understand the Bible, in its original sense, as it was never understood before. These instructed scribes draw forth from their treasury things as new as old. It is the old Book, and it is a new Book. It is the old Book, and the precious Book, because of its power of unceasing self-renovation.

The spirit that lives within the Bible is a spirit of constant self-preservation. One way of describing the Reformation is to say that, since the early Gnostic centuries, it was the greatest effort that ever took place in the Church for the self-preservation of Christianity. Remember, the Church was not reformed from the outside, but from the inside. It was the Church reforming the Church. It was the Church's faith that arose, under the Holy Spirit, and reformed the Church. So it is with the Bible.

Whatever renovation we find in connection with the Bible - I do not here mean renovation of ourselves, but renovation of our way of understanding the Book - arises out of the Bible itself. This remains true today, as it was true in the Reformation time, although it is now true in a somewhat different application. The Bible is still the best commentary upon itself. I have always done much in my ministry in the way of expounding the Bible, and I would say to the younger ministers particularly who are here, Do not be afraid of that manner of preaching.

I have known young ministers who were over-scrupulous I have known them say, "If I take a long text people will think it is because I am lazy and do not want the labour of getting a sermon out of a small one." Never mind such foolish people. Do not be afraid of long texts, long passages. Preach less from verses and more from paragraphs. If I had my time over again I would do a great deal more in that way than I have done. Read but one lesson, and read it with elucidatory comments.

Of course some people can do that better than others. There is always the danger that if a person try it who has no sort of knack in that direction, the people will feel they have been let in for two sermons instead of one; and, excellent as these might be, people do not like to feel they have been got to church upon false pretenses. It might even give an excuse to certain people for omitting one of the services altogether, on the plea they had put in the requisite amount of attention at one service.

I would also admit that if you do this it will not reduce your labour. It will really add what might amount to another sermon to your weekly work. It is no use doing it if you do it on the spur of the moment. If you just say things that occur to your mind while you are reading, you may say some banal, or some nonsensical and fantastic things. It means careful preparation. The lesson should be prepared as truly as the prayer should be prepared, and as the sermon should be prepared.

You have to work your way through the chapter with the aid of the best commentary that you can get; and you have to exercise continual judgment in doing so lest you be dragged away into little matters of detail instead of keeping to the larger lines of thought in the passage in hand. Then, if you do as I say, there is this other advantage, that you can take a particular verse out of the long passage for your sermon; and thus you come to the sermon with an audience which you yourself have prepared to listen to you.

You have created your own atmosphere, and you have done it on a Bible basis. Now I will confess against myself that sometimes, as I preach about here and there, and have done as I have been recommending you to do, people have come to me afterwards and said, as nicely as they could, that the sermon was all very well, but in respect of the reading of the Scripture, they never heard it after that fashion; they had never realized how vivid Scripture could become. That simply results from paying attention to the chapter with the best help.

You will find, I am sure, that your congregation will welcome it. Supposing, then, we return to the Bible. Supposing that the Church did - as I think it must do if it is not going to collapse; certainly the Free Churches must - supposing we return to the Bible, there are three ways of reading the Bible. The first way asks, What did the Bible say? The second way asks, What can I make the Bible say? The third way asks, What does God say in the Bible? The first way is, with the aid of these magnificent scholars, to discover the true historic sense of the Bible.

There is no more signal illustration of success here than in the case of the Prophets. During the time when theology dominated everything and was considered to be the Church's one grand concern, about one hundred years after the Reformation, when its great prophets had passed away, and the Church had

fallen into different hands, the whole of the Old Testament - the Prophets amongst the rest - was read for proof passages of theological doctrines. Now for books like the Prophets that is absolutely fatal - fatal to the books and to the Church; and fatal in the long run to Christian truth.

There is no greater service that has been done to the Bible than what has been done by the scholars I speak of, in making the Prophets live again, putting them in their true historical setting and position. Dr. George Adam Smith, for example, has done inestimable service in this way. And what has been done for the Prophets has also been done for the New Testament. Immense steps onward have been taken; and we are coming to know with much exactness what the writer actually had in his mind at the moment of writing, and what he was understood to have had in his mind by those to whom he first wrote.

In this way we get rid, for example, of the idea that Paul was thinking about us who live two thousand years after him. He was not thinking of us at all. He did not expect the world to last a century. It is quite another question what the Holy Spirit was thinking about. Paul was thinking in a natural way about his age and his Churches, about their actual situation and needs. That is another illustration of the principle that if you want to work for immortality you must work in the most relevant and faithful way amid the circumstances round about you.

The present duty is the path to immortality. And so also I might illustrate in respect to the Gospels. The second way of reading the Bible is reading it unto edification. That is to say, we read a passage, and we allow ourselves to receive any suggestion that may come to us from it, and we do not stop to ask whether that was in the writer's mind, or whether it was in the mind of the people to whom he wrote. That is immaterial. We allow the Spirit of God to suggest to us whatever lessons or ideas He thinks fit out of the words that are under our eyes.

We read the Bible not for correct or historic knowledge, but for religious and spiritual purposes, for our own private and personal needs. That is, or course, a perfectly legitimate thing - indeed, it is quite necessary. It is the way of reading the Bible which the large mass of the Church must always practice. But it has its dangers. You need the other ways to correct it. All the three must cooperate for the true use and understanding of the Bible by the Church at large. But I am speaking now about its use by individuals, and the danger I mean is that the suggestiveness may sometimes become fantastic.

Some preachers fail at times in that way. They get to taking what are called fancy texts, texts which impress the audience much more with the ingenuity of the preacher than with his inspiration. For instance, a preacher in the North, now dead, was preaching against the Higher Criticism and its slicing up of the Bible, and he took his text from Nehemiah, "He cut it with a penknife"! That is all very well, perhaps, for a motto, but for a text it is rather a liberty. It is not fair to the Bible to indulge in much of that at least.

If I remember rightly, Dr. Parker had a great gift in this way, and more than sometimes it ran way with him. It is a temptation of every witty man, and every ingenious-minded man. But there is a peril in it, the abuse of a right principle. We are bound, or course, to vindicate for ourselves and for others the right to use the Bible in the suggestive way, if we are not to make a present of it to the scholars. And that would be just as bad as making a present of it to a race of priests.

But when we read too much in that way it is apt to become a minister to our spiritual egotism, or, what is equally bad, our fanciful subjectivity. Now the grand value of the bible is just the other thing - its objectivity. The first thing is not how I feel, but it is, How does God feel, and what has God said or done for my soul? When we get to real close quarters with that our feeling and response will look after itself. Do not tell

people how they ought to feel towards Christ.

That is useless. It is just what they ought that they cannot do. Preach a Christ that will make them feel as they ought. That is objective preaching. The tendency and fashion of the present moment is all in the direction of subjectivity. People welcome sermons of a more or less psychological kind, which go into the analysis of the soul or of society. They will listen gladly to sermons on character-building, for instance; and in the result they will get to think of nothing else but their own character.

They will be the builders of their own character; which is a fatal thing. Learn to commit your soul and the building of it to One who can keep it and build it as you never can. Attend then to Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom, and the Cause, and He will look after your soul. A consequence of this passion for subjective and psychological analysis, for sentimental experience and problem-preaching a real, objective, New Testament gospel he has raised against him what is not the most fatal accusation - even within the Christian Church it has come to be very fatal - he is accused of being a theologian.

That is a very fatal charge to make now against any preacher. It ought to be actionable in the way of libel. We have come to this - that if you penetrate into the interior of the New Testament you will be accused of being a theologian; and then it is all over with your welcome. But that state of things has to be turned upside down, else the Church dries into the sand. There is no message in it. The third way of reading the Bible is reading it to discover the purpose and thought of God, whether it immediately edify us or whether it do not.

If we did actually become aware of the will and thought of God it would edify us as nothing else could. No inner process, no discipline to which we might subject ourselves, no way of cultivating subjective holiness would do so much for us as if we could lose ourselves, and in some godly sort forget ourselves, because we are so preoccupied with the mind of Christ. If you want psychological analysis, analyze the will, work, and purpose of Christ our Lord. I read a fine sentence the other day which puts in a condensed form what I have often preached about as the symptom of the present age: "Instead of placing themselves at the service of God most people want a God who is at their service."

These two tendencies represent in the end two different religions. The man who is exploiting God for the purposes of his own soul or for the race, has in the long run a different religion from the man who is putting his own soul and race absolutely at the disposal of the will of God in Jesus Christ. All this is by way of preface to an attempt to approach the New Testament and endeavour to find what is really the will of God concerning Christ and what Christ did. Doctrine and life are really two sides of one Christianity; and they are equally indispensable, because Christianity is living truth.

It is not merely truth; it is not simply life. It is living truth. The modern man says that doctrine which does not pass into life is dead; and then the mistake he makes is that he wants to turn it into life directly, and to politicize it, perhaps; whereas it works in-directly. The experience of many centuries, on the other hand, says that Christian life which does not grow out of Christian doctrine becomes a failure. If not in individuals, it does in the Church. You cannot keep Christian piety alive except upon Christian truth.

You can never get a Catholic Church except by Catholic truth. I think perhaps we all here agree about that. It is of immense importance that we do not think entirely about our individual souls, and that we think more about the Church, the divine will, the divine Word, and the divine Kingdom in the world. It is of supreme importance that we should know what the Christian doctrine is on the great matters. Now in connection with the work of Christ the great expositor in the Bible is St.

Paul. And Paul has a word of his own to describe Christ's work - the word "reconciliation." But he thinks of reconciliation not as a doctrine but as an act of God - because he was not a theologian but an experience preacher. To view it so produces an immense change in your whole way of thinking. It secures for you all that is worth having in theology, and it delivers you from the danger of obsession by theology in a one-sided way. Remember, then, that the truth we are dealing with is precious not as a mere truth but as the means of expressing the eternal act of God.

The most important thing in all the world, in the Bible or out of it, is something that God has done - for ever finally done. And it is this reconciliation; which is only secondarily a doctrine; it is only secondarily even a manner of life. Primarily it is an act of God. That is to say, it is a salvation before it is a religion. For Christianity as a religion stands upon salvation. Religion which does not grow out of salvation is not Christian religion; it may be spiritual, poetic, mystic; but the essence of Christianity is not just to be spiritual; it is to answer God's manner of spirituality, which you find in Jesus Christ and in Him crucified.

Reconciliation is salvation before it is religion. And it is religion before it is theology. All our theology in this matter rests upon the certain experience of the fact of God's salvation. It is salvation upon divine principles. It is salvation by a holy God. It is bound of course, to be theological in its very nature its statement is a theology. The moment you begin to talk about the holiness of God you are theologians. And you cannot talk about Christ and His death in any thorough way without talking about the holiness of God.

Christ and Him crucified, that is the historic fact. But what do I mean when I say Christ and Him crucified? Does it mean that a certain personality lived who was recognized in history as Jesus Christ, and that He came by His end by crucifixion? That in itself is worthless for religious purposes. It is useful enough if you are writing history; but for religion historical fact must have interpretation, and the whole of Christianity depends upon the interpretation that is put upon such facts.

You will find people sometimes who say, "Let us have the simple historic facts, the Cross and Christ." That is not Christianity. Christianity is a certain interpretation of those facts. How and why did the New Testament come into being? Was it simply to convince posterity that those facts had taken place? Was it simply to convince the world that Christ had risen from the dead? If that were the grand object of the New Testament we should have a very different Bible in our hands, one addressed to the world and not to the Church, to critical science and not to faith; and there would not be so much argument amongst scholars as there is.

The Bible did not come into being in order to provide future historians with a valuable document. It came for the purposes of interpretation. Here is a sentence I came across once: "The fact without the word is dumb; the word without the fact is empty." It is useful to turn it over and over in your mind. Paul was almost the creator and the great representative of that interpretation. It was continued on his lines by Augustine, Anselm, Luther, and many another. But what is it that we hear about so much today?

We hear a great deal about an undogmatic Christianity. And there is a certain plausibility in it. If you have no theological training, no training in the understanding of the Scripture in a serious way, that is, if you do not know your business as ministers of the Word, it seems natural that undogmatic Christianity should be just the thing you want. Leave the dogma of it, you will say, to those who devote their lives to dogma - just as though theologians were irrepressible people who take up theology as a hobby and become the bores of the Church!

It was not a hobby to the apostles. Why, there are actually people of a similar stamp who look upon missions as a hobby of the Church, instead of their belonging to the very being and fidelity of the Church. So some people think theology is a hobby, and that theologians are persons with an uncomfortable preponderance of intellect, who are trying to destroy the privileges secured by our national lack of education and to sacrifice Christianity to mind. People say we do not want so much intellect in preaching; we want sympathy and unction.

Now, I am always looking afield, and looking forward, and thinking about the prospects of the Church in the great world. And unction dissociated from Christian truth and Christian intelligence has at last the sentence of the Church's death within itself. You may cherish an undogmatic Christianity with a sort of magnetic casing, a purely human, mystical, subjective kind of Christ for yourself or an audience, but you could not continue to preach that in a Church for the ages. The Church could not live on that and do its preaching in such a world.

You could not spread a gospel like that. Subjective religion is valuable in its place, but its place is limited. The only Cross you can preach to the whole world is a theological one. It is not the fact of the Cross, it is the interpretation of the Cross, the prime theology of the Cross, what God meant by the Cross, that is everything. That is what the New Testament came to give. That is the only kind of Cross that can make or keep a Church. You will say, perhaps, "Cannot I go out and preach my impressions of the Cross?"

By all means. You will only discover the sooner that you cannot preach a Cross to any purpose if you preach it only as an experience. If you only preach it so you would not be an apostle; and you could not do the work of an apostle for the Church. The apostles were particular about this, and one expressed it quite pointedly: "We preach not ourselves [not our experiences] but Christ crucified." "We do not preach religion," said Paul, "but God's revelation. We do not preach the impression the Cross made upon us, but the message that God by His Spirit sent through a Christ we experience."

And so with ourselves. We do not preach our impressions, or even our experience. These make but the vehicle, as it were. What we preach is something much more solid, more objective, with more stay in it; something that can suffice when our experience has ebbed until it seems to be as low as Christ's was in the great desertion and victory on the Cross. We want something that will stand by us when we cannot feel any more; we want a Cross we can cling to, not simply a subjective Cross.

That is, to put the thing in another way, what we want today is an insight into the Cross. You see I am making a distinction between impression and insight. It is a useful part of the Church's work, for instance, that it should act by means of revival services, where perhaps the dominant element may be temporary impression. But unless that is taken up and turned to account by something more, we all know how evanescent a thing it is apt to be. We need, not simply to be impressed by Christ, but to see into Christ and into His Cross.

We need to deepen the impression until it become new life by seeing into Christ. There are certain circumstances in which we may be entitled to declare that we do not want so many people who glibly say they love Jesus; we want more people who can really see into Christ. We do, of course, want more people who love Jesus; but we want a multitude of more people who are not satisfied with that, but whose love fills them with holy curiosity and compels them habitually to cultivate in the Spirit the power of seeing into Christ and into His Cross.

More than impression, do we need a spirit of divination. Insight is what we want for power - less of mere interest and more of real insight. There are some people who talk as though, when we speak of the Cross and the meaning of the Cross, we were spinning something out of the Cross. Paul was not spinning anything out of the Cross. He was gazing into the Cross, seeing what was really there with eyes that had been unsealed and purged by the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of Christ's reconciliation, or His Atonement, is not a piece of mediaeval dogma like transubstantiation, not a piece of ecclesiastical dogma or Aristotelian subtlety which it might be the Bible's business to destroy.

If you look at the Gospels you will see that from the Transfiguration onward this matter of the Cross is the great center of concern; it is where the center of gravity lies. I met a man the other day who had come under some poor and mischievous pulpit influence, and he said, "It is time we got rid of hearing so much about the Cross of Christ; there should be preached to the world a humanitarian Christ, the kind of Christ that occupies the Gospels." There was nothing for it but to tell that man he was the victim of smatterers, and that he must go back to his Gospels and read and study for a year or two.

It is the flimsiest religiosity, and the most superficial reading of the Gospel, that could talk like that. What does it mean that an enormous proportion of the Gospel story is occupied with the passion of Christ? The center of gravity, even in the Gospels, falls upon the Cross of Christ and what was done there, and not simply upon a humanitarian Christ. You cannot set the Gospels against Paul. Why, the first three Gospels were much later than Paul's Epistles. They were written for Churches that were made by the apostolic preaching.

But how, then, do the first three Gospels seem so different from the Epistles? Of course, there is a superficial difference. Christ was a very living and real character for the people of His own time, and His grand business was to rouse his audiences' faith in His Person and in His mission. But in His Person and in His mission the Cross lay latent all the time. It emerged only in the fullness of time - that valuable phrase - just when the historic crisis, the organic situation, produced it.

Jesus was not a professor of theology. He did not lecture the people. He did not come with a theology of the Cross. He did not come to force events to comply with that theology. He did not force His own people to work out a theological scheme. He did force an issue, but it was not to illustrate a theology. It was to establish the Kingdom of God, which could be established in no other wise than as He established it - upon the Cross. And He could only teach the Cross when it had happened - which He did through the Evangelists with the space they gave it, and through the Apostles and the exposition they gave it.

To come back to this work of Christ described by Paul as reconciliation. On this interpretation of the work of Christ the whole Church rests. If you move faith from that enter you have driven the nail into the Church's coffin. The Church is then doomed to death, and is only a matter of time when she shall expire. The Apostle, I say, described the work of Christ as above all things reconciliation. And Paul was the founder of the Church, historically speaking. I do not like to speak of Christ as the Founder of the Church.

It seems remote, detached, journalistic. It would be far more true to say that He is the foundation of the Church. "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." The founder of the Church, historically speaking, was Paul. It was founded by and through him on this reconciling principle - may, I go deeper than that, on this mighty act of God's reconciliation. For this great act the interpretation was given to Paul by the Holy Spirit. In this connection read that great word in 1 Corinthians 2; that is the most valuable word in the New Testament about the nature of apostolic inspiration.

What, then, did Paul mean by this reconciliation which is the backbone of the Church? He meant the total result of Christ's life-work in permanently changing the relation between collective man and God. By reconciliation Paul meant the total result of Christ's life-work in the fundamental, permanent, final changing of the relation between man and God, altering it from a relation of hostility to one of confidence and peace. Remember, I am speaking as Paul spoke, about man, and not about individual men or groups of men.

There are two principal Greek words connected with the idea of reconciliation, one of them being always translated by it, the other sometimes. They are *katallassein*, and *hilaskesthai* - reconciliation and atonement. Atonement is an Old Testament phrase, where the idea is that of the covering of sin from God's sight. But by whom? Who was that great benefactor of the human race that succeeded in covering up our sin from God's sight? Who was skillful enough to hoodwink the Almighty?

Who covered the sin? The all-seeing God alone. There can therefore be no talk of hoodwinking. Atonement means the covering of sin by something which God Himself had provided, and therefore the covering of sin by God Himself. It was of course not the blinding of Himself to it, but something very different. How could the Judge of all the earth make His judgment blind? It was the covering of sin by something which makes it lose the power of deranging the covenant relation between God and man and founds the new Humanity.

That is the meaning of it. If you think I am talking theology, you must blame the New Testament. I am simply expounding to you the New Testament. Of course, you need not take it unless you please. It is quite open to you to throw the New Testament overboard (so long as you are frank about it), and start what you may loosely call Christianity on the floating lines. But if you take the New Testament you are bound to try to understand the New Testament. If you understand the New Testament you are bound to recognize that this is what the New Testament says.

It is a subsequent question whether the New Testament is right in saying so. Let us first find out what the Bible really says, and then discuss whether the Bible is right or wrong. The idea of atonement is the covering of sin by something which God provided, and by the use of which sin loses its accusing power, and its power to derange that grand covenant and relationship between man and God which founds the New Humanity. The word *katallassein* (reconcile) is peculiar to Paul.

He uses both words; but the other word, "atonement," you also find in other New Testament writings. Reconciliation is Paul's great characteristic word and thought. The great passages are those I have mentioned at the head of this lecture. I cannot take time to expound them here. That would mean a long course. Read those passages carefully and check me in anything I say - particularly, for instance, 2 Corinthians 5:15 - 6:2. Out of it we gather this whole result. First, Christ's work is something described as reconciliation.

And second, reconciliation rests upon atonement as its ground. Do not stop at "God was in Christ reconciling the world." You can easily water that down. You may begin the process by saying that God was in Christ just in the same way in which He was in the old prophets. That is the first dilution. Then you go on with the homeopathic treatment, and you say, "Oh yes, all He did by Christ was to affect the world, and impress it by showing it how much He loved it." Now would that reconcile anybody really in need of it?

When your child has flown into a violent temper with you, and still worse, a sulky temper, and glooms for a whole day, is it any use your sending to that child and saying, "Really, this cannot go on. Come back. I love you very much. Say you are sorry." Not a bit of use. For God simply to have told or shown the evil

world how much He loved it would have been a most ineffectual thing. Something had to be done - judging or saving. Revelation alone is inadequate. Reconciliation must rest on atonement.

For, as I say, you must not stop at "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," but go on "not reckoning unto them their trespasses." "He made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin." that involves atonement. You cannot blot out that phrase. And the third thing involved in the idea is that this reconciliation, this atonement, means change of relation between God and man - man, mind you, not two or three men, not several groups of men, but man, the human race as one whole.

And it is a change of relation from alienation to communion - not simply to our peace and confidence, but to reciprocal communion. The grand end of reconciliation is communion. I am pressing that hard. I am pressing it hard here by saying that it is not enough that we should worship God. It is not enough that we should worship a personal God. It is not enough that we should worship and pay our homage to a loving God. That does not satisfy the love of God. Nothing short of living, loving, holy habitual communion between His holy soul and ours can realize at last the end which God achieved in Jesus Christ.

In this connection let me offer you two cautions. First, take care that the direct fact of reconciliation is not hidden up by the indispensable means - namely, atonement. There have been ages in the Church when the attention has been so exclusively centered upon atonement that reconciliation was lost sight of. You found theologians flying at each other's throats in the interest of particular theories of atonement. That is to say, atonement had obscured reconciliation. In the same way, after the Reformation period, they dwelt upon justification until they lost sight of sanctification altogether.

Then the great pietistic movement had to arise in order to redress the balance. Take care that the end, reconciliation, is not hidden up by the means, atonement. Justification, sanctification, reconciliation and atonement are all equally inseparable from the one central and compendious work of Christ. Various ages need various aspects of it turned outward. Let us give them all their true value and perspective. If we do not we shall make that fatal severance which orthodoxy has so often made between doctrine and life.

The second caution is this. Beware of reading atonement out of reconciliation altogether. Beware of cultivating a reconciliation which is not based upon justification. The apostle's phrases are often treated like that. They are emptied of the specific Christian meaning. There are a great many Christian people, spiritual people of a sort, today, who are perpetrating that injustice upon the New Testament. They are taking mighty old words and giving them only a subjective, arbitrary meaning, emptying out of them the essential, objective, positive content.

They are preoccupied with what takes place within their own experience, or imagination, or thought; and they are oblivious of that which is declared to have taken place within the experience of God and of Christ. They are oblivious and negligent of the essential things that Christ did, and God in Christ. That is not fair treatment of New Testament terms - to empty them of positive Christian meaning and water them down to make something that might suit a philosophic or mystic or subjective or individualist spirituality.

There is a whole system of philosophy that has attempted this dilution at the present day. It is associated with a name that has now become very well known, the name of the greatest philosopher the world ever saw, Hegel. I am not now going to expound Hegelianism. But I have to allude to one aspect of it. If you are paying any attention to what is going on around you in the thinking world, you are bound to come face to face with some phase of it or other. But I see my time is at an end for today.

Tomorrow I begin where I now leave off and shall say something about this version of St. Paul's idea of reconciliation, which is so attractive philosophically. I remember the appeal it had for me when I came into contact with it first. I did feel that it seemed to give a largeness to certain New Testament terms, which I finally found was a largeness of latitude only. If it did seem to give breadth it did not give depth. And I close here by reminding you of this - that while Christ and Christianity did come to make us broad men, it did not come to do that in the first instance.

It came to make us deep men. The living interest of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is not breadth, but it is depth. Christ said little that was wide compared with what He said piercing and searching. I illustrate by referring you to an interest that is very prominent amongst you - the interest of missions. How did modern missions arise? I mean the last hundred years of them. Modern Protestant missions are only one hundred years old. Where did they begin? Who began them? They began at the close of the eighteenth century, the century whose close was dominated by philosophers, by scientists, by a reasonable, moderate interpretation of religion, by broad humanitarian religion.

Of course, you might expect it was amongst those broad people that missions arose. We know better. We know that the Christian movement which has spread around the world did not arise out of the liberal thinkers, the humanitarian philosophers of the day, who were its worst enemies, but with a few men - Carey, Marshman, Ward, and the like - whose Calvinistic theology we should now consider very narrow. But they did have the root of the universal matter in them. A gospel deep enough has all the breadth of the world in its heart.

If we are only deep enough the breadth will take care of itself. I would ten times rather have one man who was burning deep, even though he wanted to burn me for my modern theology, than I would have a broad, hospitable, and thin theologian who was willing to take me in and a nondescript crowd of others in a sheet let down from heaven, but who had no depth, no fire, no skill to search, and no power to break. For the deep Christianity is that which not only searches us, but breaks us. and a Christianity which would exclude none has no power to include the world.

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