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**A STUDY OF CERTAIN UNIQUE
CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY**

**A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity**

**by
Kenneth Dean Tollefson**

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Approved by:

Harold B. Kuhn
Dr. Harold B. Kuhn — Advisor

George A. Turner
Dr. George A. Turner — Reader

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Following World War II the international scene has witnessed the emergence of many new countries. The rising tide of nationalism has stirred the people to the challenge of new frontiers of political achievements. Due to this surge in many countries which were formerly colonial holdings, the people are re-evaluating old ways and developing homogeneous ways. Old religions are receiving new interpretations in the light of advancing cultures. In place of attitudes of admiration or passivity which once characterized the majority of other religions toward Christianity, the non-Christian religions are encountering a resurgence resulting in attacks upon the unique claims of Christianity. The issue of the uniqueness of Christianity and its relation to non-Christian religions is also a boiling cauldron within Christendom itself. This is evident in the April 25, 1961, issue of Christianity Today which devoted the major portion of the issue to this critical relationship and the tension which results. The Christian missionary of this decade will be challenged in at least two areas concerning the Gospel. The first area in which the missionary will be confronted is in regard to the uniqueness of his message. The second area concerns the local cultural patterns and the extraneousness of Christianity. The consideration of these two living issues form the basis of this investigation.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study (1) to present the internal Biblical claims regarding Christ as sole Mediator, and Christianity as a universal religion; (2) to show the theological and philosophical learnings of these two Biblical claims; and (3) to present an apology in defense of these two Biblical claims.

Importance of the study. Christendom is in a transitional theological period. Many theologians have changed their position. This innovation is compelling a re-examination of the Bible and Biblical studies. Hence, this study is an attempt to analyze the self-claims of the Scriptures and to supplement them with philosophical and historical data.

II. CLAIMS FOR DIVINE INSPIRATION

God's identification with the giving of Scripture. "More than 3,800 times," declares Thiessen, "the writers of the Old Testament introduces their messages with such statements as these: 'the Lord spake,' 'the Lord said,' 'the word of the Lord came.'"¹

Explicit directions are provided by the Lord in regard to the Pentateuch.

¹Henry Clarence Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 86.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book.² And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.³ When Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book . . . he commanded the Levites . . . Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God.⁴

The prophets were conscious receptive instruments through whom the Lord revealed His will to man. Jeremiah sets forth this interplay of human-Divine element in revelation.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.⁵ Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.⁶

Christ asserted authority of Scriptures. In answer to each of the three temptations presented by Satan, Christ quoted Scripture. He declared that the Scripture "proceedeth out of the mouth of God."⁷ The Word of God was to Christ more stable than the universe: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."⁸

Apostles witnessed to authority of Scriptures. The apostles indicate the authority of the Scripture as being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To them there was in existence a canon (i.e., Old Testament) to which they referred, "it is written," as in Galatians 3:10; 4:22; Luke 24:46; Mark 2:1. "Knowing this first," wrote the

²Exodus 17:14. ³Exodus 24:4. ⁴Deuteronomy 31:24-26.

⁵Jeremiah 30:1-2. ⁶Jeremiah 20:9. ⁷Matthew 4:4

⁸Matthew 5:18.

Apostle Peter, "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."⁹ Paul reminded Timothy that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."¹⁰ To the Corinthian Church which had become divided Paul called their attention to the fact that he did not speak "in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."¹¹

Independent writers produced a unit. When approaching the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible the question arises as to what could be a more rational explanation apart from Divine revelation. What mind is capable of producing the Bible?

How could uninspired man write a book that commands all duty, forbids all sin, including the sin of hypocrisy and lying, denounces all human merit as insufficient for salvation, holds out as man's only hope faith in the atoning death, physical resurrection, and present intercession of Christ and condemns to hell for all eternity all who reject this one way of salvation and persist in sin?¹²

Furthermore, the situation becomes more complex when forty different authors composed sixty-six books over a period of about fifteen hundred years which deal with the same topic, redemption. This is done so skillfully that the books converge easily into one book. The writers represent a variety of nationalities, languages, and cultures. There were among the divergent occupations of the authors of the Bible a lawyer, a fisherman, a shepherd, a prophet, a farmer, a priest, a doctor, a statesman, an official of the king's court, and a prince.

⁹I Peter 1:20-21. ¹⁰II Timothy 3:16. ¹¹I Corinthians 2:13.

¹²Thiessen, op. cit., p. 85.

CHAPTER II

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR TWO UNIQUE CHRISTIAN CLAIMS

The two exclusive claims of Christianity as found in the Bible are now examined inductively and set forth in a systematic form. It is by no means an exhaustive presentation, rather it is representative and suggestive. Cognizance has been given to secondary sources and critical judgments but attention is restricted to the primary source.

I. EXCLUSIVE CLAIM TO UNIVERSALITY

Creation. Universality, the inclusiveness of every individual, is acclaimed in the Bible in six distinct areas. The first area in which Christianity is universal stems from a common origin, God. God in creation thus has a definite claim on every individual. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."¹ The plan and pattern for the essence of man was to be in the likeness of God. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."² Man being formed similar to God was able to communicate with God. "The Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day . . . called unto Adam . . . Where art thou?"³

This inclusion in addition to creation stems also from pro-creation. "Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother

¹Genesis 1:1.

²Genesis 1:27.

³Genesis 3:8-9.

of all living."⁴ Man is progenitor of his own kind similar to Adam. Hence, God is Father of every individual. Therefore the Psalmist proclaimed, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."⁵ David confirmed that "great is the Lord . . . for all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. . . . Fear before him, all the earth."⁶

This is the argument employed by the Apostle Paul when delivering his famous Mars' Hill sermon. "God that made the world and all things therein . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men. . . . then . . . we are the offspring of God."⁷ Therefore, Peter admonished persecuted and suffering Christians to "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator."⁸ And Paul adds, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."⁹

A universal plan of salvation. Secondly, the Bible declares Christianity is universal in the teaching of salvation from sin which is addressed and proclaimed to all, regardless of race, color, or creed. Salvation is proclaimed prophetically to every man. Immediately following the temptation and fall of man, victory was set forth in the seed of Eve, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."¹⁰ The writer of Genesis records that God spoke to Abraham and indicated that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Further-

⁴Genesis 3:20. ⁵Psalms 24:1. ⁶I Chronicles 16:25-30.

⁷Acts 17:24, 26, 29. ⁸I Peter 4:19.

⁹Ephesians 3:14-15. ¹⁰Genesis 3:15.

more, when Judah received his blessing from his father Jacob it was foretold that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."¹¹ To this the Psalmist affirms, "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth."¹²

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen saith the Lord of hosts.¹³

Salvation is offered in all ages to every individual who will accept it. "God arose . . . to save all the meek of the earth."¹⁴ "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him . . . in truth."¹⁵ "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye."¹⁶ "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."¹⁷ "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."¹⁸ Finally, the Bible draws to a close and climax with this gracious invitation and offer, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."¹⁹

¹¹Genesis 49:10. ¹²Psalms 138:4. ¹³Malachi 1:11.

¹⁴Psalms 76:9. ¹⁵Psalms 145:18. ¹⁶Isaiah 55:1.

¹⁷I John 2:1-2. ¹⁸Revelation 3:20. ¹⁹Revelation 22:17.

Incarnation. Christianity as being universal in faith and practice is inherent in the incarnation of Christ. The prologue to John's Gospel unites the eternal logos with Jesus of Nazareth, creating a person of two natures, human and divine. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."²⁰ Christ's favorite way of referring to himself was "Son of man."²¹ The very title suggests identification with the human race.

Hebrews declares the incarnation by depicting Christ in His high priestly role. "Seeing then that we have a high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God . . . was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."²² Christ wept, hungered, thirsted, was weary, suffered bodily pain, was born and died as other men. In His divinity He walked on water, turned water into wine, stilled the storm, healed all manner of disease, raised the dead, and forgave sin as the Gospels record. In that Christ was identified with mankind He has a peculiar relationship to every man.

Universal scope of followers. The Bible sets forth the fact that the followers of the Judeo-Christian religion were from a variety of nations. Abraham, although specially chosen by God, paid tithes to Melchizedek, priest, and king of Salem, of whom little else is known.²³ It was utterly astonishing to Abraham when it was learned that the fear

²⁰John 1:1, 14. ²¹Luke 19:10.

²²Hebrews 4:14, 15. ²³Genesis 14:9.

of the Lord was in locations unsuspected to him.²⁴ Even to the disobeying of Pharaoh's command the midwives of Egypt spared the babies of Israel because they also feared the Lord.²⁵ Balaam appeared on the historical scene as a prophet of God in Pethor. A "mixed multitude"²⁶ accompanied the children out of Israel.

Many foreigners intermarried with the Israelites, such as Rahab²⁷ and Ruth.²⁸ The Covenant of the Old Testament made provision for all nationalities. "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself."²⁹ Psalms makes no distinctions except on moral grounds and asserts "blessed is the man"³⁰ regardless of race. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."³¹

The setting for the book of Job is not definitely known. Yet, within the book five nationalities are presented: Zophar the Naamathite, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Elihu the Buzite, and Job an Uzite.

Renowned kings of the Orient paid homage to God. Nebuchadnezzar, the immemorial king of Babylon, "praised and honoured him that liveth for ever."³² The Persian king Darius "wrote unto all people, nations, and languages . . . I make a decree, That in every dominion of my

²⁴Genesis 20:11. ²⁵Exodus 1:17. ²⁶Exodus 12:38.

²⁷Joshua 6:7. ²⁸Ruth 4:12. ²⁹Leviticus 19:33.

³⁰Psalms 1:1. ³¹Psalms 33:12. ³²Daniel 4:34.

kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God."³³

The Gospels constantly make mention of many nations and address their message to all who will hear. At the birth of Jesus wise men from the East, presumably Iran, came to worship saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews: for we have seen his star in the east."³⁴ Christ conversed with centurions, people of Samaria, and Greeks.

The first sermon of the early church was proclaimed to devout men of all nations, which included Partheans, Medes, Elamites, and those who lived in Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygian, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene and Rome.³⁵ Philip baptized the treasurer of Ethiopia.³⁶ Peter was of the opinion "that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."³⁷ Having become concerned about people of other nations, the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to do mission work among them.³⁸ The Gospel which Paul preached "was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."³⁹

Finally, the great victory scene of all ages depicts "a great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,

³³Daniel 6:25, 26.

³⁴Matthew 2:2.

³⁵Acts 2:5-11.

³⁶Acts 8:27.

³⁷Acts 10:35

³⁸Acts 13:2.

³⁹Romans 1:16.

. . . before the Lamb . . . and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God."⁴⁰

Great commission. The universal claim of Christianity is intrinsic in the great commission. The greatest concern of the resurrected Christ consisted in the propagation of His teaching to the ends of the earth. Each of the four gospel writers record this emphasis. Luke amplifies the commission in Acts. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."⁴¹ "Preach the gospel to every creature."⁴² "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached . . . among all nations."⁴³ The final words of the risen Lord were, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁴⁴

Universal judgment. Another claim for universality emerges from the judgment of God. The land of Canaan is promised to the seed of Abraham with this restriction that "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."⁴⁵ The inference here is that a special grace period is given before judgment, destruction and doom.

Amos prophecies against Syria, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Judah and Israel.⁴⁶ "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear . . . For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations,"⁴⁷ announced Isaiah. Jeremiah wrote, "The Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with the nations . . . he will give them that are wicked to the sword."⁴⁸ The nations to

⁴⁰Revelation 7:9-10. ⁴¹Matthew 28:18-19. ⁴²Mark 16:15.

⁴³Luke 24:47. ⁴⁴Acts 1:8. ⁴⁵Genesis 15:16.

⁴⁶Amos 1-2. ⁴⁷Isaiah 34:1. ⁴⁸Jeremiah 25:31.

have received destruction were Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, Kedor, Hazer, Elam, and Babylon.

Universal judgment falls not only on a national scale but also individually. Paul forwarns the Athenians, "God . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness."⁴⁹ In another place Paul asserts, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."⁵⁰

God acts in the following capacities: as Creator, as Provider, as Redeemer, as King, as Lord, and as Judge. In the light of these six areas in which God has been revealed, Christianity makes the claim to being the unique universal religion. These acts of God form the basis for a universal creation, a universal plan of salvation, an incarnation, or identification of God with the human race, a universal scope of followers, a universal commission, and a universal judgment.

II. EXCLUSIVE CLAIM AS MEDIATOR

Claims from prophecy. A second unique claim of Christianity is the exclusiveness of Christ as the Sole Mediator between God and man. The internal statements of the Bible are very explicit in regard to this claim. The prophetic office foretold the country, tribe, family, and the city in which the Christ would be born. The seed of Abraham was chosen and given the land of Canaan for an inheritance.

⁴⁹Acts 17:31.

⁵⁰IICorinthians 5:10.

"I will give unto thee all the land of Canaan."⁵¹ The tribe of Judah was then selected, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh come."⁵² The family of David was picked, "Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper . . . he shall be called The Lord Our Righteousness."⁵³ The ascribed city was to be Bethlehem, "But thou, Bethlehem . . . though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."⁵⁴ This was so well known that when the wise men sought counsel concerning the birthplace of Christ it was easily accessible.

A vivid description was also foretold concerning the life and death of Christ even centuries before His appearance upon the earth. These word pictures were fulfilled by precise facts which the prophets announced centuries prior to His birth, as a sign from God. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."⁵⁵ The slaughter of the innocents was related hundreds of years prior to the execution: "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children . . . because they were not."⁵⁶ Isaiah gave a brief sketch of his life's work.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent

⁵¹Genesis 17:8. ⁵²Genesis 49:10. ⁵³Jeremiah 23:5-6.

⁵⁴Micah 5:2. ⁵⁵Isaiah 7:14. ⁵⁶Jeremiah 31:15.

me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . . to comfort all that mourn.⁵⁷

The account of His death was written up beforehand, "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."⁵⁸ The Psalmist gives an even more graphic description of the death of Christ. "They pierced my hands and my feet. . . . They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."⁵⁹ A concluding observation concerning His death was, "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."⁶⁰ Concerning the resurrection it was written, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."⁶¹

A public consciousness had developed concerning the life of Christ. Crowds were cognizant of the unusual events which occurred. On account of this public knowledge, Peter on the Day of Pentecost reminded his hearers rather than relating new factors to them.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.⁶²

Claims of eye witnesses. The Biblical claim to Christ as Sole Mediator between God and man and as the Son of God is attested by historical facts. The Bible is not rooted in myth and fables, nor is it based upon secondary sources; but includes empirical facts and

⁵⁷Isaiah 61:1-2. ⁵⁸Zechariah 12:10. ⁵⁹Psalms 22:16, 18.

⁶⁰Psalms 34:20. ⁶¹Psalms 16:10. ⁶²Acts 2:22, 32, 37.

words of eyewitnesses. Luke asserts this when he addressed his Gospel to Theophilus, probably a high Roman official.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write unto thee in order . . . that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.⁶³

The apostle John carefully prefaces his general epistle of I John by claiming full sensory apprehension of our Lord. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you."⁶⁴

The "eyewitnesses" can be classified into four categories representative of all classes of people: common people, officials, religious leaders, and suprahuman personalities.

The common people "gladly" heard Christ. A notorious woman, veteran of seven marriages, met the Master at a well and returned to her village to entreat them to "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?"⁶⁵ The people of the city of Samaria, who were at variance with the Jews, went to listen to Christ and returned exclaiming, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."⁶⁶

A man born blind was healed. The Pharisees, one of the group

⁶³Luke 1:1-4.

⁶⁴I John 1:1, 3.

⁶⁵John 4:29.

⁶⁶John 4:42.

of religious leaders of that day, cross-examined the healed man. They stated that whoever accomplished the feat was a sinner. Despite the opposition presented, the once blind man believed Christ to be the "Son of God."⁶⁷

John recorded that "many of the people believe on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"⁶⁸

Martha, a housekeeper, testified, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."⁶⁹

Perhaps the greatest witness to the divinity of Christ was expressed by the thief on the cross. This dying man saw something in Christ which aroused his faith to request, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."⁷⁰ The penitent thief did not perceive Christ to be a mere man, but a conqueror about to reign despite the fact of His certain physical death.

Secondly, various world officials gave confirmation to the character and uniqueness of Christ. Wise men from the East came to worship Jesus as the Christ.⁷¹ They were probably from a tribe of the Medes similar to the Levites, the priestly tribe in Israel. Their interests were study of astrology and interpretation of dreams. They were in a position to observe and recognize unusual astronomical phenomenon.

The character of Christ was sustained by Pilate who announced:

I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, not yet

⁶⁷John 9:35-38.

⁶⁸John 7:31.

⁶⁹John 11:27.

⁷⁰Luke 23:42.

⁷¹Matthew 2:1.

Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.⁷²

Pilate's wife sent word to Pilate while he was in the judgment seat, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."⁷³

When officers were ordered to arrest Christ, they returned empty-handed with this explanation, "Never man spake like this man."⁷⁴

After the execution had been initially completed, the soldiers sat down and "watched him there."⁷⁵ "The centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done . . . feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."⁷⁶

Luke records the centurion as uttering, "Certainly this was a righteous man."⁷⁷ It is very probable that both these statements were made by the centurion. Although it is difficult to determine the amount of stress to be placed upon the phrase "Son of God," there remains an astonishing factor. The officer in this brief period acknowledged that Christ was more than a man. How much the centurion, who was probably a heathen, comprehended Christ to be the Son of God, remains a mystery. He did show belief in the claim made by Christ.

Joseph of Arimathaea had not consented to the death of Christ. Openly he sought the body of Christ and had it lain in his private tomb. This testimony was given on his behalf, that he "waited for the kingdom of God."⁷⁸

⁷²Luke 23:14-15. ⁷³Matthew 27:19. ⁷⁴John 7:46. ⁷⁵Matthew 27:36.

⁷⁶Matthew 27:54. ⁷⁷Luke 23:47. ⁷⁸Luke 23:51.

A third class of witnesses set forth in Holy Writ is religious leaders and pious personalities. During the period of our Lord's infancy, Simeon, a just and devout man in Jerusalem had received a special revelation that he would see the Lord's Christ before his death. When Joseph and Mary went into the temple to offer the sacrifice for purification, Simeon also entered the temple and seeing the baby Jesus breathed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation."⁷⁹ During this same time an eighty-four year old widow of very devout piety joined the group. "She . . . gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."⁸⁰

Christ opened His public ministry by seeking the baptism of John the Baptist. John seeing Him coming bare record before the crowd and announced, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."⁸¹

Many disciples grew weary of following Christ for various reasons. The question was addressed to the disciples if they would also desert Him. Peter retorted, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."⁸² Acting as spokesman for the twelve Peter continued, "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."⁸³

⁷⁹Luke 2:29-30.

⁸⁰Luke 2:38.

⁸¹Jehn 1:29.

⁸²John 6:68.

⁸³Jehn 6:69.

Fourthly, the claims of Christ were attested by supernatural personalities. An angel delivered the news of the birth of Christ to shepherds in the hills of Judea. "Unto you is born this day . . . a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."⁸⁴ Devils indwelling human beings confessed that Jesus was the Son of God. Some devils spoke through a man in the synagogue, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."⁸⁵ On three occasions God Himself acknowledged Christ to be Son of God with an audible voice. Following the baptism God pronounced, "Thou art my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased."⁸⁶ Again, at the transfiguration God spoke from a cloud, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him."⁸⁷ Finally, at the time of the triumphal entry, Christ besought God to glorify His name. The people standing nearby heard a voice say, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."⁸⁸ "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,"⁸⁹ added Christ.

So well attested were the life and works of Christ before the populace that the Apostle Paul could say to King Agrippa and Governor Festus:

I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.⁹⁰

⁸⁴Luke 2:11. ⁸⁵Luke 4:34. ⁸⁶Mark 1:11.

⁸⁷Matthew 17:5. ⁸⁸John 12:28.

⁸⁹John 12:30. ⁹⁰Acts 26:26.

Life and works. Another claim to the exclusiveness of Christ stems from His life and works. Christ manifested His authority over nature. Having gone to a wedding feast where the guest had run out of wine, Jesus turned some water into wine.

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was . . . called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.⁹¹

Some seasoned fishermen had spent the night fishing but to no avail. During the following day, Christ joined the fishing party. At His command the nets were lowered at a particular spot. The fishermen hesitated for they knew the lake and that place. But at the insistence of Christ they lowered their nets which were quickly filled to capacity. Peter was "astonished and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken."⁹²

During one of the night crossings of the Sea of Galilee, a great storm arose. The ship was taking water rapidly in which Christ and his disciples were sailing. Some of the disciples, being fishermen, were veteran seamen. Yet, the storm proved more than a match for them. In desperation the disciples awakened Christ who was sleeping and exclaimed that the boat was about to sink.

Christ arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. . . . And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him.⁹³

⁹¹John 2:8-9. ⁹²Luke 5:9.

⁹³Mark 4:39-41.

On another occasion a storm arose during which Christ was not on board the ship. Christ walked on the waves to them, which greatly frightened the disciples. They supposed Him to be a spirit. Again the wind ceased by His authority. "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."⁹⁴

The people of Bethsaida followed Jesus to learn more fully concerning His teaching. The multitude of people numbered about five thousand men in addition to a host of women and children. Near the close of the day, the disciples reminded Christ of the lateness of the hour and the distance from town. Christ answered that they should give the people something to eat. The sum total of the crowd's provision was five loaves and two fishes. Christ took the lunch and prayed, after which the disciples dispensed the lunch. Each individual ate his fill with the result that twelve baskets remained above and beyond the needs of the crowd.⁹⁵ At another time Christ fed four thousand men plus the women and children from seven loaves and a few small fish.⁹⁶ All of these situations which occurred in the life of Christ point out the fact that He was superhuman.

Secondly, Christ manifested His authority over disease. After church Jesus went to Peter's house. When they arrived Peter's mother-in-law was sick and feverish. Jesus healed her and she went about her work. After sundown the people of the city brought many sick individuals to Christ and all were healed.⁹⁷

On one occasion a leper came to Christ beseeching, "If thou

⁹⁴Matthew 14:33.

⁹⁵Mark 6:35-44.

⁹⁶Matthew 15:32-39.

⁹⁷Mark 1:31, 34.

wilt, thou canst make me clean."⁹⁸ This, Christ did. On another occasion, Christ healed ten men who had leprosy, instructing them to show themselves to the priest.⁹⁹ The priest could then pronounce them healed according to law.

A man blind from birth was healed by Christ. His neighbors doubted the miracle but he convinced them that he was formerly the blind beggar familiar to them. The Pharisees tried to refute the once blind man's testimony but the parents identified the man as their son born blind. The author of the Gospel John employs a chapter to this one healing, including empirical facts to verify the event.¹⁰⁰

Some of the other principle healings include: an official's son,¹⁰¹ a paralytic,¹⁰² a woman with hemorrhage,¹⁰³ an epileptic boy,¹⁰⁴ and a stooped woman.¹⁰⁵ Christ utilized His healing ministry as one of the proofs of His claim to deity. In return to the inquiry of John the Baptist concerning if Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus instructed John's disciples, "Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised."¹⁰⁶

A third way the life of Christ points to deity and exclusiveness is by His authority over death. Christ stopped the funeral procession of a widow's only son and raised him from the dead.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸Mark 1:40. ⁹⁹Luke 17:11-19. ¹⁰⁰John 9:1-41. ¹⁰¹John 4:46-54.

¹⁰²Matthew 9:2-8. ¹⁰³Luke 8:43-48. ¹⁰⁴Mark 9:14-23.

¹⁰⁵Luke 13:10-17. ¹⁰⁶Luke 7:22. ¹⁰⁷Luke 7:11-17.

Jairus, ruler of a synagogues, besought Christ to come to his house and heal his twelve year old daughter who was dying. Due to the length of the journey and delay in arriving, word was received that the daughter was dead. Arriving at the home, Christ instructed the household to stop weeping because the daughter was sleeping and not dead. "They laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead."¹⁰⁸ Peter, James and John as well as the daughter's parents accompanied Jesus into the room where she was. After Christ called to her, she arose and was ready to eat.

One of Christ's best friends, Lazarus, was sick. His sisters relayed his condition to Christ. Christ arrived four days after Lazarus had been buried. To the amazement of the crowd that gathered by the grave, Christ dispatched them to roll away the stone from the entrance to the cave which served as the vault. Christ commanded Lazarus to come forth. The crowd witnessed Lazarus struggle out of the cave, bound with grave clothes. Helping hands set him free. In each of the three accounts of raising a person from the dead, many people were eyewitnesses to the event. Christ chose at least five others to observe the raising of Jairus' daughter when the crowds could not see the miracle.¹⁰⁹

Christ's authority over demons was a fourth claim from His life and works to credit the claim concerning Christ as the mediator between God and man, the very Son of God.

¹⁰⁸Luke 8:53.

¹⁰⁹John 11:1-46.

And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? . . . fer with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.¹¹⁰

Later on in the same city of Capernaum they brought "them that were possessed with devils. . . . And he . . . cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him."¹¹¹

Christ preached in the synagogues of Galilee, "and cast out devils."¹¹²

When Christ and the disciples landed on the shores of the Gadarenes a man who lived in the cemetery met them. This man had been driven out of the city after all attempts had failed to control him. He had always broken loose when bound. He lived in the tombs crying out and cutting himself with stones. When this uncontrollable person saw this total stranger coming ashore he was heard to cry out: "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not."¹¹³ After the devil had been cast out the people of the nearby town came "to Jesus, and saw him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid."¹¹⁴

A multitude was following Christ when they came upon a man, who could not speak, being demon possessed. Jesus cast out the demon when

¹¹⁰Mark 1:23-27. ¹¹¹Mark 1:32, 34. ¹¹²Mark 1:39.

¹¹³Mark 5:7. ¹¹⁴Mark 5:15.

the man was brought before Him. "And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spoke; and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel."¹¹⁵

Christ's authority over sin was also unique. Four determined men carried a friend sick with the palsy to Christ for healing. Not gaining access by way of the door, they ripped a hole in the roof and lowered the invalid into the presence of Christ. When Christ saw their faith, he said unto the man with the palsy:

Man thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them . . . and they were all amazed . . . saying, We have seen strange things today.¹¹⁶

To a woman who anointed the feet of Jesus with an alabaster box of ointment as an expression of love, Jesus said, "Thy sins be forgiven."¹¹⁷ Christ announced to Zacchaeus who had made a promise of restitution for the past, "This day is salvation come to this house."¹¹⁸ During the execution of Christ a thief on a cross nearby pleaded, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him . . . Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."¹¹⁹ Thus, John the Baptist could present Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh

¹¹⁵Matthew 9:33. ¹¹⁶Luke 5:20-26. ¹¹⁷Luke 7:48.

¹¹⁸Luke 19:9. ¹¹⁹Luke 23:42-43.

taketh away the sin of the world."¹²⁰

It was early detected that Christ taught with unique authority. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."¹²¹ The expressed authority of Christ was clearly above and beyond that of Moses and the prophets. They spoke with a "Thus saith the Lord." Christ spoke with a "But I say unto you."¹²² Hence, Christ was claiming equality with God. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, acknowledged Christ's authority. The Scribes and the Pharisees were silenced in His presence. During the trial of Christ, Pilate perceived inherent authority in Christ and asked concerning the nature of truth.

Personal claims. Although it is impossible to determine the exact time of the beginning of Christ's Messianic consciousness, it was evident at the age of twelve. In reply to his mother's reprimand, Christ responded, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"¹²³ His public ministry was opened by cleansing the temple and this command, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."¹²⁴ "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."¹²⁵ "I and my Father are one."¹²⁶ "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."¹²⁷ Christ described Himself as, the way, the truth, the life, the light of the world, the

¹²⁰John 1:29.

¹²¹Mark 1:22.

¹²²Matthew 5:27-28.

¹²³Luke 2:49.

¹²⁴John 2:16.

¹²⁵John 5:17.

¹²⁶John 10:30.

¹²⁷John 18:37.

resurrection and the life, and the bread of life. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."¹²⁸ "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."¹²⁹

Christ underscored His power over death with the declaration that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up. It was natural and easy to interpret the hostile actions of the crowd as intended murder. The superhuman element was the prediction of where, when, and how this dastardly deed would be accomplished. The disciples were instructed to attend the feast of tabernacles without the presence of Christ because the Jews sought to kill Him, and as yet it was not His time to die. On at least two occasions Jesus vanished from their threatening hands, while on another occasion soldiers returned empty-handed. The place of death was Jerusalem and the method was crucifixion.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.¹³⁰

On the night before the passover Christ revealed the time of His crucifixion. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee."¹³¹

¹²⁸John 10:9. ¹²⁹John 16:28.

¹³⁰Matthew 20:18-19. ¹³¹Mark 14:27-28.

Christ seldom or never spoke of His death without including His resurrection. The resurrection became one of the chief aspects of New Testament preaching. Peter on the day of pentecost pointed out the fact of the resurrection and recalled the prophecy of David which had predicted the fact. Some of the members of the church at Corinth questioned the credibility of the resurrection. Paul reminded them of the following:

I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also.¹³²

Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, was not with the others when the full reality of the resurrection was perceived by the others. Not being a credulous individual, his skeptical mind maintained that unless he was provided with such empirical data as the nail print in His hands and scared side he would remain unconvinced. Eight days following his affirmation, Thomas and the other disciples were gathered together indoors when Jesus appeared.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach thither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.¹³³

Concerning the resurrection the writer of the Book of Acts informs Theophilus, to whom the letter was addressed, that Christ "shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days."¹³⁴

¹³²1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

¹³³John 20:27-28.

¹³⁴Acts 1:3.

Summary. From an inductive investigation of the Bible two distinct teachings are prominent: (1) The universal claim for Christianity and (2) The uniqueness of Christ. Christianity as a universal faith is authenticated by the following: the creation, the plan of salvation, the incarnation, the universality of followers, the great commission, the judgment. The exclusiveness of Christ is sustained by prophecy, supported by eyewitnesses, and supplanted by the life and works of Christ. A dominate characteristic of the Bible which underlies its content is its empiricism (i.e., its appeal to the experiences of individuals qualified as witnesses). This is employed by references to historical persons, places, and documents; eyewitnesses and other primary sources; and the reporting of the reactions of crowds. The primary appeal is therefore to logic, reason, and selected data as the basis for its intellectual appeal.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRISTIANITY'S CLAIMS TO CERTAIN UNIQUENESS

Included in this chapter are the attitudes of three American and three foreign philosophers, toward the unique claim of Christ to be the Sole Mediator between God and man, and the unique claim of Christendom to universality in respect to followers. The three philosophers, William E. Hocking, Arnold J. Toynbee, and Radhakrishnan present the negative attitudes toward these two exclusive claims; while Emil Brunner, Hendrick Kraemer, and Edmund D. Soper defend these two unique claims.

Each philosopher was selected because of his particular relationship to Christian Missions. William E. Hocking, author of several books dealing in this area, was selected as chairman of the committee which in 1933 evaluated one hundred years of missionary progress. Arnold J. Toynbee, considered by many to be the world's leading historian, delivered the Gifford Lectures which touched at length upon these two claims. Radhakrishnan, professor at Oxford and considered by some to be the leading spokesman of Hinduism, has written in this area, speaking for one of the world's leading Christian Mission fields. Emil Brunner, in his article in the Christian Century appearing in 1948, indicated that he was moving toward a missionary theology. As one of the world's leading theologians, his new outlook on missions has an important bearing on the Christian claims. Hendrick Kraemer has been a great apologist of Christianity in the field of comparative

religions, having set forth the views of Christ from a Biblical revelation. Finally, Edmund D. Soper, the son of missionary parents and professor of missions, has been an erudite writer in defense of these two claims.

I. THE ANTAGONISTS OF THESE TWO UNIQUE CLAIMS

William Ernest Hocking. William Ernest Hocking is an outspoken opponent of any final exclusiveness in Christianity. To him the agnostic and the mystic are equally consistent and equally near to ultimate reality. The world would neither gain nor lose anything by either the advance or disappearance of religion.

For it is not simply the case that these attributes which religion ascribes to reality (divinity, beneficence, soul-preserving or value-conserving properties) are invisible, spiritual inaccessible to observation: it is the case that these ideas, so far as reasons go, are in apparent equilibrium--neither provable nor disprovable. The world would be consistent without God; it would also be consistent with God; whichever hypothesis a man adopts will fit experience equally well; neither one, so far as accounting for visible facts is concerned, works better than the other. I have often wondered whether in these supermundane matters the universe may not be so nicely adjusted (and withal so justly) that each man finds true the things he believes in and wills for; why should not every man find his religion true, in so far as he has indeed set his heart upon it and made sacrifice for it.¹

He describes the origin of the religions of the world as growing out of a basic human need, the expression of faith in the unseen.

The pluralism of religions is attributed to the lack of intercourse between the large restricted areas of the world. Physical

¹William Ernest Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience, p. 143.

barriers tended to hinder communications and divided the world into natural regions. Due to this lack of communication, men expressed the good in different terms. The objects of worship were merely the reflections of local culture.²

There have been erudite religious leaders who contributed to the general fund of religious knowledge. Contemporary society has progressed to such an extent that these leaders are no longer important. "God is in his world, but Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed are in their private closets and we shall thank them, but never return to them."³

The equating of the Buddha and Mohammed with Christ, negates the claim of Christ as the Sole Mediator. There are held to be many mediators. Nature is a mediator, declaring the glory of God. Love as set forth in the First Epistle of John is a mediator. "Every religion, including every variant of mysticism, is a way to the immediacy."⁴ No religion can therefore be called an only way to God. "There is no only way to salvation and peace. . . . This doctrine must be abandoned definitely and for all time."⁵

Dr. Hocking is also opposed to any claim made by Christianity as being exclusive in having a world-wide following. There is one universal science; no mere local sciences. Law has its universal

²Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, p. 22.

³Ibid.

⁴Hocking, The Coming World Civilization, p. 99.

⁵Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, pp. 172-173.

elements such as: justice, good and bad judges, rules and regulations which apply to all ages. If there is to be one world culture there must of necessity be one religion. Yet, religions are like languages, both are in a plurality. The similar obstacles confront each, namely, surrendering the local procedure and accepting the universal adaptation.⁶

Two concepts arise out of the term religion. (1) Religion must be universal. "It arises in a universal human craving directed to an equally universal object."⁷ (2) "Because religion is universal it must become particular."⁸ Religion which is universal carries with it the impulse to communicate. This communication is not general but particular.

The two postulates are horns of the dilemma in religion. There is no religion to be found that is truly universal and yet particular. Hinduism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and Judaism are particular, limited by locale. Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam adhere to universalism and each claims to be the one universal religion.⁹

Three methods of reaching a world religion are: radical displacement, synthesis, and re-conception. The radical displacement method sees one religion replacing another. The synthesis method finds two religions sharing their common ideals and being charitable to the differences. The reconception method extends the sharing of religious ideas in "new frontiers" of common development.

⁶Ibid., p. 22.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁸Ibid., p. 36.

⁹Ibid., pp. 59-61.

Within the piety of the common people of every land, encrusted with superstition as it usually is, and weighted down with vulgar self-seeking in their bargaining with the gods, there is this germ, the inalienable religious intuition is the true God: to this extent universal religion has not to be established, it exists.¹⁰

Although Dr. Hocking places Christianity on the same plane as the other religions of the world, he depicts it as the leader among them.

Christianity is certainly something more than they in their vagueness and absence of personal focus. It is more than they in authority and certainty of speech. It is more than they in having become the vital energy of a spreading historical movement. Further, it is different in its richness of content: men of a hundred types have found nourishment in it and have left gifts in its treasury. It is no meagre minimum of faith, nor does it profess any admiration for meagreness.¹¹

Yet, this leader of religions with its perspicuous aims and personal focus, and with its authority and vital energy, needs to exchange values and insights with those who are included in the category, "vagueness and absence of personal focus" (cf. ante).

What shall the attitude and action of the Christian be to a non-Christian? The attitude will be one of sympathy. The action of the Christian will be "to regard himself a co-worker with the forces which are making for righteousness within every religious system. If he can in any way aid or encourage these forces, he will regard it a part of his Christian service."¹²

¹⁰Hocking (ed.), Rethinking Missions, p. 31.

¹¹Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, p. 230.

¹²Hocking, Rethinking Missions, p. 40.

The world's living religions contain partial truth. By the processes of sharing and stimulating with Christianity, religion grows "toward the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth."¹³ The future product of amalgamation will then be the real universal religion. Christianity claims inherent universality as do most of the valid religions. Along with these other religions, Christendom seeks actual universality.¹⁴

Arnold J. Toynbee. Dr. Toynbee declares that there is no Sole Mediator or way to God. Neither Christianity nor any of the other higher religions of the world have contained "an indispensable condition for salvation."¹⁵ If this were so, then the innumerable generations of men who inhabited the earth prior to the emergence of these higher religions would be lost. This ideal might even be true, though repugnant, if the true purpose of life on our planet were not the preparation for "the state of eternal felicity in the other world."¹⁶ Hence, any man who does his best with the illumination he has received, during his life time, attains unto salvation.

Professor Toynbee classifies Christ in the same groups of spiritual leaders as prophets and saints. Each has left a rich legacy which adds to the growing fund of knowledge and spiritual illumination. This accumulated spiritual knowledge becomes a source of greater

¹³Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁴Hooking, The Coming World Civilization, p. 66.

¹⁵Arnold J. Toynbee, Christianity and Civilisation, p. 48.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 51.

potential means of grace to each succeeding generation, to assist in living a life of greater blessing. This continual unveiling of truth assures the world of an eternal spiritual perspective.¹⁷

In his Gifford Lectures, Arnold J. Toynbee indicates that the essence of true religion is to present an individual eclectic decision. The approach to this religious certainty is through the slough of non-essentials of religious heritage. During the middle ages, Christianity became engaged in idolatry. Now midway in the twentieth century, the West has been brought back to face the essentials of Christianity. The world has shrunk tremendously with the coming of the space age. Culturally, East and West stand face to face. Two decisions ensue from these two factors which confront the West. The individual must divorce Christianity from the parasitic elements which have clung to it; and Christianity must face the truths which are presented by the higher religions which have been brought into close contact with Western culture. Thus, the task of the sincere seeker after religious truth is that of winnowing the chaff of religious heritage away from the grain of religious truth.

Whether it comes to us by discovery or by intuition or by revelation, and whether it is abiding or transitory, it is a matter of indisputable historical fact that it shines in all the higher religions, and it is also clear that this light in them has been the cause of their historical success.¹⁸

¹⁷Toynbee, Civilization on Trial, p. 249.

¹⁸Toynbee, An Historian's Approach to Religion, p. 265.

This is "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;"¹⁹ "and the higher religions are the carriers of it."²⁰ The purpose of this true light is to lend spiritual counsel and truths to aid man in fulfilling his true end. "Man's true end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."²¹ This liberation of man has been the aim and motive of all the higher religions. They have all addressed themselves to all men. Each of these religions contain a new way of individual salvation, which is addressed to each age, sex, or class. These higher religions are exclusive in that they alone can emancipate contemporary men and give satisfaction. Unitedly, they say, "I will be your leader in the pursuit of happiness." Yet, it has been set in motion by past Christian civilizations of the West. The inspiration for this belief stems from the supreme value of the soul to God.²²

Christianity has always been a gospel for all men. It has never been confined to Western society. There have always been important non-Western Christian followers and churches.²³

It is for the salvation that is open to all men of good will--pagan as well as Christian, primitive as well as civilised--who make the most of their spiritual opportunities on Earth, however narrow these opportunities may be, that we pray when we say 'Thy Kingdom Come.'²⁴

¹⁹Jehn 1:9.

²⁰Toynbee, loc. cit.

²¹Ibid., p. 269.

²²Toynbee, Christianity Among the Religions of the World, pp. 89-90.

²³Ibid., p. 95.

²⁴Toynbee, Christianity and Civilisation, p. 52.

Radhakrishnan. The two main thoughts which underlie the thinking of Radhakrishnan are "The plurality of the various expressions of truth about the ultimate reality, and the one truth of which they are either an imperfect expression or towards which they are blindly or dimly groping."²⁵ This "plurality" of expression of religious truth makes for a genial feeling of tolerance toward all religions. Having admitted a lack of religious certainty, all religions need to co-operate in a common venture for truth.

Religious authority resides in personal experience. Individuals vary widely in temperaments. To meet individual differences, all ways are acknowledged as means for seeing God. "When the Hindu found that different people aimed at and achieved God-realization in different ways, he generously recognized all and justified their place in the course of history."²⁶

According to Radhakrishnan, Hinduism accepts all religions and notions as facts and arranges them in the order of their more or less intrinsic significance. The bewildering polytheism of the masses and the uncompromising monotheism of the classes are for the Hindu the expression of one and the same force at different levels.²⁷

Christianity is merely a notion to be arranged in the hierarchy of truths, Christ is not the Sole Mediator, but one of the examples. Christianity is not the universal religion nor does it have any valid claim to finality. "Religion is not so much a revelation to be attained

²⁵Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 121.

²⁶Ibid., p. 122.

²⁷Ibid.

by us in faith as an effort to unveil the deepest layers of man's being and get into enduring contact with them."²⁸ Religion is stripped of all supernatural elements when he declares it to be "a natural development of a really human life."²⁹

One of the greatest needs of religion is a parliament where each religion will be able to come together to exchange and share, with sympathy and tolerance, the best in each. This ideal is set forth in the life of India, which seeks the unity of religion not in a creed, but in a common quest.

Each of these three scholars is characterized by ethnic subjectivism. In the name of reason, they declare the right of each religion to lead mankind in the common quest for ultimate reality. Hocking, Toynbee, and Radhakrishnan agreed that the two exclusive claims of Christ and Christianity are not valid. Rather, Christ must share his mediatorship with all men, and Christianity ought to receive all religions as various expressions leading to a common goal.

II. THE ADVOCATES OF THESE TWO UNIQUE CLAIMS

Emil Brunner. In the series on "How My Mind Has Changed," featured in Christian Century, Emil Brunner set forth his "missionary theology."

More and more I come to the view that the church nowadays

²⁸Ibid., p. 132.

²⁹Ibid.

speaks not chiefly to Christians, as it did in the Middle Ages and at the time of the Reformation and even a hundred years ago; it must speak primarily 'to heathen.' . . . The missionary approach to theology must start with the Christian understanding of the nature of man.³⁰

Religion that is based upon immediacy and not revelation ignores the centrality of human existence, that sin is antithetical to God and separates God and man.

If it is true that man is a sinner, if it is true that he is incapable of healing the breach which his sin has opened between himself and the Creator, if it is true that he is involved in guilt from which he cannot free himself: if all this is true, then religion of immediacy is a falsification of the human situation and is possible only on the basis and in the power of this falsification.³¹

Historical revelation acknowledges this fact and therefore affirms the necessity of an intervention of God. This is scandalous to modern man who cringes from having his self-love and self-pride uncovered. Historical revelation asserts that the truth must come from God and "that the breach between God and us is of such a nature that we can do nothing about it."³²

This places the emphases upon God and a mediator. It is not difficult to see that personality is at the heart of the Christian message. It is offensive that this person is the way, the truth, and the life, and is the supreme revelation. "It is this exclusiveness which constitutes the stumbling-block."³³

³⁰ Emil Brunner, "Toward a Missionary Theology," The Christian Century, Vol. 56 (July 6, 1949), p. 817.

³¹ Brunner, The Scandal of Christianity, p. 21.

³² Ibid., p. 22.

³³ Brunner, The Mediator, p. 490.

In what category shall this mediator be placed? The doctrine of the two natures of Christ is beyond human intellectual comprehension. Though the concept of Christ as true God and true man is beyond our understanding, it need not be discarded.

We must certainly hold firmly to both statements, without reduction: True God, true Man. . . . We must not . . . deny to Jesus full human personality. A man who prays to God is 'True Man' even in the sense of the human historical personality. On the other hand, because in Jesus we find neither divine omnipotence nor omniscience we ought not to deny His divinity. . . . The Kenosis which belongs to the Incarnation, constitutes a self-limitation of God whose limits cannot possibly be defined by us.³⁴

The concept of Christ as Mediator leads directly into the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity separates Christianity "from all philosophical, rational, and speculative ideas of God."³⁵ It is the parting of the way for monotheistic Islam and Judaism which reject it. The rejection of the Trinity as the historical revelation makes the unity of holiness and mercy obscure. Islam contains the idea of forgiveness in the Koran, but little is made of it, due to the rigid legal moralism. The Jew has a limited conception of forgiveness for he rejects the cross as a scandal. Only to the Christian does sin and forgiveness have real meaning, as both converge at the death of Christ on the cross.³⁶

It is by historical revelation that we know of the triune God, of original sin, of the reconciling work of Christ and of the consummation of the world in eternal life. It is because of our sin that we need reconciliation. It is the triune God who reveals

³⁴Brunner, Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, p. 360.

³⁵Brunner, The Scandal of Christianity, p. 31.

³⁶Ibid., p. 46.

himself and reconciles us to himself in Jesus Christ. . . . None of the non-Christian religions, none of the philosophical systems of theology, has any of these doctrines. They are absolutely specifically doctrines belonging to the Christian gospel, and whatever similarities in non-Christian theology might be pointed to are but faint and uncertain analogies.³⁷

Truth is essentially intolerant of error. Christianity as truth is intolerant, not in the sense that it withholds the freedom to worship according to the individual conscience, but from the standpoint of its apprehension of religious truth. The Indian national is able, for example, to venerate Christ alongside of Krishna, The Buddha, or Rama as "a parallel Savior and Bearer of healing." This concept embracing all religions is in direct contrast to the Christian faith. "In none other is there salvation and no other name is given to us. . . . as Christians we must all affirm with Peter: In none other is there salvation. In this spiritual sense we cannot be tolerant."³⁸

Not only does Emil Brunner defend Christ as the Divine Son of God but also asserts the universality of His followers. Emil Brunner refers to the Christian community as "the great miracle of history."³⁹ The fact that through a historical process lasting nearly two thousand years, peoples of various tongues and cultures, in one great brotherhood, have prayed to one God is most noteworthy. One of his claims to Christianity as being universal is by the fact that God is "the Creator of the whole universe, and the Lord of all nations."⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid., p. 113.

³⁸Brunner, The Great Invitation and Other Sermons, p. 107.

³⁹Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church, p. 116.

⁴⁰Brunner, Scandal of Christianity, p. 74.

God is the Lord--therefore He wills that all should be interpenetrated by His Lordship, His honour, his excellence. God is love, therefore He wills to impart Himself to all creatures. God is omnipotent, therefore there can be nothing ultimately to check the realization of His will.⁴¹

Hendrick Kraemer. For the past few centuries, the Christian faith has been subjected to searching and critical investigation. The historical setting, validity, truth, and uniqueness of the Bible have been the objects of critical examination. Christianity eludes all endeavors at making it the product of natural growth. The outcome has been that the "origins of Christianity are irreducible."⁴²

Dr. Kraemer holds that the "radical religious realism of the Bible,"⁴³ is the only valid method of presenting religious truth. He defines his Biblical realism as follows:

The Christian revelation as the record of God's self-disclosing revelation in Jesus Christ is absolutely sui generis. It is the story of God's sovereign redeeming acts having become decisively and finally manifest in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, in whom God became flesh and revealed His grace and truth.⁴⁴

One of the unique characteristic features of Christianity is the claim of Christ as being the only way to God. "Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation."⁴⁵ This fact of God becoming man is maintained in light of the fact that Christianity sets forth a

⁴¹Brunner, Eternal Hope, p. 182.

⁴²Hendrick Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 62.

⁴³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁴Kraemer, "Continuity or Discontinuity," The Authority of the Faith, p. 1.

⁴⁵Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 73.

qualitative difference between God and man. Other religions that "assume the essential identity of God and man indignantly reject it."⁴⁶ The message of Christianity "is that God by his creative act of reconciliation and atonement in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself . . . opened a way of reconciliation when there was no way."⁴⁷

The crucial fact on which alone a missionary movement can rest is that God has revealed the Way in Jesus Christ and wills this to be known through all the world. The conviction that this is the case is not to be defended by argument; it is a matter of faith. Ultimate convictions never rest on a universally lucid and valid argument. To adhere to a certain view of life has always meant a choice and a decision.⁴⁸

God is God or He is not God at all. Jesus Christ is the Truth, or there is no Truth in Him at all, for the simple reason that, if He was only a Truth, His whole gospel, all His words and acts, would become the utterance of a conceited madman, because at one time He speaks and acts as God's authentic and full representative, and at another time as the humblest servant of men. The indispensable exclusiveness of Christians is not at all the conviction that they 'have' the truth and claim that truth over against others' claims, but that the 'truth' which is Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords, 'has' them and claims everyone in the world. It has nothing to do with intellectual or other certainty; it is implied in their oneness with Christ, the living Lord in faith. It is an act of joyful, obedient loyalty to Him.⁴⁹

The second pole is the knowledge of man, man as he is mirrored in the Bible, capable of communion and co-operation with God, but radically perverted by self-centeredness. Man, perverted by sin, is incapable of any ultimate self-improvement. Through faith in the provision made by God for sin, man can be a new creature in Christ.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁸Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith, p. 165.

⁴⁹Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 373.

⁵⁰Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 101.

These two poles are the bases for the exclusive claims of Christianity as being universal. These poles become the motive and purpose for missions, which aims at confronting men with the claims of Christ as recorded in the Bible, and to build up a community of believers who surrender their lives to Christ. God employs individuals to carry this truth to all people and all nations.⁵¹ As a result of the commands of Christ, Christian missions have penetrated Africa and Asia and most of the non-Christian world. To be sure, the missionary enterprise reaches a minority as compared to the world's population, yet it is vigorous and aggressive force. Dr. Kraemer realistically refers to the world as a mission field and Christianity as universal, actively growing in all parts of the world.

Edmund Soper. The missionary emphases of Christianity, in the thinking of Dr. Soper, evolves out of a personal experience with Christ. Without this encounter, Christianity becomes stagnant. Whenever an individual experiences Christ, regardless of his educational background, he becomes truly missionary in spirit. When an individual becomes a Christian, he knows the difference which has come to him, and his desire is to share Christ with everyone. The uniqueness of Christianity is unequivocal at this point. If it is not unique, then there is no special reason for propagating it. The message is essentially the same in all ages. The power of Christ is able to save from sin. It

⁵¹Matthew 28:18-20.

is impossible for an individual to be rightly related to God apart from Christ. Christ is, therefore, basic to Christianity.⁵²

The uniqueness of Christianity is to be found in Jesus Christ, who revealed a God quite different from any other divine being. He is the God of holy or righteous love, made known in his innermost nature by his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . It gives men an assurance which can come in no other way. Far down under every other desire of the human spirit there is the longing for confidence that the universe at its center is friendly . . . that God is a God of love. It is Jesus who has answered this longing so completely and uniquely that whenever men have entered into the experience of God in him they have found peace.⁵³

The certainty of Christianity is invested in the complete revelation of God through Jesus Christ. This revelation is verified in the lives of Christians by its creation of inner peace and assurance. Christianity gives moral certitude. The life of Christ has never been reproduced among the sons of men. The life of Christ is a proof of His deity.⁵⁴

Professor Soper hastens on to declare that Christians not only believe in the uniqueness of Christianity, but in also its continuity with other religions. There are two extremes in stating the relationship of Christianity to other religions and both are dangerous. (1) If the uniqueness is held without continuity, the good in other religions may be overlooked or destroyed, and a sense of appreciation of the people who live dedicated unselfish lives will be lost. (2) The other

⁵²Edmund Davison Soper, The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission, pp. 225-227.

⁵³Ibid., p. 227.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 228.

other extreme minimizes the differences and so magnifies the likenesses, that all religions become "roads to God," which makes for a shiftiness of position and want of conviction. This belief in continuity of other religions does not negate the uniqueness of Christianity. Rather the best in any religion is to be used in propagating Christianity. "Christianity is unique because Jesus Christ is unique."⁵⁵

The uniqueness of Christ is expressed in His power to lift society and to cause man to be at peace with his neighbor. Belief in and acceptance of Christ creates an inner passion to share Christ with the whole world. There would be fewer tensions between Christianity and the non-Christian religions were it not for the missionary and this religious passion.⁵⁶

"Christianity has never been fully at home in any human society,"⁵⁷ declared Hugh Vernon White. The gap between the ideal and the actual has created a tension. Though Christianity has never been fully accepted in any location, it has maintained a universal following. "It is the world mission which has made possible this new realization, or consciousness, that there is a brotherhood made up of men of every race which is bound together as is no other group in the world."⁵⁸

According to Professor Soper, the uniqueness of Christianity is the power of Christ to change all men. "It is a present salvation: it saves man from his evil nature . . . He becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ. . . . The things he hated he now loves. There is light,

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 231.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 264.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 265.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 279.

and there is life such as he never had known before."⁵⁹ It is for this reason that Christianity should continue to be taken to all religions of the world.⁶⁰

Summary. The various views of the authors of this chapter can be divided into two main groups: naturalists and supernaturalists. The antagonists, Professor Hocking, Professor Toynbee and Professor Radhakrishnan, are naturalists. To them religion is a natural development, having its seat of authority in human reason. They present man as being basically good in character and actions. Being subjective in their presentation, they pass value judgments upon historical facts rendering them meaningless, or discard pertinent data in the name of scholarly criticism. They seem to discard a coherent theory of truth by placing truths on different levels and synthetizing contradictions in various religions. They negate the importance of religion and the differences in religions. Therefore, these three authors reject the claim of Christ as the only way to God and the exclusive claim of Christianity to a universal following.

The advocates of these two unique claims, Professor Kraemer, and Professor Soper, and Professor Brunner, are supernaturalists. Their concept of man includes: man's possession of an evil nature and his lack of any internal ability to overcome this evil tendency. In this

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 137.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 155-211.

situation God takes the initiative and offers to help man. They believe that final authority rests in the Bible and Christ. Their conclusions are rooted in authentic historical documents. The contradictions as found in the major world religions are evaluated scientifically and rejected as incongruent of any synthesis. Their realistic investigation is based on history, reason, and experience. Thus, these three writers hold to the following: the superiority of Christianity over the natural religions of the world, the belief that Christ is the Sole Mediator between God and man, and the claim of a unique universal following in Christianity.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLEMIC FOR THESE TWO UNIQUE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

The early Christians were always ready to give an answer to every man for the hope that was in them. "But when heathenism took the field against them," says Philip Schaff, "not only with fire and sword but with argument and slander besides, they had to add to their simple practical testimony a theological self-defence."¹

The Christian missionary of the present generation will need to clarify to himself and to the people he will contact two unique claims of Christianity. First, the missionary will need to set forth the universality of the Christian faith. Secondly, he will declare the uniqueness of Christ as the Mediator between God and Man. The necessity for the clarification of these two exclusive claims of Christianity is occasioned by the two charges confronting Christian missions today. These two allegations are: that Christianity is a western religion, and that there are many avenues to God.

I. THE EXCLUSIVE CLAIM TO UNIVERSALITY

Original monotheism. "I had rather believe," said Lord Bacon, "all the fables in the Legend and of the Talmud and the Koran than that this universal frame is without a mind."² A. Cressy Morrison,

¹Alfred Ernest Garvie, A Handbook of Christian Apologetics, p. 3.

²Samuel Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 21.

a former president of the New York Academy of Sciences, gave in his reprint article in the Reader's Digest entitled, "Seven Reasons Why a Scientist Believes in God," the following reason as his first. "By unwavering mathematical law we can prove that our universe was designed and executed by a great engineering Intelligence."³ Thus the causal argument seeks a mind to explain the existence of the human mind in its apex position of the universe. By this same thesis the human personality demands a superior personality to explain its origin.

The Bible does not argue, explain, or suggest; it merely assumes and states, "In the beginning God."⁴ The fact of God is inherent in the universe. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."⁵ From the first book of the Bible to the last book this same view of God is held, that He is one.

Men of all groups have been religious. It is one certain and universal phenomenon of the human race. As it hath been said "man is incurably religious." No tribe has ever been discovered which has not possessed a religious belief. Dr. Tylor in his book, Primitive Cultures, testifies that, "So far as I can judge from the immense mass of accessible evidence, we have to admit, that the belief in spiritual beings appears among all low races with whom we have attained

³A. Cressy Morrison, "Seven Reasons Why a Scientist Believes in God," The Reader's Digest, LXXVII (October, 1960), 71.

⁴Genesis 1:1. ⁵Romans 1:20.

to thoroughly intimate acquaintance."⁶ Professor Muller also bears a similar testimony. "We may safely say that, in spite of all researches, no human beings have been found anywhere who do not possess something which to them is religious."⁷

It has been a popular idea to presuppose the evolutionary theory of religion. The tide is changing due in part to outstanding scholarship which supports an original monotheism. Perhaps the greatest scholar, in this area, Dr. P. Wilhelm Schmidt, founder of the anthropological review entitled Anthropos and Professor of Ethnology and Philology at the University of Vienna supports this view. In his six volume work he asserts:

The Supreme Being of the primitive culture is really the God of a monotheism, and that the religion which includes him is genuinely monotheistic. This is the position which is most attacked by a number of authors. To this attack we may reply that there is a sufficient number of tribes among whom the really monotheistic character of this Supreme Being is clear even to a cursory examination.⁸

P. Le Page Renouf in his Hibbert Lectures on the "Religion of Ancient Egypt" is a specific example. "The worship of the different gods in Egypt . . . shows how in the ancient texts which Ra, Osiris, Amon and all other gods disappear, except as simple names, the Unity of God is asserted in the noblest language of monotheistic religion."⁹

⁶Arno Clemens Gaebelin, Christianity or Religion? p. 12.

⁷Ibid., p. 13.

⁸Samuel M. Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 61.

⁹Gaebelin, op. cit., p. 36.

The doctrine of monotheism has not existed apart from serious criticism. Dr. George Wobbermin said in his lecture on The Nature of Religion the following:

Although we must here entirely disregard the dogmatic theory of degeneration of the schoolmen, it must at least be mentioned that in certain rudimentary beginnings even David Hume, and then in the nineteenth century Creusey Schelling, and Max Muller advocated a theory of primitive monotheism.¹⁰

Many scientists who follow the traditions of Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley advocate the development or the evolution growth of languages. Professor Max Muller of Oxford in his Origin of Religion declares that history contradicts this theory.

All the stories of tribes without languages . . . belong to the chapter of ethnological fables; and what is more important still, is that many of the so-called savage languages have been shown to possess a most perfect, in many cases a too perfect, that is to say, too artificial, a grammar, which their dictionaries possess a wealth of names any poet might envy. . . . Every language, even that of the Papuans and Vidas, is such a masterpiece of abstract thought, that it would baffle the ingenuity of many philosophers to produce anything like it. In many cases the grammar of the so-called savage dialects bears evidence to a far higher state of culture possessed by these people in former times.¹¹

A study of history of religions attest original monotheism as the study of linguistics has done. Anthropology reveals the development of religion from original monotheism and not from animism as was suggested in the evolutionary hypothesis.

It seems to me, concludes Max Muller, that those who believe in a primordial Fetishism have taken that for granted which has to be proved. . . . My most serious objection is that those who believe in Fetishism as a primitive and universal form of religion, have often depended on evidence which no scholar, nor historian, would feel justified to accept.¹²

¹⁰Wobbermin, op. cit., p. 83.

¹¹Gaebelain, op. cit., p. 29.

¹²Ibid., p. 33.

In maintaining an original monotheism according to the Christian revelation concept, it needs to be said that not all of the people of any nation in history has measured up to a full concept of monotheism. It is evident from the earliest traditions that the nation of Israel, for instance, was essentially monotheistic. Although the records contain naive anthropomorphisms, they never lost sight of God as the Creator and Ruler of the world. "A simple monotheism is preserved, which is easily seen to be the oldest foundation even of the religion of the heathen Semites."¹³

George Foot Moore greatly strengthened the claim for early monotheism by refuting Hegelianism. He maintained that the belief in one God, Creator and Ruler of the world, was a fundamental dogma held for many centuries before the time of the prophets. This idea did not originate with the prophets. The prophetic task primarily consisted in calling the people back to their early belief in God. Jeremiah employs the word "return" six times in 3:1-4:4. Their proclamation found its basis in historical facts such as the Exodus from Egypt.¹⁴

All tribes have been religious. Further, all tribes have been monotheistic. J. C. Archer reported that monotheism has been universal in scope.

¹³Gustav Friedrich Oelher, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 58.

¹⁴George Foot Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, p. 225.

On the lower cultured levels are these: the Negritos of the Philippine Islands; various tribes of Micronesia and Polynesia; the Papuans of New Guinea; the black Aruntos of Australia; the Andaman Islanders in the Bay of Bengal; the Kols and Pariahs of Central and South India; the Pygmies and Bushmen of the Central African Congo basin; the Caribs of the West Indies; and the Yahgans of the extreme south of South America.

On a higher plane are these: the Samoans and Hawaiians; the Kalmuks of Siberia; the Veddas of Ceylon; the Lodas of the Nilgire Hills, South India; the Bantu of south central and southern Africa; the Eskimos and the Amerinds American Indians.¹⁵

Arno Clemens Gaebelein holds that monotheism was the original religious belief of all nations which rests upon scientific findings. His contentions revolve around three factors. (1) the unimpeachable testimony of scholarly research given by reliable witness show that so-called fetish-worshipping savages believed in an invisible personal God. (2) It has been proven that all great religions of antiquity, as the religions of Assyria, Babylonia, Chaldea, Egypt, India, China, Persia, degenerated from monotheism. (3) The evidence of the Bible collaborates with historic research asserting that original monotheism later degenerated into forms of polytheism.¹⁶

The reason for the disintegration of monotheism was suggested by P. Wilhelm Schmidt.

As external civilization increased in splendor and wealth, so religion came to be expressed in forms of ever-increasing magnificence and opulence. Images of gods and daimones multiplied to an extent which defies all classifications. Wealthy temples, shrines, and groves arose; more priests and servants, more sacrifices and ceremonies were instituted. But all this cannot blind us to the fact that despite the glory and wealth

¹⁵John Clark Archer, Faiths Men Live By, pp. 18-19.

¹⁶Gaebelein, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

of the outward form, the inner kernel of religion often disappeared and its essential strength was weakened. The results of this, both moral and social, were anything but desirable, leading to extreme degeneration and even to the deification of the immoral and anti-social. The principal cause of this corruption was that the figure of the Supreme Being was sinking further and further into the background, hidden behind the impenetrable phalanx of the thousand new gods and daimones.¹⁷

The Bible assumes original monotheism. The causal argument suggests a supreme being. All tribes have been found to be religious. Their religion was monotheism. Linguistics, ethnology, and history verifies the concept of monotheism as rudimentary. Christianity still serves the God which was once acknowledged by all nations to be the Creator and Ruler of the world.

The unity of the human race. History records that the first woman was named Eve "because she was the mother of all living."¹⁸ All human beings have, therefore, a common parentage. Thus, Paul in his sermon on Mars Hill could say "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."¹⁹ Since men of all so-called races have a common origin, Christ could actually assume the title "son of man"²⁰ and have a direct relationship to all men.

Physiologically the human race is one. E. R. Marett of Oxford in his textbook on anthropology explains:

¹⁷Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 74.

¹⁸Genesis 3:20. ¹⁹Acts 17:26.

²⁰Luke 19:10.

Oh for an external race-mark about which there could be no mistake! That has always been a dream of the anthropologist; but it is a dream that shows no signs of coming true. All sorts of tests of this kind have been suggested. Cranium, cranial sutures, frontal process, nasal bones, eye, chin, jaws, wisdom teeth, hair, humerus, pelvis, the heart-line across the hand, calf, tibia, heel, colour, and even smell—all these external signs, as well as many more, have been thought, separately or together to afford the crucial test of a man's pedigree.²¹

Another factor supporting the claim to the unity of the race is a psychological unity. Dr. Warfield in The Antiquity and Unity of Man wrote:

All men of all varieties are psychologically one and prove themselves possessors of the same mental nature and furniture. Under the same influences they function mentally and spiritually in the same fashion, and prove capable of the same mental reactions. They, they all, and they alone, in the whole realm of animal existence manifest themselves as rational and moral natures; so that Mr. Fiske was fully justified when he declared that though for zoological man the erection of a distinct family from the chimpanzee and orang might suffice, on the other hand for psychological man you must erect a distinct kingdom; nay, you must even dichotomize the universe putting Man on one side and all things else on the other.²²

Evolution is asserted by some as the alleged means for the determination of time. This view is opposed to any common genesis of the race. Wilhelm Schmidt in his work on The Culture Historical Method of Ethnology gives four reasons why this standard of time is inadequate as a scientific measuring device.

1. The development in all fields simply does not always proceed from the lower to the higher. In this matter pre-history has often been the cause of much misunderstanding through its rude forms of the oldest and ever more perfect forms of the later implements, because it did not take into consideration the fact that even the most highly intellectual human being in his working of his material would produce extremely rude forms at first.

²¹Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 25.

²²Ibid., pp. 24-25.

2. There is also a simplicity due to impoverization, a poverty due to degeneration, which therefore is younger than the previous more perfect condition.

3. The development in its entirety does not at all proceed in an ascending line, but rather, even when starting from one origin, at a certain point it branches off into several independent lines, which only later come again into contact with one another.

4. Opinions as to whether something is high or low are, for the most part, judgments of value in which subjectivism plays a great part and consequently scientific objectivity can no longer be sufficiently guaranteed.²³

Scientific research and Biblical records agree that there is a fundamental unity of all men. Physiologically, psychologically, and genealogically all men are one. Both the Old and New Testaments teach "the unity and the solidarity of the human race. You do not find that in any other sacred book. From the first chapter of Genesis until the last chapter of the New Testament it is always one great human family."²⁴

Dr. Warfield in his book The Antiquity and Unity of Man concludes that the whole doctrinal structure of the Biblical doctrine of redemption is embedded in the assumption that "the race of man is one organic whole, and may be dealt with as such."²⁵ All are one in Adam, all have sinned before God. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."²⁶ It would be impossible for

²³Wilhelm Schmidt, The Culture Historical Method of Ethnology, trans. S. A. Sieber (New York: Fortung's, 1939), p. 11.

²⁴Zwemer, The Solitary Throne, p. 16.

²⁵Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 25.

²⁶I Corinthians 15:21-22.

Christianity to be universal if there was no racial oneness, for the incarnation would have excluded extensive identification with all men. Hence, the new man in Christ is no longer regarded as Jew or Greek, bond or free, barbarian or Scythian, "but Christ is all and in all."²⁷

Universal adaptability. A basic factor of Christianity is the progressive revelation of the Old Testament. The Jews had one prevailing conviction that Judaism, as the one true religion, was destined to become the universal religion. "No other religion in their world and time made any such pretensions or cherished such aspirations. It was an exclusiveness the rest of mankind did not understand and therefore doubly resented."²⁸ This belief was maintained in an age when deities of national and personal homage were respected side by side and tolerated by all. The Jews were exempted from this universal toleration, as Philo complained, "it was chiefly because they alone were intolerant."²⁹ When monotheism was being lost God raised up the nation of Israel to instruct the nations.

The advent of Christ ushered in the Christian era. The Jews who rejected Christ were left behind as the on-going sweep of revelation shone more and more unto the perfect day. The church emerged a unique institution, universal in scope.

²⁷Colossians 3:11.

²⁸Moore, Judaism, p. 323.

²⁹ibid.

From no other religion has any exact parallel to it arisen. Judaism has its community to which the church owes a great debt-- but the bond there is as much racial as religious. The Christian Church is all-inclusive racially and its tie is a person, Jesus. Buddhism has its communities, but they are of monks or are societies of lay devotees. They do not seek to embrace all the faithful, nor is there any such urge to bring them together in conscious fellowship as is true of the Christian Church. Islam has a certain feeling of the brotherhood of all those who accept it, but no visible organization has endeavoured to make that as concrete fellowship of Christians. The Moslem community has been as much political as religious.³⁰

The founders of the various religions have been products of their culture and time. Christ transcends heredity and environment. He is timeless. Therefore, no other religion would qualify for universality upon its own merit.

Mohammed was an Arab, in thought language, life, and outlook. Confucius was a true Chinese, the scholar and gentleman of his age and of all China. Buddha was an Indian ascetic and mystic. His pathway is wholly ascetic, and is based on its pantheistic ideology. Socrates was the greatest philosopher of Greece but he was rooted in Greek thought and remained a Greek in his outlook. But Christ is neither Accidental nor Oriental, neither Jew nor Greek in his outlook. He is the Alpha and Omega of true manhood. He has all the virtues of both Accendent and Orient.³¹

Christ used the universal title "son of man" and Christianity claims to be the only universal revelation from God. Professor Tiele holds, "that Islam is not original, not even a ripe fruit, but rather a wild off-shoot of Judaism and Christianity."³²

Viscount Amberly states:

The ancient religious literature of India is very extensive . . . but the real ancient history of Indian religion is not to be gathered from it. Neither Chinese nor Indian religions have exercised any influence on the progress of religion in the west

³⁰Kenneth Scott Latourette, Anno Domini, pp. 25-26.

³¹Zwemer, Into All the World, pp. 29-30.

³²George C. Lorimer, The Argument for Christianity, p. 421.

of Asia or in Europe. They form a world apart. . . . For ages and ages they lived quite isolated and self-sufficient--the Chinese either with Lao-tze seeking the veritable Lao in the highest ideal of absolute isolation, or with Confucius amiably moralizing on the duties of the perfect man, the Indian dreaming his monotonous and fantastic dreams and longing for absorption in the eternal Brahm.³³

These other religions are now steadily becoming world-wide in their missionary thrust, by imitation of Christianity and not from inherent motives expressed in their original forms.

"In the history of mankind no other religion has been professed over so large a proportion of the globe or by so many people. From the outset Christianity has claimed for its message universality: it has maintained that it has a gospel for all men."³⁴ The Bible has always been a universal book in its outreach and provisions. It deals mainly with the nation of Israel, yet there are constant references to all men. Melchizedek, Job, Balaam, Ruth, Rahab, and many others were of other nationalities. Still they were held in high esteem by the Israelites. Jonah was sent to Assyria to preach. The wise men came from the east to worship Christ. Many races were represented in Jerusalem each year at the Passover feast. A high official of Ethiopia reveals the extent of the spread of the Bible. Six distinct areas are embedded in the Biblical claim for universalism (cf. ante, pp. 4-10).

³³Ibid., p. 423.

³⁴A. L. Warnahuis and others, The Christian Message For the World Today (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1934), p. 150.

God's full revelation as made known in Christ was quickly dispatched throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. Eusebius records in his book that: "Pantaenus of Alexandria in the second century discovered a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew in India; and equally suggestive is the fact that a bishop calling himself 'Metropolitan of Persia and the Great India' was present at the council of Nicea, 325 A. D."³⁵ Christianity has continued to advance until three continents can nominally be called Christian. Every continent has felt the impact of Christianity. Of the so-called religions of the world, Christianity is first in number of adherents. "By the suffrage rights of humanity, Jesus of Nazareth is already elected King of Hearts."³⁶

Christianity displaced many religions to the advantage of all concerned. Most of the so-called competitors were on a moral, intellectual, and spiritual plane far below even the "adulterated forms of Christianity which became the faith of the masses."³⁷

The centuries following the ascension of Christ had an amazing effect upon the populace. Christianity uprooted and destroyed all the non-Christian religions of the Roman Empire with the exception of its own parent stock, Judaism. "Never in so brief a time has so thoroughgoing a religious revolution been wrought in so large a proportion of civilized mankind. . . . It has increased with each age."³⁸

³⁵Lorimer, The Argument for Christianity, p. 422.

³⁶Arnold Toynbee, Christianity Among the Religions of the World, pp. 20-23.

³⁷Latourette, Anno Domini, p. 24.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 52-53.

The pragmatic test of Christianity has authenticated its veracity.

More than any other faith, Christianity has displayed the ability to survive the death of cultures with which it has been intimately associated and, after a period of reverses, to have a striking revival and to go on to fresh advances which carry it beyond its earlier high-water marks.³⁹

Christianity's universal adaptability is seen in its present-day survival and growth in all but a few areas of the world. No other religion is able to approximate this standard. "For the first time in its history or in the history of any religion, in the present century Christianity has become firmly rooted in almost every people, land, and culture."⁴⁰ This flexibility stems from the nature of the founder, Jesus Christ, who is not "constricted by chronology, by geography, or by culture. These may modify his influence, but they do not completely obscure it."⁴¹

From its genesis, Christianity has been traveling always upward and onward. Christianity has never known decline.

The reaction against religious sterility which brings about revivals is to be seen in some other religions, but it has been most marked in Christianity. . . . Of all the major religions of mankind, only in Christianity have these revivals led to a progressively increasing vigour and power. The historian can speak of the rise and decline of Buddhism, of Hinduism, and of Islam, but, if he is true to the facts, he can speak only of the rise of Christianity, he can point in its record to pulsations, to ebb as well as flow but, thus far at least, he cannot speak of the decline of Christianity.⁴²

³⁹Latourette, The Emergence of a World Christian Community, p. 60.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 61.

⁴¹Latourette, Anno Domini, p. 175.

⁴²Ibid., p. 138.

Christianity does not become a universal religion simply by fulfillment. It does not complete or build upon the foundations of other religions. The stability of Christianity is far superior. Rather, Christianity is unique. Neither can Christianity work with other religions toward a common goal, each sharing what is best, as Hooking advocates. Animistic heathenism has an attitude of meticulous obedience to the minute elements of religious practice as to the non-Christian religions. Life is a religious ceremonial. Christianity is generally conceded to be superior to heathenism. It would seem logical to expect heathens upon coming in contact with the Gospel to accept Christ. They would compare the vast differences and see that what their fathers patiently sought and painfully felt was inferior. The result would be forsaking of partial truth for the Truth. But heathenism by no means receives Christianity with open arms. The fact of initial rejection of the Gospel when first presented is a clear proof that the nobler elements of the non-Christian religion does not necessarily predispose or prepare the people for the Gospel. Rather, they actively or passively reject it.⁴³

Christianity and the non-Christian religions are irreconcilable. Buddhism is atheistic, Hinduism is pantheistic, and Confucianism along with others tend to be agnostic. Islam and Judaism have much in common with Christianity but their teachings would cut the jugular vein of Christianity, which is Christ. The inevitable result is an organization

⁴³ John Warneck, The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism, p. 135.

without power and life. If they were to accept Christ they would become Christians. Mohammed said that "God cannot have a son."⁴⁴ "So different are these non-Christian faiths even from one another that they cannot be combined without doing violence to the central affirmations of each. To seek to incorporate them in Christianity would be to denature both them and Christianity."⁴⁵

Richard Niebuhr locates the motive for the universal thrust of Christianity in the founder. Because God was in Christ the church's responsibility is universal.

All beings existent in the world are the creatures of this Creator and the concern of this redeemer. The question, 'Who is my neighbor?' and 'What is good?' need to be answered in a wholly inclusive way by a church which lives in the presence of and in expectation of the coming in power of this Lord.⁴⁶

The need for Christianity arises from the fact that it alone is and always has been the only source which is capable of meeting the evil forces of any age. All non-Christian religions have been deficient in this area.

Buddhism is too despairing and too sceptical of this world. At its core are a denial of the reality of human personality and the belief that all striving for food and shelter arises from a misunderstanding of the nature of man and of the apparent universe. Confucianism is too morbid and, even in its heyday, had too little faith in God and did not force in adequate fashion the problem of evil. Hinduism is too monistic and gives insufficient recognition to the reality of evil. Islam is too fatalistic and has in it no incarnation, no entry of God into human life as savior. . . . Moreover, all these ancient religions are associated with cultures which are disintegrating under the impact of the

⁴⁴Latourette, The Emergence of a World Christian Community, p. 64.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁶Latourette and others, The Gospel, The Church and The World. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1946), p. 119.

new movements which have impinged on them from the Accident. It is from Christianity that the most hopeful efforts are arising to cope with war and with blind materialism. Indeed even when at first sight, as in the case of Ghandi, movements of social betterment seem to be emerging from non-Christian faiths, on closer examination they are seen either to have had their origin in contact with Jesus or to owe to Jesus much of reinforcement.⁴⁷

All men of all ages have been religious. Science testifies that monotheism preceded any other form of religion. There is distinct proof for the unity of the race. Christ entered the stream of human consciousness and therefore could be identified with all men. Monotheism was transferred to Christianity through the nation of Israel. Christianity fulfilled the Jewish system and antiquated it. The church because of its unique revelation has a universal responsibility. Christianity has always had a universal message which has been universally applied. The church transcends racial barriers and envelops the world. Christ eclipses culture and time. He stands as the ideal man in any age. Christianity has never known decline. No other ideology given among men meets the needs of men as does Christianity. Therefore, Christianity is qualified to make the exclusive claim to universality in its message, following, and adaptability.

⁴⁷Latcurette, Anno Domini, pp. 200-201.

II. THE EXCLUSIVE CLAIM OF CHRIST AS SOLE MEDIATOR

The claim of Christ as the only Mediator between God and man rests upon at least six firm pillars as follows: revelation, the person of Christ, the work of Christ in redemption, the survival of the Christian Church, the message of hope, and the power to live a transformed life. The difference between the Christian religion and the non-Christian religions is that the former is basically supernatural and the latter are natural.

At the root of all things is the idea of God. Here all religions meet to be judged. 'The truth and the good inherent in all forms of religion,' said Jevons, 'is that, in all, man seeks after God. The finality of Christianity lies in the fact that it reveals the God for whom man seeks.' The best that can be said of any non-Christian religion is that it is seeking for that which Christianity possesses, the true and perfect God.⁴⁸

All religions of the world agree on four areas of belief: that man is not the highest being, that man must try to harmonize with the higher Spiritual Being, that there is a problem of good and evil, and that suffering poses a tremendous problem. How then does Christianity differ from the world's religions? Christianity is not a religion, it is a revelation. Christianity is not man seeking God, it is God seeking man. It does not claim to be a way to God, but it claims to be the way to God. It is the Supernatural Creator working in the creature to the end that the natural creature may become like the Supernatural Creator in moral quality.

⁴⁸Robert E. Speer, The Light of the World, pp. 334-335.

Supernatural foundation. Christianity has an historical and supernatural foundation. Christianity is rooted in historical data copied from documents available to the writers in each period of its history. New documents that turn up from time to time only strengthen the historicity of the Bible. The Bible fits in with the rise and fall of contemporary nations and the dates of the writers who refer to these places. The Bible reflects the particular idioms of speech of the various cultures which come into contact with the Israelites.

Robert Dick Wilson assures the believer of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures by contrasting the accounts of Hebrew authors with those of Greece and Arabia. This exactness humanly speaking might be accounted for in three ways.

- (1) The authors of the Hebrew records were contemporaries of the kings they mentioned, or had access to original documents.
- (2) The Hebrew writers were good enough scholars to transliterate with exactness.
- (3) The copyists of the Hebrew originals transcribed with conscientious care the text that was before them.⁴⁹

Even those who hold the Supernatural in low esteem acknowledge the historicity of the Bible. Harnack, one of the all time great scholars in the liberal Christian tradition, strove as hard as any scientific investigator to discover flaws in Christianity. His conclusion was that "no documents of history are more trustworthy

⁴⁹Robert Dick Wilson, Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly, pp. 21-22.

than the Gospels.⁵⁰

When it was proposed at the University of Berlin to establish a chair of comparative religion Harnack, the great theologian, objected.

One of the objections was as follows:

There is only one religion which was revealed from God. All the other so-called religions are the inventions of men. One has come down from heaven; the others are of the earth, earthy. One is a divine revelation from the Creator of the universe; and all the others may be classified as mere moral philosophies.⁵¹

All religions could not possibly spring from the same source, for some are mutually exclusive.

It cannot be, adds Mr. Tisdall, that the same tree has produced the abominations associated with the worship of Adonis, Attis, Asires, Mylitta, Cybele, Ashtoreth, on the one hand, and Christianity, purity and lofty conception of the Divine on the other. To believe that the vile idea of phallic worship so all but universal in the Gentile world is due to the same source whence sprang the conception of the Holy God of Israel, is possible only to the perverted intellect.⁵²

The general urge of these religions is self-maintenance, self-enrichment. Their central driving force is self-affirmation and self-assurance: they are various forms of self-deification, men claiming partnership with the gods themselves.⁵³

Many of the Biblical events are also contained in substance in other cultures which attest the event in history. Dr. S. H. Kellogg describes one such event in the degraded aboriginal tribes of India known as the Santals. They possess a tradition which they universally accept as true.

⁵⁰Martin J. Scott, The Credentials of Christianity, p. 244.

⁵¹Werner, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, p. 68.

⁵²Speer, The Light of the World, pp. 322-323.

⁵³Christopher E. Starrs, Many Creeds One Cross, p. 5.

In the beginning they were not worshipers of demons as now. They say that very long ago, their first parents were created by the living God; that they first worshiped and served Him; that they were seduced from their allegiance by an evil spirit, Marang Buru, who persuaded them to drink an intoxicating liquor, made from the fruit of a certain tree. In consequence they came under the power of the evil spirit, and hence, from that time until now, have had to worship and serve him, instead of the one God of their fathers.⁵⁴

Another event uncovered by anthropology which supports the Bible is the deluge. The Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks, Phryians, Esquimaux, Fiji Islanders, Aboriginal Americans, Brazilians, Indians, and Peruvians have traditions which refer to a great flood where only one family escaped. How is it that all these cultures hold to the same traditions? "All these myths are intelligible only on the supposition that some such event did actually occur. Such a universal belief, not springing from some instinctive principle of our nature, must be based on an historical fact."⁵⁵

When Jehovah spoke to His chosen race He always referred to concrete historical happenings. I am the God which has done thus and thus. The Old Testament is the basis of all supernatural revelation. "Without this foundation the New Testament would be a deception . . . without Christianity in its supernatural character the Old Testament revelation would be equally a deception unworthy of our confidence."⁵⁶

Professor William Henry Green of Princeton said in his master-

⁵⁴Gaebelein, op. cit., p. 34.

⁵⁵Henry H. Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook, p. 75.

⁵⁶Gaebelein, op. cit., p. 34.

work, The Unity of Genesis, "all tradition from whatever source it is derived, whether inspired or uninspired, unanimously affirms that the first five books of the Bible were written by one man, and that man was Moses."⁵⁷ No answer to this work has ever been published.

The testimony of the writers of the life of Christ to a large extent go against their interests. They narrated the unpopularity, the scorn, the cruelty, the scourging and the torture of their leader. Christ is shown in disappointment, fatigue, and sorrow. The writers admit the cowardly behavior of either themselves or friends in fleeing and forsaking Christ. The account is hardly a symposium of a hero. However, the account is so vivid and realistic in its presentation that it would be far beyond the highest attainments of the human mind unless the very personality had been before them. "To invent a Newton," says Parker, "one would have to be a Newton himself. What man could invent a person like Jesus?"⁵⁸

In summing up the records of the life of Christ, Martin J. Scott writes concerning the authors of these documents:

They stand forth sincere, undeceived, disinterested, and describing events beyond their powers of invention. Every man of them suffered persecution and violent death for his testimony. They presented their narrative to the very person who could challenge it and were interested in challenging it, but who did not challenge it. They could not, and they knew it.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 101.

⁵⁸Scott, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 85.

The sacred book of Christianity is unique among the "book-religions." The sacred writings of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism lack both the lofty style and the organic unity of the Christian Bible. The Koran is devoid of order, progress, or arrangement. The Scriptures of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism are heterogeneous materials, vague in purpose and origin. From Genesis to Revelation there is both progress and unity. The scarlet thread of redemption binds the various sections of the Bible into one organic whole. There is one story to tell which unfolds itself in a purposive and progressive manner. "No other literature is linked into one whole like this," declared Kirkpatrick, "instinct with one spirit and purpose, and, with all its variety of character and origin, moving forward to an unseen yet certain goal."⁶⁰

The argument for the supernatural foundation also stems from prophecy. The Old Testament is completed in the New Testament. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah vividly portrays the Christ of the New Testament. "These non-Christian Bibles are all developments in the wrong direction," related Joseph Cook in his Boston Lectures. "They all begin with some flashes of true light and end in utter darkness."⁶¹ The present followers of these religions are translating their Scriptures in a new light caused by the pure light of the Gospel of Christ.

M. de Broglie in his History of the Church and the Roman Empire introduces the empiricism of the Gospels in the following

⁶⁰James Orr, The Problem of the Old Testament, p. 32.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 484-485.

manner.

The events related in the Gospels do not belong, like the records of ancient religions, to a remote, semi-heroic, and semi-barbaric age, nor are they confined to some unknown, deserted land. It was in the bosom of advanced civilization, in the principal city of a Roman province, visited by Pompey, and described by Tacitus, that Jesus Christ preached, established His Church, and sacrificed His life. His biography has not come down to us from mouth to mouth in rhapsodies heightened by popular enthusiasm and credulity. Four simple precise narratives, agreeing in their assertions, taken by ocular or contemporaneous witnesses in a perfectly intelligible language, are the documents upon which the history of Jesus Christ is established.⁶²

There are two reasons, according to Scott, for not believing the claim of Christianity, ignorance and dislike. Ignorance is an excuse only to the mentally incompetent. Dislike excuses no man. All history stands or falls with the account of the life of Christ which is built upon the scientific method of recording data, namely the collaboration of eye-witnesses and primary sources. Luke in the introduction to his Gospel clearly and emphatically called attention to this method.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, from the beginning were eyewitnesses . . . It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write.⁶³

If faith cannot be placed in so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding the life of Christ, as attesting the veracity of their claims, then what historical facts are credible?⁶⁴

⁶²Scott, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

⁶³Luke 1:1-3.

⁶⁴Scott, op. cit., p. 40.

The supernaturalness of the Bible is further seen in its own claim to inspiration. God has revealed His will and His deeds to men in history. The Bible is a record of God's acts and revelations to men. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His doings unto the children of Israel"⁶⁵ (cf. ante., pp. 2-3).

The supernaturalism of the Scriptures of Christianity is rightly attributed to the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit aided human memory, the choice of words, and the interpretation of factors which were beyond the capabilities of man. Paul claimed that all Scripture was "God-breathed." The Bible was "produced with the supernatural impulsion and guidance of the Holy Spirit which we call inspiration."⁶⁶ Apart from inspiration there would be no supernatural revelation.

Research has proven the plausibility of the trustworthiness of Holy Writ. Anthropology reveals the extent to which Biblical data is authenticated by other cultures. The writers assume an objective recording attitude which is admirable. The style and unity place the Bible sui generis. The Bible itself makes the claim to be the divine revelation. The Holy Spirit superintended the compilation. Therefore, Christianity rests upon a supernatural foundation built by God.

Supernatural person. The ideal man of philosophy was described

⁶⁵Psalm 103:7.

⁶⁶J. Gresham Machen, The Christian Faith in the Modern World, p. 39.

by Plato in his Politia, Volume II, page 36:

Who without doing any wrong may assume the appearance of the grossest injustice; yea, who shall be scourged, fettered, tortured, deprived of his eyes, and after having endured all possible suffering, fastened to a post, must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness.⁶⁷

"There is no record, in the writings of all nations and of all times, of a life for which absolute perfection is claimed from its beginning to its close."⁶⁸ But the character of Christ as depicted in the Gospels is human perfection in which no flaw appears even under cursory examination. "This wondrous Person always is, and acts up to the ideal of perfect humanity--never unnaturally elevated so as to be out of fellowship with men, and never below the highest human excellence, conceivable in the particular circumstance at the time."⁶⁹

It is universally acknowledged that the only perfect moral life was the life of Christ. He is also the only man who claimed to be deity and who demanded worship of himself. The world's great religious leaders have been struggling along with their followers. It is easily recognized that Christ is not a product of the human race nor can the law of evolution explain Him. He is not of this earth. He is from above even as He claimed. This fact is attested by His life.

⁶⁷Zwemer, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, p. 52.

⁶⁸John Young, The Christ of History, p. 225.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 222.

No analogy can be cited to that of the founder of Christianity from the records of religious enthusiasm. Many such enthusiasts have existed, claiming great pretensions for themselves. "But none of these, in respect to character and to surrounding circumstances, resembles Christ . . . There is this radical difference, that none of these have been exempt from the corrupting operation of sin."⁷⁰

Christianity owes both its beginning and continuance to the person of Christ. The relationship between Christ as a founder of a religion is unique. Buddhism and Islam would remain essentially the same if their founder were forgotten. Christianity is as dependent upon its founder throughout all of its history as it was the first day of its existence.⁷¹

Confucius was a teacher of moral and political axioms who disbelieved in any cognizance of the invisible world. Buddha was a moral reformer, a philanthropist, and the propounder of ethics. There are no data which would suggest that he laid any claim to deity. His work was largely negative, pointing to an escape from reality. Mohammed had sincere yet unfounded confidence as a divine messenger. His remarkable self-delusion is attributed largely to his morbid physical constitution. From youth he had a form of epilepsy. When this nervous infirmity was combined with his mystic religious fervor, he

⁷⁰George P. Fisher, Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity, p. 525.

⁷¹Samuel G. Craig, Christianity Rightly So Called, p. 52.

translated his extraordinary psychic phenomenon into communication with the divine. Socrates claimed a divine supernatural guidance. But "he claimed nothing more for himself than what he attributed to others."⁷²

The ultimate truth of Christianity resides in a person. It not only involves truth in the form of ideas but also involves volition and emotions. The truth of Christianity could only be perceived and communicated as it was freely reincarnated in a person. "Someone must be the truth if it is to be fully realized."⁷³

Great religious leaders have declared themselves to be delivering God's message, but Christ was that message. Others have taught men about God and tried to lift men Godward, but God in Christ lived among men and revealed Himself. Man is able to build up a reasonable case for God and His personality traits. But unless God reveals Himself, it is mere speculation. It, therefore, remains to God's initiative to give us special revelation. If there is a living God who loves, then it is reasonable to expect a revelation from Him.⁷⁴ All religions which claim to be ways to God "are but worship of self in one form or another. Self was the great idol, and that was the attraction of idolatry. Man read his own self, his passions, his pursuits, his very crimes, into his self-made deities and

⁷²Fisher, op. cit., p. 531.

⁷³Hugh Vernon White, A Theology for Christian Missions, p. 117.

⁷⁴J. N. D. Anderson, The World's Religions, pp. 192-193.

fabricated his idols and their rites accordingly."⁷⁵

Christ is the embodiment of all the truth which had been revealed or known.

The unifying factor was not the incarnation nor the Virgin Birth, nor the life of Benevolence, nor the words of Wisdom and love. All these were to be found in Hinduism, in Buddhism, in Confucianism, in Greek philosophy. But when the Incarnate Son of God, born of Mary, baptised in Jordan, and tempted of Satan, after a life spent in works of mercy and words of love, faced death rather than being untrue to principle, and not only faced death but conquered it by Resurrection and Ascension, it was known at once that He had gathered all things unto Himself, and that there was no further need of any partial or fragmentary Gospel.⁷⁶

The only ground upon which any faith could seriously threaten Christianity would be to reproduce the life of Christ. He is the good news of the Gospel and in Him is the finality of Christianity. Christ is the only Mediator between God and man.

To call Christianity the absolute or final religion, therefore, is to contend not merely that in Jesus Christ God is presented in a higher and more spiritually satisfying than elsewhere, but that the relationship to the Father on which believers thus enter is such that it cannot be transcended.⁷⁷

Pascal summed up the finality of Christ when he contended that "Jesus Christ is the center of everything and the object of everything; and he who does not know Him knows nothing of the order of the world and nothing of himself."⁷⁸ Christ identified Himself with all men and still He remains distinct. "Between him and all men there must have

⁷⁵Scott, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷⁶Speer, Christianity and the Nations, pp. 274-275.

⁷⁷Zwemer, Into All the World, p. 39.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 39.

been a separation--though there was also as a certainty a community--of nature, a separation not incidental and relative only, but constitutional and organic."⁷⁹

There was no one idea which predominated in the thinking of Jesus Christ which could label Him as an enthusiast or a reviver of forgotten truths. Rather, He had the insight into truth to the extent that He could say "I am the Truth."⁸⁰ "The fertility, the variety, the consistency, and symmetry of his teaching"⁸¹ focus on a unique personality.

The public ministry of Christ and His spiritual character converge to present a supernatural life incapable of adequate explanation on any purely human basis. Either of these two aspects reveal both the Divinity and the humanity of Christ. The ministry of Christ represented the Word which "was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."⁸² His character is represented by the life which "was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Fatherhood was manifested unto us."⁸³

What is the relation of miracles to the life of Christ? The central miracle asserted by Christianity is Christ. All miracles tower or topple with Him. Is there a realm beyond the five senses which is natural from its own point of view? An individual will answer these

⁷⁹Young, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

⁸⁰John 14:6. ⁸¹Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

⁸²John 1:14. ⁸³John 1:2.

questions in whatever way he views reality. If the inquirer is a naturalist then there can be no miracles to him.

We are also prepared for reality as religion conceives it: reality with a ground floor (Nature) and then above that one other floor and one only--an eternal, spaceless, timeless, spiritual. Something of which we can have no images, if it presents itself to human consciousness at all, does so in a mystical experience which shatters all our categories of thought.⁸⁴

If there is another realm of reality then miracles or the control of a higher realm upon the lower realm will become conceivable. If Christ descended to a lower realm then He could do things beyond the natural. The miracles of the Gospels were chiefly a teaching technique. Each contained a deep spiritual meaning; and altogether form the nature and design of His mission. "They were not mere signs of power, but lessons of wisdom and acts of mercy; they were not simply attestations of a Divine Presence, but subduing expressions and expositions of the Divine Character."⁸⁵

Perhaps the best proof of miracles is the resurrection. There have been stories of so-called resurrections, originating from popular awe for heroes and tyrants who by popular demand must return again to this stage of life. Not one of these stories ever entertained the idea that the individuals had died but were only asleep. It was not death, but prolonged periods even years of sleep from which these heroes reappeared. "The resurrection of Christ bears a stamp of

⁸⁴C. S. Lewis, Miracles, p. 186.

⁸⁵Young, op. cit., p. 256.

authenticity infinitely different."⁸⁶

The setting of the Resurrection includes the following incontrovertible facts.

The record is the most authentic document of history; Christ foretold His Resurrection; the Jews knew He foretold it; the opponents of Christ were as sceptical as any today; the death of Christ was certified to the Roman governor; the Resurrection was proclaimed in the very city where it occurred and to the very people who were instrumental in Christ's death; the first proclamation converted to belief in Christ three thousand of those who had rejected and crucified Him; the whole people were in the way to conversion, but the Jewish leaders prevented it. No case in law, no fact of history, is so well established as the Resurrection.⁸⁷

The resurrection "was the assertion of a truth of Christianity, which, by its meaning unified and irradiated all the other truths."⁸⁸

Christ expressed His assurance of triumph. His actual triumph for two thousand years is history. These two elements lead to one conclusion only. It is this, His claim to deity is true and His religion is divine. Christianity is "the only religion which contains the indubitable proof, and present to the world a real incarnation of divinity—God in man."⁸⁹

"That strange man on the cross," said Tyrrell, "keeps calling me back."⁹⁰ His life has been under almost continuous critical ex-

⁸⁶William Milligan, The Resurrection of Our Lord, p. 31.

⁸⁷Scott, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

⁸⁸Milligan, op. cit., p. 37.

⁸⁹Young, The Christ of History, pp. 241-242.

⁹⁰Warnshuis and others, op. cit., p. 150.

amination. No man's life has commanded such attention as has His life. As East and West stand before Him, they are judged by Him. The first great fact that emerges is that Jesus Christ is alive today. The incarnation is God's complete revelation to man. This revelation is rooted in history not in a dream, a hope, or a vision. Christ is the ideal man in any culture or age. His life stands unique in moral perfection. No other man made the claim to deity in a major religion. All truth adheres in Him. The only way of repudiating the claims of Christ as the Sole Mediator of the world is to reproduce a similar life before the world. The resurrection of Christ is the world's most fully verified fact. The power revealed in the resurrection is the same power in operation throughout the life of Christ. Christ is the only qualified personality to make the claim as being a way to God. Hence, there is only His way to God.

E. Stanley Jones has been asked in many of his meetings if there are not other ways to find God than through Jesus Christ. His reply was that the matter cannot be settled by argument. The only way to answer the question is to go and find another way and then report it. Only then could a discussion be possible upon the subject. At this the crowds would usually laugh. "That laugh," reported Jones, "is the most revealing and startling thing I have ever heard; it means that the idea of immediately finding God does not seem to be practical. It does not seem to be in the realm of the immediately realizable."⁹¹

⁹¹E. Stanley Jones, Christ at the Round Table, pp. 66-67.

Supernatural work of redemption. Christianity is a redemptive religion. In some sense all religions are redemptive, inasmuch as they extend salvation from some evil or like attribute. The point at which Christianity departs from the non-Christian religions is the fact that it "offers redemption in and by the work of another."⁹² The supposition of the non-Christian religions is that man can save himself. There is no such person as a self-saved Christian. Other religions appeal to no dynamic or source of energy outside of the individual. It says to the wounded--heal thyself, to the wandering--find thy way, and to the broken-hearted--cheer thyself. Christianity is a redemptive religion in that it "offers salvation from sin, conceived as guilt and pollution, through the atoning death of Jesus Christ and through the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit."⁹³

If the ideas of Christianity were discovered in the non-Christian religions, still they would contain no Christianity. For Christianity depends, "not upon a complex of ideas, but upon the narrative of an event."⁹⁴

The world's religions are extremely weak in the area of redemption. In Islam there are only wilful sins and not sins of ignorance. Hinduism sees sin as an illusion. Buddhism disregards God, hence there is no sin. Confucianism which teaches men to respect the

⁹²Craig, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

⁹³Craig, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

⁹⁴Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, p. 70.

gods, totally lacks all conception of sin. Only Christianity diagnoses the disease of mankind and declares the remedy for it.⁹⁵

In answer to the laymen's Report on Missions in 1933, a group of conservative scholars published their reply to the liberals and non-Christian religions.

We do not set up a tension between our system and your system. . . . But there is one place where we do not hesitate to set up a tension and that point is between Jesus Christ and human need. We set it up first of all between Christ and our own souls. We find that tension is to us redemptive. Next we set up that tension between Christ and our civilization. We are in the same deep need of the saving power of Christ as others. Then what we would take for ourselves we would share with others. . . . In Jesus Christ we feel that He is not our opinion of life, but God's revelation of His redemptive purpose for a race. We give this not as originators or owners of it, but as those who pass on what has been passed on to us.⁹⁶

A few years ago in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Joseph Cook challenged the priests of the various religions to answer Lady Macbeth's question, "How cleanse this red right hand?" All the priests were silenced. None of the writings of these ancient religions have a logical and adequate cure for the sin problem which plagues the world. They are able to answer that question presenting, only by superimposing, that which has sprung from Christian sources upon their own literature.⁹⁷

The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

⁹⁵Speer, The Light of the World, p. 5.

⁹⁶Warnshire and others, op. cit., p. 199.

⁹⁷Henry Clarence Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 84.

but have everlasting life."⁹⁸ Again it says that Christ "bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed,"⁹⁹ and "God made him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."¹⁰⁰ "All that believe are justified from all things."¹⁰¹ Thus, through the death of the righteous Son of God, provision is made for all the world. What man could not do for himself Christ did for him.

Supernatural survival. Christianity can do what no other religion can afford to do. It is able to submit to comparison on any ground. It stands ready to compare its founder, work, message, meaning, ethics, salvation, influence, and the experience of individuals in Jesus Christ with the corresponding elements of any of the non-Christian faiths. Christianity is able to maintain itself against all opponents.¹⁰²

Many individuals have predicted the end of Christianity, but Christianity has survived. Among the many victories which Christianity has won, no victory is more impressive than the one gained over the paganism of the first century. Paganism was not a mere set of abstract conjectures, but a concrete creed rooted in the lives of the nations.

⁹⁸John 3:16. ⁹⁹I Peter 2:24. ¹⁰⁰II Corinthians 2:21.

¹⁰¹Acts 13:39.

¹⁰²Speers, The Finality of Jesus Christ, p. 288.

It was a world power. It dominated everything. . . . This was the pagan Goliath that confronted the Christian David. . . . Skill was pitted against size. But there was no proportion between the contenders when Christianity confronted paganism. Paganism had power, wealth, learning, prestige, position, and possession on its side. Christianity had nothing, humanly speaking. Yet it demanded the complete surrender of paganism. Can you conceive of a more startling proposition? If Christianity had not had the most sound credentials she never would have toppled Roman paganism.¹⁰³

One common denominator of all religions is their claim to effect a synthesis of the whole of life. "The central truth of the conditions of the world's religion today is simply this, that the ancient synthesis of life, based upon religion, has been broken into fragments."¹⁰⁴ In China it was charged that the educated Chinese turned either to Christianity or to atheism. The youth of India deplore many of the loathsome religious practices such as child-marriage, widow burning, caste, escapism, and apathy toward progress. Islam, however, along with Buddhism and Hinduism is becoming more and more nationalistic. Turkey has rewritten its history in an effort to minimize the Islamic elements and to magnify the Turkish race. Mohammed was a remarkable man well in advance of his age, but in the light of more advanced cultures, he has become inadequate as a standard for life. African religions of the old forms are melting before the smelteries of the industrial revolution. All these factors signal the disintegration of all non-Christian religions in their historic forms.

¹⁰³Scott, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁰⁴Warnshuis and others, op. cit., p. 135.

Religion in these areas has many times become a departmentalized thing, one interest among other interests. It is predicted that these people will continue until they find a new center of faith.

The sands of time have not covered the historical signs of Christianity, rather they have tended to polish the markings. The survival of Christianity emerges from its truthfulness. It is because Christ established the Church that it still stands. The universality of the Church reveals the degree to which the Church has survived.

Supernatural message. Dr. Theodore Parker said, "There may be comparative religions but Christianity is not one of them."¹⁰⁵ Other religions teach a way of life which must be attained by man. By the observances of rites, performance of good deeds, and ethical conduct their adherents gradually win their salvation. They represent man trying to build his tower to heaven. Christianity by contrast brings the good news of salvation down to man. The message was delivered by angels and finally by God Himself through the Incarnation. While other religions tell what men must do, Christianity tells what God has done. Its message is a gift to be received and a life to be believed.

The non-Christian religions are unable to meet the moral needs of man. These religions are not able to present a perfect moral ideal as an example of conduct. None of their great religious leaders even lived up to their own ideal. Each religious system breaks down at the fundamental element of truth.

¹⁰⁵Zwemer, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, pp. 67-68.

Verily, said Mohammed, a lie is allowable in three cases: to women, to reconcile friends and in war. . . . Lie not to another, says Christianity's clear and unqualified injunction. Lie not, says Buddhism, but adds the truth annihilating condition, to constitute a lie, there must be the discovery by the deceived that what has been told him is not true.¹⁰⁶

The non-Christian religions have much to say about the misery and suffering of the world, but little to say about morality and forgiveness. Karma, one of the chief tenets of faith in Hinduism, holds sin to be a breach in an abstract moral order, rather than rebellion against a living God. The release sought by many of the Eastern sages is escape from the chain of mortal cycles of life, not forgiveness. In the Buddhist and Hindu traditions very moving stories have been told, depicting men breaking through to God. Yet these stories lack many things: the objective reality of the story of Christ, the soul-searching union of divine love, and the absolute holiness of God. The Christian message is primarily constructed upon the seriousness of rebellion against the moral law of God, and repudiation of the love of God. The message of Christianity is the message of the cross implanted in the heart of God from eternity and upon a Judean hill in time. It is a message of forgiveness, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."¹⁰⁷ The cross demonstrated the love of God for the sinner and the wrath of God toward sin. God in love procured a Gospel to be proclaimed to the world to be practiced by all men.

Morality is always directly connected to monotheism and both

¹⁰⁶Speer, Christianity and the Nations, p. 278.

¹⁰⁷Mark 2:5.

are embodied in a personal relationship with a holy God. Inherent in this interpersonal relationship is the concept of salvation which clearly depicts two great forces in their teleological progress.¹⁰⁸

Who, coming to this sacred book, with a sincere desire to know God's will for the direction of his life, will say that he cannot find it? Who, desiring to be instructed in the way of salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, will consult its pages, and say it is not made plain to him? Who, coming to it for equipment of his spiritual life, will say that there are still needs of that life which are left unprovided for? Who, seeking direction in the way of the life everlasting, can doubt that, if he faithfully obey its teaching, he will reach that goal?¹⁰⁹

Christianity is a purposive religion. It came like a summer zephyr to the barren and frozen world of the Eastern faiths caught in the tentacles of the procession of cycles. The stoics held much the same belief. Christ brought to men the message that there was a divine purpose, that God was at work, and that the world was moving toward a consummation. The world is neither an illusion nor is it the final abode to the Christians. It is a testing ground and a training school.¹¹⁰

Herman Bavinck has summed up the message of Christianity with these words.

Christianity does not exist through the strength and fidelity of its confessors, but through the life and will of its Mediator. . . . His will and His work is to make men truly religious, to bring them into fellowship with God, and that is also the will and work of God Himself. For the will of God to save the world was not only an annunciation of God's indination in the past, but is an action, a deed, a work of God, which goes from day to day. God is love; but that love is no quiescent attribute, but an

¹⁰⁸Orr, The Problem of the Old Testament, pp. 40-44.

¹⁰⁹Orr, ibid., p. 50.

¹¹⁰Wernshuis and others, op. cit., p. 147.

eternal, omnipresent energy which realizes itself in the heart of men. God is Father; but that Fatherhood is no mere title of honor, but an almighty, energetic power which regenerates men as His children and heirs. Christianity is no mere revelation of God in the past, but it is, in connection with the past, a work in the midst of this and every time.¹¹¹

The non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the social needs of men. Whereas the Bible teaches the brotherhood of men and implies that all men are sons of God by creation and may become sons of God by redemption, each of these other religions deny the unity of mankind: "Hinduism with its caste, Confucianism with its deceit, Islam with its fanatical bigotry, and Buddhism with its damnation of all women."¹¹² "Jesus Christ is the only religious leader Who came to destroy all race barriers and class hatreds."¹¹³

Christianity offers a universal hope for all men, a forgiveness from sin, a conscience voice of offence, and a new dynamic for life. Where other systems are open and free, Christianity demands a careful self-examination, a sorrow for sin, a turning to God by faith, and abandonment of self to do God's will. The Christian message declares God to be loving, who will blot out sins and remember them no more. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."¹¹⁴ It is essentially a message of present help and

¹¹¹Craig, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

¹¹²Speer, Christianity and the Nations, p. 282.

¹¹³Zwemer, The Solitary Throne, p. 17.

¹¹⁴II Peter 3:9.

future hope.

Supernatural power. Christianity has the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit working through the lives of its true followers. "Buddha could point his disciples to a way and say, walk ye in it. Socrates could tell his pupils of a truth and say, cleave ye to it. But He who stands above all earthly guides and teachers . . . is able to pour His own life into the spirits of men and transform their beings."¹¹⁵

Justin Martyr described himself and his fellow converts as follows:

We who formerly delighted in fornication but now embrace chastity alone; . . . we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions . . . now brings into a common stock and communicate to every one in need; we who hated and destroyed one another and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, . . . now since the coming of Christ live familiarly with them and pray for our enemies and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God.¹¹⁶

Tertullian of the second century was a pagan until middle life, when he accepted the claims of Christ. Following his conversion, he addressed the Roman Emperor by saying, "We are but of yesterday, and we fill all that is yours; your cities, your islands, your military posts, your boroughs, your council-chambers and your camps; your tribes, your corporations; the palace, the senate, the forum: your temples

¹¹⁵James Hastings, The Speaker's Bible, St. John, Vol. II, p. 72.

¹¹⁶Latourette, Anno Domini, p. 34.

alone do we leave to you."¹¹⁷

Augustine who possessed one of the greatest minds of all time left paganism because "he found that the credentials of Christianity were sound, the soundest conceivable."¹¹⁸ The change which resulted in his life was positive proof that Christ can change a sinner into a saint.

Some raise the question that if Christianity is the only religion why do not more embrace it. There are chiefly two reasons. First, it does not reach every individual with its claims, and when it does, it is often a misrepresentation of New Testament Christianity. Secondly, man was created with a free agency and rational powers. The power of choice resides within the volition. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."¹¹⁹

God does not present evidence that will compel our acceptance, for to do so would be to force us, and that He will not do. . . . He could give us compelling evidence if He chose, but then there would be no choice on our part, no possibility of an act of faith. . . . The credentials of Christianity are sufficient to produce reasonable certainty, but not physical certainty. . . . Mankind lives for the most part by reasonable certainty.¹²⁰

This certainty comes to the individual through experience. It is the set of the will, like the set of the sail, which determines the results of investigation. "Judaism and Hinduism rest on an age-old tradition . . . appeal to . . . the past. Confucianism appeals to the

¹¹⁷Scott, op. cit., p. 127.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹⁹John 7:17

¹²⁰Scott, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

authority of a great philosopher. Islam has . . . a totalitarian religion. The proof of Christianity . . . is not authority, tradition, force or argument, but experience."¹²¹

During the days of his skepticism, George Romanes discovered this verse in John 7:17. The validity of the verse became a personal reality to him when he became willing to do His will.

Men who are of the stature of Paul of Tarsus, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Martin Luther, David Livingstone, John Newton, Jim Vaus, and John French, have a right

. . . to demand a hearing when they testify to the experience out of which their lives have issued. When a genuinely Christian man, whose gracious and noble character is an open book for all men to read, declares that his life, so justly admired, is due to Christ, one who would refuse assent to the explanation is in a difficult and insecure position, for he can deny neither the reality which is to be explained nor the sincerity with which the explanation is offered.¹²²

Harold Begbie in summarizing the significance of the stories he records in his book, Twice Born Men, says:

When I visit the happy homes, and experience the gentleness and refinement of such as those whose life stories appear in this book, and compare them with the squalor and misery of the great majority of homes surrounding them, I am astonished that the world should be incredulous about Christianity.¹²³

Multitudes of men and women have died for their faith. Martyrs do not necessarily prove the validity of Christianity. Others have

¹²¹Zwemer, The Finality of Jesus Christ, p. 35.

¹²²Louis Matthews Sweet, The Verification of Christianity, p. 212.

¹²³Harold Begbie, Twice Born Men, pp. 279-280.

died for contrary beliefs. It remains, however, if there were no Christian martyrs, Christianity would be certainly false. The numbers of men and women who surrendered their life rather than deny Christ, the types of individuals who represented all classes of people, the sufferings which they endured, and the spirit with which they died, emphasize the fact of a power at work in their lives.¹²⁴

Archibald Alexander, the nineteenth century Princeton apologist, has well summarized the testimony of the martyrs, especially of those of the early church:

Persons of all ages, of all conditions of life, and of both sexes, exhibited under protracted and cruel torments a fortitude, a patience, a meekness, a spirit of charity and forgiveness, a cheerfulness, yea often a triumphant joy, of which there are no examples to be found in the history of the world. They rejoiced when they were arrested; cheerfully bade adieu to their nearest and dearest relatives; gladly embraced the stake; welcomed the wild beasts let loose to devour them; smiled on the horrible apparatus by which their sinews were to be stretched, and their bones dislocated and broken; uttered no complaints; gave no indication of pain when their bodies were enveloped in flames; and when condemned to die, begged of their friends to interpose no obstacle to their felicity (for such they esteemed martyrdom), not even by prayer for their deliverance. What more than human fortitude was this? By what spirit were these despised and persecuted people sustained? What natural principles in the human constitution can satisfactorily account for such superiority to pain and death? Could attachment to an impostor inspire them with such feelings? No; it was the promised presence of the risen Jesus which upheld them, and filled them with assurance and joy.¹²⁵

Summary. Christianity's claim to universality can be validated. It rests its case with the fact that all tribes have been religious,

¹²⁴John H. Gerstner, Reasons for Faith, pp. 178-185.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 185-186.

and that the first type of religious belief among the older civilizations was monotheistic. The nation of Israel maintained to a certain extent this early belief. By special revelation from God, it progressively unfolded the acts of God. There is a fundamental unity of the race. Physiologically, psychologically, and geneologically all men are one. The Bible's plan of redemption is built upon this fact. Christianity has maintained belief in the unity and uniqueness of the God of early times. Christ identified Himself with all men in that He entered the stream of the human race. Christianity has a universal Savior, message, following, adaptability, and solution which are unique.

The claim of Christ to His unique role as the Mediator between God and man rests upon the following factors: It is laid in a supernatural foundation--the Bible, founded upon the supernatural person of Christ, manifest in the supernatural work of redemption wrought in the hearts of men, attested by the supernatural survival of the Church, revealed in the supernatural message of love, and verified by the supernatural power of God which can change a sinner into a saint.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The missionary message of Christianity rests upon at least two unique claims: the universal adaptability of its message and the exclusiveness of the Mediation of Christ.

From an inductive investigation of the Bible one sees two distinct and prominent teachings: (1) the universal claim for Christianity, and (2) the uniqueness of Christ. Christianity as a universal faith is authenticated by the following: the creation, the plan of salvation, the incarnation, the universality of followers, the great commission, and judgment. The exclusiveness of Christ is sustained by prophecy, supported by eyewitnesses, and supplanted by the life and works of Christ. A dominate characteristic of the Bible which underlies its content is its empiricism (i.e., its appeal to the experiences of individuals qualified as witnesses). This is employed by references to historical persons, places, and documents; eyewitnesses and other primary sources; and the reporting of the reactions of crowds. The primary appeal is therefore to logic, reason, and selected data as the basis for its intellectual appeal.

However, such scholars as Hocking, Toynbee and Radhakrishnan place little value upon these claims. Taking the syncretistic view, they place all religions in the same class. By eclecticism and cooperation they see all religions working toward a common goal for the common good. Christianity is held to be arrogant if it makes any

claims to finality. It is admitted that Christianity is the leader but differs from the non-Christian religions quantitatively and not qualitatively. Their synthetic view of religions fails to take into adequate consideration the fundamental differences which exist between the various religions, the historicity of the Bible, scientific data, and the credentials of Christianity. They are naturalistic in their approach and thus are limited in their explanation of phenomena.

In contrast, Brunner, Kraemer, and Soper conclude from the behavior of man, from the historical accuracy of the Bible, from the supporting evidence of scientific investigation, and from the credentials of Christianity, that there is a unique difference between Christianity and the non-Christian religions of the world. They acknowledge that the contradictory elements of these religions are mutually exclusive. They are supernaturalists, believing that ultimate authority adheres in God. Their realistic investigation is based on history, reason, and experience. They conclude that Christianity is uniquely universal in claim and practice and Christ is the only qualified approach to God.

Some scholars assert and some scholars overlook these two exclusive claims of Christianity. The explanation seems to stem from the two terms: awareness and experience. All knowledge rests upon faith. Awareness apprehends the phenomena and experience authenticates it. The faith of a Christian is similar to faith in history, electricity, or atoms. It requires a decision, a conclusion, and experience. Free moral agency allows men to reject and accept what they will regardless of the evidence.

Man lives by reasonable certitude. Christianity offers not binding evidence but reasonable certitude. In defense of its unique claim to universality, Christianity offers the only continuity in the history of religions. The early form of religion was monotheism which Christianity still maintains. Redemption is held to be universal, founded upon the fact of the unity of man as is claimed by sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists. Christianity has a universal adaptability because of its message which offers hope to all men from their plight of sin, its ability to survive cultures, and its world-wide following.

The credentials for Christ's claim as the Sole Mediator is framed in a supernatural setting. The Bible sets forth this claim which Christ made for Himself. The trustworthiness of the Bible is seen from its historicity, its prophecy, its style, its unity, its eye-witness accounts, its endurance of destructive criticism, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Christ confronts man as a supernatural being; no man spoke, lived, healed, taught, died, rose from the dead, and made the claims which He made for Himself. Thirdly Christianity offers a supernatural forgiveness by the atoning death of Christ who was God. In addition, Christianity has had a supernatural survival which alone has survived all cultures, investigations, and attacks. Fifthly, Christianity declares a supernatural message which meets the moral needs of man, offering pardon and peace and the social needs by breaking down all barriers. It is the only religion

which does not break down at the fundamental element of truth. Lastly, Christianity has a supernatural power of the Holy Spirit which works in the hearts of men and changes them.

Conclusion. The claim of the universality of Christianity and the claim of Christ as the only Mediator are valid. These rest upon scholarship, scientific data, history, and experience. In the words of Augustine, they are the soundest credentials conceivable.

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