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THE FISH

D.B. KNOX

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"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

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You may have noticed Christians wearing in their lapel the outline of a fish or perhaps you may have noticed a plastic sticker at the back of a car with the outline of a fish on it. It is an old Christian sign. It goes back to the very beginnings of Christianity. In the underground catacombs of Rome there is still to be seen the figure of a fish scratched on the walls. The catacombs were underground graveyards where Christians hid when the government was persecuting them. They chose the symbol of a fish because the Greek word for fish was *ichthys* and its five letters are also the first letters of the sentence 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour' so it sums up the Christian faith. The emphasis fell on that last word 'the Saviour', that is whom Jesus is to Christians. He saves. But from what does he save? From worry, that is true; from ill health, yes, it might well be his will to answer prayer for healing. But Jesus as the Saviour is not primarily concerned about the ills and suffering of this life, though that is what modern Christians are preoccupied with. But Jesus is the Saviour on the Judgement Day so that we should not be condemned to eternal wrath as our sins deserve. Nowadays people confine their interest to this life, even Christians do this, and this is one of the mistakes of the Charismatic movement. The Christian message is not primarily concerned with this life, for eternity is real and God's judgement certain and awful. Our own consciences tell us that it is right that wrongdoing should be punished though we like to think that we ourselves will be able to get away with it. But of course this is not so. All of us without exception must stand before God's judgement throne but we need to know that we will be saved on that day, for it may come sooner than we expect. Jesus saves because he has undergone our penalty in his own body on the cross when the Lord God laid on him all our sins and he bore them perfectly, and so we may be forgiven in him. Our sins and guilt may be blotted out completely if we put our faith in Jesus.



God's word promises that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. We can begin to experience that this is true as soon as we call on Jesus' name, because when we do our sins are forgiven and we are restored to friendship with our heavenly father. This friendship is real, we experience it and in this way we may know it is real. We do not have to wait to find out what will happen when we die for we already know the joy of our sins forgiven, we know God's help in our lives. But this is only the beginning of our salvation. Jesus is our saviour because he delivers us from the wrath to come. God so loved the world, the Bible says, that he sent his only son that all who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. It is because he saves us from perishing eternally that he is pre-eminently the saviour. All who pray to Jesus will be saved now and on that day.

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**THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

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