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"OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS"

(TITUS 2:13)

D.B. Knox

The Protestant Faith

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"OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR "JESUS" (Titus 2:13)

The Christian religion is extraordinary and unique. There is no other religion like it; and if it is true, it is stupendous and I want you to ask yourself what you think about it, whether in fact you believe it, whether it is you are a Christian in reality.

Christianity says that there is only one God, who made the heaven and the earth and everything in it. But most extraordinarily, this one and only God has become man. He took our nature and lived our human life, that is, not only did he create us but he came into a new and intimate relationship with us his creation, by becoming one of us. He related himself to us by taking our nature, a relationship which will never be broken. This is the teaching of the Bible. Paul in Titus 2:13 speaks of "our great God and Saviour Jesus" and in Romans 9:5 he says "Christ, who is God over all" and in 11 Corinthians 8:9 he says that "though Jesus was rich, he became poor", by this affirming that Jesus existed before he became man in Bethlehem. He existed that is, as God, because of course Paul did not think of him merely as an angel and in Philippians 2:6, Paul says that Jesus was in the form of God but humbled himself to become man. The other authors of the New Testament testify to the same marvellous truth that Jesus was Emmanuel "God with us". Thomas acclaimed him, "My Lord and my God". Thomas, a Jew, brought up in the strict teaching of the Old Testament in which Jehovah is the Lord, testified that Jesus was that one and only God. Jesus himself confirmed this truth when he said, "Before Abraham was, I am" and again "I and the Father are one" and "he who has seen me has seen the Father". Isaiah, many centuries before, with the inspiration of the Spirit of God had foretold this wonderful event when he said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and his name shall be almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is.9:6).

No wonder the Christian religion is unique, for no other religion teaches that the one and only God has taken our nature and lived among us as our brother. And so I ask the question, do you believe this? That is, are you a Christian, because this belief will make all the difference to your view of human

history and to your understanding of the purpose of life. God who has Himself become man, will certainly not allow the human race to slip away from His purpose. Plainly He is enormously interested in us and how we behave to one another. Take Jesus as your model for your life. Be serious about it. Read the New Testament and model yourself without any qualms on His teaching because it is certain to be right. Accept the divine teaching of Jesus as your guide with regard to the world, with regard to the Bible, with regard to God, remembering that "Jesus is our great God and Saviour," so that His views should be our views because they are undoubtedly true.

Consider next what happened to Jesus our great God and Saviour. Our fellow men and women, took Him and crucified Him. We crucified our Lord and God, for basically we are all the same. We men and women crucified the Prince of Life. What does that tell us about ourselves? Simply this, that we humans have a spirit which will not have God to rule over us. We reject Him. Do you think we will get away with it in the end? That God will do nothing about it? On the contrary, we will reap what we sow as sure as night follows day.

But why did God become man and allow Himself to be scoffed at rejected and crucified for He knew the end from the beginning. The Scripture is quite clear; His actions were purposeful. He gave Himself for us. He allowed men to crucify Him and thus to symbolise and express their God-rejecting attitude (in which we share) that He might save us from the wrath and reconcile us to Himself. In the whole process, He, as a man, perfectly obeyed His heavenly father as we ought to but don't. He was in perfect love and kindness towards all around Him, even his enemies, as we ought to be but are not; and he accepted in His own soul the punishment which God inflicts on rebellious sinners, the agony of which was expressed in our Lord's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane and in his cry of desolation on the cross. Jesus, God's Messiah, and beloved Son died for our sins. He bore our sins in his own body. If we consciously lay our guilt on to Him through faith in Him we are forgiven. We escape from the wrath which a rebellious world lies under and we are restored through forgiveness to God's fellowship and the joy of His presence.

Once again christianity is unique in that it's impossible to think that there can be any forgiveness, any reconciliation with God, if we by-pass the cross, on which the son of God died for our sin. His death was perfect, his trampling down all that was evil was complete, His bearing of our sins left nothing over. It is not surprising but is entirely congruous that he would rise from death, the outward consequence of sin. The resurrection is the seal of the truth of the Christian faith, that faith which affirms that Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us" and that He is our salvation.

Do you believe these things, for they have abundant evidence to support their truth; have you responded to them; are they the centre of your view of life; have you come to Him as your Lord and called on Him for forgiveness and for the gift of His fellowship, His Spirit, which He has provided by becoming our brother and dying for sin and which He gives to all who ask? Do you believe these things, have you responded to them, are you a Christian?

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