

The Only Way

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Ephesians 6:10, 11 "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

We come now to the detailed consideration and analysis of this most important statement: 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' The Apostle is exhorting these Ephesians to realize something of the nature of the battle in which we are all inevitably engaged as the result of being Christians. Indeed this battle exists whether we are Christians or not. The teaching of the Bible throughout is that this world in which we live is a battle-ground, is a place in which we literally have to fight for our souls, to fight for our eternal welfare.

The Apostle gives these Ephesians some very specific instruction with regard to the nature of that battle, and as to the only way in which it can be waged successfully. Clearly the exhortation is primarily for Christian people; his whole argument is based upon that consideration. At the same time, however, it has a message for everyone; for it is true to say that this is a conflict which affects all persons whether they realize it or not. Those who are not Christian do not understand their own world at this present time; they cannot understand why it is as it is, and why various things are happening. So while we are looking at the Apostle's instruction with regard to the way to fight this great battle, we shall, incidentally, be seeing the exposure of the complete failure of all who are not Christian even to understand their problem, and still more their failure to deal with it in an adequate and successful manner. In other words, we are confronted here with the Apostle's teaching as to the way in which we can fight successfully the forces that are arrayed against our souls and their highest and best interests.

Perhaps the best way to approach this subject, and to put it into its modern setting in order that we may realize the relevance of all this to life as it is today, would be for me to quote some words which I read in a newspaper recently. A certain senior lecturer in education in a college in Great Britain said this: 'The Church should take a firmer lead in moral matters; woolly generalizations must go. The Church must give answers to real modern problems, including sex. While the religious basis offers the best prospect of success it should never be regarded as the only way to teach morality, otherwise we would become narrow-minded.' This is a very typical statement of the attitude of so many in the world at the present time to the problem which is dealt with here by the Apostle Paul. I refrain from making certain obvious comments upon it, for I am

interested in it simply because I think it will help us to understand the Apostle's teaching. Setting detailed considerations aside for the moment, we shall consider the Apostle's teaching in general as it gives an answer to this kind of statement. The lecturer uses the word 'woolly' - he does not want 'woolly generalizations'. Yet, poor man, his own statement is nothing but a woolly generalization! However, let us ignore that. It is one of the typical modern clichés - 'The Church must do this and not do that; it is about time the Church . . .' We are all familiar with such remarks.

Statements of this type are invariably based on an ignorance of what the Church is, and what is the nature of her teaching. In the Ephesian passage before us, the Apostle is really saying that what he is teaching is the only way to deal with the problem of conflict. The lecturer says that 'while religion offers the best prospect of success, it should never be regarded as the only way to teach morality, otherwise we would become narrow-minded'. The Apostle, on the other hand, specifically and openly says that the way he propounds is the only way to victory. That is why there is such a note of urgency in his teaching, and why, as I have said, it is a kind of trumpet-call: 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God.' If you fail to do this you are defeated, you are already finished before you start. The Apostle's is the only way. We make no apology for saying so. We are not at all afraid of this charge of 'narrow-mindedness'. When you know that to take a certain course is the only cure for a disease, that it is specific, that it cures it to a certainty, and that nothing else can do so, you do not regard it as being narrow-minded to use that remedy and to refuse to waste time with other remedies. That is not being narrow-minded, it is just being sensible and sane and rational.

Every kind of specialization is in this sense narrow. We are living in an age of specialization; but I have never heard anyone suggesting that an atomic scientist is narrow-minded because he gives the whole of his time to the science of the atom. Of course not! That is just common sense, that is wisdom; it is to concentrate on what matters, what is powerful, what really does yield results.

But let me state my thesis positively. The claim of the Christian faith quite openly and specifically is that it - and it alone - can deal with this problem. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not one of a number of theories and teachings and philosophies confronting the world. It is unique, it stands absolutely alone. The Bible is not one book among many books. It is God's Book, it is a unique Book, it is *the* Book, standing apart from all the others. We must emphasize this because it is the whole basis of the Christian faith. The Church is not one of a number of institutions; she claims to be quite unique as an institution; she says she is the body of Christ. We speak because we have a revelation. The Bible does not provide us with a theory, a speculation, an attempt to arrive at truth. The position of all the men who wrote the books of the Bible is akin to what the Apostle says about himself in the third chapter of this Epistle to the Ephesians: 'For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery'.

The Apostle does not address the Ephesians saying: 'Listen, many people have been offering you advice and teaching; well, I have studied a great deal also, and I have come to this conclusion; so this is what I suggest.' That is not the case at all! He says, 'a revelation was given to me'. It is not a message devised by Paul; it was given to him by the Lord Himself, the Lord of Glory, on the road to Damascus. He apprehended him and arrested him and said, 'I am going to send you as a minister and a witness to the people and to the Gentiles' (Acts 26:16-18). Divine communication is the whole basis of the Christian faith. It is therefore foolish to regard that faith as one amongst many. No, as the Apostle Peter stated it once and for ever at the very beginning of the Church when he and John had been arrested and were arraigned before the authorities in Jerusalem, 'There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). None other! There is not even a second! He is the only One, and He is enough; you do not need any addition. This and this alone! And that note is found in everything the Apostle says. That is why he is so urgent, so insistent as he presses his message upon them. This is the only hope. Were it not for this there would be nothing at all. It is a dogmatic pronouncement; and anyone who apologizes for his Christianity, or tries to accommodate it, or to say that it is the best amongst a number, is virtually denying the most essential point in the Christian position.

We must not stop, however, at a mere dogmatic assertion, but must proceed to demonstrate it. I suggest that if you take the evidence of history you will be driven to the conclusion that it is the only way. Go back, review the history of the centuries as far as it is known, look at secular history-books, take history as it is recorded in the pages of the Old Testament, and you will find beyond any doubt or question that the asseveration of the Apostle is fully and completely substantiated.

You find it in miniature, as it were, in the story of the children of Israel themselves. Their story is that whenever they were true to God, and worshipped Him, and obeyed His commandments, all went well with them; they were a pattern and an example to the nations, and highly successful; but every time they turned away from God and looked at the idols of other nations, or took up their religion or their philosophies, everything went wrong with them. It is the principle that emerges as you read through the pages of the Old Testament.

But the most impressive statement of all, the perfect summary of this entire argument, is provided by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, beginning at verse eighteen and going on to the end of the first chapter. He says that as nations and peoples in supposed 'wisdom' have turned their backs upon God the Creator, they have always become fools - 'Imagining themselves to be wise, they became fools'. Then he proceeds to give an account of their terrible moral degradation, the perversions and obscenities into which they fell. 'Ah,' says our modern lecturer, 'the Church must speak specifically about sex . . .' Very well, the Church does so! If you want to know what she has to say, read the second half of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and you will find an account of all the modern perversions, all the foulnesses that are disgracing life at the present time. They have occurred many times before. But when has that happened? It is always when man in his supposed wisdom has turned from the

Creator and has given his worship to the creature. The whole history of the human race substantiates what the Apostle claims. Before Christ ever came into the world everything else had had its opportunity. The Greek philosophers had flourished, the greatest of them had already taught their beliefs. But they could not deal with the problem of sin; their teaching was not adequate and had already failed. There was also the great Roman Empire with its system of law; but there was a canker at the very heart of the Empire; and it finally collapsed, not because of the superior prowess of the Goths and the Vandals and the Barbarians, but because of the moral rot at its very heart. That was the cause of the 'Decline and Fall' of the great Roman Empire, as is admitted by all. In other words, history substantiates the Apostle's teaching.

But, unfortunately, modern history, contemporary history, proves my thesis also. This is where we see the relevance of this teaching. And how up-to-date it is! how it speaks to us at this present time! We have read in our newspapers during the last week statements such as that of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Edinburgh, and of various other Medical Officers of Health who have been giving their annual reports. 'The Church,' says the lecturer I have quoted, 'must supply an answer to the problem of sex.' What the Medical Officers of Health are reporting is that there is an appalling increase in venereal diseases and especially amongst adolescents and juveniles. Such is the problem confronting us. This moral problem has become the most acute and the most urgent - there is a serious breakdown of morality.

They tell us that we are confronted by an amoral generation, by people who do not seem to have a moral sense at all! But let us not forget that this situation must be considered in the light of the exceptional educational facilities and opportunities and advantages which have been available since 1870. This man who tells us that religion is not the only solution is a lecturer on education, and there has been an abundance of such lecturers and lectures since 1870. And yet here is our great problem - immorality and vice and evil! The world has multiplied its institutions for dealing with the moral and social problems in this present century more than ever before. Clubs, institutions, cultural agencies, have been multiplying one on top of another. Never has the government of any country spent so much in an attempt to deal with moral and social problems as has been done in this country in the present century. And yet here are these men saying one after another that moral standards are deteriorating almost hourly, week by week, and that the problem is becoming appallingly difficult of solution. They are asking what can be done? The lecturer in question says that things have come to such a pass that the Church must do something, the Church must begin to speak. But then he spoils it all by telling the Church what she is to say; and what he says, as I shall show, is completely wrong!

What then is the position? It is as religion has declined in this century that the moral problem has become more acute. Let us remember that we have two lots of statistics. There are the statistics of the Medical Officers of Health, proving that all these terrible problems and diseases are on the increase. But there are other statistics, church statistics. The number of church members is going down year by year; the number of adherents is declining; the number of Sunday School scholars grows less and less. The

two things go together. As religion has gone down all these other things have gone up. I am simply saying all this to justify the assertion of the New Testament that its teaching is the only way, and that there is none other. The modern situation is proving it before our eyes, and yet our education lecturer says that Bible teaching must not be the only teaching. He says that 'perhaps it will give the best hope of success', but would be 'narrow-minded' if we said that this is the only answer and solution. Well, let him mention the others! What has he got to mention? Education? We have tried it. Let him mention various clubs. We have tried them also, and cultural agencies. We are still trying them all. How foolish, how ridiculous, to utter these general clichés and not face the facts!

But there is a further reason why this is inevitably the truth; it is because of the nature of the fight in which we are engaged. The whole of past history proves it, the modern position proves it. But apart from that the nature of the fight itself makes this proposition inevitably true. How? Man's own nature makes a warfare absolutely certain. The fatal mistake made constantly about man is to regard him only as a mind and an intellect; and therefore, the whole basis of secular teaching is that all you need do is to tell men about the evil nature of certain things, and the evil consequences of doing them, and then they will stop doing them. Conversely, if you tell them to do certain things because they are right and good and true and noble, they will jump at them and do them. What ignorance of human nature!

I am not alone in speaking thus. I was interested recently to read a review of part of the autobiography of a well-known sceptical, irreligious, modern writer, Leonard Woolf. The review was written by another literary sceptic, Kingsley Martin. But the reviewer, at any rate, had reached the conclusion that the trouble with this whole school to which Leonard Woolf belongs is just this, that they will not see that man in the main is irrational. He used what seemed to me to be a very good illustration. 'What Leonard Woolf and all his companions, such as Bertrand Russell and others, have always failed to grasp is this,' he said, 'that man is a kind of iceberg.' Standing up above the water is a certain amount, about a third perhaps, which may look very white, but underneath are two-thirds out of sight in the depth, in the darkness. Writers like Leonard Woolf, says Kingsley Martin, do not realize that man is mainly irrational. What he means, of course, is that man is not governed by his mind, his intellect; his understanding, but by desires, impulses, and instincts, by what the psychologists call 'drives'. These are the things that control and master a man; and the problem which is confronting the world in the present era is that of these instinctive 'drives'.

All this can be seen on the national and international plane as well as in the case of the individual; and that is what makes all optimistic statements about some world organization that is going to banish war so childishly ridiculous. Nations, like individuals, are not governed by common sense. If the world were governed by common sense there would never be a war. War is sheer madness, from every standpoint. It is a waste of money, it is a waste of life, it is a childish way of settling a dispute and a problem. How can you settle a problem of government or any other problem by just killing one another? I repeat, war is sheer madness; there is nothing to be said for it. Why then do

the nations fight and prepare for war ? The answer is that they are not governed by their minds and intellects but by the two-thirds that is underneath the surface, the part of the iceberg that you do not see - greed, avarice, national pride, the desire to possess and to become greater than others. These are the things that ever cause wars. 'Whence come wars among you?' asks James. 'Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war within your members ?' (James 4:1). That is true of the individual as well as of nations; and because it is true it follows that nothing but that which can deal with this hidden powerful two-thirds can really provide a remedy for the situation. It is the claim of the Gospel that it, and it alone, can do so. Nothing else can.

In the next place consider the enemy that stands against us. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' 'Take unto you the whole armour of God,' says Paul, 'that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' Put up all your moral schemes and teachings against the wiles of the devil and he smiles at you in contempt. Of course! How utterly inadequate it all is! We shall elaborate that later.

Furthermore, consider the standard to which we are asked to attain. Christianity not merely tells us to be nice and good and clean and moral. A Christian is not simply a nice respectable person. It is because so many have thought that mere respectability is Christianity that they have left the Church. They say that. such a result can be achieved outside the Church, and point to the nice, good, moral people who are not Christians. And that is a perfectly fair argument. But the answer to it is that that is not Christianity. A Christian is not merely a person who does not do this, that, or the other. A Christian is positive. He is called to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness'; to be 'pure in heart'; to be 'perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'. That is Christianity! To be like Christ, to live as He lived! And the moment you consider the standard you see how utterly impossible and inadequate are all these other suggestions that are being put forward. We can, therefore, sum it all up by asserting openly, frankly, avowedly, and unashamedly, as the Apostle does here by implication, that this, and this alone, is the only way of victory and of triumph. It was because this is so that the Son of God came into the world. If anything else could have sufficed He would never have come. There would never have been an Incarnation, still less a death upon the Cross, were it not that this is true. 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' This is the beginning and foundation and basis of the Christian position. Christ came because, in a sense, He had to come if there was to be any salvation at all. He came because man had completely failed.

***O loving wisdom of our God,
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.***

It was and is the only way, there is no other. Let the world in its supposed wisdom call it 'narrow-minded'. As long as it does so it will continue to degenerate morally and ethically, and fester in its own iniquity. The Christian way is the only way.

But let us consider a second general point. It is obvious from the statement of the lecturer which we have been considering that Christianity is capable of being misunderstood and this, unfortunately, is something that has kept recurring throughout the centuries. There has been nothing so tragic as the misunderstanding of Christianity and the Christian message. There are people like this lecturer in education who are very ready to say, 'The Church must make her contribution. Christianity, perhaps, is the best hope we have got. It is not our only hope, but perhaps it is one that is most likely to lead to results, so the Church must play her part.' Governments are very ready to say this in times of crises. When the problem gets out of hand they ask, 'Well now, what has the Church to say?' And they expect the Church to make some general statements which will improve the moral tone of society. The Church must play its part! Yes, but this attitude betrays, as I say, a complete ignorance as to what the message of the Church really is.

There have been two main misunderstandings in this particular context. The first is that Christianity and its message is nothing but a teaching that we ourselves have to apply. This lies at the root of the misunderstanding of the lecturer whose statement we are examining. It is a very old fallacy. It was the real trouble at the beginning of the eighteenth century before the great Evangelical Awakening took place. It was the overall fallacy of the men who were called Deists, and others. They said that God had created the world like a watchmaker winding-up a watch and then had no further concern with it, except that He had given it a certain moral teaching. So they merely equated Christianity with a teaching and morality which tell people to live a good life. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby in the nineteenth century, was guilty of exactly the same fallacy: that was his teaching also. It is sometimes known as 'Public School religion' and teaches that Christianity is that which makes *you* 'a good little gentleman'. You refrain from certain things and you do certain other things. It is just moral, ethical teaching.

Now this is a tragic misunderstanding of the whole position, for it regarded Christianity merely as one teaching among a number of other teachings, for example, those of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Seneca, and others who supplied high, idealistic, moral teaching. Christianity is but another, and perhaps the best of them all; so let us give great attention to it. And do not forget that the late Mr Gandhi of recent date held a very exalted and noble teaching; and there are various others. They add to their list of great teachers the name of 'Jesus', as they call Him, and He generally comes somewhere about the centre. Some rise superior to Him, others are esteemed His inferiors. But such thinking and talking simply reduces Christianity to nothing but a moral, ethical teaching - just a variant of the theme of 'Goodness, Beauty and Truth' to which we are to aspire. It is because such multitudes of people, especially in the present century, regard that as Christianity that the Church is as she is.

Such was the teaching of the theological school called Modernism or Liberalism which came in about the middle of the last century in this country. Its theme was 'the Jesus of history'. They took out miracles, indeed the entire supernatural element, and the substitutionary atonement. What is Jesus? 'Ah,' they said, 'Jesus is the greatest religious teacher the world has ever known. Listen to His teaching, emulate His example, follow Him; and if you do so you will be a good Christian. Do not bother about doctrines, they are not important; it is Jesus' teaching that matters.'

So Christianity has been reduced to a moral and an ethical code and teaching. That leads inevitably to failure and to disaster, for it leaves the whole business to us as individuals. I have got to admire the teaching, next I am required to accept it, and then I have to proceed to put it into practice. It is left entirely to me. 'Ah but,' they say, 'look to the example of Jesus.' Example of Jesus? I know of nothing that is so discouraging as the example of Jesus! As I look at His moral stature, at His absolute perfection, as I see Him walking through this world without sin, I feel that I am already condemned and hopeless. Imitation of Christ? It is the greatest nonsense that has ever been uttered! Imitation of Christ? I who cannot satisfy myself and my own demands, and other people still less - am I to imitate Christ? The saints make me feel ashamed of myself. I read of men like George Whitefield and others, and I feel that I have not yet started. And yet I am told to take this ethical teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, this idealistic social teaching, and to put this into practice! 'It is so marvellous,' they say, 'it will stimulate you; look at Him and follow Him!'

It is not surprising that failure has resulted, and that people have left the Christian Church; it is not surprising that we are faced with a moral collapse in this country, and in all the countries, at the present time; for the non-Christian ethical teaching leaves it all to me, strengthless and powerless though I am. I am like the Apostle Paul by nature and I say, 'Alas, with my mind I see what is right, but I find another law in my members dragging me down. With my mind I receive and accept and admire the law of God, but there is this other law, this other thing, working within me, and making me captive to the law of sin and death which is within me' (cf. Romans 7:14-25). There is this third of the iceberg, as it were, above water and it is looking at the sun; but I am aware of the other two-thirds that is dragging me down to the depths and the darkness. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?' That is the inevitable position. If Christianity is but a moral ethical teaching it is as useless as all the others. The 'Christian' way has always been proved to be useless when it is reduced to such a level.

But Christianity is no mere code of ethics. Our educationalists cannot just turn to us and say, 'Well now, come along, you representatives of the Christian Church. Do not be narrow-minded, but give us your help, give us your teaching, we want to know what you think about sex, and many other factors in life.' I answer that what is needed is not what I think about sex, but a power that will deliver a man from being mastered and controlled by it. There is ample knowledge about sex. Alas, people today know far too much about sex; they know much more than their forefathers knew. They are reading books about it - novels, text-books, and so on - and the more they read the worse they get. Their reading only serves to aggravate the problem. It is not knowledge we need; it is power.

And that is where your moral ethical systems break down and fail completely. They have no power to offer, none at all. We must beware, therefore, of reducing Christianity to a mere moral, ethical teaching. God forbid that anybody should still be held in that ignorance and blindness! All that teaching has been tried very thoroughly for a hundred years and more, and it has failed completely, both in the case of the individual, and also in the national and international realms.

But I must say a word about the other misunderstanding. Here, again, is an interesting and fascinating story. There have been those who have said, 'No, it is not just enough to hold this teaching before men and to tell them to get on with it, because the forces against us are too great. We are up against the world and the flesh and the devil. There is all that I am conscious of within myself, and then as I walk about the streets and see the hoardings and the placards and read newspapers, sin is insinuating itself and tempting me. I see it everywhere around me, in advertisements, in dress, and in all that characterizes the life of a great city like London. How can I fight against all this? 'No,' they say, 'there is only one thing to do. If a man is to save his soul and to live a good and pure life he has got to get away from all this, he has got to segregate himself.'

In other words, the second great misunderstanding of the Christian teaching is that which we can sum up under the whole notion of monasticism. Here is a wonderful story. There is something about the people who started the monastic idea which calls forth one's admiration. At any rate they were men who were serious and concerned about their souls and their lives and their daily living. This was the biggest thing in life to them; so much so that they would give up a profession, they would give up home, they would give up all that had been dear to them and retire into a monastery, there to live what they called the 'religious' life. The idea was that the only way in which you could fight this battle was to get away from the enemy as much as possible. Now in that principle, as I shall explain, there is something which is right and true. The Apostle Paul, addressing the Romans in chapter 13 of his Epistle, says, 'Make no provision for the flesh'. It would be good for all of us if we spent less time reading our newspapers, kept our eyes straight ahead as we walked the streets of London, did not look at certain things, and did not go to certain places. So far, so good! But certain people carried that further; they said that you must get right out of the world. You must concentrate on this alone, you must give up ordinary life and living, and isolate yourself; you must go into a monastery, or become a hermit on top of a mountain, or get away into some cell somewhere; that being the only way of escape. And they did not stop even at that. They said that you have to keep down the body; so you have to fast twice, perhaps three times a week. You have to do other things also, perhaps put on a camel-hair shirt, and in various ways knock down this body of yours and insult it as much as you can. They indulged in what were called 'flagellations'; they would beat their bodies, scarify their flesh, all in an attempt to overcome these powers that are against us in this great fight of which Paul is speaking. The best description of all this that I have ever read is to be found in a book called *The Vision of God*, the Bampton Lectures delivered about 1928 by Kenneth E. Kirk. There you will find an account of how this idea came in, and at a very early period in the history of the church. And that same school of thought has persisted ever since.

But that is not Christianity, and for the following reasons. Though you leave the world and all its prospects, and go and live as a monk or a hermit in a cell; though you have left the world, you have not left yourself - the two-thirds submerged part of the iceberg is still with you! You do not leave your sinful nature outside the monastery. Evil imaginations and thoughts are with you still; you cannot get rid of them. Wherever you go they go; yourself, your nature, this part that drags you down will be with you in the cell exactly as it was on the streets of London. Not only so, the evil powers are also there as much as they were when you were living your life amongst other people. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' Stone walls do not keep them out, iron bars do not keep them out, locked doors do not keep them out; wherever you are they will be there. They are spiritual, they are unseen, they can penetrate everywhere, and they are with you in your cell. You cannot get rid of them. And for these reasons the great system of monasticism finally broke down completely.

The whole matter can be summed up in the story of one person, Martin Luther. What exactly did Luther discover? He was a monk there in his cell, fasting, sweating, praying, trying to get rid of the body, trying to get rid of this problem, trying to conquer these spiritual enemies. But the more he tried the nearer he seemed to be to complete failure and utter hopelessness. And at last he saw it! His monastic ideas were a travesty of Christianity; they were not Christianity at all. Christianity was something essentially different. He saw that you could be a Christian in the midst of the world, you could be a Christian 'sweeping a floor', as he puts it. You need not be a coenobite, you need not take vows of chastity and remain unmarried, in order to be a preacher. No, as a married man you are as eligible as a man who renounces sex. He suddenly saw that the monastic way was not God's way, and that was the beginning of the great Protestant Reformation. Thank God that that which Luther had to unlearn is not the Christian teaching, for the logical end of the monastic argument is that you cannot be a true Christian and still live in the world. Of course the Roman Church did not teach that, but divided Christians into 'religious' and 'laity', and taught that the latter could be helped by borrowing from the over-plus of righteousness of the former - the utterly unscriptural doctrine of supererogation. You see how essentially different that is from the New Testament teaching. Here were ordinary people, servants, slaves, husbands, wives, parents, children. The Apostle does not say to them, 'Off, all of you, into a monastery; get away somewhere from the world.' Not at all! Thank God it is not that! That would be a gospel for wealthy people alone. And not only so; there would be no Christian witness and testimony in the world.

What a denial it is, ultimately, of the glory of the Christian faith! What is the Christian method? I end with a text. It is not, 'Set about imitating Christ, adopt His moral ethical teaching, and try to put it into practice'. It is not, 'Get away and become a monk or a hermit'. But just where you are in the midst of the world, with evil and sin rampant round and about you, and everybody and everything doing all they can to discourage you and to drag you down, just as and where you are, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand

the wiles of the devil.' It is not retreat, it is not escape, it is not attempting something that is impossible. No, it is this supernatural, miraculous Gospel that enables us to be 'more than conquerors' over everything that is set against us.

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