

Seven Reasons Why I Believe in THE FULL DIVINITY OF CHRIST

From the book *CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS*

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WStS Note: This etext was typed and reformatted by Tom and Katie Stewart from a reprint (1971-- uncopyrighted) of the original edition. The use of the letter "s" instead of "z" was correct at the time of publishing.

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST is God manifest in the flesh. God tabernacling in human form. When I say I believe in the full deity of Christ, that is what I affirm.

At His birth our Lord Jesu Christ did not begin to exist. He was before all worlds Very God of Very God. Neither did He cease to be God, He was, is and always shall be the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity. At the incarnation God the Son took on another mode of existence by taking into union with Himself an impeccable human nature. The Westminster Confession of Faith states:

"The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

It is the full deity of Christ as taught in the scriptures and defined in this statement for which I contend.

The aim of the so-called modernists is to dethrone Christ and rob Him of the attributes of Deity. To them Christ is a man, howbeit a great man, an unparalleled man, a unique man but still only a man. He was subject, they affirm, to all the failings common to humanity.

On the other hand, the traditional view of the church for which I contend affirms with Paul that "Christ is God over all blessed forever" and because He is God the saints can acclaim "Jesus never fails."

In this message I want to advance seven reasons which buttress my faith in the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FIRST REASON: THE UNSHAKEABLE HISTORICITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Attempts have been made, and no doubt will continue to be made, to destroy the historical Christ as portrayed in the New Testament. The assertion that Christ was a real person, born at the time and in the way the gospels state, living the life the gospels portray, dying the death the gospels record and rising again from the dead as the gospels narrate, has been challenged on every side.

Rationalistic writers have sought to explain away the historical Christ by seeking to establish that Christ is a composite idea made up of many forms of religious thought.

Professor Jensen of the University of Marburg, a typical exponent of this school of thought, states:

"Jesus of Nazareth, in whom, as in the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, Christianity has believed for nearly two thousand years, and who is regarded, even by the most advanced scholarship of our own day, as a good and great man who lived and died the sublime pattern of the ideal ethical life -- this Jesus has never lived upon earth; neither has He died, because He is nothing but an Israelitish Gilgamesh. We, the children of a much lauded time of progress and achievements, we who look down upon the superstitions of the past with a forbearing smile, we worship in our cathedrals and churches, in our meeting-houses and schools, in palaces and shanties, a Babylonian deity."

In a similar manner so-called modernistic writers negate the actuality of the historical Christ of the gospels by means of "a literary and higher criticism." For example, in a recent book "The Jesus of St. John," Principal J. E. Davey of the Irish Presbyterian College, Belfast, writes:

"Thus one must, I think, not claim too much, in the spheres of historical and literary criticism, for the factual worth of the peculiarly Johannine material; and the discourses are obviously expansions due to meditation, whether of historical sayings of Jesus or of apocryphal material based on the utterances of Christian prophets, or are imaginative constructions of the evangelist or his sources."

To the modernist school the Christ portrayed in the gospels is partly historical, partly apocryphal and partly whimsical.

Paul anticipated the manufactured Jesus of both the philosophical and theological rationalists and warns against the preaching of "another Jesus" 2 Corinthians 11:4.

Different Estimates of Christ

The searching question of our Lord Himself, "Whom do men say that I am?" rings down through the corridors of time challenging the men of every age.

The estimate of the iniquitous Jewish leaders, "He hath a devil and is mad" (John 10:20) re-echoes in the blasphemies of the infidels and sceptics.

The estimate of Nicodemus before his conversion that Christ was a great religious teacher finds its echo in the words of unbelieving men of the centuries who have paid tribute to the genius of Christ.

Renan, the French infidel, said:

"All history is incomprehensible without him. He created the object and fixed the starting point of the future faith of humanity. He is the incomparable man to whom the universal conscience has deemed the title Son of God and that with justice."

Colonel Robert Ingersoll, the notorious American sceptic, stated:

"I wish to say once for all that to that great and serene man I pay, I gladly pay, the homage of my admiration and tears."

Our Lord followed up His general enquiry with the individual enquiry "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God."

I am of Peter's persuasion and it is the Christ whom Peter confessed for which I contend.

The question of Christ's contemporaries, "What manner of man is this?" is the question that has baffled the faithless philosophers of the ages. The greatest intellects cannot on any natural basis explain His life, death, resurrection or His power, universal influence and moral glory.

Viewing the Cross with Christ in the throes of His mighty passion, the centurion in charge became awed with solemn conviction and exclaimed, "Verily this was a righteous man." That answer, however, was not sufficient. With conscience disturbed he had yet another word to speak. When his dreadful task was finished as he rode away from that awful scene he turned and took a final view of the crucified Christ. Then he cried out again, "Verily this was the Son of God." That word of the centurion is the only adequate answer to the age-long enquiry, "But whom say ye that I am?"

The Supernaturalness of the Gospels

Now the master brains of all lands and ages have tried in vain to portray a perfect character. Their attempts all resulted in a remarkable demonstration of the invulnerable fact that it is beyond the genius of man to paint a God-like man.

How comes it then, that four men, condemned by their learned contemporaries as "unlearned and ignorant" have accomplished such a task? There is only one answer, they had before them the person about whom they wrote. They were not novelists but eye-witnesses. It is self-evident that man could sooner create a world as invent the Christ of the gospels. It is also self-evident that the evangelists wrote under the inspiration of God. Only *Inspiration* could record *Incarnation*.

Many other pens have attempted the colossal task of writing the life of Christ and their spurious gospels are themselves a convincing testimony to their ignominious failure. Of these apocryphal gospels Prebendary C. A. Row writes:

"The case stands thus: our Gospels present us with a glorious picture of a mighty Saviour, the mythic gospels with that of a contemptible one. In our Gospels He exhibits a superhuman wisdom; in the mythic ones a nearly equal superhuman absurdity. In our Gospels He is arrayed in all the beauty of holiness; in the mythic ones this aspect of character is entirely wanting. In our Gospels not one stain of of sinfulness defiles His character; in the mythic ones the Boy Jesus is both pettish and malicious. Our Gospels exhibit to us a sublime morality; not one ray of it shines in those of the mythologists. The miracles of the one and of the other stand contrasted on every point."

Another proof of the supernaturalness of the gospels is their indiminishable store of wisdom and knowledge compressed into such small compass. For example, my copy of Geikie "Life and Words of Christ" contains 739 pages, my copy of Farrar's "Life of Christ" contains 690 pages, my copy of Patterson-Smyth's "The People's Life of Christ" contains 336 pages, and my copy of Stalker's handbook "The Life of Jesus Christ" contains 155 pages. In contrast, in my copy of the Authorized Version, Matthew's gospel is contained in 46 pages, Mark's in 30 pages, Luke in 49 pages and John's in 36 pages. Notice the contrast, the four "Lives" contain almost 2,000 pages, but the four gospels only 161 pages.

Almost innumerable volumes have been written explaining and commenting on the Four Gospels and yet their wealth of wisdom is not exhausted. Why this undiminished wealth? From what source did the evangelists gain this eternal wisdom? How did they attain their skill to portray the unfading beauty of the Perfect Life? Who taught them to describe a Person Who to this day is unparalleled in history? There can be but one answer to these questions, The Living Christ was before them and the Living Spirit infallibly enabled them to portray Him to the ages. This Christ is portrayed by them as none other than the Mighty God enthroned in humanity.

I therefore believe in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Unshakeable Historicity of His Person.

SECOND REASON: THE UNQUESTIONABLE RELIABILITY OF THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

Christ is both the great Prophet of Scripture and the great Person of scriptural prophecy. Prophetic utterances heralded forth His advent and His whole Person, Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection were prophetically unveiled long before His actual entrance into the world. These prophecies, foretold many hundreds of years beforehand, the place, the time, the circumstances and the characteristics of Christ's coming and they were fulfilled to the minutest detail.

If their testimony concerning the circumstances of Christ's birth stand impregnable, by what law of evidence can their testimony to Christ's person be rejected?

Now the prophetic unveiling of Christ's Birth in the Old Testament is never divorced from the prophetic declaration concerning His Person and Work.

Genesis 3:15. The earliest prophecy in Genesis 3:15 "He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel" not only foretold Christ as the seed of the woman but also that He was to be the Person of Power who would crush the great adversary of the human race. That Eve was in no doubt about this Person is evident from her exclamation when Cain was born, "I have gotten a man, the Lord." Genesis 4:1. (There is no word in the Hebrew corresponding to the word "from" in our translation). The learned Dr. Gill comments:

"It would appear that she took that seed to be a divine person, the true God, even Jehovah, that should become man."

Eve was mistaken in thinking that Cain was the promised seed but she made no mistake in thinking that the promised seed when He came would be none other than God Himself.

Dr. Munro Gibson says:

"Just as God wraps up in the seed, the stem and the root, the leaves and the branches, and all that afterwards comes out of it, so in this old seed-bed of theology as we may call it, He wraps up all the most important things which are afterwards fully unfolded."

Thus even here in the twilight of prophecy we catch a glimpse of the full deity of Jesus the Son of God.

Genesis 49:8-12. As the book of Genesis nears its end, another great prophetic utterance calls for attention -- the prophecy of Jacob concerning Judah found in Genesis 49:8-12. Each succeeding prophecy unfolds something new concerning the coming One. In this particular prophecy four great truths are revealed concerning Christ.

His Sonship would be Special.

"Thy father's children shall bow down before thee," Genesis 49:8. The word translated "bow down" is the same word which occurs in the second commandment concerning graven images. "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them." Exod. 20:5. In this prophecy those who by the ordinary course of nature should be equal with the Messiah "thy father's children" were to bow down to Him in the same manner as they would bow down and worship their God.

Now the name Judah means "Glory to God" and the name Shiloh "peace." In this connection Dr. Gibson points out:

"There is, I cannot help thinking, something more than curiosity in the fact, that if the Hebrew equivalents were given for the Greek words in the hymn which was sung by the angels over Bethlehem's plains, when the great son of Judah was born there, a Prince and a Saviour it might read thus, 'Judah' in the highest and on earth 'Shiloh'; 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace'."

Yes, Christ's Sonship is Special.

His Sovereignty would be Supreme.

"Thy hand shall be in the neck of thy enemies," Genesis 49:8. This prophecy has a further development in that great prophetic Psalm, Psalm 2. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Yes, Christ's Sovereignty is Supreme.

His Sceptre would be Supernatural.

"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," Genesis 49:10. Here we have the magnetism of the Divine Personality, a prophetic echo of the New Testament affirmation, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. The pivot of the gathering is Christ and its perimeter runs out into all the earth.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Yes, Christ's Sceptre is Supernatural.

His Sacrifice would be Salvation.

"He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes," Genesis 49:11.

This wonderful unfolding of the blood-shedding at Calvary has its parallel in Isaiah 63:1-5:
"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, *mighty to save*.

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

"For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

"And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

Complete atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing is paid
Whate'er Thy people owed;
How then can wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood?

Yes, Christ's Sacrifice is Salvation.

Who else could this be? One, whose Sonship is Special, whose Sovereignty is Supreme, whose Sceptre is Supernatural and whose Sacrifice is Salvation. This could be none other than God Himself. Every circumstance of this prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ and Christ must therefore be God.

Isaiah 9:6. The twilight of Genesis now gives place to the morning of Isaiah. The prophetic vision becomes clearer.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Here we have not only a child born but a son given. The Son of God could not be born by human generation. God so loved that He gave. The Son was given. He could, however, only be given by an incarnation hence the child was born. Who was the Son? None other than the Mighty God. Note, too, this was His name after the incarnation, "He shall be called."

The Son of God, the Son of man,
Who was before the world began,
Who is, and evermore shall be
One God to all eternity.

The child is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, and He is the Son and being the Son the Mighty God and Father of Eternity.

The prophecy concerning His birth was absolutely correct, so also is this prophetic testimony to His glorious Person.

Daniel 9:25 and Micah 5:2

In Daniel the morning has given place to mid-day and the very time of the coming of the Messiah is declared.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." [Daniel 9:25].

In the previous verse we are told who the Messiah, the Anointed One, is. He is the Most Holy, none other than God Himself.

Also in the mid-day of prophecy a clear vision is given of the very place of Christ's birth.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, 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; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." [Micah 5:2].

Nothing could be plainer. Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. This scripture was fulfilled to the last letter and although circumstances seemed to point to Nazareth as the likely place of Christ's birth yet through the decree of a heathen emperor the expectant mother was brought to Bethlehem and there the child was born. The prophecy is equally plain concerning the Person who was to come forth at Bethlehem. "His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting, or from the days of eternity." (marginal reading).

This could refer to no one but Jehovah Himself. Now history demonstrates that the first part of the prophecy is unassailable, how then can the second part be questioned?

Malachi 3:1

In Malachi we come to the evening of the Old Testament prophetic vision: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

Here the ministry of John the Baptist is foretold and then fast on the heels of the forerunner the advent of the greater Messenger, the Messenger of the Covenant. Who is He? The prophet answers, "The Lord." Where does He come to? The prophet replies, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body," John 2:20, 21.

Who came suddenly to that temple of flesh prepared by the Father's hand for His reception? None other than Jehovah the Son.

Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad,
From everlasting was the Word;
With God He was, the Word was God,
And must divinely be adorned.

But lo! He leaves those heavenly forms,
The Word descends and dwells in clay,
That He must hold converse with worms
Dress'd in such feeble flesh as they.

Mortals with joy behold His face,
The eternal Father's only Son;
How full of truth! how full of grace!
When through His eyes the Godhead shone.

We conclude this brief survey of Messianic prophecy by repeating the question asked at the commencement, "If the testimony of prophecy concerning Christ's birth and work stands impregnable, by what law can the same testimony concerning Christ's Person be rejected?" The reliable prophecies declare that, He is God.

So I believe in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Unquestionable Reliability of the Prophecies concerning Him.

THIRD REASON: THE UNIMPEACHABLE VALIDITY OF THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

The fact that our Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be God is incontestable. A study of His actual words as recorded in the gospels demonstrate in at least seven ways that He placed Himself on a place of equality with God the Father and so coupled Himself with the Godhead as to leave no doubt concerning His full and eternal Deity.

1. Christ claimed to be the God of Heaven

The title "Son of God" He repeatedly appropriated to Himself. By designating Himself by this divine title He emphatically declared that He was God. That this name Son of God distinctly conveyed such a stupendous

claim to His hearers cannot be questioned. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," John 5:18. "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God," John 10:33.

It was upon this title and its divine claim that the whole proceedings against Christ before the Sanhedrin were based. "But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy," Matthew 26:63-65.

Luke supplements Matthew's account thus: "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am," Luke 22:70.

Now if this interpretation of the Jews was erroneous it was the bounden duty of the Lord to set them right, especially when upon this very interpretation they were going to stain their hands with His blood. Our Lord, however, said nothing to show that they were under a misapprehension. He sealed the title "Son of God" with His life's blood.

Under such circumstances, if Christ was not what He claimed to be, God incarnate in the flesh, what language would be strong enough to condemn this act of the basest deception? What would we think of one who would incite others to murder by a deliberate silence when one word could clear away the dreadful misapprehension? This awful alternative I cannot accept, therefore I believe Him to be what He Himself claimed, the God of Heaven.

2. Christ claimed to be King of both Worlds

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," Matthew 13:41.

Here, in the plainest possible manner the Lord Jesus declares that He is King of both worlds. If He is not that universal King then what must we think of Him?

3. Christ claimed to be Sovereign of the Law

As the Lawgiver is greater than the Law so did Christ exalt Himself above the Law. In the Sermon on the Mount this sovereignty is implicit.

Seven in Scripture is the perfect number, and seven times Christ wields His perfect sceptre. He elevates the law until it glows with the glory of the Christian ethic prefacing His commands on the whole range of human duty with the simple yet sublime declaration, "But I say unto you." By this statement He not only places Himself on a level with the law but as He defines and extends the limits of the laws already propagated and adds new laws, He declares unquestionably that He is the Lawgiver Himself. (See Matthew 5:20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44.) ["20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven... 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire... 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart... 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery... 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne... 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also... 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).]

4. Christ claimed to be the Judge of all Men

The eternal reception of joy, "Come ye blessed" and the eternal sentence of doom, "Depart ye cursed," Christ

claims will be pronounced by none but Himself. He will discern between the moral ability or inability of all souls from Adam until the day of judgment.

5. Christ claimed to be the Lord of All

Over the divine institution of the Sabbath Christ claimed jurisdiction. "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day," Matthew 12:8. Over the church and all her ordinances Christ claimed supremacy. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matthew 28:19, 20.

Over the very heaven of heaven He also claimed Lordship. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Matthew 19:28. The very places in heaven are prepared and assigned by Christ Himself. He is Lord in His Father's house. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you," John 14:2.

6. Christ claimed to be Equal to the Father

The mighty works of the Father in creation, providence and redemption He claimed to be able to do. "For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," John 5:19.

In the great High Priestly Prayer of John 17, Christ places His will and purpose on equality with the Father's will and purpose. Only an equal would dare to address the Father and say, "Father, *I will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," John 17:24.

Granted, He said, speaking as the Mediator in the redemptive purpose of God, "My Father is greater than I," John 14:28. In contrast, however, speaking of His Deity He said, "I and my Father are one," John 10:30.

7. Christ claimed to be the Giver of Life

Christ claimed to be the giver of both physical and spiritual life. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John 5:28, 29. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John 10:27, 28.

All that pertains unto eternal life Christ claims to give.

Forgiveness: "And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, 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," Luke 5:20-24.

Rest: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Matthew 11:28-30.

Peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John 14:27.

Sonship: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John 1:12.

No one else but Christ dared to say, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Now these tremendous claims of Christ have been so established by Him that they stand unimpeachable.

Christ's immaculate character alone impregably establishes them. Even sceptics and infidels have paid their tributes to His unblemished honour and humility. How then could Christ Who is universally admitted to be of unparalleled nobility and character be anything else but what He claimed to be? Who could say after careful study of Christ's life that He was a deceiver and an imposter? There is but one inexorable alternative -- If Christ is not God He is not good. By proving His sanity one proves His deity.

Hence I believe in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Unimpeachable Validity of His Claims.

FOURTH REASON: THE UNALTERABLE AUTHORITY OF THE WORDS OF CHRIST

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," Matthew 24:35. The acid test of the passing of the centuries has failed to destroy the truthfulness of this assertion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Down through the generations Christ's words have established, beyond controversy, their unalterable authority. The closest scrutiny, and the bitterest enmity have failed to undermine their impregnable veracity and stability. Dr. R. A. Torrey comments:

"All the artillery of science, literature, philosophy, political intrigue, sarcasm, ridicule, worldly ambition, force, all the artillery of earth and hell, have been trained upon the words of Christ, and for centuries at a time an almost incessant cannonade has been kept up. Sometimes weak hearts have been shaken by the roar of the battle, but the words of Christ have remained absolutely unshaken. There has not been one single stone dislodged from these fortifications. Words that can come out of eighteen centuries of such experience as that unscathed, unscarred, unmarred, will stand forever."

One great demonstration of the proof of the unalterable authority of Christ's words is the story of His anointing for burial. "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her," Matthew 26:6-13.

These words of Christ spoken in an obscure village of a vassal state to an inconspicuous company of people have been fulfilled in all generations. Throughout the whole world, under all circumstances, in many different climates and to various classes of people this story has been told as was infallibly predicted by Christ. As another Matthew (quaint old Matthew Henry) remarks:

"This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of Christ crucified, and the inspired writers of the history of his passion, could not choose but take notice of this passage, proclaim the notice of it, and perpetuate the memorial of it. And being once enrolled in these records, it was graven as with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever, and could not possibly be forgotten. None of all the trumpets of fame sound so loud and so long as the everlasting gospel."

And is it not wonderful to think that as the reader peruses this very page the unalterable authority of Christ's word is demonstrated yet another time this scripture is fulfilled?

The One Who of Himself spoke such words must surely be God. Never man spake like this man, for this is not man but God in human form.

So I believe in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Unalterable Authority of His Words.

FIFTH REASON: THE UNASSAILABLE PURITY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The heavenly immaculateness of Christ's life is the great demonstration of His Deity. Against the dark background of the universal sinfulness of the race Christ stands out in unique contrast. Without doubt the writers of the New Testament viewed Him absolutely without sin.

Paul--- "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," Hebrews 4:15.

Peter--- "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Peter 2:22.

John--- "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin," 1 John 3:5.

Even Christ's enemies had to admit this self-evident fact. On a garment which is dirty to begin with, many more stains may escape detection, but on a garment immaculately white, the smallest stain cries out for attention. Christ's enemies could not even find the smallest stain. Even those who were primarily responsible for His death gave striking testimony to His sinlessness.

Pilate, Christ's judge, as he seeks to disassociate himself from the sentence which he has been forced to pass, exclaims three times: "I find *no fault* in Him," John 18:38; 19:4, 6.

Pilate's Wife, in an effort to deter her husband from the fatal act, warns: "Have thou nothing to do with that *just* man," Matthew 27:19.

Judas the betrayer adds his testimony in the wail of hellish remorse, "I have betrayed the *innocent* blood," Matthew 27:4.

The Centurion who carried out the crucifixion concluded his awful task by exclaiming, "Certainly this was a righteous man," Luke 23:47.

The **Dying Thief** who a few moments before reviled Christ (Matthew 27:44) testified, "This man hath done *nothing amiss*," Luke 23:41.

Before the crucifixion Christ capped the climax of His spotless career with a devastating challenge to His unrelenting foes, the Scribes and Pharisees, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

Further, in the gospels Jesus is never recorded as confessing sin. Over and over again He called for confession and repentance on the behalf of others, but to Himself required no such experience. A troubled conscience was something absolutely unknown to our Saviour. Dr. F. D. Jenkins writes:

"Had His nature entertained one touch of sin, one momentary flickering of an evil impulse, though He may have concealed it at the time, He could never have thus carried the sham through life, for

(1) conscience, though temporarily stifled is inevitably its own Nemesis;

(2) the slightest, most transient sin not only lingers ineffaceably in human nature, but redoubles its reproducing power by natural law; and progressively lowers the internal resistance until a final breakdown and exposure is inevitable."

The sinlessness of Christ is incontestable. What J. P. Richer, the German poet truly wrote is true:

"He is purest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the pure -- and still continues to rule and guide the ages."

Now I contend that if Christ was unassailably pure -- and the united testimony of friends and foes affirm it along with the consensus of opinion of the ages -- then no mere natural explanation can possibly define His person. He who stands out as the phenomenon in history, the moral miracle of the ages, can only adequately be explained in the words of John. "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, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," John 1:1, 14.

No other conclusion but that Jesus is God can define the exceptional Personality to whom sinlessness is predicated.

Therefore I believe in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Unassailable Purity of His Life.

SIXTH REASON: THE UNCONTRADICTIONAL ACTUALITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The Resurrection of Christ has been rightly called, "the Gibraltar of Christian Evidences and the Waterloo of Infidelity."

It is the best attested fact in history and the keystone of Christianity. Is it not surprising that many accept the authority of the gospel narratives in regard to the death of Christ but reject their testimony to His resurrection? How do we know that Christ died? By exactly the same authority which tells us He rose again.

Now the evidence for His resurrection is of the most extensive and reliable nature. The trustworthiness of the gospel narratives, the circumstantial evidence and the witness of Christian experience and the witness of Christian experience form a combined testimony to the actuality of the resurrection of Christ which is absolutely unshakeable. Now Christ declared that the resurrection was the supreme test of His Messiahship. By this, His claim to be the Son of God was to be emphatically vindicated. Now is Christ risen from the dead and thus is "declared to be the Son of God with power," Romans 1:4. Professor James Orr states:

"If the premises of the Christian view are correct as to Christ's claim to be the Son of God, and as to the connection of sin with death, it was impossible that He, the Holy One, should be holden of death. The Prince of Life must overcome death. His resurrection is the pledge that death shall yet be swallowed up in victory.

"On the other hand, the denial of Christ's resurrection leads to a subversion of His whole claim as unfounded. If historically real, the resurrection of Christ is a confirmation of Christ's entire claim; if it did not happen, this alone negates it. The resurrection is thus an integral part of the Christian view. In this respect also -- as well as in its bearing on our justification -- we may say: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," (1 Cor. 15:17)."

No one but God could lay down His life and take it again. The empty tomb empties Unitarianism of its arguments. Deity alone could smash the strong bands of Death. He Who is Lord of Death and Hell is surely Lord of All.

He dies! the Friend of sinners dies!
Lo! Salem's daughters weep around!
A solemn darkness veils the skies,
A sudden trembling shakes the ground:
Come, saints, and with your tears bedew
The Sufferer, bruised beneath your load;
He poured out cries and tears for you,
He shed for you His precious blood.

Here's love and grief beyond degree:
The Lord of Glory dies for man!
But lo! what sudden joys I see:
Jesus, the dead, revives again!
The rising God forsakes the tomb;
The tomb in vain forbids His rise!
Cherubic legions guard Him home,
And shout Him welcome to the skies!

Break off your tears, ye saints, and tell
How high your great Deliverer reigns;
Sing how He spoiled the hosts of hell,
And led the monster death in chains.
Say, Live for ever, wondrous King!
Born to redeem, and strong to save!
Then ask the monster, Where's thy sting?
And, Where's thy victory, boasting grave?

I believe then, in the Full Deity of Christ because of the Uncontradictable Actuality of His Resurrection.

SEVENTH REASON: THE UNSURPASSABLE VITALITY OF THE POWER OF CHRIST

Throughout all generations the unsurpassable vitality of the power of Christ has been both demonstrated and vindicated. Compare the influence of Christ with the influence of Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius. The influence of the great comparative religions is sullied with the depravity of their founders but the influence of Christianity is sanctified by the impeccability of its founder.

"What is, after all," asks Professor Warfield,

"the fundamental difference between Christianity and other 'positive' religions? Does it not turn just on this -- that the founders of the other religions point out the way to God while Christ presents Himself as that way? It is primary teaching that we receive, when we are told: 'Buddha and Confucius, Zarathustra and Mohammed are no doubt the first confessors of the religions which have been founded by them, but they are not the content of these religions, and they stand in an external and to a certain extent accidental relation to them. Their religions could remain the same even though their names were forgotten, or their persons replaced by others. In Christianity, however, it is altogether different. Christianity stands to the Person of Christ in a wholly different relation from that of the religions of the peoples to the persons by whom they have been founded. Jesus is not the first confessor of the religion which bears His name. He was not the first and most eminent Christian, but He holds in Christianity a wholly different place ... Christ is Christianity itself; He stands not outside of it but in its centre; without His name, person and work, there is no Christianity left. In a word, Christ does not point out the way of salvation; He is the Way itself."

The power of Christ to elevate is unquestionable. The triumph of evangelical missions is surely proof enough of that. Every day throughout the world men and women hopelessly lost in sin are being saved by the transforming power of the risen Christ. When all else fails Christ is triumphant. The experience of salvation witnesses to the fact that "Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Any doubt the soul may have about the Full Deity of Christ is quickly dispelled when contact is made with His Divine Person. When His hand touches us we know it is the hand of God. When His power lifts us we know it is the power of God. When His grace saves us we know it is the grace of God. When His love embraces us we know it is the love of God. When His peace fills us we know it is the peace of God. When His joy thrills us we know it is the joy of God. When His presence surrounds us we know it is the presence of God. And when He Himself speaks to us we know He is "God over all, blessed forever."

As Dr. R. W. Dale has said:

"What it is to find God or to be found of God every devout man knows, but the secret cannot be told. We feel His touch, and we know that the unseen Hand can be only His. There is a power upon us, and we need no visible sign or symbol to assure us that it is the power of the Eternal. A light shines; we know that it is Divine. In solitary places -- on the hills, by the sea, among the cornfields, in the woods -- in the crowded streets of great cities, the glory finds us. It finds us when we do not seek it; sometimes when we seek we cannot find it. And to Christian men these great hours often come when they are reading the Four Gospels. They witness a diviner transfiguration than that which Peter, James and John saw on the sides of Hermon. They become independent of the proof-texts on which biblical theologians have built their argument for our Lord's divinity; as they read, Christ commands their reverence, their love, their worship. They may know nothing of theological definitions, they may be perplexed by the terms of the creeds; but to them Christ is what God is, and apart even from the authority of His own words, it would be in their hearts to say that, having seen Him, they have seen the Father."

I believe therefore in the Full Divinity of Christ because of the Unsurpassable Vitality of His Power.

I could not conclude these arguments more appropriately than by recording that worshipful and triumphant *Te Deum*:

THE GLORIOUS COMPANY OF THE APOSTLES PRAISE THEE.
THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE PROPHETS PRAISE THEE.
THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS PRAISE THEE.
THE HOLY CHURCH THROUGHOUT ALL THE WORLD ACKNOWLEDGE THEE.
THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O CHRIST;
THOU ART THE EVERLASTING SON OF THE FATHER.

