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K. C. Moser

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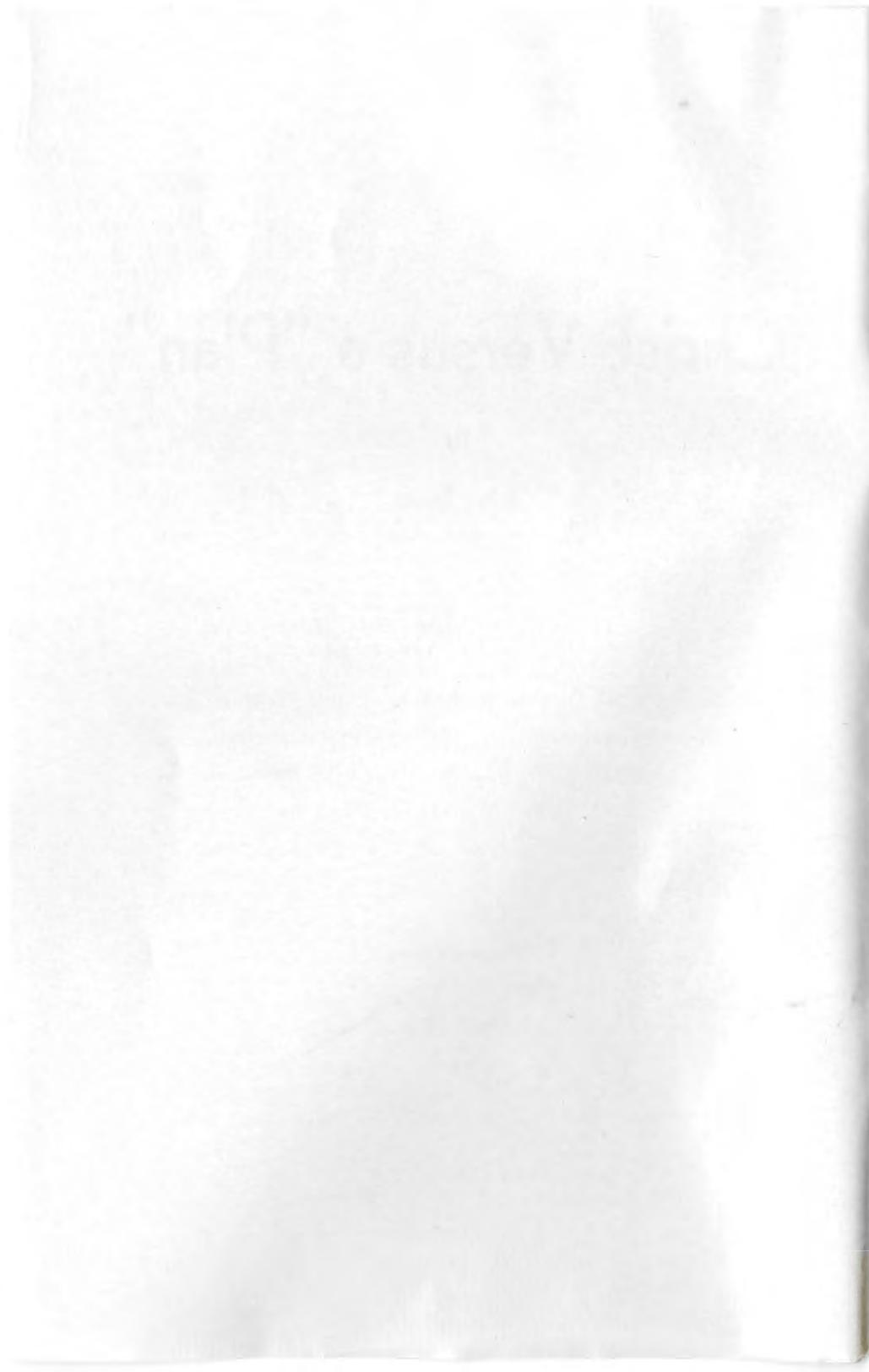
# Christ Versus a "Plan"

By

**K. C. Moser**

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## Foreword

Perhaps there is more preaching being done to day than ever in the world's history. It is, therefore, a good time to consider, in the light of the New Testament, the kind of preaching being done. Preaching is profitable only when the right things are preached. Preachers should know the Lord; they should understand the fundamental principles of Christianity. To be able to quote scripture, and to preach beautiful sermons are not enough. Nor is it enough to be able to name the conditions of salvation. A correct understanding of Christ as Saviour is essential to a correct knowledge of the conditions of salvation. The conditions do relate directly to Christ crucified, and preaching should show this relation.

The author has been moved by a definite sense of duty and gratitude to write this tract. To be silent when something needs badly to be said would be wrong. A good many years ago he discovered that he was not really preaching Christ. He was preaching only the conditions of salvation, just as though the great object of the Lord's visit to this earth was to set forth certain acts as conditions of justification. He was overlooking the importance of the cross upon which he bore our sins. He was not recognizing Jesus as our High Priest who offered himself for the sins of the world. He considered the cross as a means to an end, the end being the endowment of Christ crucified with the authority to originate a "plan of salvation." He was giving the "plan" the emphasis that belongs to Christ himself. It dawned upon him that Jesus did not come to inaugurate another legal system conditioning salvation upon human achievement or human righteousness, but to give his life a ransom for sinners. The conditions were no longer regarded as a "plan" to which Christ directed us, but as a proper response to Christ as sinoffering. He saw that we do not go through Christ to the conditions, but through the conditions to Christ. So without first preaching Christ as God's Son and our sinbearer he saw that the conditions were meaningless. The conditions of salvation are not merely responses to a king possessing "all authority," but responses to Christ as a sinoffering. They signify reliance upon Christ as a propitiation for our sins. Hence unless and until Christ as a sinoffering is preached it is impossible properly to respond to him. Merely to obey him outwardly is not enough. The obedience required in order to salvation must relate directly to him as a sinoffering and express trust in him for salvation.

Let it be understood that this is not a discussion of the conditions of salvation except as they relate to Christ crucified.

The author recognizes the absolute necessity of the conditions of Salvation. When he magnifies Christ as Saviour, he logically emphasizes also the conditions of justification. But what of the matter of magnifying the conditions apart from Christ crucified? It is time that we become concerned about a lack of emphasis on Christ as man's sin-offering. Apart from Christ crucified any so-called condition is meaningless.

Whether the author will be praised or blamed is not important. He wants to be right regardless of the cost. If he can help others to see in the personal Christ God's "plan" of saving sinners, and cause them to preach him as the consideration of all the conditions of salvation, he will be duly compensated for any cost. For the sake of clarity and emphasis the author has purposely resorted to repetition of certain fundamental truths.

## The "Plan"

Many persons think that Jesus came into the world to give a "plan of salvation." By "plan of salvation" these persons do not refer to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but to the conditions of salvation. By his death Jesus was qualified to give the "plan," or "to name the conditions." The advocates of the "plan" theory affirm that God could have chosen a different sacrifice for sins; or having elected to give his Son, he could have selected other conditions. For reasons unknown, we are told, God has required of sinners that they believe in Christ as God's son, repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ, and be baptized.

### Preaching The "Plan"

The preaching of those who hold the "plan" theory naturally consists of setting forth the "plan"—faith, repentance, confession and baptism. Usually the cross receives little or no emphasis. After all, the cross is considered but a means to an end, the end being the giving of a "plan"! Times almost without number I have heard sermons on the conditions of salvation without a single reference to the cross. I have heard preaching in meetings that lasted for three weeks in which the cross of Christ received only a passing reference. At no time did the preacher make the cross his theme and teach sinners what Jesus did on their behalf. But in every sermon a "plan" was preached and sinners urged to do their "duty." The "plan" was considered the gospel unto salvation.

### "A More Excellent Way"

There is another type of preaching based upon a different conception of the work of Christ for sinners. Instead of a "plan" Christ is preached. Jesus is set forth as the Son of God who became man's Saviour, not because he was given authority to name certain acts as conditions of salvation, but because he "bore our sins in his body on the tree." This type of preaching, therefore, puts the emphasis upon the redemptive power of the blood of Jesus. A real Saviour is one who furnishes the cause of man's salvation, not merely one who determines, by virtue of his authority, the conditions of salvation. The Messiah is not only a **teacher** and **king**, but he is preeminently the **sinoffering**. And it is his death on behalf of sinners that makes him the Saviour. The law of Moses placed man under the obligation of perfect obedience. Hence by the law none is justified. But Christ brought, not another code, but his "precious blood." And by it sinners are redeemed. Our iniquities were laid upon him,

and "with his stripes we are healed." Nothing like this ever happened before, nor will it ever happen again. Sin left man condemned. Christ bore his sins and offers him mercy. Salvation from sin is the direct result of what Christ did on the cross for sinners. He did not die in order to do something else that would make him the Saviour. The Father proposed to redeem the world by means of the death of his Son, and the Son willingly laid down his life for us. Both the Father and the Son, therefore, regard the death of the Son as the ground of salvation. Christ crucified for sinners is the divine "plan" of salvation. Sinners must look to Christ to save them, not to their own human achievement.

The conditions, therefore, must be related to Christ as **sinoffering**. The response of the sinner to Christ is not merely the response to one in authority, but to one who died in his stead. His authority (Matt.28:18) is not merely the right to command, but power to save through his own blood. The conditions of salvation are set forth, therefore, not as a "plan" or "scheme" originated by one in authority, but as means of appropriating him as Savior. **The sinner does not go through Christ to the condition of salvation, but he goes through the conditions to Christ as sinoffering.** Jesus invited sinners to himself. He did not direct them to a "plan." "He that hath the Son hath life." He is the source of life, the Son of God, crucified for our sins. This is considered the very essence of the gospel, the good news of salvation. "Christ Jesus and him crucified" is the gospel that is to be preached to all the world. The conditions of salvation are means of accepting his work on our behalf.

### Discussion

That two distinct types of preaching exist cannot have escaped the attention of the discerning hearer. For the following reasons I object to the "plan" idea:

1. **It is unknown to the New Testament.** Of course, the expression "plan of salvation" is not found in the Bible. This should be interesting to those who propose to call Bible things by Bible names. Certainly God has a plan or method of saving sinners, but his plan is Christ crucified. But that Christ came to give the world a plan of salvation as the result of the authority given him because of his death on the cross is wholly unknown to the New Testament. Because the conditions are always the same, some teachers suppose that they constitute a "plan." Eating is always essential to physical life, but who would think of denominating the mechanical acts of chewing and swallowing a "plan of life"? No inspired man ever preached

a "plan." Every one preached Christ crucified.

2. The "plan" theory regards any method of salvation as arbitrary with God. The writer has argued against this point many times. One speaker said: "God could have saved the world through Moses had he seen fit." Others have confidently affirmed that God was not bound to save the world by the "present plan." I know of nothing more unreasonable than to teach that God arbitrarily chose the method of saving sinners through Christ. In the shadow of the cross the Son prayed: "If it be possible, let this cup pass." Who can think that another way was possible in the light of this petition of the suffering Son? By sin the life of the sinner was forfeited. Christ gave his life for the sinner's life. The Son of man came "to minister and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Lev. 17:11). "In whom we have our redemption through his blood" (Eph. 1:7). "He that hath the Son hath the life" (1 John 5:12). Jesus alone of all beings in the universe was qualified to become man's Saviour. Men and angels have sinned; Christ proved himself sinless in the face of Satan's greatest efforts to induce him to sin. Christ was both divine and human. He was, therefore, qualified to represent God and man. Being divine, he could bear our sins and give his life for the sinner's life. For these and other reasons no one could have taken his place as man's Savior. Hence the method by which sinners must be saved is not arbitrary.

Closely related to the idea that any method of salvation is arbitrary with God is the misconception that salvation is not according to reason. Paul is cited as proof that the gospel is the "foolishness of God" (I Cor. 1:18-25). But it should be noted that Paul wrote of those who rejected Christ on the ground of human wisdom. But to those who accept him "Christ crucified" is the "power of God, and the wisdom of God." If Christ crucified is really divine foolishness, then so is everything spiritual. To the "natural man," that is, the carnal and unspiritual man, things spiritual are foolishness, because "they are spiritually judged" or discerned (1 Cor. 2:10-16). God is essentially wise just as he is essentially holy. And he has not turned from the principle of wisdom to that of foolishness in order to redeem sinners. If divine wisdom is "too deep" and God's ways "past finding out," let not carnal and foolish man attribute foolishness to him!

3. The "plan" theory is the product of a misconception of

the work of Christ on behalf of sinners. Christ was not another Moses, Jeremiah, or John the Baptist. He came to save sinners, not by reformation, but by means of an atoning sacrifice. **He did not come to show man how to become his own savior.** Christ came to be the Savior. He gave "himself," not a "plan". Our sins were placed upon him, and by a death for us we are redeemed. He is Savior because what he did for us saves us. The power to save is in the blood, not in a "plan," as I once heard a speaker affirm! Christ brought grace, not law (John 1:17); he offers his blood, not another code! When these things are really understood, there will be no place in any discerning mind for the "plan" theory.

4. **The "plan" theory robs Christ and the cross of the chief emphasis and places it on a "plan".** When a "plan" is preached people will naturally conclude that it is the greatest thing. But when the cross is preached and explained it will be seen to be the chief consideration. It is not too uncommon to hear sermons addressed to sinners in which Christ's work on their behalf receives only a scant notice and no emphasis. I once heard every sermon in a meeting of three weeks duration and not once was the cross stressed. An imagined "plan" did receive constant emphasis. No untaught sinner could possibly have learned what he should know about the death of Christ in his stead. **Christ crucified was not preached!** Conditions apart from Christ crucified were repeatedly preached. The speaker regarded them as a "plan" arbitrarily given by the Lord. The cross only gave Christ the authority to give the "plan"!

To preach the conditions of salvation without relating them to Christ crucified renders the cross void. In fact, there is no condition of salvation apart from the cross. There is no condition leading to health apart from a remedy. Christ himself, crucified for our sins, is God's remedy for the disease of sin. Christ is both the physician and the remedy; he is both the sacrifice and the Priest. Hence Christ crucified for our sins is the very essence of the gospel and it is Christ that needs emphasis. But when a "plan" is preached apart from Christ crucified, the "plan" receives the emphasis that belongs to Christ.

Peter on Pentecost, Philip at Samaria, and Paul everywhere preached Christ. Peter's subject on Pentecost was not repentance or baptism, but Christ. And it was after preaching Christ as the Messiah that he commanded anyone to do anything. And only after Philip preached Jesus from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah did he command the eunuch to be baptized. The eunuch was told that Christ was "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." He heard

that "with his stripes we are healed" and that "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Thus Philip "preached unto him Jesus." To preach Jesus is to preach **Jesus!** To preach a "plan" is to preach a "**plan**". Inspired men always preached **Jesus**. And not until they had preached **Jesus** as sinbearer did they expect anything of sinners. **How any one can be persuaded to omit in his preaching the very thing that makes Jesus the Savior and preach the conditions apart from him is most difficult to understand.** Let us not rob the cross of the emphasis given it in the New Testament.

5. The "**plan**" theory regards the conditions of salvation as having been arbitrarily given. Next to the idea that the method of saving sinners through Christ is an arbitrary arrangement with God, the teaching that the conditions of salvation have been arbitrarily chosen is perhaps the strangest. How any trained mind can so conclude is inexplicable. But does any responsible teacher so teach? Here is an excerpt from an article that appeared a few years ago in one of our leading papers from a well known preacher and teacher of the Bible:

We do not know why God chose to try Abraham's faith in this way. (The writer referred to Abraham's offering Isaac). He could have made some other way. We do not know why God chose to save man from sin by the blood of Christ rather than by something else. It was God's plan for Jesus to die for men. We do not know why he sacrificed his Son rather than making some other sacrifice. After Jesus was raised from the dead he commanded his disciples to go teach all nations, baptize the taught, and teach the baptized. (Matt. 28:19-20). We do not know why "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21). But this was God's plan and we accept it. **God could have saved the world in some other way had he so desired.** (My emphasis. K.C.M.) On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached faith, repentance, and baptism to the inquiring multitude. **Why God placed these commands as steps into his kingdom, instead of some other commands, we do not know, but we accept the will of God.** (My emphasis. K.C.M.) (Acts 2:36-38).

How appropriately the writer prefaces these remarks by the statement "We do not know!" And how timely would be the question of Christ to Nicodemus, "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandeth not these things?" It is really diffi-

cult to believe one's eyes when he reads the above excerpt. And not one word of criticism appeared from anyone. Perhaps some were ashamed to mention it! But the above writer "did not know" what any qualified teacher ought to know, namely, that God sacrificed his Son for our sins, because he alone was qualified to be the atoning sacrifice. I wonder if the writer knows why God did not save the world through animal blood? So far as his article goes, "some other sacrifice" might have been a goat. The writer of the Hebrew letter writes thus of animal blood: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). If sacrifices are arbitrarily chosen, why was it "not possible" for animal blood to take away sins? The fact that God did not depend upon animal blood as a sacrifice of reconciliation because "it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" proves conclusively that such blood is not by nature a suitable sacrifice for sins. Men and animals are different. Mere animal life and human life are different. Humanity cannot bear its own sins. How much less could some lower form of life. I say we do know why animal blood was rejected! And for one to play up his ignorance in order to emphasize his faith leaves us doubting the basis of his faith!

Furthermore, the fact that God rejected animal blood as an atoning sacrifice for sins because such blood is not naturally fitted for such a sacrifice, and the fact that he did choose the blood of Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for sins, proves conclusively (1) that the blood of Jesus was chosen as a sacrifice for sin because it was fitted naturally for such a sacrifice, and (2) that God operates upon the principle of reason in providing a sacrifice.

But what of the writer's ignorance about the divine choice of conditions of salvation? Even after God gave his Son to die for us the writer still does not know why either faith or repentance, for example, is required? Does the writer know why man **eats** food, **drinks** water, and **hears** sound? Why does he not **hear** food, **eat** water, and **drink** sound? If the above author desires to take a trip and some one provides an automobile for his convenience, would he know why he must **enter** the vehicle and **drive** it? When his doctor prescribes a remedy, puts the remedy into a bottle, writes the patient's name on the bottle, and gives direction as to the manner of taking the medicine, would the author know why he must "take" the medicine? Why not merely **look** at the remedy, or more conveniently still, pitch it out the window? Faith in a sin offering such as Jesus means **trust** or **reliance**. Is it difficult to know why it is required of sinners that they depend upon him whom God set

forth to be a propitiation to be received by faith? Is it impossible to understand why repentance stands between the sinner and the Savior? Sin is the spiritual poison that necessitated the remedy, the blood of Christ. Is it difficult to understand why one who has been drinking poison must stop drinking it in order to be benefited by the doctor's remedy? And yet a "teacher in Israel" does not know why repentance is made a condition of salvation! Neither can he understand why it is necessary to rely upon something which provides a blessing. God promises salvation by means of the blood of Jesus. But why has he required faith, trust, reliance?

It is thought by some that God operates in the spiritual realm as he has the right to do in matters entirely physical. If by his sovereign right God commanded Naaman to dip seven times in water in order that a purely physical blessing may be bestowed, some insist that in matters moral and spiritual blessings may be conditioned on commands which have no logical relation to a definite cause for the blessing. God healed Naaman by means of his divine power apart from anything done by another on his behalf. But God forgives sins by his mercy on the condition of the sinner's reliance upon the sacrifice provided by Jesus Christ. In Naaman's case the act of dipping revealed no faith in a "remedy" put between him and God. (In fact, Naaman's faith has never been given as an example.) In the sinner's case the "dipping" does definitely relate to the Savior in his capacity of sacrifice for sins. The difference is obvious!

To affirm that because of his "authority" Christ had the right "to name the conditions of salvation" is purely gratuitous. Conditions of salvation are no more chosen upon the principle of "authority" than is the doctor's remedy. The fact that it is **sin** and **sinning** from which sinners are to be saved determines the necessity of repentance. Likewise the fact that it is by the blood of Jesus that sinners are to be redeemed determines the condition of faith or trust. It is as naturally required of sinners to have faith in Jesus (faith in the sense of trust) as it is required of the hungry person to eat food. Trust or faith is the natural response to Christ crucified. The bitten Israelites depended upon the brazen serpent for healing. Even so, taught Jesus, does the sinner depend upon the "lifted up" Savior. **When teachers learn the meaning of John 3:16 no such error as that which is here being considered will be made.**

But some one might inquire, "Has not Christ arbitrarily chosen baptism?" I have said that repentance and faith, or trust, are naturally required of sinners who desire salvation through Christ as a sinoffering. Now, is baptism naturally

required? Is baptism a natural response to the crucified Saviour? To these questions I reply: Baptism should never be considered alone. It is the divinely ordained expression or embodiment of repentance and faith. This is its **meaning**. Since baptism has the **meaning** of repentance and faith, it is, like repentance and faith which it embodies, a natural response to the blood of Christ. As a mere act baptism has no meaning that could possibly relate it to Christ or to his death for our sins. But as an act designed to embody repentance and trust, baptism can logically relate to Christ crucified. Again some have separated baptism from faith and repentance, and made it stand alone as an example of the "foolishness of God" designed especially to test the faith of man in the arbitrary working of an **infinitely wise** God! Selah!

5. The "**plan**" theory logically makes the "**plan**", not Christ crucified, the means of salvation. Christ, we are told, came to give man a "plan of salvation," that is, a "plan" by which man is to be saved. It is easy to see that if sinners are saved by a "plan", the "plan" becomes the real saving power. The doctor provides the remedy, but it is the remedy that cures. Yes, Christ came to provide the "remedy" for sin, but the "remedy" is himself crucified as an offering for sin. Jesus "offered himself" as the means of salvation (Heb. 7:27;9:14). Even John 3:16 teaches this easy lesson.

It does no good for one to answer: "But it was Christ who gave the 'plan' and, therefore, he is the saviour." This still makes the "plan" the real saving power. It is not the doctor, but his remedy that cures. Yet the doctor gives the remedy. The cook provides the food, but it is the **food** that gives nourishment. The "plan" theory logically puts the "plan" where Christ belongs. That is why some preach a "plan" instead of Christ. And that is why many have faith in a "plan" as the means of salvation, instead of Christ. Jesus taught: "I am the living bread." He did not say: "I will furnish the living bread." Again he said: "And the bread which I give is my flesh, for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth **me**, he also shall live because of **me**." Sinners must "eat" Christ crucified, not merely subscribe to a "plan". Why? "In him is life," and "He that hath the Son hath the life." Gospel preaching offers the world a Savior in the person of Jesus crucified for sins, not merely another code or a "plan". Christ's invitation says, "Come unto **me** . . . I will give you rest." All the inspired preachers from Peter on Pentecost to the end of the divine revelation preached and offered the Savior, not a "plan", as the means of salvation.

6. The "**plan**" theory misconceives the meaning of saving

**faith.** Faith in a “plan” is devoid of the element of trust, except in the wrong thing. A sinoffering as naturally demands faith in the sense of trust as food requires eating or water calls for drinking. Jesus did not offer himself as an atoning sacrifice merely as a fact to be intellectually accepted. He offered himself to be relied upon, to be trusted in. Christ crucified is as much a challenge to the sinner’s trust as food is a challenge to the hungry man to eat it. God “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him” should be saved. The Son was given to be believed in, that is, to be trusted in, to be relied upon. “And just as Moses in the desert lifted the serpent on the pole, and the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that every one who trusts in him may have eternal life” (John 3:16 - William’s translation). “For so greatly did God love the world that he gave his only Son, that every one who trusts in him may—have eternal life” (John 3:16—Weymouth’s translation). A sinoffering requires trust, reliance. If the blood of Christ does not require faith in the sense of trust, then the conditions of salvation have been arbitrarily chosen and the cross is made void! This truth is so obvious that one feels humiliated to argue the question.

A restudy of the following text would be revealing: “So belief (faith) cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). The “word of Christ” must be preached before faith can follow. Preaching Christ crucified for our sins produces faith, not merely preaching the command to believe. “So faith comes from what is told, and hearing through the message about Christ” (Rom. 10:17—William’s translation). “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Revised Standard Version). “And, so we gather, faith is a result of teaching, and the teaching comes in the message of Christ” (Twentieth Cent. N. T.) When Paul penned the above truth he was referring to the message concerning Christ found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. When Christ is preached as man’s sinoffering according to Isaiah, faith in the sense of trust will result. Certainly the truth about Jesus must be believed, but this faith will lead on to trust or reliance, another element of faith. When Christ is not properly preached, the hearer can only have faith in him as one having authority to demand obedience.

7. The “plan” theory misconceives the meaning of obedience under Christ. I refer here to the obedience of the sinner. When the conditions of salvation are regarded as a “plan” the obedience required of the sinner is considered merely the response to the authority of Christ. Christ claimed “all authority”, and hence he commands faith, etc., we are told. Hence

obedience is but a recognition of the authority of Christ. In such obedience the element of trust in the sacrifice of Christ is lacking.

The radical idea in obedience is submission. But must the sinner submit to Christ as teacher and king only? Is Christ the Savior simply because he is teacher and king? Submission to Him as teacher is believing what he taught. Submission to him as king is a recognition of his authority. But Christ considered only as teacher and king is no Savior. He saves by his blood. God has always claimed the right to teach and to command. The mission of Christ to this earth was not for the purpose of attaining the right to rule over man. He came "to give his life a ransom." This he did when he died on the cross. Now, obedience to Christ as Saviour must relate directly to him as the sin-offering. Hence the obedience which the sinner must render is not obedience in the general sense of a recognition of divine authority. It is rather an obedience that signifies reliance upon the death of Christ for salvation. Hence to interpret such scriptures as Matt. 7:21 and Heb. 5:8,9 as requiring obedience in the general sense is a misconception of the meaning of obedience under Christ. Did Christ die that he might have the right to command? Does the cross call for human achievement or for trust? If Christ died to induce obedience in the general sense only, then the peculiar efficacy of the cross lies in its greater appeal to obedience than did the sacrifices of the law. Furthermore, if salvation is conditioned on the general obligation of obedience, then salvation is by law through works and not by grace through faith.

The obedience required by Paul is the "obedience of faith." This expression is found both at the beginning and at the close of the epistle to the Romans. Hence the significance of the obedience contemplated must be learned from a correct understanding of what lies between these two instances of its use. This is not the place for an exposition of the Roman epistle. But it is most obvious that Christ as a propitiation for our sins is the central teaching of the epistle. And the apostle makes faith or trust the principle answering to the atonement of Christ. If one does not see this truth, it is simply impossible for him to understand Romans. Hence the expression "the obedience of faith" must yield a meaning compatible with the significance of the cross. Paul was not a legalist setting forth the doctrine of human merit. Hence to interpret the book by the phrase is a most dangerous procedure. The meaning of the cross must not be changed. The conditions of salvation are not the end of the cross, but the cross the end of the conditions. The sinner does not go through the cross to the conditions

considered as a "plan," but through the conditions to Christ crucified.

The phrase, "the obedience of faith" could mean (a) obedience produced by faith, (b) obedience consisting of faith, and (c) obedience having the meaning of faith. To assert without proof that Paul uses the phrase in the first sense only would be logically to ignore the cross, and to miss completely the teaching of the Roman letter. Paul was not so foolish as to present Christ as a sinoffering and then demand a response that ignores or contradicts this fundamental truth. Some are so intent upon demanding obedience that they miss completely the meaning of the obedience that is a response to a sinoffering. While the cross does not preclude obedience in the first sense, it does logically demand faith in the last two senses. And to believe in Christ as Saviour is as much obedience as baptism or anything else. We read of obeying the gospel and believing the gospel; but never do we find the expression "believe and obey the gospel." Believing or trusting in Christ crucified is obedience. It means submission to him as sinoffering. The jailor at Philippi asked what to do to be saved. He was **commanded** to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." When, therefore, he believed he obeyed. But the obedience rendered was not obedience that signified a mere recognition of the authority of Jesus. It was an "obedience of faith," an obedience consisting of faith or that meant faith, trust in the atonement of Christ.

To contend for mere obedience under Christ is to err greatly. I repeat that the purpose of the cross is to redeem man from sin, not merely to induce obedience. Christ is set forth as a "propitiation," not merely as one having authority. He does possess authority, but his authority does not nullify the cross. He has, first of all, authority to save by means of his blood those who put their trust in him. **It is as necessary to relate obedience to the blood of Jesus as it is to preach obedience.** To stress any command addressed to sinners apart from its reference to the blood of Christ manifests a misconception of the fundamentals of Christianity. The law, which provided no saving sacrifice, demanded obedience in the general sense. And if man had been saved by law, his own obedience would have saved him. Since we are saved by the blood of Christ the principle of salvation must be faith in the sense of trust. This principle places saving power in Christ crucified, not in human achievement.

Hence those who make obedience in the general sense the condition of salvation to sinners misconceive the meaning of obedience under Christ. The obedience required means faith or trust in Christ crucified.

7. The "plan" theory regards the end of any condition as arbitrary. As we have seen by quoting from writers and speakers, both the offering for sin and the conditions of salvation are regarded as having been arbitrarily chosen. If this conception is right, then any result of any condition must likewise be an arbitrary matter. Then God could not only name any act as a condition of salvation, but in so doing, he would be compelled arbitrarily to determine the result of the condition. This is why the author already quoted writes: "On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached faith, repentance, and baptism to the inquiring multitude. Why God places these steps into his kingdom, instead of some other commands, we do not know." And he could have as logically added: "Why God assigned a certain result to follow any command I do not know." If there is no logical reason for choosing the sacrifice or the conditions, there can be no logical reason for any result of the cross or of any condition. If this is not utter confusion then it would be difficult to find it. And yet some persons wonder why anyone should be discussing the subject of this study! What I am saying here is several generations late for some people!

For example, if God arbitrarily made repentance a condition of salvation, he did not choose it with reference to anything it can naturally accomplish. But repentance is the name of the act of changing one's mind with reference to sin. It is the determination carried out to quit sinning. But an arbitrary selection of repentance must disregard the natural result of the act. For what reason, then, did God make repentance a condition? The author quoted elsewhere confesses, "We do not know!" Why does he not know? Because he thinks that Christianity does not conform to the fundamental principle of reason. Perhaps even the above author at other times would be logical in his discussion of repentance. But I have his own words for it that "We do not know" why the conditions were chosen.

Under No. 6 the misconception of justifying faith was discussed. What is the end or purpose of saving faith? If Christ crucified is lost sight of, faith is nothing more than a "principle of action leading to obedience." That it is sometimes a principle of action I freely admit and teach. When God gives a command to either sinner or Christian the proper faith and love will lead one to prompt obedience. But when the object is a **sinoffering** such as Christ crucified for our sins, what is the end or purpose of faith? As we have seen under No. 6 faith as the response to a sinoffering must mean trust. A sinoffering naturally demands trust. And any response minus this element of faith is

no proper response to Christ crucified. If trust is not included in the faith that is a condition of salvation, it is because God has definitely ruled it out, that is, if Christ crucified is Saviour. But faith minus any element of trust in the blood is many times made a condition of salvation. Why? First, because Christ has been substituted by a "plan," and second, because somebody is mistaken about the function of faith. If Christ is to be substituted by a "plan," faith in the sense of trust is excluded. In fact all reason is ruled out and we are left with nothing to say except "We do not know." But there is a difference between "We do **not** know" and "We **cannot** know." We **can** know why Christ is Saviour, and why faith, for example, is a condition of salvation, and what it is expected to do.

Of course, if one does not know why repentance and faith have been made conditions of salvation, he could not be expected to see anything sensible in baptism. To some persons baptism is no more than an act arbitrarily chosen of God to put us "into Christ." Just why anything—baptism **per se**, or baptism and something else should put one into Christ some would have to say, "We do not know." Union with Christ is a real, spiritual union and the result of conditions adapted to this end. As we have said, baptism was never intended to stand alone. It must not only be **preceded** by faith and repentance, but it was ordained to represent or embody each. Hence baptism puts one "into Christ" not as an act **per se**, but as the embodiment of faith. Whatever baptism does, it does along with faith or repentance contributing to the same end. Why, for example, "remission of sins" is usually attributed to baptism any more than to repentance or faith, "We do not know." And why it is thought that it is baptism any more than faith that puts one into union with Christ, again "We do not know." How this act can be torn from that which it is divinely ordained to embody and given a purpose not shared by that which it embodies is strange indeed. It all goes back to the "plan" theory and to the error that makes God accomplish the salvation of sinners by purely arbitrary means. One error begets another, or others. What prolific parents are the "plan" and the "arbitrary" theories! They have so many "children" "We do not know" what to do with them, but to reveal them in their true light.

While the purpose of this study is not necessarily exegetical, it might be well to offer a few words concerning Gal. 3:26, 27. I have said above that baptism no more than faith puts one "into Christ." Union with Christ is not a legal or make-believe relationship. It is a real, spiritual one. And the means of union with Christ must be natural and logical or else

the cross is vain. Paul had been arguing in Galatians, third chapter, that sonship is upon the principle of faith, not upon that of merit or of fleshly relationship to Abraham. "They that are of faith are sons of Abraham." The law that succeeded the promise to Abraham by four hundred and thirty years did not annul the promise. Sonship by the principle of faith still stands. The principle of merit kept man in spiritual bondage until Christ annulled it by the cross. Even this bondage under law looked "unto the faith" which was to come. The principle of merit or self-reliance naturally condemns, and reveals the need of mercy and trust in a Saviour. Since two opposite principles cannot be operative at the same time, when faith (the principle of trusting in the Saviour) came man was no longer under law and the principle of merit. Hence Paul wrote: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." Sonship is no longer based upon fleshly relationship or upon human achievement, but upon the work of Christ on behalf of sinners appropriated by faith or trust in him. Man's relation to God's Son makes him a son. Confirmatory of this fact Paul added: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." **Baptism designed to embody faith proves sonship by faith.** Paul in verse 27 was not explaining **how** we are sons through faith, but **that** we are sons by faith. Faith, and baptism that embodies faith, are one with Paul. Hence sonship by faith is proved by baptism into Christ. **If one must go beyond the meaning of faith in Christ (reliance upon the Saviour) in order to union with Christ, then by the same rule one must stop short of baptism for sonship.** Sonship is by faith and union with Christ is by baptism. If sonship means one thing and union with Christ is something else, then baptism has no part in making one a son and faith no part in uniting one with Christ. But if baptism is the divinely ordained embodiment of faith, it must partake of the meaning of faith, and faith is expressed in baptism. If faith is embodied in baptism, what is done by faith can be proved by what is done by baptism. But baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" or to be "baptized into Christ" results in the putting on of Christ, that is, the acceptance of him as Saviour. But Christ is accepted as Saviour by faith (trust) in him. Hence to be sons of God by faith in Christ is the same with Paul as union with Christ or to be clothed with Christ. Hence to separate faith and baptism, the embodiment of faith, and make one accomplish one thing and the other another thing is both unscriptural and unreasonable. Baptism has no **meaning** apart from faith. If it has no **meaning** apart from faith, it has no **function** apart from faith. If it has no function apart from faith, it is not baptism any more than

faith that puts one into Christ. Sonship by faith is proved by baptism into (**eis**—unto or into) Christ. (Paul's habit of asserting the same truth by different expressions can also be seen from Rom. 10:9, 10. Verse 9 conditions salvation on **confession** and **faith**. But since confession is the expression of faith Paul affirms of each, confession and faith, what he had affirmed of confession and faith taken together. Accordingly "With his heart man believes and is justified, with his mouth he confesses and is saved"—(Moffatt). The words "righteousness" and "salvation" mean the same thing, and Paul represents both confession and faith as reaching salvation or righteousness. To interpret "unto" as only leading to salvation is to miss Paul's argument one hundred per cent. A superficial view of Rome. 10:10 might lead some one to deny that one believes unto salvation and confesses unto righteousness simply because Paul connects righteousness with faith and salvation with confession. But with Paul confession signifies faith, and so he can affirm in substance that confession accomplishes the same thing as faith. Just so with faith and baptism in Gal. 3:26, 27. To be a son of God is to be in union with Christ. Hence Paul could affirm sonship by faith and union with Christ by baptism, because baptism is the embodiment of faith.)

But what has all this to do with the general theme of this study? Much in every way. If God operates arbitrarily in providing a sacrifice for sins, and in determining the conditions of salvation, then he must act in the same manner in determining the function of each condition. Hence faith would arbitrarily be assigned a certain function and baptism another. But if it is baptism *per se* that puts one "into Christ" or "into union with Christ," then God has acted arbitrarily in forbidding faith its natural function of uniting one with Christ and assigning to baptism a result it does not have, separated from faith as its embodiment. Hence the position that it is baptism *per se* and not faith also that puts one into union with Christ is a part and parcel of the general idea that God operates arbitrarily in the salvation of sinners, and hence a "plan" arbitrarily given.

The new covenant differs from the old covenant in many important respects. The new covenant is not merely **another** but a **different** covenant. It is "not according to" the old covenant. Among the differences none is more significant than the one respecting Christ. The old covenant provided a **code** setting forth man's obligations to God and to his fellowman. The new covenant provides a **Saviour** through whom God can justly bestow mercy. The coming of this Saviour was the chief subject of prophecy. And when the Saviour came his work on behalf of sinners was the subject of New Testament preach-

ing. Christ was not another Moses—not another lawgiver. Moses brought law, Christ brought grace (John 1:17). Moses delivered to Israel a code which became, because of man's inability to keep it perfectly, "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:7-9). Christ gave for all the world "himself" as an offering for sin. Christ crucified is man's Saviour. **Hence Christ as man's sinoffering was the theme of all inspired preachers.** Paul was determined to know nothing "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." ("Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ the crucified."—Moffatt). Jesus crucified, therefore, is the very core of the "glad tidings" which is God's power to save. Hence **Christ** must be preached, and thus Christ was preached by preachers guided by the Spirit (Acts 8:5, 35; 1 Cor. 2:2; 1 Cor. 1:23). Christ gave his life to save sinners. He did not die merely in order to have the right to give a "plan" that would save. Had he done so, his death would not be the saving power, but merely a means of attaining the right to give a "plan" possessing the power to redeem. The power of the blood to redeem was not transferred to a "plan," as I have heard it preached.

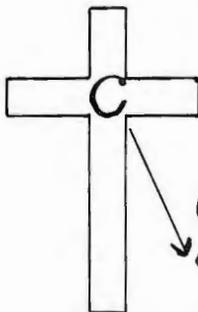
Our eagerness to set forth all the conditions of salvation, and to give each its proper emphasis need not lead us into the grave error of underemphasizing the cross. Apart from the cross any condition is no more than a legal enactment the obedience to which would logically become an effort to earn salvation. The cross makes the difference between a legal religion and a religion of grace. It is significant that many who preach a "plan" regard Christianity as merely another legal system. (One brother who says that he is writing a commentary on Romans affirmed that Christianity "is another legal system." When he succeeds some one will likely attempt to prove that Communism and Democracy are identical. We smile (or frown) when Stalin claims that his dictatorship is a democracy. But Stalin is no more ridiculous in claiming that his government is a democracy than are those who affirm that Christianity is a legal system.) Preaching Christ does not make void the condition of salvation. Rather such preaching gives meaning to them. No one contends for preaching Christ apart from the conditions of salvation. **But I do with all my heart condemn preaching the conditions of salvation apart from the cross.** I have heard it done a thousand times! When one considers his obedience to some "plan" as the ground of his salvation rather than relying upon Christ crucified for pardon he has heard the wrong kind of preaching. There can be no error greater than that of failing to preach Christ as Saviour. Soundness of preaching is not determined by emphasizing the condi-

tions apart from their relation to Christ. Apart from the cross there are no conditions of salvation.

Preaching Christ has a direct bearing on our efforts to restore primitive Christianity. The religious world knows that preaching a "plan" instead of Christ crucified is unscriptural and unreasonable. And they cannot be much impressed with our claims and aims when they hear such preaching. We must not depend upon the denominational world to preach Christ as man's only sinoffering and ourselves correctly to set forth the conditions of salvation. (Many of us would learn faster, if we would temporarily forget all others but Christ and the sinner. Fear of not being different in every respect possible robs many of a proper appreciation of Christ crucified.)

What this sinful world needs is not "plans" and "schemes" but **Christ**. When Christ crucified is not preached one should not preach at all. And until one learns the meaning of the cross and sees the difference between Christ as the sinoffering and a mere "plan" he would do the cause of Christ an outstanding favor, if he would keep silent. **Let us preach Christ or nothing.** (1 Cor. 2:2).

Not this,



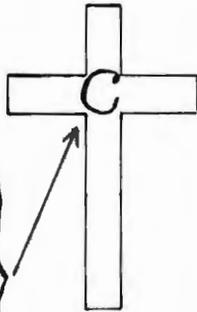
Christ crucified, buried, raised, and given authority to provide a "plan of salvation"—

Faith  
Repentance  
Confession  
Baptism

but this

Christ crucified, buried, and raised becomes our Saviour to be appropriated by—

Faith  
(Gal. 3:26)  
Repentance  
(Lk. 24:4-7)  
Confession  
(Rom. 10:9)  
Baptism  
(Acts 2:38)



Isa. 53:5, 6

1 John 5:11, 12

John 3:14-16

Rom. 3:25

1 Pet. 1:18, 19

1 Pet. 2:24

1. Here one goes through Christ to the conditions of salvation considered as a "plan."

2. Here a "plan" is preached.

3. Here the authority of Christ to command is stressed.

4. Here the cross, existing as a means of providing a "plan of salvation," often receives little or no emphasis.

5. Here Christ points the sinner to the conditions.

1. Here one goes through the conditions of salvation to Christ as the sin offering.

2. Here **Christ** is preached.

3. Here the power of Christ to save by means of his blood is emphasized.

4. Here the cross is the chief consideration and receives the main emphasis.

5. Here the conditions lead the sinner to Christ crucified. Every condition relates directly to Christ crucified.

