

better example than that of the Apostles if he would secure like results. The elements of power are still the same.

Now it will be observed that this preaching of Christ into which the Apostles entered with such zeal and success is not quite the same thing as preaching certain formulated doctrines about Christ, however true these may be in themselves. It would have been an easy thing for them to formulate doctrines—to say for example that Jesus of Nazareth was both God and man in plain terms, logically prove it from his words and deeds, then demand from all their hearers confidence in him as such. What they did do was rather to hold up the living person in all the details of his conduct and character, allowing him to speak for himself that they might learn to love and trust him.

In saying this I do not wish to be misunderstood. I have no sympathy with much of the modern senseless railing against theological dogmas and fixed creeds. The formulation of creeds is a necessary and inevitable result of any attempt at definite and clear thinking. Moreover a right theory about Christ is necessary to keep our minds in a right attitude to appreciate the facts of Christ's life and personal character. A wrong theory makes it necessary to distort them. There are not wanting evidences even in the Gospels, and they are still more

abundant in the Epistles that the Apostles early began to reflect upon the significance of these facts and to shape a philosophy or a theology for their interpretation. The church was certainly soon forced by the errors which began to be promulgated to think out the problem with some degree of precision in order to save the facts from being misrepresented. But the dogmatic conclusions reached were never intended to form the staple of preaching. It is noteworthy that the earliest formulas, such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene, still give a much larger place to the recital of facts in the life of Christ than to any theory of his person. It was rightly felt that just in proportion as these facts were made real and vivid would men be drawn to Christ as their Saviour.

The cry now everywhere is "Back to Christ." In so far as this expresses disparagement of Apostolic teaching and the later products of Christian thought it is mere cant. Nothing can ever blot out the development of the Christian centuries that have elapsed. But in so far as it represents interest in the person of Christ himself and a striving after the vivid realization of the historical personage in the imagination of to-day, the movement deserves all encouragement. It is well to know if we can what kind of men Paul and Peter and John and the rest were. But we must know what Christ was if the world is to be saved at all.