

of us. It is a concrete statement, in terms which you and I cannot fail to understand, of our total moral liability, of God's demand upon us. When you and I begin to scrutinise our record in the light of the moral achievement of Jesus Christ, there is not one of us but has to confess that we are totally and irreparably bankrupt, and that we are involved in utter moral insolvency. That is a very serious state of affairs; yet it is not the worst thing to be said about us. We have to know something even more than that before we recognise the real quality of sin. Shall I take an analogy from the Gospels in order to illustrate what I mean? You remember that Jesus once asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" The answer was, "John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." This was a perfectly sound judgment, so far as it went; but, observe, it was the judgment of the natural faculty. Then Jesus asked the disciples what their judgment was, and Peter said, "Thou art the Messiah of God"; and Jesus went on to say, "Flesh and blood" (that is, the natural faculty)