Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

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**“Contra-Fosdick: “Good Works are NOT Good Enough”**

**I. Understanding Salvation and Works Based Righteousness**

**Salvation** refers to the act of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in delivering his people from bondage of sin and condemnation, transferring them to the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1:13), and giving them \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 6:23)—all on the basis of what Christ accomplished in his atoning sacrifice. The Bible teaches we are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ through faith; and that not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). In theology, the study of salvation is called **soteriology**, from the Greek soteria meaning "salvation". Salvation, virtually synonymous with the overall concept of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, includes a past, present, and future sense. As Christians, we were saved from the penalty of sin when God brought us to faith in Christ; we are presently being saved from the power of sin as the Holy Spirit sanctifies us; and we will someday be saved from the presence of sin when we meet Christ face to face in glory. Biblical Christianity is the only religion that does not require human participation in order to be found righteous before God. All other religions require human work:

Zoroastrianism, the person has to win the struggle over evil.

Judaism - You must obey the Jewish law and customs.

Islam - Muslims must practice the five pillars successfully.

Roman Catholicism – Catholics must participate in the sacraments and be members of the church.

Hinduism - The individual must purify himself from evil in life after life after life.

Sikhism - Proper worship and conduct must be performed in order to be worthy to be saved.

Confucianism - Heaven on earth is possible, only through personal conformity to the rules of society.

Shintoism - Must maintain Japanese supremacy at all costs.

Taoism - No harmony (that's as good as heaven gets).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - Must appease the gods and spirits in order to be rewarded.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - compliance to a system or a philosophy. You've got to do that to be happy; or total non-compliance, in order to be free. So you're either going to be an anarchist - break all the rules, or keep all the rules, but you've got to deal with the rules.

**II. Universities Accept and Teach Theological Liberalism**

The religious disquiet of New York, found its way on to the campus in the 1890s, as Madison University became \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “Passion for knowledge” was edging out moral training as a pedagogical goal. The sciences were in ascendancy. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ emerged as a department in 1890. The Divinity School had its progressives, notably Prof. William Newton Clarke, whose lecture notes were published in 1894 as an Outline of Christian Theology. But teachers at the Seminary could go too far in their research. Witness the 1896 dismissal of Prof. Nathaniel Schmidt, for denying the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible, and for employing scientific methods of biblical criticism. Schmidt quickly found a home — indeed, a chair in Semitic Languages — at decidedly secular \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ University, where he achieved a certain prominence as teacher and scholar. Harry Fosdick was present at Colgate at the time of Schmidt’s dismissal. Another example of theological liberalism infiltrating seminaries is Yale Divinity School: “YDS has an enduring commitment to foster the knowledge and love of God through scholarly engagement with Christian traditions in a global, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ context. Participating in the vibrant life of Yale University, the Divinity School is uniquely positioned to train leaders for church and society given its ecumenical and international character, engagement with music and the arts, and commitment to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Rigorous scholarly inquiry, corporate worship and spiritual formation, and practical engagement in a variety of ministries enable students to develop their knowledge and skills in a community that welcomes and affirms human \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The Divinity School pursues its mission of training students for service in church and world through three principal activities: (1) it prepares people for lay and ordained Christian ministries; (2) it shares with the Graduate School in educating scholars and teachers for theological schools and departments of religious studies; (3) it equips people preparing for public service or other careers to understand more fully the theological dimensions of their vocations.”

**III. Fosdick and Good Works**

Fosdick’s teaching was false in many areas, but the heart of it all was his denial of the inerrancy, infallibility, and authority of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He elevated \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ above the plain words of Scripture; he made reason the final arbiter of truth. All the other doctrines he denied depended upon first undermining the Bible. He also denied the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God, suggesting that wrath was simply a metaphor for the natural consequences of doing wrong. With wrath removed, it was inevitable that the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ would also be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Before long Fosdick’s Christianity looked nothing like historic Christianity. Jonathan Edwards' Enfield sermon ["Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"] pictured sinners held over the blazing abyss of hell in the hands of a wrathful deity who at any moment was likely to let go, and so terrific was that discourse in its delivery that women fainted and strong men clung in agony to the pillars of the church. Obviously, we do not believe in that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ any more, and as always in reaction we swing to the opposite extreme, so in the theology of these recent years we have taught a very mild, benignant sort of deity . . . Indeed, the god of the new theology has not seemed to care acutely, about sin; certainly he has not been warranted to punish heavily; he has been an indulgent parent and when we have sinned, a polite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has seemed more than adequate to make amends. Since 1927 Fosdick's sermons had been broadcast from Boston to Chicago on the "National Vespers Hour," and more than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ listeners tuned in. For the most part, he concentrated on practical and experiential Christianity, defining preaching as "personal counseling on a group scale." Fosdick’s literary trilogy on The Meaning of Being a Christian — the meaning of Prayer (1915), of Faith (1917), and Service (1920) provided a guide to Christian life.

**IV. The Depravity of Man**

The totality of that depravity is clearly not that man does as much evil as he could do. There is no doubt that man could perform more evil acts toward his fellow man than he does. Man’s depravity is total in at least four senses:

**1) *Our rebellion against God is total.*** Apart from the grace of God, there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the holiness of God, and there is no glad submission to the sovereign authority of God. Of course, totally depraved men can be very religious and very philanthropic. They can pray and give alms and fast, as Jesus said (Matthew 6:1-8).

**2) *In his total rebellion everything man does is sin.***

In Romans 14:23 Paul says, “Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” Therefore, if all men are in total rebellion, everything they do is the product of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and cannot be an honor to God, but only part of their sinful rebellion. However, such outward conformity to the revealed will of God is not righteousness in relation to God. It is not done out of reliance on him or for his glory. He is not trusted for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, though he gives them all.

**3) *Man’s inability to submit to God and do good is total.***

Picking up on the term “flesh” above (man apart from the grace of God), we find Paul declaring it to be totally enslaved to rebellion. Romans 8:7-8 says, “The mind that is set on the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ cannot please God.” The “mind that is set on the flesh” (literally, “mind of the flesh”) is the mind of man apart from the indwelling Spirit of God (“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you,” (Romans 8:9). So natural man has a mindset that does not and cannot \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God. Man cannot reform himself.

Ephesians 2:1 says that we Christians were all once “dead in trespasses and sins.” The point of deadness is that we were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of any spiritual life with God. We had physical life, but our hearts were like a stone toward God (Ephesians 4:18; Ezekiel 36:26). Our hearts were blind and incapable of seeing the glory of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4-6) (2 Corinthians 4:4-6). We were totally unable to reform ourselves.

**4) *Our rebellion is totally deserving of eternal punishment.***

Ephesians 2:3 goes on to say that in our deadness we were “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” That is, we were under God’s wrath because of the corruption of our hearts that made us as good as dead before God. The reality of hell is God’s clear indictment of the infiniteness of our guilt. If our corruption were not deserving of an eternal punishment, God would be unjust to threaten us with a punishment so severe as eternal torment. But the Scriptures teach that God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in condemning unbelievers to eternal hell (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Therefore, to the extent that hell is a sentence of total condemnation, to that extent must we think of ourselves as totally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ apart from the saving grace of God.

**10/28 Contra-Fosdick: “Our Final Hope”**