For I determined not to know anyone among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The city of Corinth, in which was situated the Church to which these two epistles were addressed, was celebrated among the ancients for its great wealth, refinement, and luxury. We have indeed little ground to believe that there was very much of literary and scientific refinement among the inhabitants, and although it was the native place of Periander, who holds high rank among the seven sages of Greece, it would seem from the character he bears in history, that he was more distinguished for that wisdom which consisted in being able to govern men than for his attainments in any other department of knowledge. And then we have no records handed down to us which convey the impression that Corinth was at the time the seat of the Muses.
movements in a certain sense did
characterize the inhabitants.

It was the refinement consequent
upon the possession of great wealth.
Statuary, Painting, Architecture,
Music, and voluntary and personal
enjoyments were cultivated to a very
high degree. And it was true that
from the pre-eminent advantage
of its situation, standing out
magnificence upon the celebrated
dism of the same name and by
this position commanding the trade
of the Ionian & Aegean seas, this
City held as it were the keys of the
Peloponnese, and thus became
continued to be the seat of opulence
and the arts while the rest of Greece
was sunk in comparative obscurity
and Barbarism. The trait of
which of all others gave character
to the people of Corinth was
their sensuality. Insomuch that
the proverbial term for a person
of dissolute habit was "a Corinthian"
Since we have the authority of history for the statement that "on a neighboring hill (the Acro-Corinthus)" was erected a magnificent temple of Venus, whose shrine was attended by no less than 1000 female slaves dedicated to her service as courtesans. These priestesses of Venus were but so many instruments to increase the wealth and luxury of the city.

These remarks seem necessary to introduce the language of the text, to account for the adoption of such a mode of preaching as was adopted by the Apostle. For it cannot but be apparent to every person who has attended that preaching of any other description would never have had the effect of convincing sin and converting from sin a people so entirely sensual as the inhabitants of Corinth.
The historian of the Acts of the Apostles informs us that Paul continued in Corinth a year and six months and collected a large and flourishing Church. Suppose for a moment Paul instead of using the simple style he did use, in his presentation of truth, had come to the Corinthians and had adopted the arts of Rhetoric, the flowers of Rhetoric, the ornaments of Classic lore, the brilliant illustrations of their finest Poet, the dreamy Speculations of the Platonic Philosophy and with the thrilling words of Eternal Life to them with all this drapery thrown around the truth, how many would have been converted? Not one! It would have been like the dulling sound of enchanting music, sinking them more profoundly into the slumber of death.
But Paul came on no such errand, preached in no such style. He tells us how he came, and what was the style of his preaching. "But I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." And why not? "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. One might almost imagine from the earnestness of the Apostle on this subject, that he had been arguing this point with some Corinthian who had objected to his plain, unvarnished style of preaching and who had been...
...torying to persuade him to present his truths in more polished and popular phrase and style: Who would wonder that Paul, the learned judge of Gamaliel, who was familiar with the literature and the science of the Greeks and Romans, who could on occasion bring to bear upon his object the sentiments of their own poets, and who had the power to adorn his speech with all the beauties of rhetorical art, should content himself with so humble and unpretending a style, as we hope to recommend himself or his cause to these refined and polished Corinthians by preaching only and him crucified. Yes, said Paul, I am aware of the estimate placed by you upon myself. I know that you have given it as your opinion that my bodily presence is weak...
and my speech contemptible "I know
that this Gospel is to the Jews a
stumbling-block and to the
Greeks foolishness." I know
all that! But then this is not
my Concern. I am committed
not to please you by the studied
ornaments of Grecian Eloquence
"not to preach myself but Christ
the Lord, and myself your servant
for Jesus' sake." And knowing
that "The wisdom of man is foolishness
with God." I prefer to adopt the
plan, since "it has pleased God
by the foolishness of preaching
to save them that believe." I
am well assured that there is
no other mode of preaching which
can be supposed effectual
to save the simple presentation of
the Truth; and as my object is
the salvation of your Souls, there
fore. "I determined to Know anything
among you save Christ Jesus, and Him
myself."
The great truth which I conceive to be embodied in this language of Paul is this: that the atonement of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world is the Grand Central Truth of the Gospel, and the only effective in man's salvation. Around it others may cluster like the satellites around their primary luminous Centre, but there is but one primary. This Cross of Christ is the Great Sun of the Christian System—and around it you must cause all the minor Planet-truths which belong to the Gospel to revolve in grand harmony like the music of the spheres. From this, they must derive all the Light which they reflect upon the world. Extinguish the Light which beams in heavenly radiance from the Cross on Calvary and there settles down upon the soul upon the world a horror of pitchy gloom—even
"the blackness of darkness ever." Intercept its beams by the interposition of the Osprag medium of Human Philosophy. The soul will be frozen into torpor, its genial life-giving energies being withdrawn. No other System of Truth devised by man or angel has the light in it to dispense the darkness of the human soul in its native ignorance and wretchedness. No other has inherent warmth to enkindle within the soul "dead in trespasses and in sins" the glow of Life eternal and to quicken it into energetic action. And this not a bare theoretic truth of Scripture, but one borne out by the history of the world, and in the experience of mankind. There has never been presented to my mind in all my reading or observation a more striking illustration of this truth than the
of the missionary effort of the Moravians among the savages of Greenland. The position has been assumed by the opponents of the cause of missions that man in a state of ignorance and barbarism is only to be gained over to the truth by first instructing him in the arts of civilization; in other words "You must civilize before you can Christianize a barbarous community, and to bring this matter into connection with our text". You must know everything else first when you go among the heathen to convert them and then you may know "Ye Jesus and him crucify. But the facts of history are that" for many years the Moravians missionaries had labored to train the natives to habits of industry and to instruct them in the first
and simplest truths of religion, studiously withholding from them the deeper mysteries of the Christian faith, but his sensible effect followed. One day however, while one of the missionaries was engaged in making a fair copy of a translation of one of the Gospels, a crowd of natives gathered around him curious to know the contents of the book. He read to them the history of our Saviour's sufferings and death. "How was that?" said one of the savages, stepping up to the table at which the missionary was sitting, his voice trembling with emotion as he spoke. "How was that? Tell me that once more; for I too would fain be saved!" These words the like of which this missionary had never heard before from any pagan, pierced his very soul, and affected him so much that
who tears in his eyes he relates to them the whole history of the sufferings of Christ and the counsel of God for our salvation. The Greenlanders who put the question was the first convert to the truth; and the mode of his conversion was so instructive that ever after was the first office of the Moravian missionary was to proclaim the death of Jesus as the great expiation of human guilt, the only ground of the sinner's hope for eternity. This incident so simple happening so naturally served to recall to the minds of these missionaries the great truth which they had never realized, that if you would convert the soul it must be by doing as did Paul when he came among the Corinthians determine not to know anything save Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.
We may find, upon consideration, abundant reason for this determination of Paul. And that this is the true and only effectual subject to present to the world for its salvation will appear manifest if we consider, generally, that "in Christ Jesus and Him crucified" we there alone, we behold the bright illustration of those truths essential to be known by the sinner before he can be saved. There are certain great truths involved in the relations which subsist between God and the sinner without the knowledge of which he never can be saved. And I repeat that in all the universe of God there is no other repository of these truths save in the doctrine of Christ and Him crucified. The first of these truths is that he is a sinner. I know that men
opposed to know this from other sources—that there is an everlasting theory which almost every man has within him, that all men are sinners. And yet while men admit the truth most readily it is with the cold assent of the understanding alone while the heart retains no suitable impression of the awful solemnity of this truth. Like the impression produced upon the memory of the appearance of the stranger’s face we may as its lineaments are reflected upon and as its features are caught by the art of the dauguerrean writer upon the tablet prepared in the glowing light of the Sun, there it abides permanent, rich, glowing, perfect. So of the theory of universal depravity men see through the medium of the understanding and the judgment not the truth of it is never dauguerrotypable in deep and permanent impressiveness.
until the blaze of Gospel power is
brated upon it as it beams in heavenly
radiance from Calvan’s angelbow.
And this will appear manifest when we
consider that in “At Jesus, Him crucified,” we behold most affecting
ly displayed the evil & bitter nature of
Sin. We behold a pure & innocent
Being in testimony of whose purity &
innocence we have the declaration
of Heaven, Earth & Hell united
made to suffer the vengeance of
a violated Law. Now you might
be affected to some extent with pity
& even with indignation to behold
a man whose xTnr was upright so
far as you knew, subjected to unmit
ed punishment. But the uncertainty
which ever attaches to human affairs
the limited knowledge we possess
of the heart and the possibility
that after all we may be deceived
in the man would combine to pre
clude the formation of a judgment
of the evil of Sin even from the unjust.
punishment of the best of human beings. The death of such an one would not of itself convince us that sin was a great evil. But come, my fellow sinner, gaze with me upon you bleeding scene and tell me who the sufferer is? Hark as we pass around the agitated mountain and listen to the duller rumbling of the quaking Earth, and feel our way through the palpable darkness which envelopes the scene, we hear the voice of the Centurion as he exclaims: "Truly this was the Son of God!" This is He in whose favor clouds issued forth: "This is my beloved Son." This is He of whom the men sent to apprehend him said: "Never man spake like this." This is He of whom Pilate after examination said: "I find no fault in him." This is He of whom the traitor Judas said: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." This is He who thou art the Holy One of God. And thus by the testimony...
of friends & foes, God men, Devil, Heaven, Earth & Hell this individual whom we now behold suffering, pierced, forsaken by God & man, bleeding, dying in agony unutterable is shown to have been holy, harmless, undefiled & separate from sinners. Whence is all this? Oh it was because of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. So enormous was the guilt incurred by the human race that its deep stains could never be washed away save in the blood of the immaculate Son of God. The blood of man was too impure & corrupt to purify and cleanse. And the requisite purification and washing away of its foul filthiness could never be attained until God the Eternal Father sent His only & well-beloved Son, the darling of Heaven to lay down his Life to pour out his soul unto death, to shed his own Blood upon the Cross. And it is readily to be seen here then that in & with Him crucified.
The most affecting display of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is no power in human logic, there is no attractive persuasiveness in human Rhetoric — there is no energy in human Eloquence — there is no convictive virtue in all the means devised by the wit of man, which will ever impress upon the sinner's heart and conscience the awful truth of any hatefulness, bitterness, and ill-desert in the sight of God, until he comes in view of the Cross and sees the Lamb slain for his sins. Then he beholds his heart with its deep stain impressed. He sees one hanging on the tree in agonies and blood who bore his sins, and never to his latest breath can he that look forget. It seemed to charge him with his death. Thomas peels and owns the guilt, plunges him in despair. He sees his sins had spilt His blood and helped to nail Him there. And he gathers from this view...
a more truthfu[effecting impression of the awful deformity & heinousness of sin than he could derive from all other sources in the Universe of God. But I remark another truth essential to salvation which is learned nowhere else save from a contemplation of Christ Jesus. Him crucified is that as a sinner he is condemned to everlasting death. There are certain characteristic features in the essential nature of sin which men are apt to lose sight. But a due consideration of the subject will serve to array them before us and to furnish us with a more correct judgment in regard to its heinousness, but to its true desert. Let a man contemplate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in all its awful particulars. Let him look upon the character of the sufferer & his Nature & attributes and the terrible infliction of wrath he endured, & it is inevitable that he will arrive at the conclusion that sin
evil of infinite magnitude and men's an infinite punishment. We behold an infinite Being enduring the agonies of an ignominious death, & by a law of our own nature we are obliged to conclude that a penalty so great must be the consequence of a proportionate violation. For under the Govt of a God of Justice the penalty must correspond with the crime. Accordingly when we institute an inquiry into the nature of that for which for Sin. + What is Sin? It is an infinite evil. How so? Because it violates an infinite Law. How is it shown that the Law is infinite? Because it is but a transcript of the divine mind and all that emanates from that mind must of necessity be like itself. + Care of all its attributes of infinity & perfection. God is a Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness + Smith. So is His Law precisely so - eternally & unchangeable which man has broken + trampled under his feet. The next step in the reasoning respecting the penalty to be inflicted. Every man can sec at a
mere glance, that Justice requires an infinite penalty. Of course it must fall primarily and substantially upon man. But now come fallen, 1000 of them 10,000,000 or a race of men, or crow into one the millions who have peopled the Earth since the violation took place, the millions who now dwell upon the surface of the Earth, and the millions who are to come after us and rear up heaven high the funeral pile and let it smoke with the incense of this mighty holocaust as a sacrifice for sin, and still the inexorable Law would clamor for satisfaction, and atonement could never thus be made. For man, yea! all men are but finite beings and the sacrifice of all their finite lives would never meet the demands of an infinite Law. But when I behold the Son of God and learn that He died for sin, I see that Justice is appeased and God is pacified. And because no other but a Being Infinite in His nature could atone, I learn
That lesson which is essential to my salvation that the sinner, exposed to everlasting death, since an infinite Being are condescending (cf. 11)

If however the contemplation and his crucifixion taught us nothing further, nothing more than the two truths that we are sinners, that as such, we are exposed to everlasting death, it would be productive of so deep and terrible a state of despair, as would deter us not only from looking at the subject but from preaching it. Better for us not to know our misery of relief. Better that we should die in our sins and sink to our woes hopeless descent! Better to be another blessed be God we learn another great truth by contemplating the crucifixion. And that is

3. That the sinner may be saved from the penalty of the Law. It is a grand principle in all right Government that no Law is of force without a penalty annexed to its infraction, but is a dead letter upon the Statute Book. Accordingly
The Divine Law Giver having annexed penalty of the violation of His Law, eternal death, and man having incurred that penalty must bear the curse denounced. Let us bear in mind also that the character of God is composed of a number of Perfections or Attributes not one of which can be spared from the grand, harmonious combination. He is wise, powerful, true, just, and merciful. Now if we conceive that God, after the manner of some weak earthly Ruler, should be so overcome by His abounding pity as to permit man to violate His Law with perfect impunity, and remit the penalty annexed to His Law, we would greatly dishonor Him, prostituting His Justice, and debating the supremacy of His Moral Code. And hence the Rule of this all-wise Being would be set aside, and His Authority despised, instead of bringing a blessing it would only inflict the direst curse upon man and throw the whole machinery of His
now so harmonious into the wildest disorder & Anarchy—and Earth would be but a Pandemonium. On the other hand had God’s Justice wreaked its just vengeance upon man for the violation of God’s Law while His Law would have been upheld and His truth vindicated; yet the whole Race without a single exception would have been whelmed with everlasting death. But while Justice drew her Sword His Mercy laid Her gentle restraints upon the Indignant Attribute and in soft persuasive accents entreated a suspension of the descending blow. “How” said Justice “would you have me thus insulted with impunity? Has it not been declared that “the soul that sinneth it shall die?” And must I compromise my own declarations thus to suffer man to live after having harmed?” But mercy pleased she for man—guaranteeing that if he could be spared, she with the aid of God’s infinite Wisdom would devise a way whereby His Justice could be preserved His Truth maintained and His God Honored, His Law magnified and Man be saved all without any injury to either Party considered, Accordingly in the Councils
of inconceivably remote Eternity. The Wise
and the Love of God devised the Plan and
Justice approved it; and Truth sanctioned
it whereby man can be saved. And
in the Fulness of Time God's eternal and
Co-equal Son came forth and voluntarily
subjected himself to the authority of
that Law, by a Life of sinless obedience
to every title of its requirements
kept it perfectly and honored it, then by His death infinitely precious
on account of the union of Divinity with Humanity, made the requisite atone
ment which was perfectly satisfactory
when therefore we know that no vain
search would be made among the
infinitely varied Departments of God's
Universe for a suitable and adequate
sacrifice to atone, and that the
it was shown conclusively that there is no other name given
under Heaven among men where
by we must be saved save the
name of Jesus.
emphatically declares that man as a sinner exposed to eternal death may be saved only by "at Jesus' Arm crucified." Where else could this rich and glorious truth be held forth save in the Cross? Nature from her 10,000 radiant points can show nothing of God but his Power, Wisdom, Justice and General Benevolence. Philosophy or human Learning could only reason out the deduction the probability that God would punish Conscience than might supplement by awakened anxiety the deficiency of Reason; and add certainty to probability - but in all the vast Realms of God; infinite Rule. His Gracious Design of mercy Pardon and Forgiveness could only be proclaimed from the summit of bleeding Calvary whereon I behold "at Jesus' Arm crucified." "Thus while His death our sins display, In all their blackest hue, Such is the
mystery of Grace. It shall only
Who can wonder then, that Paul
should make the Cross of Christ the
great subject of his preaching?
that he should exclaim to the
Romans "I am not ashamed of the Gos-
pel of Christ to the Corinthians.
I've preached the Cross crucified" to the Philippians; "I've re-
joice in Christ Jesus having no confidence
in the flesh." To the Galatians: "God
forbid that I should glory save in the
cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, and
who can fail to see the reason now
why Paul so emphatically declares
that he "determined not to know
anything among the Corinthians
save Christ Jesus and Him crucified." The three great truths which have
shown to be held forth in the Cross
1st that man is a sinner as a
sinner justly exposed to eternal
Death and 3rd that there is a plan
of salvation for him whereby he
may escape the wrath of God.
constitute beyond all controversy
trace.
To make Paul's determination.

It is enough surely to give to this great doctrine the prominent place in all our ministrations, to know that here alone are taught the nature and consequences of the disease which has fastened itself upon the soul of man, and here alone is found the infallible remedy for that disease.  

I wish to remark by way of application of this subject, that we have reason to fear there are few modern ministers of the Gospel who carry out the determination of Paul. We indulge the fear from the vast ignorance which characterizes the mass of Professing Christians. These are times when there seems to be a great disposition to rush into the L.C. On the one hand and on the other we receive in intelligence of what are called revivals when numbers are added to the ranks of the L.C. It is ostensibly good news. But we look for the fruits in after time and alas! we find wild grapes. We seek for the fruits of the
Spirit and we too often find the works of the flesh. We reasonably expect of these loud Professors a Knowledge of the Plan of Grace and alas! We find that they have never turned their thoughts to the subject: They only feel and know that they have got something that they call religion and which in many instances amounts to no more than "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." And why is this? It is because the Ministers of the Gospel do not preach Christ crucified, but they glorify sect and party and denounce all who differ from them; instead of explaining the Plan of Salvation how God can be just and justify the sinner that believeth and mortifying the sinner to be reconciled to God on the terms of the Gospel—They place before him the inventions of man instead of the means of grace.
Instead of the Cross they have substituted a set of measures, unknown to the Church of a former and a better day—and utterly unauthorized by the Word of God. Thus is the Church filled with spurious professors who add nothing to its effective strength but are source of shame and reproach to her, because the glorious doctrine of Christ crucified is kept so much out of view.

Among the most striking illustrations of the Power of Christ crucified ever recorded is to be found in the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers. There was a period in his history when he entertained but a feeble impression of the power of the Cross. With a mind of gigantic powers and a spirit of boundless ambition he entered the ministry of the Gospel with his heart a stranger to the Grace of God. Devoted to Science he accepted a Professorship
in addition to the Pastoral care of a City Church—devoting 6 days of the week to the Professorship of Lecturing eloquently and thus gaining a reputation daily that was unequaled by any man of his age, and then devoting the remaining 2 days to his Pastoral duties, maintaining too in the presence of the venerable Assembly of the Scotch Church that this was as much as ought to be expected of any man. But Chalmers never felt the power of the Cross then. And when he did find himself under its influence and felt himself a sinner condemned & saved by it, never was there one who felt in the deep recesses of his soul and showed in the ceaseless exertion of all his energies of body & soul, a truer & higher appreciation of the Power of the Gospel than did this world renowned Scotch Preacher.
men in ordinary times forget the importance of this doctrine, but in time of danger it is felt and acknowledged. A few years ago, the Ocean Screamer, the Great Western was caught in a storm in her passage across the Atlantic. Her proud mast and gallant rigging were torn and shattered and such was the violence of the storm that she was reduced to a mere floating hulk upon the boiling deep, and on one long dark dream night of pitiful ceaseless storm, all hope was given up by the crew and passengers. But God in his mercy relented the winds and the waves and no lives were lost. On board that ship were a number of ministers of the Gospel—among them the venerable Lyman Beecher. After the storm had ceased by general consent there was held a meeting of all on board to unite in prayer and Thanksgiving for their miraculous deliverance. And these ministers were requested to address the company by way of improvement of the occasion. I remember well the substance of Dr. Beecher’s remarks. He recounted in his graphic style their dangers and the feeling he indulged in view of an immediate