



# TOO GOOD FOR CHRIST.

(THIRD EDITION.)



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LONDON, W.:

W. H. G. BLATCHLEY,

Printer & Publisher,

27, LANCEFIELD STREET.

1902.



*One halfpenny ; 100, post free, 3/6.*

# Too Good for Christ.



WHO are these? Where are they to be found? In God's estimation of men no such class exists, for He has told us, "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10, 12.) Clear and expressive is the divine declaration—"no, not one," repeated in this emphatic manner, "no, not so much as one." In men's estimation of themselves, how numerous is that company! What, it may be asked, then, are their characteristics? How shall they be known? Let the Word of God define them.

(1) Those who *appear* outwardly righteous before men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Such are too good in their own estimation for Christ. Scribes and Pharisees formed this class in the Lord's day, and were compared by Him to whited sepulchres, beautiful in external appearance, but *within* full of all uncleanness (Matt. xxiii 27, 28).

Witness, too, that Pharisee, who, having invited the Lord to dine with him, doubtless, most carefully washed his *hands*, but thought not of his *heart*, thus making clean the outside of the cup, and the platter, whilst his inward part was full of ravening and wickedness (Luke xi. 38, 39). He desired nothing from the Lord, because he had never thought of what he was *within*. Is that generation extinct?

(2) Those who, like the Pharisees and Scribes of Luke xv. 2 would murmur against the Lord because He received *sinners*, and ate with them.

(3) Those who would adopt the language of the elder brother (Luke xv. 29), *i.e.*, cannot charge themselves with ever at any time transgressing God's commandment.

(4) Those who *justify themselves* before men, forgetful all the while that God knows their hearts. Witness the covetous Pharisees of Luke xvi. 14, 15, unmindful that what is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.

(5) Those who *trust in themselves* that they are righteous, and despise others. Witness

the Pharisee in prayer in the temple (Luke xviii. 9-12), who could tell God what he had done, what he was *not*, but evidently knew not what he *was*.

(6) Those who are *not willing* to come to Christ to have life. Of such we read in John v. 40.

Now these are samples of those who in their day were too good for Christ. They needed, as they thought, nothing from Him. These were all Jews. Are there none answering to this description, who were ever found amongst the Gentiles? The man who sat down to the feast without having on a wedding garment was a brother in spirit with those Pharisees. He thought he was fit in himself to be at the festive board, and to meet the eye of the Master of the feast (Matt. xxii. 11). He did not put on a wedding garment. Can we stop here in our enquiry? No. Is it asked, Are there any too good for Christ who have ever been found in the ranks of professing Christians? The Lord's address to the angel of the Church in Laodicea conclusively answers such a query: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of no-

thing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one, and the miserable, and poor, and blind and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). They professed to be Christians, but had never yet received anything from Christ.

At different times, then, since the Lord appeared on earth, there have been those who thought themselves *too good for Christ*. In what terms did He speak of those met with in His day? Hypocrites, fools, blind, He called them. How did He characterise those in Laodicea? Poor, blind, and naked, He declared they were. His judgment is unerring. What He called them, that they were. But what were their names? Not one of them has come down to us. Too good as they thought themselves for Christ, wanting nothing from Him, their very names have sunk into oblivion. Their characteristics *have*, however, been preserved to all, like a buoy at sea, which floats over a wreck. All can see the buoy, and knows what lies below; a vessel hidden from sight, sunk, it may be, deep in the sand, against which the mariner is warned that he be not shipwrecked likewise.

To this, Scripture gives one bright excep-

tion. There was one, a Pharisee of Pharisees, his fathers before him having belonged to that sect (Acts xxiii. 6), and who as touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless (Phil. iii. 6). Wrapt up for years in his own self-righteousness, his eyes were opened to himself, by the voice of the Son of God (John v. 25). He learned it was a question of his *inward* parts (Rom. vii.), a question both of what he *was*, and what He had *done*. He took his place as a *sinner*, and learned that, Pharisee as he had been, mercy, grace, salvation he could share in. Once *too good* for Christ in his own estimation, he proved, and gladly owned, he was not, in God's estimation, *too bad* for Christ. His name is recorded. Saul, the Pharisee, is Paul, the sinner saved by grace, the illustration and witness to all, that Jesus Christ came into the world to *save sinners*. Will the reader be found in Paul's company, or will he swell the number of those whose characteristics we read of, but whose names, as far as earth is concerned, have wholly perished, and who if they died impenitent, will never have part with Christ?

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