

What Christ Taught

OR

“Modern Thought” in the Light
of His Words.

BY

H. D. BROWN,
(LONDON),

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P R E F A C E.

THE title of this little book may sound very presumptuous, as if one thought to compress into a tiny volume that which the inspired Apostle said "even the world itself could not contain."

"What is Truth?" Pilate asked of Christ, little knowing the vastness of the question. But though we cannot compass the limitless ocean of Divine Truth, yet we can stand, as it were, on the sea shore and gaze out upon the expanse of glory.

"The well is deep and Thou hast nothing to draw with," said the woman of Samaria, but she knew neither the fathomless depth of the well of which He spake, nor the power that He alone possessed to draw therefrom.

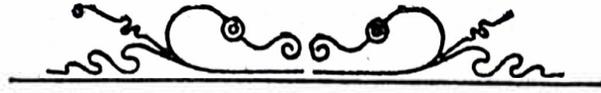
Our pitcher is very small, but though it cannot exhaust the spring, yet it can be filled from the well and shew us what kind of water the spring gives forth.

And as many, in these days, draw water from their own cisterns—or from their neighbours'—and offer it as the Water of Life, we have taken our pitcher to the Fountain Head that we may, by comparison, see of what sort their water is.

Or, to change the simile, the Way of Life is all clearly marked out in the Heavenly Chart, the Word of God; but many profess to have found out newer and better ways, which they say are sanctioned by the Great Master Himself, so we would fain compare their charts with the recorded sayings of our Lord, to see how far they agree or disagree with

WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT

concerning some of the great verities of the Christian faith.



WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT.

OR

“Modern Thought” in the Light of His Words.

INTRODUCTION.

“Back to Christ.”

“BACK TO CHRIST” is, inconsistently enough, the cry of many who yet strive to undermine the great verities of the Christian faith.

But indeed this is not strange, for our Lord Himself foretold that many false Christs should arise, and surely there never was a time in the history of the church when this prophecy was more literally fulfilled than now, though there have been false Christs—both bodily and spiritually—since the days of the apostles.

For many centuries the apostate church of Rome, the pagan counterfeit of Christianity, has in the name of Christ—that is, of its own false Christ—committed every conceivable iniquity, and been “drunken with the blood of the saints.” And still professing the name of Christ it wages war with the truth He taught, and still it seeks with its idolatrous rites and priestly claims to step in between the sinner and the Saviour, and though, for a time, it

has changed the rack, the block and the stake, for the incense, the music and a pretence of toleration, yet it only bides its time for a return to power to set ablaze again the fires of persecution.

But Rome is not the only "false Christ;" there are many persons who profess to be protestant and evangelical but who preach "another gospel" than that which was preached by the apostles; who speak loftily of the epistles as "Pauline theology" "Johannine theology," etc., and who with the cry "Back to Christ" would have us believe that the teaching of the rest of the Scriptures is not in accordance with that of our Lord.

Such views are in reality more dangerous than Romish error, they agree more with the spirit of the age, and are avowedly opposed to priestcraft and superstition. Those who advocate them vauntingly profess freedom of thought, and make a great pretence of large-heartedness, whilst they interweave with their declarations a few isolated sayings of our Lord, and carefully omit everything Christ said or did that does not fall in with their lines of thought.

They boast of their "breadth of view" and in their ranks may be found men of every variety of "modern thought" while they stigmatize as narrow, hard and uncharitable, all those who believe that the Bible is the only revelation of Divine truth which we have received from God, that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the only ground of the sinner's justification, and that all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins needing to be "born again" in order to become the children of God. They pro-

fess to shew us a more excellent way of salvation than through the righteousness of God in Christ, a way more in accordance with the dignity of human nature than the confession that all our “righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” They represent God as nothing more than a great compassionate Father ready to forgive—without any respect to the eternal principles of righteousness—the foibles of His naughty children, while our Lord is represented as the “Elder Brother” the “Ideal Man” and if they acknowledge Him as “the Word made flesh” it is only as the great Pattern of Humanity who came to teach men how to purify their lives and climb “the world’s great altar stairs” up to God.

All this is very bewitching, it is the religion of poetry, art and music, it enables a man to hold up his head and think he is not so bad, after all, as the Bible makes him out to be, that there is some good thing in him and in the human race which only needs developing, cultivating and refining. He does not mind being told that his ancestry were apes and tadpoles, if it can only be made out that the Bible is wrong; there is a fascination in thinking himself the slow product of the evolution of the ages.

This religion is very popular with man, but it finds no favour with God; it is the bloodless offering of Cain who, in his self-righteousness, offered the fruits of the sin-cursed earth, “but unto Cain and to his offering the Lord had not respect.” It may seem to exalt man but it grievously dishonours God.

Were these teachings confined to those who are

openly "the enemies of the cross of Christ" it were sad enough, but alas! there are many who profess to be His servants, who call Him "Master" and thus gain the ear of multitudes of both the false and the true disciples of our Lord. They use many Scripture phrases, they speak of redemption, the "redemption of the world" the "redemption of humanity" as they term it, but it is a redemption without blood; they speak of atonement or "at-one-ment," but it is reconciliation without meeting the demands of the righteous law of God. The "cross" is frequently on their lips, but it is only as a supreme act of self-sacrifice as an example for fallen men to follow. All this is accompanied with such a loud profession of love to man and charity towards their neighbours that many true Christians who themselves believe and love the truth are so influenced by it that they speak and write as if soundness in the faith, "orthodoxy" as it is called, were almost antagonistic to godliness of life or labours of love; and if a man plead for sound doctrine he is regarded as narrow-minded and uncharitable, one who cannot have the love of God in his heart or compassion toward his fellowmen.

Now it cannot be denied that there is a great need for a more consistent life on the part of all the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ than is seen in the present day, a life, purer, holier, more unselfish, more compassionate and self-sacrificing. Nor can it be denied that there are but few professing Christians who seem to use their time and talents (in the Bible sense of the word) in the

service of God and man as they ought to or could do. Yet what are the facts? Go to all the great centres of voluntary and disinterested labour for the amelioration of the condition of the poor, for feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, nursing the sick, &c., and you will find how largely such works of mercy are carried on by those who adhere to the old Gospel of salvation by the grace of God through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ; rather than by the disciples of the “broad school,” who with all their talk do little or nothing to grapple personally with sin and misery, except perhaps by providing a few concerts and other entertainments to amuse the people and help them for a time to forget their trouble. So that were it only for the promoting of works of mercy it is needful to carefully preserve sound doctrine; for we have the Apostolic injunction, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”—*Titus*, iii, 8.

But there is something far higher and far more important than that. This life is, after all, but short, whatever may be its circumstances, eternity is straight ahead of every one of us, eternal blessedness or eternal woe, there is but one way of salvation provided by God for man. Surely, with these vast issues before us, it is of the greatest consequence that men be taught the truth concerning eternity and the salvation of God, for as our Lord said, “if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.”

Moreover, the Word of God ever places purity of doctrine and soundness in the faith in the very forefront, and falsifying the truth is counted a more heinous sin than breaches of the moral law. Man thinks differently, but "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord."

To falsify the truth of God is to dishonour God and to destroy men's souls, therefore, it is one of the greatest of sins and has the most far-reaching consequences.

Undoubtedly there are many points of minor importance in regard to which the most devout Christians may have differences of view as to what is the teaching of Scripture, and each may be fully persuaded in his own mind as to the correctness of his interpretation, and in these matters the right attitude towards one another is that of brotherly love. It is not these, however, but the great foundation truths which in the present day are being so vigorously assailed by the leaders of "modern thought."

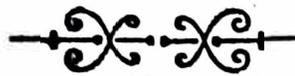
Surely then there is good cause to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" when false doctrine, however fair-sounding it may be, is permeating the thoughts and affecting the teaching even of a large number of God's dear children.

As previously stated, the most specious argument of this "broad school of theology" is that the teachings of Christ during His life on earth are to be regarded as above all other Scripture, and anything written

which He did not say may be disregarded and disbelieved by us as if it had only the authority of mere men and not of God the Holy Ghost. So they raise the cry “Back to Christ,” and then quoting some of our Lord’s sayings and giving a very one-sided view of His character; they audaciously claim the right to set aside all other teachings of Christ and of the rest of holy Scripture.

Now, while we unhesitatingly affirm our belief that the whole of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation are of *equal authority*—though not of equal importance as regards man’s salvation—and that the inspired writings of the apostles and prophets who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” are as truly the words of God as those that fell from the lips of Emmanuel Himself, yet we willingly take up the challenge to go “back to Christ” and see how the teachings of the Divine Master agree with the “modern Gospel” so prevalent in the present day.





What Christ Taught concerning the Scriptures.

DID He Who was Himself the Incarnate Word of God ever teach us to regard the Scriptures as of less authority than His own words? On the contrary He ever appealed to the Old Testament writings as the great authority upon which He founded His claim to be the promised Messiah, the Son of God and the Light of the world. Of these Scriptures He said, "They are they which testify of Me." *John*, v, 39. He spoke of Moses' testimony regarding Him and added, "If ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My words?" (*v.* 47).

His whole teaching was an exposition of the Scriptures, continually referring to them as concerning Himself, and speaking of His life and work as being their fulfilment. To the disciples with whom He walked and talked as they were on the way to Emmaus He said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself."—*Luke*, xxiv, 25-27.

The Scriptures were His one text book, His one court of appeal. In His great conflict with Satan in the wilderness, "It is written" was His one

answer to every temptation of the wicked one, and with Him the Scripture, which he said "cannot be broken," was an end of all controversy.

True He sometimes referred to some Scriptures which the Jews had wrested from their proper meaning to suit their own evil thoughts (as many men do still) and shewed them their true spiritual intent, but He ever upheld them as being the infallible words of God, the Scriptures of truth. He stretched His arm as it were over the whole Hebrew canon and vouched for its absolute inerrancy and Divine authority. He spoke of its history as history, its prophecy as prophecy, its miracles as realities.

On His authority therefore we believe the whole of the Old Testament to be the Word of God, and on His authority we accept all that was written by His holy apostles as being also the Word of God, for He told them while He was yet with them that He had many things to say to them but they could not bear them then, "howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth." Again in His great High-priestly prayer, He prayed "for them which shall believe on Me through their word," and His last words to them ere He ascended were "Ye shall receive power (authority) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

If then men will really go "back to Christ" they will learn from Him that they have no warrant whatever for placing on a lower level than His own words the revelation which God has given by the

Holy Ghost in both Old and New Testaments, but that these also teach us "the whole counsel of God."

Yet more, for these men of "modern thought" blow both hot and cold. On the one hand they profess to take the words of Christ as the only Divine words in the Bible and on the other hand when they find His words running counter to their thoughts, they attribute them, to what they call "the limitations of His human knowledge" or to concessions He made to the popular ideas of the Jews of those days. In the latter case they forget that it was the Jews' want of adherence to the Scriptures for which He blamed them. "Ye do err, **not knowing the Scriptures**, nor the power of God" He said to the Sadducees who asked Him a foolish question concerning the resurrection; and He charged the Pharisees with transgressing the commandments of God by their traditions "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

To speak of the "limitations of our Lord's human knowledge" and to imagine He knew less or understood less of the Scriptures than men of the present day is nothing else than unbounded presumption and pride. True we read that He "emptied Himself" when He came to earth, and made Himself as entirely dependent upon God, in His human nature, as the very "least in the kingdom of heaven" yet He was Perfect Man and therefore a **perfect** medium for the communication of divine truth; and He was filled with the Holy Ghost, while He declared over and over again that the words He

spoke were not His own words but the words which His Father gave Him commandment to speak.

The deep mysterious union in Him between God and man is utterly beyond our comprehension, but His knowledge was infinite as His power was almighty, and every word He spake was the word of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. On the high authority therefore of the Triune God, in Whose Name our Saviour spoke we claim the same Divine source and consequently the same absolute infallibility for the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the apostolic writings in the New as for the words of Christ Himself, and that they demand from us the same unwavering submission. Had they been merely the words, the thoughts, the conceptions of men, our Lord would never have appealed to their authority to substantiate His own claims, nor promised to send the Spirit of Truth to guide His apostles into all truth.

The sin of depreciating the Scriptures therefore is very great, even though it be on the pretext of honouring Christ, for it is denying His testimony and the testimony of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. It is, moreover, robbing God's people of the riches of their glorious heritage in the Word of God. The Bible is so "compacted together" that to take away any one part impairs the whole, and "if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?"

But, blessed be God, the foundations *cannot* be destroyed, for they are deeply embedded in the "Rock of Ages."

What Christ Taught concerning God.

That the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was "the brightness of His (the Father's) glory and the express image of His Person" is a truth of unspeakable blessedness. In His uncreated Being One with God, in His incarnation "made in the likeness of men," the Eternal Word "was made flesh and dwelt among us" revealing to us God in His own glorious Person, His immaculate character, His holy and beneficent life and His sacrificial death, in lines so clear that He could truly say "He that hath seen **Me** hath seen the Father."

The inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments reveal to us the *mind* of God, His thoughts toward us; but the Son reveals **God Himself**. They, like the heavens, "declare the glory of God" but Christ is the very effulgence of the glory.

But oh! how poor and mean the thoughts, how narrow and limited the vision of those who see nothing more in the teaching of Christ than the revelation of God as a compassionate Father. True He shewed Him to be a God of wondrous love and boundless compassion, Who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," a God of patience and long suffering, of great and tender mercy, Who sent His Son "to seek and to save that which was lost."

In Christ we see Love, the love of God in its deep deep yearning over the souls Whom He had made, in its terrible grief for their sin and rebellion, in its amazing pity for their misery and wretchedness, the sorrow and suffering that follow from their sins. Nay more, in Christ we see that infinite and eternal Love putting forth its almighty power to **save**, yea, Himself bearing our griefs, carrying our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, with Whose stripes we are healed.

And all the while that great heart of Love was “despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him, He was despised and we esteemed Him not.” He continually “endured such contradiction of sinners” and those He came to save returned Him hatred for His love, yet when they put Him to bitter shame and agony upon the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

But oh ! how vastly greater is this than the mere compassion of a weak, indulgent Father such as is portrayed by the “broad school of theology” the preachers of the modern Gospel.

And while the love of God which passes all understanding was revealed to us by Christ in all

its fulness, it was not love alone that He, the Eternal Word, revealed. The glory and majesty of His Person, His burning holiness that could not permit the slightest defilement of sin to come into His presence, His inviolable righteousness that could not let sin go unpunished, yea, the fierceness of His wrath against sin, were all clearly shewn forth in word and deed. No more terrible denunciations of judgment against sin are to be found in the whole Bible than fell from the lips of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida, . . . it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." "And thou Capernaum which art exalted to heaven shalt be thrust down to hell." "It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city." It was "this same Jesus" Who as "the Faithful and true Witness" spoke of the doom of the wicked as "a furnace of fire," of "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," of an awful Gehenna "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." These are terrible truths and He kept them not back from us, for He in His great love would warn us to flee from the wrath to come, that awful wrath of God which abideth on him that believeth not the Son. It was He Who told us of the sin against the Holy Ghost which "hath never forgiveness," and of the time when He Himself "the Son of Man" shall say "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Ah! how this enhances to us the value of the great salvation provided for us in Christ, and tells us something of the awful woe which He passed through when He made His soul an offering for sin.

“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Ah! it was **the truth** for which men hated and rejected Him in those days, and it is **the truth** for which they hate and reject Him still, as He said to the Jews “Because I tell you the truth ye believe Me not,” “But ye seek to kill Me.” So long as they “did eat of the loaves and were filled” they sought Him eagerly, but when He told them the truth they “took up stones to cast at Him.” So long as they received temporal benefits at His hands they were willing to make Him a King, but when He made known to them the truth of God, it stirred up fierceness and wrath; and it is the same to-day as it was then.

“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;” it is only “in the face of Jesus Christ” that we see “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” but we behold that glory as much when in holy anger, He drove the sordid traffickers out of the court of the temple, saying “It is written My house shall be called the House of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves,” as when He touched the bier and raised to life again the widow’s son, or when He took little children in His arms and blessed them.

It is vain for us to contemplate only one attribute of God as revealed to us in Christ, but while we bless and magnify His holy Name for the exceeding riches of the glory of His grace we must reverently bow in adoration before the glory of His majesty, His wisdom and His might, giving thanks for the glory of His holiness and righteousness and truth, while we listen in silent awe to the thunder of His wrath "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." All this we behold "in the face of Jesus Christ" and all this was taught us by Him of Whom it is said "His mouth is most sweet, yea, He is altogether lovely."

There is yet another modern heresy which must be guarded against, viz: that Christ was only a human manifestation of God, and not a distinct Person; that the Father is God in essence, the Christ is God manifest, and the Holy Ghost is God acting.

This is designed as a concession to Unitarians, to meet their difficulties in accepting the doctrine of the Three Persons in the Godhead, yet the error is so subtle that not a few Christians, themselves sound in the faith, are misled by it as a new and beautiful explanation of the mystery.

Now however unfathomable to us may be the Mystery of the Trinity—One God, yet three Persons—nothing is more emphatically declared to us in Scripture than this great truth. And our Lord Himself spoke in the clearest language of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as three distinct Persons, each One having His own separate office, though all having one will, one heart, one purpose, one glory.



What Christ Taught concerning Himself.

Our Lord came not to reveal Himself, but His Father ; it was His Father's business He was about, His Father's work He loved to do, His Father's words He spake, His Father's honour He jealously guarded, His Father's glory He manifested. But His daily life was a revelation of Himself as the only-begotten Son of God, and His divine glory was manifest in every look and act and word.

To those who love and reverence our Lord, nothing is more painful than the attempt on the part of many who profess His Name to detract from His glory by speaking of Him as if He were only a man, even when they do not explicitly deny that He was the Son of God. And if it be painful to His people on earth, what an offence must it be to His Father in heaven Who is jealous for the glory of His Son !

Yet, in the days of His life of humiliation upon earth, in the fearlessness of His divine purity He plainly declared unto us Who and what He was, though sinful men were ready to stone Him for what in their blindness they thought was impious presumption in making Himself one with God.

He declared Himself to be the Son of God and Son of Man, the Light of the World, the Bread of

Life, the Giver of the Water of Life ; He ever spoke with divine authority while "all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."

He mingled with "publicans and sinners" and "did eat with them," but the divine majesty of His person kept any from presuming upon His condescension ; He was "meek and lowly in heart," but sin could not stand before His pure and holy gaze, and the presumptuous sinners cowered and shrank before Him while they hated Him with bitter hate.

He trod this earth and lived to minister to others, but ever as a heavenly Visitant, Himself dwelling in the eternal realities, and He called His disciples to do the same. Earth was not His home, He did not entangle Himself with the affairs of this world ; He came not to *reform* the world but to "save the world," to "give His life for the life of the world," to "seek and to save that which was lost."

Every word He spoke bore upon eternity, He viewed everything in the light of eternity, and, though His mission was not then to judge the world, He weighed every word and act of men in the balances of the coming "Day of Judgment."

He made no compromise with sin, no weak concessions to the "infirmities of the flesh," yet He loved the sinner himself with a great love, even when he was dead in trespasses and sins, so that even while men crucified Him He prayed for them, and laid down His life for those who hated Him without cause.

He was true Man, every fibre of sinless human nature possessed His being, and every phase of sinless human life was known to Him. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He knew hunger and thirst, weariness and pain; the sweets of friendship and the bitterness of desertion were His, and He tasted every human sorrow and every human joy, "yet without sin."

At the grave of Lazarus—

Jesus wept ! O blessed tears that fell
 From eyes that scanned the infinite. Eyes
 Which eternal ages could not dim
 Were dimmed with tears ! Eyes from whence there shone
 The brightness of the Father's glory !
 Tears that welled up from the heart of God
 Revealing depths unfathomable
 Of love, and grief for human woe ! Tears
 Which angels could not weep ! Pearly drops
 From th' infinite ocean of God's love !

He wept over hardened impenitent Jerusalem, and to the stony-hearted Jews He sorrowfully said, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

But He was also very God, He "spake as never man spake," as even His enemies testified, He spake "as one having authority and not as the scribes." With a touch He healed the leper, with a word He quelled the storm, the winds were hushed and the waves were at rest at their Creator's feet. He commanded the devils and they hastened to obey. He spoke the word of power and the dead came to life again.

In Him were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," for "in Him dwelleth all the

fulness of the Godhead bodily." Who but God could have spoken as He spake? Who but He could have said, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life," "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me," "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you," "In Me ye shall have peace." Who but He could say without blasphemy, "I and My Father are One"?

In the whole world's history Christ stands absolutely **alone**, and to liken Him to any man—even to prophets and apostles—is derogatory to His high and lofty position, while to mention Him in the same breath with such as Mahomet, Buddha, Confucius, is to blaspheme His holy Name, "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord, who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord"? He proclaimed His equality with God and declared Himself to be the great I AM, and the words of Scripture apply to Him, "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One."

Yet many, even of those who profess to believe in His Godhead, men of the "broad school of theology," speak and write of Him as if He were only a man, pure and good and great maybe, but subject to like passions as we are, of limited knowledge—more limited than their own!—learning of other men, getting "inspiration" from others, and even being surprised and repelled—as they profess to be

—by God's own institutions in the Temple ritual and sacrifices, as if He knew not that they prefigured His great atoning work. All these thoughts are born of Unitarianism, though they are adopted by many who are not Unitarians by profession but are in spirit.

They speak of Him as an Ideal Man whom the world can follow and worship in its own way; but the Christ of God, the world has never either worshipped or followed. They speak of "Jesus," but it is "another Jesus" (2 Cor. xi. 4), a Jesus of their own imagination. Their "Jesus" is their own ideal, but the Lord Jesus Christ is God's Ideal; He is as far removed from the conceptions of men as the East is from the West. If we would know Him we must learn of Him as He is revealed to us in the Word of God, not from the fancies of men.



What Christ Taught concerning the Fatherhood of God.

There is no doctrine more popular in the present day than that which is known as the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal Brotherhood of Christ; that is, that God is the great compassionate Father of the whole human race, and that Christ by His incarnation has bound all mankind up in one universal brotherhood. Advocates of this doctrine (and they are legion) are to be found now-a-days in all the churches, and their thoughts, in more or less pronounced form, permeate the bulk of our religious literature. There is no doctrine more specious, none in which it is more difficult to disentangle the true from the false, and yet it is the switch point at which the deadliest error diverges from the straight line of God's truth, for it entirely misrepresents man's position before God and misleads as to the only means of his salvation. It is not a question, therefore, of some fine theological point merely, it is a question of life and death—eternal life and eternal death.

It is, then, of vital importance to know whether or not the Bible teaches, or whether our Lord Jesus Christ taught, that all men are by nature the children of God, or whether Christ by His incarnation united the whole human race in one common brotherhood with Himself. And the answer is, that there is not the slightest warrant for this belief in the whole of

the Scriptures or in any of the words of our Lord. There is, indeed, a common brotherhood of the whole human race, for God "hath made of one blood all nations of men," but that brotherhood is not in Christ, it is in the flesh, in the "blood," and is derived not from the incarnation of Christ but from the common descent from Adam. God is our Maker, our Creator, the Author of our being, and in this respect we are all "the offspring of God." Adam was originally a "son of God" created in His image and likeness, but through sin he lost that birthright, that image was defaced; and it is of strange and deep significance that we read that he "begat a son in his own image after his own likeness." Therefore the human race has a common fatherhood in Adam, a common brotherhood in each other. When this brotherhood is realized how much it calls forth that is tender and true, how much to break down the artificial barriers that men have raised between one another, how much that calls for mutual help and mutual sympathy as we realize that all men, rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, black and white, civilized and savage, all belong to one great human family having one common origin, one common nature and, in all its varied features, one common heritage of sorrow.

It is the Bible alone that has taught men this great truth and the duties which flow from it, duties of love one towards another, of compassion, of seeking each other's welfare, of the claims that all men have upon their fellowmen; and though many, who are not Christians, now proclaim this truth, it is

from the irradiation from the Bible that they have obtained their light.

But admitting and emphasizing all this, we affirm that the Bible in no way teaches, neither did our Lord ever teach, that by nature we are the children of God. As has already been said God is our Maker, the Author and Preserver of our being, and therefore He possesses an inalienable right in us and a claim to our reverence and obedience, moreover He loves with a great love the souls which He has made, even though they be dead in sin, but this is a totally different thing from our being "the sons of God."

No one taught this more clearly than our Lord Himself when He said to Nicodemus "Ye must be born again" and "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus learned to his amazement that he must receive a new nature (in the root sense of the word) a new life begotten in him, if he would enter the kingdom of God, and in his perplexity asked if a man could enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born.

Our Lord then told him that another natural birth would be of no avail, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Here is the great cleavage between the sons of God begotten by the word of His truth, "born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and unregenerate men who are "by nature the children of wrath" being "the children of disobedience."

It was only to His disciples that Christ spoke of their "Father in Heaven." To the Jews who rejected Him and who said "We have one Father even God," He replied "If God were your Father ye would love Me . . . ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Again when "one said unto Him, Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with Thee . . . He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren, for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother," or as it is given in *Luke*, viii, 21, "My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it." It was not to the world but to His disciples that He sent the precious message "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father ; and to My God and your God."

On the surface merely, this doctrine, that the whole human race are the children of God, has the appearance of magnifying the grace of God, and of a world-wide charity towards all men. But, instead, it belittles the love of God, for it takes from it that element of holiness and righteousness upon which it is founded and with which it is blended in Divine harmony ; and as for charity towards men, it is in reality only an attempt to gloss over sin and to maintain that there is some good in every man which only requires developing to make him right with God. Now, that there is a certain amount of moral virtue to be found amongst those who do not profess

the name of Christ is true, especially in a land like ours where the power of Christianity is felt, and even in heathen lands it is not wholly unknown ; but in **relation to God** the natural heart of man is at deadly enmity, as truly amongst the cultured and refined as amongst the coarse and debased, so that God has declared that **“there is none that doeth good, no, not one,”** and Christ also taught us that **“there is none good but One, that is, God.”** Notwithstanding stray gleams of virtue He Who knows what is in man, Who searches the heart and tries the reins, has declared that **“the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”**

As already said, this doctrine is not a mere theological question, it is a heresy which strikes at the very foundation of the Gospel, denying the need for an atonement for sin or for a new birth as taught us by Christ as well as by the inspired writers of the Bible. It teaches men to look to Christ, not as the Saviour of sinners, but as the **“Helper”** of weak humanity, helping men, chiefly by His example, by their own poor feeble efforts to climb from earth to heaven, from sin to holiness. It asserts that man is justified in the sight of God, not by the imputed righteousness of God in Christ, but by his own good works and character. This is the way in which Satan fosters pride in the human heart and leads men to seek salvation in a way whereby they will never obtain it, for God has declared that it is **“not by works of righteousness which we have done”** but **“by grace are ye saved through faith,”** and if men will only strive to obtain salvation

by their own efforts Satan knows that they will strive in vain. He therefore sets before them an attractive programme of all that is best in human life, of good deeds, heroism, philanthropy, crowning it all with a visionary self sacrifice, and thus leads them to think they are grandly following the example of Christ, and in course of time through the process of evolution they will bring the race into the likeness of their great Prototype. Not to make the way too hard, art, music, science, dancing, a purified stage and every worldly delight are brought into requisition on the pretext that such things will "elevate the masses." But such things will never save a soul or lead a man to Christ. It is only a flowery bye-path leading to eternal death; hence the necessity for exposing its deadly error.

This doctrine with its many honeyed phrases has taken such a hold that it is found to a great extent even in truly evangelical literature. For instance, many, even Christian, writers, fall into the mistake of speaking of the poor, and especially of poor children as the brethren of Christ, and of applying to them His words "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me." But while it is clearly the Christian's duty to "consider the poor," to help the helpless, to seek the lost and succour all who are in need, yet it is neither poverty nor weakness nor helplessness that makes men Christ's "brethren" but a living union with Him through faith in His Name and being "born again" by the Holy Ghost.

Again how often is our Lord spoken of as our "Elder Brother" in a manner by no means warranted in Scripture. Although He is "not ashamed to call them brethren" who are united to Him by faith, yet no man in the Bible ever called Him Brother, not even in the days of His humiliation, how much less since He ascended up on high. He Himself said to His most intimate disciples on that night when He stooped in love to the menial service of washing their feet, "Ye call Me Master and Lord and ye say well for so I am," and the attitude of the devout soul is shown in the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." It is not well to apply to our Lord any names or titles which have not been given Him in Scripture by the Holy Ghost.

These things show us how insidiously this doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Christ has crept into the thoughts of men, and how it has affected the preaching, the writing, the religious poetry of the present day, yet it has no warrant in Scripture, but is only the specious gloss of lying spirits to turn men away from the truth, and it is directly opposed to the teaching of our Lord.





What Christ Taught concerning the Atonement.

This is the citadel of the faith, the foundation of the Gospel; no wonder then that Satan's most determined efforts have ever been directed towards undermining faith in this glorious truth. Well he knows that men may believe anything if only they reject the salvation offered freely by God on the ground of the finished work of Christ upon the cross, he knows that no other faith will save them, for there is "none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," therefore "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God should shine unto them." The doctrine of the atonement has always been unpopular, for it strikes at the root of all man's pride, it shows him to be a condemned sinner, "guilty before God," "sold under sin" with no possibility of redeeming himself, helpless to work out his own salvation, needing another to make atonement for him; whereas he loves to think that his own merits must count for something, and refuses to acknowledge that he can be saved by grace alone.

This leads him to make all manner of objections to it, he calls it a relic of barbarism, the religion of the shambles, a moral injustice, a libel upon

the Fatherhood of God, an after-thought of the Apostles, Pauline Theology, and so on, all quite contrary to the teaching of Christ. So say the advocates of the "broad school of theology," the "men of modern thought," yet they claim to be "evangelical" and use many phrases which Christians use, but with a different meaning.

We have already referred to this but as it is appropriate to this subject, it is well to repeat it here because a great many even of God's children are caught by these phrases and insidiously led into error, not being able to detect the subtilty, and they also help in misleading others, while large numbers of people imagine they are listening to the Gospel while in reality they are being turned away from it.

As previously said the preachers of the "modern Gospel" speak of "atonement" or "at-one-ment," but with them it is merely the reconciliation between Father and child who have been estranged, chiefly through a misunderstanding on the part of the child not knowing how much his Father loved him until Christ came to make it known. They talk of "redemption," "the redemption of the world," in which we all can have a share, helping to "redeem humanity" by our good example. They speak of Christ dying for us, but it is merely as a kind of dramatic spectacle of love to the human race, or as the culminating point of self-sacrifice, a point for us to reach that we may become by our own efforts perfect imitators of Christ. They even speak of Him bearing our

sins, but it is only in the sympathy of His great heart as we also might bear the sorrows of one another.

But that the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God and Son of Man, "His own-self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" that He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," that He took the sinner's place, bore the sinner's punishment, that He might set the sinner free, they strenuously deny. All this they say is only a human creed begun by the Apostles, and afterwards crystalized by the Church, but never taught by Christ Himself; a relic of the dark ages now happily displaced by the newer light of "modern thought!"

Both the pulpit and the press are largely requisitioned by the advocates of this insidious heresy, it is preached in many Christian churches and widely disseminated by books and magazines, especially in the form of semi-religious tales; it is taught to the students in our colleges, and the children in our Sunday schools, and wields so great an influence that many who know and hold the truth themselves make but slight allusion to the atonement in their preaching, or speak of it almost with bated breath, and if one press for a clear acknowledgment of this glorious truth, they say they cannot always be harping upon it, and excuse themselves by asserting that "there was no word of atonement in the Sermon on the Mount."!

Now, that our Lord did not expound this truth with the fulness with which it was afterwards done by the Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit, is quite clear, and the reason is obvious. The whole of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi is based upon this truth which is inter-woven with every line. From the very cradle of humanity, men were taught by God that sinful man could only approach Him through the shedding of the blood of another and an innocent Victim. We read that "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." "Now *faith* cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God ;" it must therefore have been by the command of God Himself that Abel offered the "more excellent sacrifice," through the shedding of the blood of a lamb. And so began the altar fires which were never to go out, and the sacrificial shedding of the blood of animals which was never to cease until the Lamb of God should come to fulfil in His own glorious Person, in His holy and righteous life, and in His sacrificial death, everything concerning Him which was shadowed forth in the Old Testament Scriptures ; wherefore He said "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which **testify of Me ;**" and again after His resurrection, when the great atonement for sin had been made, as He walked to Emmaus with two of His Disciples, He "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded unto them in **all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself.**" What a wonderful exposition must that have been ! and though the discourse is not recorded, can any one doubt that it all centred in that which had just been accomplished

in Jerusalem, and which was at the very time filling the minds of His disciples with perplexity and sorrow? opening up to them the great truth which had been as yet hidden as in a mystery, but now made manifest, that He suffered thus that He might redeem us to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

But until that atonement was an accomplished fact, the blessed results of it could not be published, and moreover until the Holy Ghost was given, as at Pentecost, men's minds could not take it in, as our Lord said to His disciples "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."

Nevertheless our Lord did teach in clear and unmistakeable language that He was to lay down His life as our great Substitute and Sin-bearer. Did He not say "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"? I know that many scoffingly ask "To whom did He pay the ransom?" Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? It was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who spake; if thou mockest thou mockest God. What language could more clearly state that He paid the penalty of sin on behalf of "many"? Again when taking "the last supper" with His disciples, He said of the wine "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed

for many for the remission of sins;" not, for a splendid example of self-sacrifice, but for "the remission of sins." Whoever then says that the doctrine of the Atonement, or the vicarious death of Christ as our Substitute, paying the penalty demanded by the eternal law of righteousness for our sin, was an after-thought of the Apostles and was not taught by our Lord, manifests either great ignorance or utter disregard for truth.

But the whole of His public ministry bore testimony to this great truth, even in His "Sermon on the Mount" (which be it noted, was spoken, not to the multitude but to His disciples, see *Matt.* v. 1.) He said "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The "Law" to the Jews was contained in the five books of Moses, and in what way could He fulfil that Law but by accomplishing all its typical meaning? Whenever He said to a poor sinner "Thy sins are forgiven thee," He knew that they could be forgiven only on the ground of the shedding of His own blood; and when He said to the sinful woman "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more" it was because His mission then was "not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Hereafter He is coming again, to "judge the world in righteousness," but His mission then was, as He said, "not to judge the world, but to save the world."

During all those years of His earthly ministry the burden of the cross lay heavily upon Him,

ever growing heavier and heavier as the time drew nearer. During His last journey to Jerusalem, it was the one theme of His converse with His disciples, the keynote of every word He spoke. He never swerved from His steadfast purpose, but it would seem as though Satan were ever tempting Him to turn aside from it, as when Peter said "Be it far from Thee Lord, this shall not be unto Thee," then suddenly the holy fire broke forth, and He said "Get thee behind Me Satan: thou art a stumbling block (*R. V.*) unto Me." Yet as the end approached His soul seemed to tremble and quake before the awful horror of the cross, "I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" He said, and again "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save Me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour: Father glorify Thy Name." Then on the last terrible night in dread Gethsemane, under the dark shadow of Calvary, in fierce conflict with Satan and all His hosts, in such agony of soul and body that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," He prayed three times, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." It was no mere death such as men die to which He was looking forward, but to the awful ordeal of His soul being made "an offering for sin," when, as it is written, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," when He, "through the eternal Spirit offered

Himself without spot to God" being "made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The conflict over, the victory gained, He thenceforth went forward in perfect peace, with calm sweet majesty to meet the shame and the agony, the spitting, the scourging, the mocking of the crowd, the crown of thorns, the cruel cross, and the awful culmination of all, the hiding of the face of God.

At last from that cross of shame whereon the Prince of Glory hung, the cry rang out from earth to heaven "**IT IS FINISHED**" and we may well believe the heavenly host who sang "Glory to God in the highest" when Christ was born, caught up the triumphant shout repeating it again and again till heaven was filled with the paean of victory.

What was "finished"? was it only a life of sorrow and a death of shame? only a divine example of devotion to humanity for men to follow? only a life of beneficence ending in a splendid exhibition of self-sacrifice? How miserably poor the thought! how utterly inadequate to explain the deep impenetrable mystery of the death of the Christ of God! Do those who tell us this not know that death is "the wages of sin," and without a just cause such self-sacrifice would be self-immolation which is a horrible sin, and that to permit the shedding of the blood of a righteous man would be unrighteousness on the part of the Judge of all the earth? Nay the only **possible**

explanation of the death of the Son of God is either that He was Himself a sinner, or that He bare the sins of others.

That which on the cross was "finished" was begun in the counsels of eternity, was proclaimed in Eden, was shadowed forth in type and prophecy for nigh four thousand years, but now every "jot and tittle" of "the law" was fulfilled, the works of the devil were destroyed, the righteousness of God was manifested, the majesty of Heaven was vindicated, and God was glorified. Moreover, the barrier which sin had raised between God and man was broken down, and the floodgates were opened for the unhindered flow of the love and grace of God to the souls whom He had made.

It was given to the apostles, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to expound in all its fulness the meaning of the cross, to tell forth its glories and its blessed results, and to sound out the Gospel of our salvation as it could not be done until all things were accomplished, but our Lord Himself also taught by word and deed this glorious truth; and when men deny it, they dishonour Him. They take from God the glory and commit most grievous sin against the Majesty on High.

And it would be well for all the servants of the Lord to be on their guard lest they should participate in this sin. For by belittling in any way this truth or failing to give it its due place as the great foundation of the Gospel, men may be led to seek some other way of salvation, and thus "the cross of Christ be made of none effect."



What Christ Taught concerning Faith.

“It does not matter what a man believes so long as he lives right,” said a borough head-constable to me in reply to a question I had put to him. “But you don’t live right,” I said. “How do you know,” he asked, “you don’t know me.” “No,” I said, “but God knows you, and he says that ‘there is none righteous, no not one.’” “That’s a matter of opinion,” he said. “Indeed it is not,” I replied, “now, you are a constable and familiar with courts of justice, suppose then a prisoner is before the judge, it doesn’t matter much what the prisoner thinks of his crime, but it matters everything what the judge thinks of it, does it not?” He admitted it. So, I said, “it matters little what a man thinks of his life, but God is Judge and His verdict is true.”

How many there are who preach this doctrine, that it matters not what a man’s faith is, but only what his life is, and it is wonderful how many of God’s own people there are who are misled by this specious talk! And undoubtedly the inconsistent walk of many who profess faith in the truths of God’s Word, carries force to the argument, while the fact that here and there are to be found unbelievers who have naturally amiable dispositions and generous impulses seems to give additional

weight ; but amiability of disposition does not make up for deep dishonour done to God through despising or disbelieving His Word. Even as regards the words of men it is of no small consequence what one believes ; if a man were in a burning house and he were told that there was but one way of escape, it would be a question of life or death to him whether or not he believed and acted upon what he heard. But when it concerns the word of God then unbelief becomes heinous sin. This is why so much stress is laid upon faith in the Bible. This note sounds through the whole of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, it was through disbelieving God that man fell, it is through unbelief that man is separated from God, and it is through faith in God that he returns and is brought into living union with Him in Christ.

But again we take up the challenge and go “back to Christ” to learn what He taught on this subject. With Him everything hung upon faith, not a mere profession of words, but a real genuine faith in Himself as the Son of God. “Repent and **believe the Gospel**” was his first proclamation. “All things are possible to him that believeth” He said to the agonized father who entreated Him to cast the unclean spirit out of his son. “Thy faith hath saved thee.” “Thy faith hath made thee whole,” He said again and again to those who came to Him for healing ; His commendation of the centurion was “I have not found so great faith no not in Israel.” When the Jews asked Him what they should do that they might work the works of God

He said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

And, strange and mysterious as it may appear to us, it was said that in Capernaum He could not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief.

Our Lord then gave not the slightest countenance to the thought that it was of little consequence what a man believed, but, on the contrary, He made it the all important matter, for "without faith it is impossible to please God."

But it may be said that our Lord spoke of faith in God and in Himself not of belief in a creed. True, but what is a creed? It is simply a declaration of faith, a statement of what a man believes, and if a man be unable to say what he believes, he must be a poor weak jelly-fish kind of creature. A man without a creed—that is without a definite belief in *something*—is mentally a nonentity, and the only real question is as to what a man's creed may be. Every "creed" therefore must be examined and compared with the word of God; if it be shown that it is drawn from, and founded upon, that standard of Divine truth it must be held fast, but if not it must be rejected. But when God has graciously condescended to reveal His truth to man, it is the height of impiety to say that it matters little what a man believes.

Of course, it matters not what a man *professes* to believe if he believes it not with the heart, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto

salvation." But the whole life is the outcome of what a man **really** believes, for "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

To profess a creed, however Scriptural, will certainly not save a man, but how can one have faith in God and not believe the truth which He has revealed? "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar."

God has made salvation so simple, so easy to be obtained by one who truly desires it, but man always tries to make it so difficult, such a complication of good works, good feelings, religious observances, which are all in vain; whereas Christ has said "he that heareth My word and **believeth** on Him that sent Me **hath everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."

Reader, if you are unsaved and want to be saved, let not your own thoughts nor the thoughts of others mislead you in this all-important matter. Take Christ at His word, come to Him as your Saviour, confess yourself a sinner, seek His pardon, believe in Him, and on His authority you may know that you **have** everlasting life.

The self-righteous Pharisee was rejected, the self-abased Publican who took his rightful place before God was "justified" by Him Who "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and Who said "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."



What Christ Taught concerning His Disciples and the World.

How often it is said that if the disciples of Christ were more like their Master they would commend Christianity more to the world. But the truth is directly opposite, it is, alas! just because we are so unlike our Master that the world tolerates us. And this was what Christ taught His disciples, for He said to them "If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world but I have called you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." No one could be more like the Master than the Master Himself, yet the world hated Him, as He said "If the world hate you ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." And the world is no better in that respect to-day than it was then, the carnal mind is still enmity against God, and while God has shut the lion's mouth for a time, and is manifestly testing His people with prosperity, there are plenty of indications of the same virulent hatred whenever one seeks to walk with God separate from the world, and to witness for His truth.

So long as the church loves the world the world will love the church, so long as the Bride of Christ is content to wear the world's finery, and walk in the world's ways, lending the halo of

her fair name to "all that is in the world," the world will smile graciously; so long as Christians will confine their efforts to philanthropy, attempting to make the world better by "uplifting humanity," they will be popular, and receive the world's applause, but as soon as they shew that they prefer Christ to the world, obedience to His commands rather than to the world's maxims, the joy of communion with Him instead of the world's poor pleasures, then the old hatred bursts forth and they are derided as fools and fanatics. Still more when they bear witness to the truth, pressing home upon men the reality of eternity, pleading with them to "flee from the wrath to come" and seek salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, they are accounted nuisances and but for the restraining hand of God, persecution would burn against them the same as of old according to the words of our Saviour, "If they have persecuted Me they will also persecute you." We must not be lulled into dreaming that the natural heart of man has in the least changed its attitude towards God.

True, in our time, and more especially in our own land, God restrains the wrath of man, and is giving His people great peace; true also, where great efforts are made and much prayer ascends, crowds will gather to hear the Gospel and many are being added to the church; moreover the power of Christianity in a land like ours tells upon society and moulds its usages—although they call it "civilization" and boast that it is only "human progress." But the heart of man is still

the same, the carnal mind is still "enmity against God" and through the whole of society in the present day there is a marked and growing intensity of rebellion against God in the demeanour of men, a more pronounced defiance of His authority. How truly are the words of the second Psalm the language of their hearts "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." No one who thoughtfully notes the signs of the times can fail to see how society in our land and amongst all classes is rapidly approaching the description of the last days given in 2. *Tim.* 3. 1-7, and in other Scriptures. And the same spirit is to a grievous extent permeating many of the churches also.

Yet with it all there is an outward profession of honouring Christ, but it is a Christ of their own, not the Christ of the Bible, the Christ of God. A painted Christ, a Christ upon the stage or in a novel, a "passion play" they will admire and even weep over. A great Leader of men, a great Example to "Humanity," an ideal Hero, they will put upon a pedestal and even accord him divine honours, but the Christ of the Gospel, the **Saviour of Sinners**, who saves from their **sins** all who come to Him, they will have none of; they do not need **salvation**, only a little "uplifting" of "the masses of the people," which can best be done by education, sanitation, improved morals, and a few entertainments of the less grosser sorts. But why should their own consciences be awakened? Why should men be troubled with thoughts of eternity,

of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, as Christ taught? Do we not live for to-day, and is not that a better Gospel which cares for the body in the present than that which provides for a shadowy hereafter? Such is the purport of much that is said and written in the present day, yet it is proclaimed with so much appearance of devoutness that many of God's children are misled by it and think it is their Lord which is thus preached; but it is only covert rebellion against God and His Christ.

What then are our Lord's commands and what is His great commission to His Disciples? His first command is "Follow Me." How shall we follow Him? Not by listening to what men say nor by conjuring up our own ideas, but by reading and studying under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the story of His wondrous life and sayings as recorded in the Gospels and all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments "given by inspiration of God" as attested and authenticated by Him. Truly He "went about doing good" He "pleased not Himself" lived for poor needy "humanity" as no one ever lived, continually His hands dispensed blessings, and His lips distilled sweetness, His tender mercies flowed like a river, His compassion was like a boundless sea, His mouth was "a well of life" His eyes shone with the light of heaven, His heart of love was a great deep. Neither hunger nor thirst nor weariness stood in the way when the hungry were to be fed, the thirsty to be given

the Water of Life, the weary invited to rest, when the sad were to be comforted, the sick to be healed, the blind eyes to be opened, the deaf ears to be unstopped, the dead to be raised to life again. Morning, noon and night He was at every one's call, He answered every question of the heart, supplied every real need, while His soul yearned with compassion for the multitude who were as sheep without a shepherd. He sought no fame, but constantly charged those He healed to "tell no man," He did not strive nor cry nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. Wicked men "went about to kill Him," they laid traps to catch Him in His words, they reviled Him, attributed His power to Satan, treated Him with the basest ingratitude, acted with hypocrisy; yet while He laid bare and rebuked their sin it was with unruffled spirit, without a tinge of impatience, and when His "own familiar friend" turned traitor, and in the garden of Gethsemane kissed Him with hellish hypocrisy; in calm sweet majesty but, we may well believe, with a tremor in His voice, He only said "Judas betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Disciple of Jesus wouldest thou follow thy Master? Learn of Him Who is meek and lowly in heart, and go thou and do likewise.

"Follow Me!" The Lord Jesus was in the world, but not of the world; He mingled with men, but as a heavenly Visitant; He conformed not to this world, made no compromise with sin, but ever bore faithful witness to the truth. Disciple of

Jesus, wouldest thou follow thy Master? Follow Him in this.

“Follow Me!” His feet touched the earth but His spirit ever dwelt in the atmosphere of heaven; often while others slept He spent the night in communion with His Father; the things not of time but of eternity filled His soul. Disciple of Jesus, wouldest thou follow Thy Master?

It seems to be thought by some that to “follow Jesus” is a very simple thing, and so it may appear when the following is very far off, so far off that the Master can scarcely be seen, yet they who follow most closely are most conscious of the infinite gap between. To “follow Jesus” is not an easy but it is a very blessed thing, as He said “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me him will My Father honour.”

There are many ways of serving Him, but His great commission to His disciples was “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Although the world hated Him, rejected Him, crucified Him, yet He loved the world with an infinite compassion, and yearned over the souls whom He had made. For this He came into the world, and at His birth an angel from heaven proclaimed “good tidings of great joy to all people.” For this He was the “Light of the world,” the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” giving His “life for the life of the world.” He lived for this, He died and rose again for this, and when He was about to ascend to His Father

to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on High, His last great command to His disciples, and through them to His church, was "Go ye into all the world and **PREACH THE GOSPEL** to every creature."

The Gospel is God's one remedy for sin, His one panacea for all the world's woe, for it is "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." It is quite right to do good to our fellowmen, to see to their temporal welfare and deny ourselves for their sakes, but if they are not saved it matters little what we do for them. If a man were in a burning house who would think of looking after his comfort? of providing for his pleasure while he lay there? the one thought would be to save him first; and while men are dead in trespasses and sins, under condemnation, in danger of hell, our first thought must be their salvation, and that we know is God's first thought, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Preach **THE GOSPEL**, not human philosophy, not the "oppositions of science, falsely so called," not the "wisdom of men, which is foolishness with God," not "the progress of humanity," not moral dissertations, but **THE GOSPEL**. Oh! that the ministers of Christ were content to follow the Master in this, with eternity stamped upon their brow, burning words upon their lips, and deep compassion in their heart. Oh! that they were like the great Apostle, who, writing to the most

intellectual and highly-educated people of the time, said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Wherever this is the character of the preaching, there in some degree it is found that the disciples of Christ are despised and hated, but sinners will be saved and God will be glorified, and though the outward fires of persecution do not burn, there is even to-day a real experience of what is meant by the Apostle, when he wrote (Hebrews, xiii, 13) "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."





What Christ Taught concerning Life and Death.

This is a very solemn subject, to be dealt with with great tenderness, but at the same time with faithfulness, for it is not a question of what we would wish, but of what God has said. Doubtless, it is the natural shrinking of the human soul from the terrible thought of eternal woe, that has caused many to embrace the doctrine that the eternal punishment of the wicked is not taught in Scripture, and eagerly to listen to all that could be said against it. But it must not be supposed that those who see this solemn truth plainly declared in Scripture, have any less shrinking from the awful thought, though reverently they bow their heads, it may be with anguished hearts, to the plain declarations of God.

There are many objections made to this truth all founded upon human reason, men's thoughts of what is fitting or what is consistent with the character of God. But at the outset it may be stated that it is an utter impossibility for finite minds to determine what is consistent with the character of God or to know anything of the future state, except what He has revealed. Yet it may be well to state some of these objections and answer them.

By some it is said that it would be unjust in God to punish eternally, sin committed during a short human life. But in the first place, who is the Judge of the just penalty of sin—God or man? We know, though we cannot comprehend, what it cost the Son of God to make atonement for sin, and the same atonement was needed for one sin as for a thousand. But in the second place, when does a man cease to sin?—at death? Does the unsaved sinner suddenly become holy when he dies? Nay verily, such a thought is impossible, he perishes in his sins, and the sin which held him in its dominion here will hold him still, and he will continue his sin, the circumstance of his being absent from his body will make no difference in that; Satan is a spirit, and a wicked spirit, sinning against God, and so will also the lost soul be. Now, in justice, punishment must always follow sin; when will the lost cease to sin?

Others say it is not consistent with the love of God that beings He has created should suffer eternally. But, if so, is it consistent with the love of God that beings He has created should suffer at all? We know that the world is full of terrible suffering; yet "God is Love." But we also know that sin is the great cause of all sorrow and suffering, not only to the sinner himself, but to all connected with him; sin which separates from God the source of all good; therefore, if there be eternal sin, there must be eternal suffering and eternal sorrow.* So then it is inconsistent neither

* See Note page 62.

with the justice of God nor with the love of God that the lost should suffer eternal punishment.

Yet others say the Bible nowhere speaks of the immortality of the soul out of Christ. I shall deal with this presently, but, meantime, ask where does the Bible speak of the *mortality* of the soul? We read of our *mortal bodies*; we nowhere read of our *mortal souls*! What right or reason have we to assume the mortality of the soul without a declaration of it in Scripture?

There are two leading heresies concerning this truth, the one is the universal restoration and the other the universal annihilation of those who die unsaved. There are modifications of these, but the principles are respectively the same.

The first is now called "the larger Hope," or "Eternal Hope," which are only euphemisms for a modification of the Romish doctrine of purgatory. The idea is that the lost souls pass through purgatorial (or purifying) fire, and in the course, it may be, of long ages, become purged of all dross, pure and holy, and so made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." This view scarcely needs refutation, it is the refuge of those who seek no light beyond that of their own reason, for there is not the slightest confirmation of it in the teachings of our Lord—and they make no pretence that there is—nor in the whole Scripture.

On the other hand, the advocates of annihilation, or as it is now called "conditional immortality" or "life in Christ," boldly affirm, and stoutly maintain that it is the teaching of Scripture, and it is, con-

sequently, an error into which many of God's own children have fallen. May the Lord enable us to deal with this in all faithfulness and truth and yet with all gentleness in exposing the error.

It is commonly said by them and strongly emphasized, that we must take the literal meaning of the words of Scripture, and that "death means death, and destruction means destruction," whereupon they produce many passages speaking of the death and destruction of the wicked, and triumphantly declare that these conclusively prove the annihilation of the lost, that is, that they are resolved into the original state of nothingness out of which all things were created. Now, it is perfectly evident and we readily admit that "death means death and destruction means destruction." But that does not explain the meaning of either death or destruction, still less does it show that these words mean annihilation! Let us take one example; in *Hosea* xiii. 9, we read, "O Israel thou hast **destroyed thyself**; but in Me is thy help." Is it within the bounds of reason to suppose that the Lord was addressing people who did not exist, who had annihilated themselves, resolved themselves into nothingness? It is only to state this to show its utter absurdity, yet if destruction means annihilation, the above must be the meaning of these words. Again in *Matt.* xxvii. 20, we read that "the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and **destroy** Jesus," and again in *Rom.* xiv. 15

“**Destroy** not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.” In these examples the word “destroy” could not possibly mean annihilate, put out of existence, but in the one case simply to kill and the other to do spiritual injury. In the Bible, as in ordinary language, “destruction” often means death, and often means ruin, but ruin is not annihilation.

But what of “death,” it may be asked, does not death mean the cessation of existence? By no means, in Scripture it never does; we read “the wages of sin is **death**” and if death meant the cessation of existence, these words would indeed be, as they have been called, the gospel to the ungodly. Every wicked man would leap with joy if he could only be assured that after a life of sin he would pass into endless nothingness. But if so, what would mean the awful warnings given by our Lord Himself concerning the future state if it were nothing worse than a welcome oblivion? and what would mean the awful sacrifice upon the cross, the terrible ordeal through which our Saviour passed, in looking forward to which He cried in His agony, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.” Ah! no, it could not be merely to save from oblivion that the Father “put Him to grief,” it could not be the Buddhist’s heaven of “Nirvana” or utter unconsciousness, so coveted by ungodly men, to save from which Christ came to give His life a ransom for many.

But, yet further, to show that “death” could not mean a state of non-existence, let us see how

it would do to translate the following sayings of our Lord according to the interpretation of the annihilationists. Suppose we read *John* v. 24 thus:—“He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent me hath ‘age-long existence,’ and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from ‘non-existence’ into ‘existence!’” or verse 25, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the ‘non-existent’ shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall ‘exist.’” Surely, that is nonsense, and yet this would be the right interpretation if life meant existence and death non-existence. But the whole supposed argument from Scripture rests upon the statement that death, destruction, perish, &c., mean the cessation of existence, which they certainly do not mean, so that the supposed Scriptural argument falls to the ground.

But what then does life and death mean according to the teaching of our Lord? In *John* xvii. 3, He says:—“THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM THOU HAST SENT.” This then is Life, the knowledge of God; not simply to know about God, but to know Him with that deep experimental knowledge which only comes from real union with Him in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if this be life, then death is the opposite, namely, “being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.” (*Eph.* iv. 18). Thus Adam died, that is, he was cut off from God the moment he sinned, for sin and death are inseparable as cause and effect.

So now, by nature, we are "dead in trespasses and sins," but through faith in Christ we are made alive again, that is, restored to union and communion with God.

And now we can understand why Scripture never speaks of the immortality of the soul of the unregenerate. Immortality is deathlessness, and death, as we have seen, is separation from God, and the whole unregenerate man is dead, that is, separated from God; how then could the soul of an unregenerate man be immortal in the true Scriptural sense? But where in all the Scriptures does it give the least hint that the man ceases to exist? The man dies, which is the separation of the soul from the body, that is, the *temporary* separation of the soul from the body, because our Lord clearly declared that there will be a resurrection of the just and a resurrection unto damnation, so that the souls and bodies of the wicked dead will be reunited, and where in all Scripture is there any hint that this reunion is not for ever? Instead therefore of asking for a text of Scripture stating categorically that the soul of the unregenerate is "immortal" or that it never ceases to be, we should rather ask for a Scripture stating that the soul is "mortal" or that it ever ceases to exist.

Now let us hear what our Lord said upon this solemn subject, and surely no one will claim to be more tender-hearted, more compassionate, more gentle than He, yet in His great love to sinners He held nothing back concerning the future state, but gave most faithful warnings of the awful woe which

awaits the wicked and impenitent. In *Matt.* xviii. 8 He says :—“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee ; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.” Again in *Matt.* xxv. 41, “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” ; and verse 46, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal.” To say that the fire is everlasting, but they that are cast into it are consumed to nothingness, is puerile folly, and to say that the Greek word translated in the last verse “everlasting” and “eternal,” means never-ending in one case and not in the other, is a statement for which there is not the slightest warrant, either in Scripture or reason. Our Lord tells us that the punishment of the wicked is the everlasting fire “prepared for the devil and his angels,” and in *Rev.* xx. 10, we read that in that “lake of fire and brimstone” the devil “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Could any language describe more clearly and forcibly the future state of the lost or the never-ending character of the woe ?

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, there is the same dread note of an endless agony. “The rich man died and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” This is no “Romish legend,” no “creed of man,” no “theological dogma,” but the words of the Lord Jesus giving us

a picture in a parable of the everlasting fire and of "the great gulf fixed" which no one could pass, a picture of the utter hopelessness of their condition. This is a terrible subject to dwell upon, it is full of pain, but it is a crime to be silent upon a subject on which our Lord was not silent, lest men be deceived and lose their souls. Better to cry aloud and warn men of the fearful woe than let them deceive themselves and fall into the pit.

Oh! reader, listen not to the voice of the deceiver who would tell thee that the words of the Lord Jesus are to be lightly esteemed when He warned thee to flee from the wrath to come, when they tell thee there is no place "where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," no awful Gehenna, "where their worm dieth not and where the fire is not quenched," who tell you on their own authority alone that if there is judgment and punishment for sin, it hath an end. This may accord with their own ideas, and you may try to believe it to crush out the gnawing fear; but there is a better way, "Escape for thy life," "Lay hold on the life which is life indeed" (*1 Tim.* vi. 19, R.V.) that eternal life which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then shall you be in perfect safety, "your life hid with Christ in God" and "when Christ, Who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."





What Christ Taught.

In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to show in brief and condensed form what is our Lord's own teaching in respect of some of the phases of what is known as "modern thought," but, which is, in reality, as old as the beginning of sin and unbelief in the world. It may appear to some that we have dwelt upon the darker sayings of our Lord, but it is just because the solemn truths concerning sin and judgment, which are the dark back ground of the Gospel, but without which a man will never seek the Saviour, are so much omitted from the preaching of the present day and are wholly eliminated from the "modern gospel" of the "broad school." But it is this dark back ground which throws into such glorious relief the boundless love of God to sinners and the infinite value of that great atoning sacrifice whereby our Saviour redeemed to God all who believe on His Name out of every tribe and nation and people throughout the wide world.

To know the greatness, the richness, the exceeding preciousness of that divine love, we need to range through the whole revelation given by the Holy Spirit in the written Word from beginning to end; but in this little book we have confined ourselves exclusively to the teaching of our Lord when upon the earth, in order to meet the allegation that His teaching was in any way contrary to the

rest of the Scriptures, and also to show upon His own testimony that these Scriptures were of equal divine authority with His own words.

If this booklet should be useful in warning some against the many seeds of error which the great enemy of the truth is so busy in sowing in the present day ; should it be the means of confirming any in the truth, or of leading any of God's servants to be more faithful in declaring the whole counsel of God and preaching the Gospel as Christ and His apostles preached ; it will not have been written in vain. The Lord grant that it may be so to His own praise and glory. Amen.

NOTE (see page 53).

The presence of sin, sorrow, and suffering in God's universe is a problem which many have tried to solve but in vain, it is an inscrutable mystery beyond the power of man to understand. But it is not for man "whose breath is in his nostrils," whose vision is limited and marred by sin, to question the ways of "the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God" (*1 Tim. i. 17, R.V.*). One thing we know, that "God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all," so we may leave the solution to Him Whose law is "holy and just and good." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—*Gen. xviii. 25.*

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