

The  
Christ of  
Nineteen  
Centuries

Behrends











# THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

---

BY THE LATE

REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

---

SELECTIONS FROM DISCOURSES AND SERMONS

COMPILED BY

WILLIAM HERRIES

THE  
OF

OF

T. B. VENTRES:

597 FULTON STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

1904

BX 7233  
B55C5

LIBRARY of CONGRESS  
Two Copies Received  
JUN 15 1904  
Copyright Entry  
*Feb. 8, 1904*  
CLASS *a* XNo. No.  
*78 F 66*  
COPY B

COPYRIGHT 1904, by  
WILLIAM HERRIES

WASHTON  
D. C.

1880



REV. A. J. F. BEHRENDS, D. D.

## A FOREWORD.

---

THESE discourses and homiletical extracts from the pen of my honored predecessor, the late Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, D.D., have been compiled and arranged by his friend and parishioner, Mr. William Herries. They represent in the main the thought and utterance of a distinguished scholar, theologian and preacher, who, at the time of his decease, had long been a foremost light of the American pulpit. Yet, the outward reputation of the former pastor of the Central Congregational Church was the lesser part of his very able and illuminating ministry. Its inward worth, its depth and width of consecrated knowledge; its moral eminence, and its spiritual insight constituted Dr. Behrends a favorite teacher for teachers, a preacher whose constructive efforts presented afresh the dignity and weight of the sacred message.

It may have been said of him, "His delight was in the law of Jehovah: and in His law doth he meditate day and night." He also knew the secret of human life in its innermost re-

cesses, its reciprocal influences, its sunlight and its pain.

He brought his gifts and energies to the office of the Christian pastorate; he received the manifest approval of his Redeemer; and the churches in centers such as Yonkers, Cleveland, Providence and Brooklyn bore testimony to his unfailing energy for the Kingdom of God.

I commend this volume to my brethren in the ministry, and to all devout lovers of the truth as this is revealed in Jesus Christ. In an age sometimes marked by immaturity and mental slackness, Dr. Behrends wrought in detachment from minor considerations, with a mind natively large and unusually rich and fertile. He was thorough in all his researches and they bore the marks of painstaking effort.

His record is deserving of this permanent memorial of some of its outstanding characteristics, and as devout souls ponder these pages they will realize afresh how great was Dr. Behrends' intelligent zeal in the proclamation of the Gospel.

S. PARKES CADMAN.

CENTRAL CHURCH, 1904.

## PREFATORY.

---

**S**HORTLY after Dr. Behrends' death, a few months ago, a member of the Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, who possessed exceptional qualifications, undertook, in a spirit of affectionate regard, to compile this volume of excerpts from his pastor's Sermons and Addresses. Their author was a power in advancing the influence of the Gospel, and a positive force in the defense of approved and well tested positions. May the influence exerted by this volume be a continuance of the work so suddenly cut short! Dr. Behrends' work and words as printed here are from his own pen, including the address delivered in Carnegie Hall during the Ecumenical Conference in which "he uncovered and ripped down clear through all the miserable sophistries by which we disguise the evils of our infamous divisions," which is according to the author's manuscript.

This book will be a source of deep satisfaction to those who knew and listened to the eloquent preacher of truth and righteousness,—whose sincerity was unquestioned, and whose character was reflected in his preaching,—as it is to one who treasures the memory of having been associated with him in the work of the Gospel.

WILLARD P. HARMON.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., MARCH 15, 1901.



## INTRODUCTORY.

---

**I**T has been deemed due to the memory of the Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, D.D., and to the desire of many to whom he was friend and pastor, that some of his work should be put in form for permanent usefulness. In compliance with this wish, a collection of excerpts from his discourses on different themes, during his pastorate of the Central Congregational Church in Brooklyn, has been made. So, in presenting this book to the public, little need be said except that the author speaks for himself, as no attempt has been made to change, in any way, a single sentence as it fell from his lips. Thus, although the preacher has departed, he still speaks, and that in such a way as to endear his deliverances to all readers.

The careful perusal of the book must unquestionably promote respect for the Christian religion. It will serve to perpetuate the memory of him who speaks, in the hearts of earnest Bible students; while it will furnish families and individuals with a body of religious literature the perusal of which must exert an exalting, healthful, spiritual power. The absence of any classification of subjects in the arrangement of the excerpts and complete discourses, which for the most part constitute the book, is accounted for by the desire of the compiler to represent the pulpit ministry of the Rev. Dr. Behrends in the order of its exercise

## INTRODUCTORY

for about fifteen years. In making the selections the aim has been to enable the more studious reader to comprehend the manner, method and style of the great preacher, while also preserving the freshness and the frankness of expression which must make for mental and spiritual profit to the general reader. It is a book designed to be in its proper place, whether in the college or in the home, in the study of the preacher or in the seminary. It contains a body of instruction that is the essence of the clearest, most manly and most scholarly thought. In one of his sermons, Dr. Behrends maintained that the "philosophy of God's discipline was compacted in the life of Jesus Christ," and so, that philosophy, as illustrated in what is preserved in the pages of this volume, is a fine manifestation of the loving and noble spirit of one who was declared by his contemporaries to be "the greatest preacher in America." Readers will gladly and gratefully acknowledge that his light still shines.

Preliminary to the main body of the book, instead of a biographical sketch of the author for which readers are apt to look eagerly, the compiler has preferred to furnish a series of statements which amply cover the ground of Dr. Behrends' life and work.

First of all is Dr. Behrends' own account of himself, as a student for the work of preaching; next in order is the Tribute by the Rev. C. C. Creegan, D.D.; Dr. Behrends' Religious Career, by the Rev. Frank B. Cressey; The Great Preacher, a tribute in Christian Work, and last, The Scope of Dr. Behrends' Ministry, as set forth in the columns of the *Brooklyn Eagle* at the time of his death.

# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FOREWORD BY THE REV. S. PARKES CADMAN, D. D. . . . .	3
PREFATORY NOTE BY THE REV. WILLARD P. HARMON . . . .	5
INTRODUCTORY.....	7

## PART I.

DR. BEHREND'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF AS A STUDENT FOR THE WORK OF PREACHING.....	13
THE BOOKS THAT HELPED HIM MOST . . . . .	15
TRIBUTE, BY THE REV. C. C. CREEGAN, D.D.....	18
DR. BEHREND'S RELIGIOUS CAREER, BY THE REV. FRANK B. CRESSEY.....	20
THE GREAT PREACHER.....	25
THE SCOPE OF DR. BEHREND'S MINISTRY.....	28
DR. BEHREND IN CLEVELAND.....	33

## PART II.

THE TEMPLE AND THE CROSS.....	35
THE EDICT OF CYRUS.....	36
OVERTHROW OF BABYLON.....	37
BIRTH OF THE SYNAGOGUE.....	38
AN AXIOM TO REMEMBER.....	40
GRACE TO LIVE, AND GRACE TO DIE . . . . .	40
OUR OWN WILL.....	41
THE STORY OF ESTHER.....	41
DANIEL THE PROPHET OF DEEDS . . . . .	43
PRAYER A DIALOGUE.....	45
DANIEL'S CHARACTER . . . . .	45
THE BOOK OF JOB.....	47
THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUFFERING . . . . .	49
THE SCOPE OF THE PSALMS.....	51
THE PSALMS ARRANGED . . . . .	52
THE PSALMS AS A SOLACE.....	54

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
DAVID AND SOLOMON COMPARED.....	55
THE BOOK OF PROVERBS .....	56
A PRICELESS NECKLACE.....	57
A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.....	58
WARNING AGAINST ROBBERY.....	58
SCOPE AND STYLE OF ECCLESIASTES .....	59
LEAVING THE PIT OF DESPAIR .....	60
OFFICE OF THE HEART .....	62
WHY AM I A CHRISTIAN? .....	64
TESTIMONY OF JOHN.....	65
THE MIGHTY MESSAGE.....	66
AN UNFALTERING FAITH IN GOD .....	68
RIGHTEOUSNESS ESSENTIAL TO HAPPINESS.....	69
GOD, THE SOUL, AND THE BIBLE.....	71
THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS .....	73
MODERN SOCIALISM VERSUS CHRISTIANITY .....	75
TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN PLAN .....	78
GNASAPHTHANI? GNANITHANI .....	80
PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XVI.....	82
PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XIX.....	84
SING TO THE HEART OF JESUS.....	85
LORD, I'M TRUSTING .....	87
INTRODUCTION TO BIRDSEYE VIEWS OF THE BIBLE.....	89
MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY.....	91
HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE .....	94
THE NAME OF JEHOVAH .....	96
THE SPIRIT IS WILLING BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK .....	98
THE NINETEENTH PSALM.....	102
A CALL FOR CHURCH UNITY .....	109
THE NATIONAL COVENANT WITH THE NEGRO .....	110
STUDYING THE BIBLE .....	111
THE NAME OF GOD.....	113
THE WORLD FOR CHRIST .....	115
THE LAW OF WORK INTERPRETED .....	118
CHRIST'S LIFE NOT A DREAM .....	120
THE DOUBTING APOSTLE.....	123
CHRIST'S METHOD WITH THOMAS .....	124
THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION.....	125

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
VIGILANCE INDISPENSABLE TO MORAL SAFETY.....	128
CHRISTIAN UNITY.....	131
PHILOSOPHY OF PREACHING.....	135
LAW OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS .....	136
THE SURVIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY.....	138
PARAPHRASE OF ROMANS iii., 21-26.....	141
THANKSGIVING OBSERVANCE.....	143
MEANING OF THE DIVINELY INSPIRED BIBLE .....	146
STATEMENT AND TREATMENT OF SCRIPTURAL DIFFERENCES	149
THE CONSTRAINING LOVE OF CHRIST.....	152
THE LATER RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.....	155
THE ATONEMENT.....	156
UNITY IN CONGREGATIONALISM.....	158
END OF TEN YEARS IN THE CENTRAL CHURCH.....	159
FUTURE PUNISHMENT.....	160
ATHANASIUS AND THE INCARNATION.....	171
THE INCARNATION AND SIN.....	175
THE ONLY WAY OF ESCAPE.....	180
REVOLUTIONARY DEMANDS OF SOCIALISM .....	182
SACREDNESS OF THE SABBATH .....	187
TWO FORMS OF CRITICISM.....	191
THE JEWS AS CONSERVATORS.....	194
TESTIMONY OF LEARNED JEWS.....	199
EVOLUTION AN UNPROVED THEORY.....	203
HARNACK AND LITERARY CRITICISM.....	206
WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?.....	209
THE LAMP OF LIFE .....	212
THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.....	216
WHAT IS MAN?.....	219
WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?.....	224
WHY DID CHRIST DIE? .....	229
WHAT DOES THE NEW BIRTH MEAN?.....	233
JUDGMENT OF SELF.....	238
CHRIST DWELLING IN THE HEART.....	243
LAST MINISTERIAL ANNIVERSARY.....	249
THE SPIRITUAL BODY.....	252
THE INCARNATE CHRIST .....	257
WAYSIDE NOTES ON BIBLE CRITICISM .....	269

## CONTENTS

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT .....	275
GOD'S LOVE FIRST .....	282
THE EFFECT ON THE CHURCHES OF SUPPORTING FOREIGN MISSIONS .....	294

### PART III.

	PAGE
HALF HOURS WITH JESUS.....	304
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY AS A TEACHER.....	304
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT....	310
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE GUIDANCE OF THE CHURCH BY HIMSELF.....	316
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT GOD.....	321
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE SOUL OF MAN.....	326
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE DEVIL.....	331
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS OWN DEATH AND RESURRECTION.....	337
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY AS KING.	343
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD..	350
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT CHILDREN.....	358
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.	364
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT NATURE.....	371
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT GOD'S CARE OF HIS CREATURES.....	378
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT PRAYER.....	384
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT RELIGION.....	392
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE SABBATH.....	400
WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HEAVEN.....	407

## PART I.

---

DR. BEHREND'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF AS A  
STUDENT FOR THE WORK OF PREACHING.

SOME years ago Dr. Behrends favored a representative of the *Brooklyn Eagle* with a talk about himself, principally as to his preparation for pulpit work, including his course of reading and his method of study; and now, the story which he then told is reproduced; the great preacher, although his voice is silenced for ever, speaks for himself. He said:

When I began my ministry I adopted what I presume is almost the universal custom of spending the entire week in the preparation of my sermons. One I always wrote out in full and endeavored to prepare for the second without the use of the pen. I soon discovered my mistake. The well speedily became empty. I found that I must pay more attention to accumulation and less to expenditure. I began to give the best half of my week to general hard study, critical reading of the Bible, philosophy, ethics, science, history and theology. I began to find the hardest studies most helpful as giving keenness of edge to thought. Two days now suffice for the work of immediate

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

preparation, one day for each sermon. The work is done easily and rapidly because of the increasing momentum secured by general study during three or four days of the week. It was a hard thing to do at first, but I persevered, and I have always been glad that I began so early.

For a number of years I continued to read half of my sermons and to prepare the other half without use of the pen. But my written and speaking styles were out of harmony. I found myself living a double mental life. My preaching lacked uniformity and the individuality which grows out of the use of a single method. So I abandoned both methods and adopted a third, that of preparing a careful brief, mastering its contents without special attention to the language, and then freely reproducing it in speech, and without the use of a note. This has been my habit since, and I am sure that, for me, it is the best.

The written preparation usually amounts to about two thousand words, one third of a fully written discourse. The thought is put as compactly as possible, and with special regard to clearness and precision. No elaboration, either of argument or of imagery, is attempted at the time of composition; this is left to the subsequent review, to which an hour or an hour and a half is given immediately preceding the service, and very much is left to the friction of thought which an active and attentive audience always excites. I know the disadvantages of such a method. It prevents a man from filling up a barrel, upon the contents of which he can draw in an exigency. To preach an old sermon, prepared in this way, requires nearly as much

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

work as the creation of a new one. Exchanges do not bring relief, and supplies lose their attraction.

I want my vacations for absolute rest, and I get it. But I have found the advantages many and great, and I am sure that, for me, it is the best. So I mean to stick to it, whatever may be the judgment of others; and in this matter every man must be his own homiletical instructor. I have ceased to read lectures on preaching, because you might as well expect to learn how to make butter by reading treatises on churns as to learn how to preach by reading lectures on the subject.

---

### THE BOOKS THAT HELPED HIM MOST.

As to the books which had helped him most in his work, Dr. Behrends, on a subsequent occasion, spoke as follows:

In Theology I have been greatly indebted to the monographs of Dorner, Julius Muller, Lee and Dove, and to the more general treatises by Hodge, Dwight, Van Oosterzee, Martensen, Philippi, Luthardt, Hare and Jonathan Edwards. In Biblical Interpretation I have consulted, with constantly increasing satisfaction, the works of Calvin, Meyer, Alford, Elliott, Lightfoot, Trench, Delitzsch, Godet, Murphy, Tholuck, Alexander, Olshausen, and Perowne. Neander, Glesseler, Guericke and Schaff have been my guides in general Church history. Milman and Stanley, Samuel Hopkins, Isaac Taylor, Dollinger and Ranken have been

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

favorites of mine. D'Aubigne's histories I read with avidity. Calvin's "Institutes," and the works of Andrew Fuller and of Robert Hall were much thumbed by me twenty years ago. I have derived much profit from Herzog's "Real Encyclopædia," a perfect thesaurus of critical and theological learning. The *Britannica* ranks next, in my judgment, its use requiring great caution. Motley has always been one of my favorite historians. The works of Coleridge early fell into my hands, and I have always held them in high esteem.

It was during my seminary course that the sermons of F. W. Robertson fell into my hands, and produced upon me a profound impression, which still remains. Horace Bushnell I regard as one of the suggestive and stimulating writers. I have read all his books with greediness, though unable to follow him in all his conclusions. One of the earliest theological books I ever read was Bledsoe's "Theodicy." I was only fifteen years old, but I read it with the eagerness of a starving man, and the questions which it discusses have always enlisted my profound interest.

In Philosophy, Sir William Hamilton has been my master, whose influence upon me has been qualified by that of Calderwood, Caird, Porter, McCosh and Lotze. In Ethics, Butler, Kant and James Martineau have had most attraction for me. The latter, especially, has always been one of my favorite authors. The only product of Carlyle's pen that I have ever had the patience to read was his "History of Frederick the Great," and that stirred me profoundly. I always read Goethe with pleasure and profit.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

I fell upon the "Pickwick Papers" during my college course, and Charles Dickens has always had a singular fascination for me. Later, Washington Irving had great attractions for me, though for a dozen years or more I have rarely opened his volumes. I have the liveliest remembrances of the novels by George Eliot and Georg Ebers.

In Poetry, my reading has not had a very wide range. It has been confined to Homer, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning and Longfellow, though most of my friends would probably be surprised to learn that I had read even these. De Quincy and the elder D'Israeli were often in my hands twenty years ago. Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies" were more interesting to me than any novel, and Lecky's "History of European Morals" stirred me more deeply than any work of fiction could have done.

In the voluminous literature called forth by Strauss' and Renan's Lives of Christ, I have derived the greatest help from Hanna, Farrar, Young, Andrews, Fisher, Pressense, Westcott, and Weiss. Oberlin, Kurtz and Oehler have been of great service to me in Old Testament theology. Delitzsch I regard as the prince of Old Testament commentators, though in some respects Calvin is his superior; while, for the New Testament, the palm of superior merit belongs to Meyer, with a very high place for Alford and Ellicott. I have made no mention of Mill and Spencer in Philosophy; of Darwin and Huxley and Tyndall in Science; of Buckle and Draper in Philosophical History; of Davidson and others in Biblical Criticism, because their

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

reasoning has not carried conviction to my mind. The logic has been vicious in its unsupported assumptions. There are other departments, notably that on Political Economy, on which I have not touched, simply because the list of names would be too widely extended.

---

TRIBUTE BY THE REV. C. C. CREEGAN, D.D.

[August number of the *American Missionary*, 1900.]

Born in Holland in the home of an humble Lutheran preacher, he came to this country with his parents when five years of age. While teaching school, in his seventeenth year, near Portsmouth, Ohio, he was converted by the preaching of an obscure Methodist minister, and at once decided to fit himself for the work of the ministry. Largely by his own efforts he worked his way through Denison University, Ohio, graduating in 1862 in a class of three, all of whom became prominent clergymen. Three years later he completed his theological studies at Rochester Theological Seminary at the head of his class, and was called at once to the pastorate of a large Baptist Church in Yonkers, N. Y., where he remained eight years. He was then called to the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, Ohio, where he won great distinction as a platform orator.

It was during this pastorate, which lasted three years, that Dr. Behrends, after a great struggle, decided to resign from this strong church, where he was very

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

popular, and enter another denomination. Six happy years were then spent in the Union Church of Providence, R. I., where he was recognized as one of the foremost preachers in the State and nation. Dr. Behrends was a great scholar. It is the belief of those who knew him well that he was able to fill any chair in any of our theological seminaries. His services were in frequent demand for courses of lectures in our leading colleges and seminaries, and at least two of these courses have been put into book form. While his services were often sought for on great occasions, such as the annual meeting of the American Missionary Association, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and similar gatherings, his best work was done in his own pulpit. His sermons were always prepared with the greatest care, and except on rare occasions, were delivered without a note, and with wonderful beauty of diction and irresistible logic to the audiences of two thousand cultured people who hung on his words every Sabbath, and who regarded him, not without good reason, "the greatest preacher in America."

The secret of the great success of Dr. Behrends as a preacher was not to be found in his striking personality, nor in his musical voice, nor in his profound scholarship, but rather in his strong faith in the Bible as the Word of God, and his only creed, and that Christ Jesus, the Divine Saviour, is to win the whole world to Himself. From this belief he never wavered, and to him the preaching of the Gospel to men, and seeing them come into the kingdom, was the joy of his soul.

# THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

## DR. BEHREND'S RELIGIOUS CAREER.

BY THE REV. FRANK B. CRESSEY, BAPTIST CHURCH, WEYMOUTH, MASS.

[*Congregationalist*, May 31, 1900.]

Adolphus Julius Frederick Behrends was born at Nijmegen, Holland, December 18, 1839.

Dr. Behrends' life was one of exceeding difficulty, exceeding triumph. Dutch by birth, he was also by birth and childhood training a Lutheran, almost of the Roman Catholic type; so far as was possible in the United States all the influences of a State religion gathered closely about him. As a young man, his parents then living in Ohio, he read the Bible for himself, found its teachings to be seriously at variance with the religion of his home life, and promptly decided to accept the Bible. The cost of such acceptance was very great. His father's door was closed against him; for Christ's sake he became homeless.

His study of the Bible decided him to become a Baptist; also, from the Bible he learned not only his way to Christ but his work for Christ to preach Christ. He determined to secure an education; went to Denison University, Greenville, Ohio, and "worked his way through college," during the presidency of that skilled scholar, Dr. Samson Talbot. Then at Rochester Theological Seminary, he was a pupil of the prince of teachers and preachers, Dr. E. G. Robinson, with whom in the class-room he had many a tilt—an exercise heartily enjoyed by both.

Dr. Behrends graduated from Rochester Seminary in 1865, married an estimable Presbyterian woman

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of Rochester, and settled with the Warburton Avenue Baptist Church of Yonkers, N. Y., its membership including Dr. Edward Bright, editor of the New York *Examiner*, and from whose hands (unless serious mistake is here made) Mrs. Behrends often received the Lord's Supper before she became a Baptist. Dr. Behrends remained at Yonkers eight years, and while there preached a "Baptist" sermon extreme enough for the most extreme Baptist. He then went to the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, Ohio, which brought him again into the State of his Lutheran boyhood, and also into immediate neighborhood relations with at least one minister whose denominational antagonisms were by no means helpful to one of Baptist thought and feeling. In scarcely more than a year after going to Cleveland he was led to preach one of the strongest of so-called "open-communion" sermons. It grieved his church, and brought on him the venomously severe criticisms of many. But his church did not ask him to resign, such prominent members as James M. Hoyt and B. F. Rouse seeming to feel that lack of agitation and lapse of time would help the pastor to come again into the Baptist faith.

Yet the criticisms continued, and after more than a year, Dr. Behrends resigned, and went immediately to the pastorate of a Congregational Church in Providence, R. I. A copy of his letter of resignation lies before me; its date is January 23, 1876. By his request it took effect eight days later. He says: "After thirteen months of varied experience, since the utterance of my views on the communion question, I find myself so radically at variance with the denominational spirit

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

that a peaceful withdrawal from the Baptist body seems to me my only honest and honorable course." He speaks of "unrestrained assault" upon himself, which had become "practically unendurable and almost a wrong at the bar of his conscience," but immediately adds that he does "not impeach his brethren as guilty of conscious and designed intolerance." "I propose to indulge in no parting philippics, nor do I mean to assume a polemical attitude. I wish to withdraw quietly, and as peacefully to resume my work as a Christian minister in the next field of God's appointment. For you and for me the world is wide enough and time is too short and too precious to be wasted in needless friction."

Dr. Behrends' letter of resignation showed him to be utterly at variance with the denomination whose fellowship and honors he had so long enjoyed. That he held these divergent views intelligently and conscientiously no one of his Baptist brethren has ever doubted, however great their disappointment and sorrow at his holding them. And it is doubtless true that there was no real necessity for Dr. Behrends to leave the Baptist denomination so far as Baptists themselves were concerned. For while Baptists are intelligent and unflinching in their views of Biblical truth, there is always among them large and honorable room for brethren of quite dissimilar views. The thought still remains with many that it would have been better in many respects if Dr. Behrends, after preaching his "open-communion" sermon, had been contented quietly to continue as a Baptist. He loved his Cleveland church and his Cleveland church loved

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

him. He went from them of his own accord; they sorrowed to have him go, and had he remained with them they would have been none the less a Baptist church than before.

In the letter of reply to the resignation, the church expressed profound surprise and regret that Dr. Behrends should then hold convictions as to Christian baptism so unlike those held by him when called to the pastorate and, in their view, "so out of harmony with the command of Christ and the just interpretation of the Scriptures and of apostolic usage." To this they add that in the severance of the pastoral relation they are "mindful of a cardinal principle of Baptist faith which concedes to all unfettered religious freedom," and assure him of their prayer that God's blessing may attend him in his labors with other denominations with whom he may be in accord, "and whom we would honor and love with unfeigned sympathy as sincere, and as entitled to freedom of conscience equally with ourselves, and as doing in their several spheres vital service for Christ." Dr. Behrends and the Baptists parted in mutual love and with mutual regret.

In a private letter written a year ago last March, he says: "I am glad to add that my old friendships have been a constant source of joy to me, very few having felt it their duty to question my sincerity. I left for the sake of peace, and because I saw that among American Baptists there were none who would stand on my ground or recognize it as tenable. I am not and would not be regarded as a representative Congregationalist in many minor matters, in which my Baptist training is manifest to all, but I am left to do

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

my work in peace and receive the most cordial fellowship. Twenty-three years in my present church relations, sixteen of them in Brooklyn, have convinced me that I made no mistake, while I have every reason to be grateful that my early Christian life and my theological training were shaped under Baptist influences. Many of the questions which disturb New England theology to-day cause me no uneasiness, because Dr. Robinson steered me into the open sea, where these squalls do not blow."

Now that Dr. Behrends is dead, possibly an increased number will join with him and others in the thought that some of the criticisms of a quarter of a century ago were needlessly severe. To dissent emphatically from a brother's religious views is one thing; to follow him torturingly is another thing. Also, may it not be that sometimes not sufficient allowance is made for one's former religious surroundings? A born-and-bred Lutheran, like Dr. Behrends, would hardly be expected, from human point of view, to be as thorough a Baptist—whatever that may mean—as one with, perhaps, less real intelligence, who had never lived outside a Baptist family.

Dr. Behrends was a man of exceptionally great pulpit power; he was a deep and careful thinker; he has left a broad and deep mark as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an honor to the Baptist ministry that he was once one of its number; he always retained a deep and abiding love for his Baptist brethren. His death is a great loss to the religious forces of the United States.

# THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

## THE GREAT PREACHER.

[From *Christian Work*, May 31, 1900.]

In the death of the Rev. Dr. A. J. F. Behrends no ordinary man passes away, and no one denomination suffers less. As his sympathies and his whole religious nature struck deeper and extended higher than any denominational reactments and vaster than the area circumscribed by them, so his loss is a bereavement that falls upon the whole Church. We say this in no spirit of praise for the dead divine;—he is beyond all that, and to praise such a man, it is no mere hyperbole to say, is to gild refined gold. And here we may say, and most truly so, that Dr. Behrends was not only in the widest and most accurate sense of the term a great preacher, but he was one whose elements of greatness were perceived only by the few. Ordinarily he was known as a strong preacher, an earnest preacher, one who had evidenced his power by successfully succeeding such a remarkable man as Henry Martyn Scudder, preacher, physician, missionary, naturalist, poet, of deep sympathetic nature, high mental equipment and resourceful abilities. And although it may seem a great deal to say, it is, we believe, quite within the bounds of exact fact to assert that among the hundred thousand and more ministers in this country, in mental equipment no man could successfully assert a claim of superiority to the great man who has just passed away. From the precocious age of fifteen, when he mastered Bledsoe's Theodicy, to the close of his life, he acquired the whole gamut of the philosophies: Hamilton, Kant, Hegel, Lotze, and McCosh;

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Caird, Porter, Buller and Martineau were familiar to him, and were absorbed and mastered by him, while he reveled in Carlyle, delighted in Goethe, laughed in Dickens, and found refreshment and stimulation and rest in Homer, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, in Lecky, Rawlinson, Sayce; it may be said everything was grain that came into his hopper and was converted into nourishing, stimulating food.

We cannot fail to notice one remarkable phase of Dr. Behrends' character: his broad sympathetic nature. It was his wonderful development in this direction which gave him his sense of proportion by which he reversed the perspective of your narrow hyper-denominationalist. Instead of the denomination towering in the foreground, as it does with so many lesser minds, with him Christ and his Gospel were everything, while denominationalism was only the indistinguishable infinitesimal point in the distance. It was this spirit, this equipment, that carried him, in the intensity of his feeling and in the full conviction of his reason, at the late Ecumenical Council, to break out into his passionate utterances which carried his hearers by storm. Right in the midst of the movement, and at the very time when wild discussion was going on elsewhere over terminologies, and haggling was seen over creeds, Dr. Behrends, while confessing to his belief in creeds, said: "I will sign any creed that will permit me to sign all creeds. But unless you will permit me to sign all creeds, then I refuse to sign any of them." And again he declared: "We must come back to the New Testament; our religion must centralize in personal devotion to the personal Christ. He is our Mas-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ter, He alone. We must stop deifying dogma. We must stop deifying ritual." Not that our preacher would do away with creeds, but he would have them centered upon the fundamentals, not upon the tentative philosophies of religion; in other words, as he has been quoted in substance, one creed should include all creeds, and it should not be skeletonized speculation

Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,  
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,

and all finding no end, "in wandering mazes lost."

Up to the very last, Dr. Behrends gave close attention to the scientific discussions of the day, and their bearing upon religious thought. While for a time his thought inclined him to a more technical interpretation of Scripture than would seem to accord with his wide horizon line, we believe in the last few years of his life these views were modified, and with the modification came a relief from restriction, and the development of the broader view which placed his ratiocination in such complete accord with his wide sympathies as to bring him intellectual rest, while his power with men was correspondingly increased.

Taken away at sixty-one, dead in the plentitude of his powers, just as the fruit had ripened, the pastor of a church united upon him, a power in the pulpit, a comfort and stimulant in the pastorate, a strong man, a preacher of righteousness with whom scheme and "plan" and philosophy were less than love and light and life, one with whom the Gospel, and only the Gospel, made radiant the pathway to the skies, our preacher

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

passes away and leaves a lasting beneficent influence behind as he now sees the King in His Beauty in that land which for many of us is not very far off.

---

### THE SCOPE OF DR. BEHREND'S' MINISTRY.

[From *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 22, 1900.]

Dr. Behrends was a modest man, and most delicate in the performance of many of the duties incidental to his pastorate. This was particularly noticeable on the occasions of receiving members into the church for their first time, in the baptism of infants and adults alike, in the marriage ceremony, and in funeral observances. He studied the canons of good taste in every direction, sometimes even to the point of erring, in cases where the advice of over-punctilious persons prevailed. Left to his own individual judgment he was level headed, and invariably a reliable and wise counsellor. He excelled as a powerful preacher, one who dared to give utterance to his convictions after he had calmly weighed them in his study.

His last exhibition of this was given in his celebrated address at Carnegie Hall on May 1. That was not a spontaneous outflow of an over-excited brain. The ground he assumed was all thought out, except as to some rhetorical effects, beforehand. His earnestness was as deliberate as it was bold and fearless. His recent sermon on "The Incarnate Christ" is one of the freest conceptions on this subject known in modern

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

theology. Its statements are worked out with logical keenness and close sequence, and the doctrine of the incarnation is unfolded with a plainness of diction which commends itself at once to the commonest as well as the most cultured understanding. His pulpit deliverances were never "over his people's heads," but always addressed not only with the evident desire that the speaker should be comprehended, but with the manifest determination that his Master's message should be received as the dictum of Jesus Christ, and not the say-so of Dr. Behrends.

In 1888 and 1889 Dr. Behrends gave a course of sermons the general title of which was "Birdseye Views of the Bible." That was a notable undertaking, and one in the prosecution of which he said his mind underwent a new discipline, and he acquired new light upon the unquestionable inspiration of the Scriptures. The preaching of that series of discourses at first confronted him with new difficulties as to method of treatment, born of the increasing magnitude assumed by the theme itself. He over-mastered every obstacle, and the discourses, which were printed in the *Eagle*, were marvels of compactness in style of thought. The pastoral spirit of those sermons may be worthy a single illustration—an excerpt from the "Birdseye View of the Psalms," as follows:

The Psalter is a perpetual crucifixion followed by a perpetual resurrection; and it is this that has given to the Psalms their infinite pathos and abiding power. What now do these noble Psalms contain? I cannot undertake to answer that question for you. You must read them for yourselves alone and when your heart

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is heavy. They are a grand covert when the storms burst over you and the depths are broken up, when heart and flesh fail you. They are pervaded through and through with a vivid sense of the Divine presence. God is always near. That is the golden thread upon which the pearls of song are strung, and the God of the Psalms is a being of wondrous majesty and gentleness, with whom there is forgiveness that He may be feared, so strange is the grace of pardon, so sweet is its assurance. In the Psalms it is always the honest soul that pleads. The suppliant's abasement is never his debasement. He is kingliest when he is lowliest.

Dr. Behrends' series of discourses on "Socialism" attracted immense congregations. It was evident throughout the series that the preacher knew what he was about, and that if logical argument was needed to dispose of the flimsy assumptions of professed doubt and criticism, there was an abundant supply. It was remarkable that in the publication of these deliverances in the *Eagle* there was not a single attempt to controvert the work done in the Central Church pulpit.

A sermon preached on May 15, 1887, on "The Incorruptible Life," made a profound impression upon those who heard it, and in order that the people might have its comforting assurances in their possession, it was published in tasteful pamphlet form. An extract from this sermon shows what Dr. Behrends' convictions were in regard to the future of the Christian's life. He assumed that the capacities of the spirit were enlarged and intensified. Of departed spirits, he said:

They are said to be at rest, with Christ, and in Paradise. They are at rest, because forever freed from the infirmities of their mortal state, delivered

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

from the shackles of a diseased and dying body; without heartache, or headache, or handache. They are with Christ, in a higher fellowship and activity than was their privilege here. There was more power in the one day of Pentecost than in all the thirty-four years of our Lord's mortal ministry. One hour of Paradise is worth more than a lifetime on earth, though prolonged to fourscore years. Knowledge is clearer and more comprehensive. Love is more intense and holy. Joy is deeper. Activity is more varied and refreshing. But your poor heart cries out: "Am I, then, forgotten in this flood of joy?" Forgotten? No! a thousand times, No! They know you are coming, though they know not when; and at every knock upon the death portals they wonder whether you have come. They know you are coming, nor will you need to wait for them long when your heart has ceased its beating, and your surprises under their loving guidance will be a new joy to them. They know you are coming—coming from toil and tears to rest and laughter, from loneliness and heartaches to blessed fellowships and a divine guidance. Your coming will increase their blessedness. For they are not perfect without us. . . . There is to be a last deathbed, as once there was a first. And when the last grave shall have been filled, while the bereaved perchance stand about it in chastened grief and hope, the great eternal transfiguration shall chase away the night for ever.

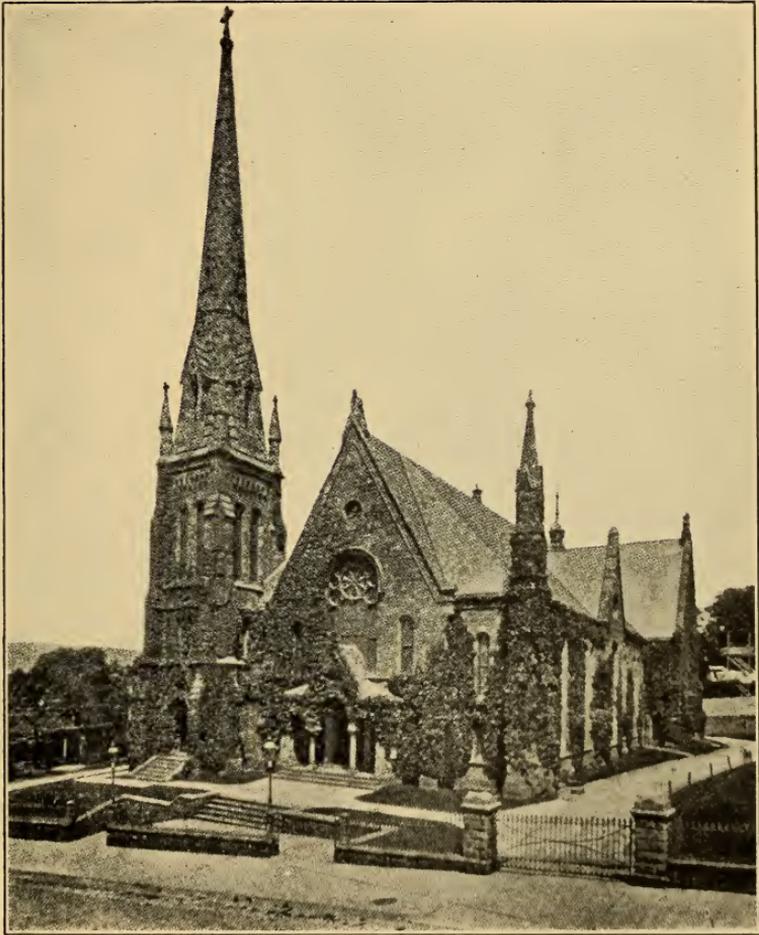
It was on the day of his last appearance in the Central Church pulpit that Dr. Behrends said that when he struck loose from the Baptists as a denomination in Cleveland, he stood ready for an open door, and determined to accept the first call that came to him, whether it was Methodist, Presbyterian or Congregationalist. The call came from the Union Church

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in Providence, R. I., and he accepted it gladly. "All I want," said he, "is the open door where I can preach to perishing souls the everlasting blessedness of that Christ who said, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die, 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.'"

As a Congregationalist, Dr. Behrends accepted the order and practice of that body as most available for the exercise of perfect freedom in preaching the Gospel. His views as a Congregationalist were fully and eloquently exploited in his address delivered before the Congregational Club of New Haven, Conn., on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of the Martyrs' Church, organized in London, 1592; and again before the Manhattan Conference of Congregational Churches at the autumnal meeting in the South Congregational Church, November 18, 1897.

In celebrating the seventeenth year of his pastorate in the Central Congregational Church on February 25 last, his sermon was affectionate and earnest. Incidentally he alluded to the work he had done in vindication of the integrity of the Holy Scriptures, and in concluding said: "The Scriptures master me by their contents; they hold me captive by their tone; Jesus Christ, in whom they culminate, is so full of grace and truth, so majestic in character, so authoritative in word and so mighty in deed, that He wins and holds my absolute confidence. There I stand, and the book which He bids me read and search I will surrender at no man's bidding."



WARBURTON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, YONKERS, N. Y.

(Dr. Behrends' First Pastorate)



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### DR. BEHREND'S IN CLEVELAND.

In 1883 the people of the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, Ohio, observed with spirited ceremony its semi-centennial. An account of the observances and several papers concerning the history of the church were gathered into a volume and published. Among these is a paper on "The Pastorates from 1846 to 1883," by Mr. L. Prentiss. The portions devoted to the work of the Rev. Dr. Behrends are as follows:

On June 6, 1873, Dr. A. J. F. Behrends became the pastor of the church, in answer to its unanimous call, and continued in that office until February 1, 1876. The church life and work were fully maintained during his ministry. There were 74 baptized, 105 received by letter, and 17 by experience—in all, 196, in his pastorate. His earnest desire for the conversion of souls, and for the growth of the church in moral and religious power was very great, and found special expression during the fall and winter of 1874-5, in the meetings then held.

In 1874 the Idaka Sunday School was organized and received his hearty indorsement and coöperation. The school had an attendance of about 128 scholars and teachers at its commencement, and now has an average attendance of about 255 scholars and teachers, and is growing in strength and interest.

The Trinity Baptist Church was organized during the pastorate of Dr. Behrends, and received his earnest aid and encouragement, and the church again spared some of its valuable members to aid in the establishment and success of the new interest.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

As a pastor, Dr. Behrends was friendly, unassuming, and sincerely interested in the people of his charge. He was a man of strong, large nature, and great earnestness, energy, independence, and moral courage. Of a devout spirit, his prayers were specially impressive and helpful. As a preacher he possessed rare power of the most solid character. United with a clear and strong grasp of his subject, he had a full, ready and choice command of language in which to clothe and enforce his strong thoughts. He was accustomed to go directly to the heart of his subject, and to arouse attention and interest at once, by the clearness, earnestness, and power of its presentation. There was nothing of the merely sensational in his preaching; but, on the other hand, he always addressed himself directly to the best judgment and convictions of his hearers. To an intelligent and thoughtful church like this, such preaching was not only interesting, but it gave the truth larger and stronger meaning, and much of its force has gone into the thinking and lives of his hearers, as living forces for good.—*History of the First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio.*

## PART II.

---

### THE TEMPLE AND THE CROSS.

THE Temple did not save the nation any more than the throne of David had done. The priesthood proved to be as broken a reed for national support as had the royalty. The Temple was doomed when men came to glory in its marble and gold. It was desecrated by Antiochus and ground into dust by the Romans. Neither in throne nor temple was Israel's hope and refuge, but in Him whose servant David was, and whose glory filled the sanctuary. Alas! Israel discerned not the hour of its immortal coronation. The King came at last, but in such humble guise that His own received Him not and crucified Him as a blasphemer. Not even yet doth Israel behold its deliverance, its true return from a captivity of more than eighteen honored centuries, and its vocation to a mightier mission than any that dawned upon David or Malachi. But Jehovah has not cast off His people. They shall look on Him whom they have pierced. They shall be healed of their blindness. They shall return in holy repentance and in ardent faith. Then shall they see that neither the throne of David, nor the Temple of Solomon, but the cross of Jesus Christ is the magnet by which the seed of Abraham is to conquer the world.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE EDICT OF CYRUS.

I doubt whether Isaiah and Jeremiah, Zachariah and Haggai, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, measured the full significance of the time in which they lived, and of the work which they prosecuted with such tireless energy. But subsequent events have made it plain that these Jewish patriots and peers discovered what their heathen contemporaries did not suspect—the tremendous and revolutionary importance of the birth of the Persian Empire. It is an intuition so remarkable, confined to the prophets of this period, that its existence among them points to a Divine revelation. More than 2,400 years have passed since the edict of Cyrus sent a thrill of wonder and joy through the hearts of the Jewish exiles. Cyrus had been king for nearly twenty years when he marched his victorious army against the proud city of Babylon. In the North and far West his arms had been victorious. Assyria had been completely subdued. At Sardis, Cresus, the proud and rebellious king of Lydia, had been humbled. Only Babylon remained defiant, strong, wealthy and proud, boasting of a history of 2,000 years. Babylon was the Rome of the Orient, the headquarters of Asiatic despotism and Asiatic idolatrous power. Its antiquity always gave to it a certain pre-eminence, and under Nebuchadnezzar it vaulted into unchallenged supremacy. No one dreamed that the city could ever lose its prestige. You know how, at a later day and for many centuries, Rome secured and held the place of the older city. Rome became the seat and center of political and religious power, bear-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ing sway over a hundred million souls. Rome's history was so wonderful that she became known as the Eternal City, just as Babylon had been named Lucifer, the Son of the Morning. And when Rome fell a prey to the barbarian invaders, when the Huns plundered the Empire, and the Goths sat in the palaces of the Cæsars, and the Vandals ravaged the land, amazement and terror filled all hearts, and even Jerome feared for the result. It was then that Augustine wrote his "City of God," the noblest of all his works, which stamps him as the Isaiah of his time, and in which he rallied the hopes of his Christian countrymen. Nine hundred years before a similar storm had burst upon Babylonia, and the earlier crisis was in some respects more important than the later one.

---

### OVERTHROW OF BABYLON.

The most cruel and debasing idolatry was entrenched in Babylon, and the city's fame gave to idolatry in general a certain pre-eminence and claim to supremacy. Its overthrow came from the North, from a race with simple manners and with a simple religion. Cyrus was the Attila of Asia, the scourge of God, whose stinging blows brought Babylon to the dust. The Persians lived in an inhospitable region, inured to hardship, famed for three things, their bravery, their energy and their truthfulness. They were dualists in religion, believing in an Evil and in a Good God, but worshipping only the latter. They were at heart monotheists, and this accounts for their

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

friendliness to the Jews. Their accession to imperial power, therefore, was both a political and a religious revolution. It brought the Indo-European races to the front. It ended the political supremacy of the Hametic and the Shemetic tribes of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, and placed the scepter in the hands of the sons of Japhet, passing from the Persian to the Greek, the Roman, the Teuton and the Anglo-Saxon. And with this change of empire came the overthrow of the ancient idolatry, a shock from which it never recovered, and opening a free and wider path to the monotheistic faith. The news spread like wildfire, and wherever it was heard it produced amazement, mingled with terror and gladness. The supporters of the old regime trembled. The oppressed were glad. The tidings seemed almost too good to be true, for when Nebo stooped and Bel bowed down it seemed as if the millennium had come. The prophetic utterances that accompanied the event, or which predicted its near advent, are keyed to the highest pitch of triumph. The dead in their graves are represented as taking part in the universal jubilee.

---

### BIRTH OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

In seven months Nehemiah had finished his task, and then he joined with Ezra in pushing the work of religious reform. The book of the law was read and expounded as it ever afterward continued to be in the synagogues. All foreign elements were eliminated from the domestic life of the people. Regular pro-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

vision was made for the service of the sanctuary, and the observance of the Sabbath was restored and vigorously enforced. In all this Nehemiah found a vast amount of stolid indifference and even resistance. His prayer, "Remember me, O my God, for good," with which he closes his account, sounds like a lamentation. It is the sad appeal of a man whose patriotic devotion and religious zeal had met with scanty sympathy and support. But the work of Zerubbabel, of Ezra and of Nehemiah lasted. The temple maintained its ascendancy. Mixed marriages were placed under the ban. The Sabbath was observed with ceremonial exactness.

The synagogue, with its systematic interpretation of the law, became a permanent institution. The scribe became a leading figure in the reconstructed society. The character of the Jew assumed a kind of hardness and narrowness contrasting unfavorably with the nation's earlier life. But the Scriptures assumed prominence, and through their wide distribution in the Greek language, the Jew gave to his faith a universal though secret ascendancy which gave a mighty impulse to the preaching of the Gospel. For on its human side the synagogue was the forerunner of the Christian Church. It was in the synagogue that our Lord was trained in the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures; for the synagogue was the great popular library of Christ's time. It was in the synagogue of Nazareth that He preached His first sermon, and with the synagogue a large part of His ministry was identified. It was to the synagogues that the Apostles resorted in their missionary travels.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

The organization of the synagogue was reproduced in that of the church. The service of the former gave shape to the worship of the latter, concluding with the Lord's Supper, and held on the first day of the week. The officers of the synagogue reappear in the elders and deacons of the Apostolic Churches. And the synagogue was the creation of Ezra, who is revered by the Jews as a second Moses and as greater than Elijah. Here, in the synagogue, where the Old Bible was read and explained, is the formal link between Judaism and Christianity, and though many readers yawn as they peruse the pages of Ezra and Nehemiah, wondering why these books should have so exalted a place, the bells of the Holy Sabbath never summon us to worship without an unconscious tribute to the labors of these earnest and devoted servants of the Lord.

---

### AN AXIOM TO REMEMBER.

Punishment is what we deserve. Chastisement is what we need.

---

### GRACE TO LIVE, AND GRACE TO DIE.

I have heard people say, "I fear I have not grace to die." You do not need it till the time comes. You need the grace to live, the grace to work, the grace to wait. It will be time enough when your summons comes to have grace to die.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### OUR OWN WILL.

The death of Christ is sufficient for all, but effective only to those who believe. Christ is the second Adam or head of the race. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made to live. There is nothing in the way of our salvation through Jesus Christ but our own will.

---

### THE STORY OF ESTHER.

The Persian king is a tyrant and a brute. Haman is unscrupulous and cruel. Our judgment of Esther must be one of qualified approval at best, though some of the criticisms upon her character and conduct have been unwarrantably severe. She certainly appears in a much more favorable light than her companions, the noblest and purest inmate of the harem; but we cannot reconcile ourselves to the personal degradation in which she permitted herself to be involved. The most that can be said is that her behavior was passive, that she resorted to no intrigue, that she was the victim of circumstances in an Oriental despotism over which she had no control, and that she retained her simplicity of character amid the most unfavorable surroundings. But she certainly remains inferior to a woman like Ruth. Mordecai too, with all his sturdy qualities, his fearlessness, and loyalty, and patriotism, reveals a certain hardness and haughtiness, and an easy compliance with the polygamous customs of the Persian court, which do not make him a model character. There is a good deal of the ambitious

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

political rival in his treatment of Haman and the eagerness with which he supplants the disgraced and fallen prince; and his surrender of his niece, even if we suppose him to have been innocent of complicity, is not creditable to him. There is an absence of fineness in the narrative contrasting with the earlier histories of Joseph and Ruth.

I agree with Luther, that there is a good deal of "heathen naughtiness" in the book of Esther. I have no very great admiration for its characters. To me it is an unfounded and absurd fancy that there is anything Messianic or Christian in the story, and that Esther represents the church coming to the Gentiles. Such a use of this narrative is shocking to the moral sense, and calculated to undermine reverence for the Word of God. It ought not to be difficult for a candid reader to extract the moral of the little book, and to discover the reason why it claims a place in the Old Testament Scriptures. These Scriptures trace the dealings of God with Israel, to whom He gave His law, and of whom Christ was born. They tell us not only what He said to them, but also what He did for them. They show us that while He chastened them oft and sorely, He did not abandon them, nor did He permit their enemies to crush them out. Against Pharaoh He raised up Moses, against Ahab and Jezebel He raised up Elijah, against Haman He raised up Esther and Mordecai. And in the last case the imperfection of His instruments only throws into stronger relief His eternal and tender guardianship. The lesson of the book is an impersonal one. It has been fitly called the "Romance of Providence, the Book

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of the Hidden Hand." It is a tight and tangled knot that is here unexpectedly and curiously unraveled. The devices of the wicked are brought to naught and they are snared in the net which they have spread for the innocent. Haman and his sons swing on the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai; and by a strange combination of trifling circumstances, a people that was to have been exterminated is not only delivered, but commended and honored in an imperial edict. This is the one great and permanent lesson of the story, that

"There is a Providence that shapes our ends  
Rough hew them how we may."

---

### DANIEL THE PROPHET OF DEEDS.

In the Hebrew Bible the book of Daniel is placed among the Hagiographa, the Holy Writings, pamphlets that content themselves with the narration of personal experiences, or the description of historical events, leaving the reader to discover their meaning and importance for himself. They fall into two general classes, the poetical and the historical. To the former belong Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon and the Lamentations of Jeremiah; and in their poetic literature we can trace all the varying moods of the spiritual life of the time; the perplexities with which thought wrestled, and the reasoning by which their solution was sought; the restless search of the human heart for an abiding peace, and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the conclusion of the long and painful quest. In these poetical books, the most thoughtful and devout men of the time take us into their confidence, and give us the benefit of their ripest experiences. The historical group contains Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, and the Chronicles.

These books are descriptive of events, as the poetical books are descriptive of experiences. Or to phrase the distinction in another way, the methods of composition in the poetical books is psychologic and analytic; in the historical books it is pictorial. In the one case we deal with thoughts; in the other case we deal with things. Thus Ruth photographs the domestic life of David's ancestors. Ezra and Nehemiah picture the national movement which resulted in the rebuilding of the temple and the planting of the synagogue. Chronicles traces the importance of the temple in Jewish history from the time of David to the first Cyrus. Esther emphasizes the unexpected and remarkable deliverance of the Jews—of the dispersion from the insane fury of an Oriental tyrant. In all this there is no preaching. The moral is not intended nor appended, because the story is supposed to convey its own lesson. It is the revelation of God in works not in words; in deeds rather than in doctrines. The book of Daniel belongs to this class, and is placed between Esther and Ezra, simply because its style is descriptive, not didactic. It simply outlines the personal fortunes of a man whose life spans the entire period of the Babylonian captivity, and tells us what outlook into the future was given to him of the world's political history. The visions of Daniel constitute a philosophy of his-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tory valuable as the contribution of a man whose abilities secured for him high official station in the government of his conquerors.

---

### PRAYER A DIALOGUE.

Prayer is not a monologue; it is a dialogue.

---

### DANIEL'S CHARACTER.

It was during the first Babylonian invasion, in the year 606 B. C., eighteen years before the final destruction of Jerusalem, provoked by the treachery of Zedekiah, that Daniel was carried away to the imperial city on the banks of the Euphrates. He was of princely lineage, if not of royal birth. His last recorded vision dates in the third year of Cyrus, 533 B. C., seventy-three years after his removal from his native land. If we suppose him to have been 16 or 18 years old at that time, he must have lived to be 90 years old. During all these years nothing occurs to mar the simplicity and symmetry of his character. He earned the surname of "The Beloved," a favorite with God and men. Upon his first appearance at the royal court everybody seems to have fallen in love with him, in spite of his alien lineage. It was a bold request that he made when he asked that a simpler diet might be provided for himself and his friends; but the request was made with such sincerity and sweetness that it could not be denied. The lad was studious and soon distanced all his companions, being versed in all the

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

learning of the Chaldeans and in the higher wisdom of Moses. He retained his early modesty. He never became a place hunter, and he never shrank from any post of duty to which he was called. His reputation and standing outlived the Babylonian dynasty. Darius prized him as highly as did Nebuchadnezzar. The utmost vigilance and scrutiny of his enemies could find nothing wrong in his official conduct. Before he was 35 years old he was so widely and favorably known for his uprightness and wisdom that his name appears in the prophecies of Ezekiel. We discover in him a peculiar and high-minded consciousness. He does nothing from policy, everything from principle.

There is an equally remarkable completeness in his character. There are in it no violent contrasts, no lapses over which we must throw the mantle of charity. He is a man of the finest and firmest courage. He tells Nebuchadnezzar the truth; he is fearless before Belshazzar; he prays according to his habit, without a thought of the lion's den. He is always contented, whether filling a responsible post or remanded to obscurity. He bides his time, and he is full of charity. He cherishes no animosities. He does not turn upon his persecutors. He could have had no great love for the priestly class, but his first public appearance is on their behalf, because they had been condemned to death unless they could reproduce the king's forgotten dream. It is a noble figure that stands out against the dark background of general vanity, revelry, and cruelty; and is a notable instance of the supremacy of righteousness over brute force.

It cannot be doubted that Daniel's quiet influence

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

at court must have done much to soften the rigors of the captivity, and it goes far toward explaining the favorable disposition of Cyrus and the facilities which were gladly accorded to Zerubbabel by Cyrus, and to Nehemiah by Darius. As Joseph prepared the way for his father's household, so Daniel prepared the way for the captives of Judah. He had been eighteen years in Babylon when the captives came pouring in from the wasted city, and he was held in high esteem. They must have been considerately treated for his sake; and his name must have speedily become a household word among them. It was not a misplaced reverence. He has not suffered by a lapse of 2,400 years, and we still summon men to the highest level of character when we say to them, "Dare be like Daniel." When we turn from Daniel the man to Daniel the seer our task is not so easy. It belongs to the very nature of prediction that its precise fulfillment in point of time cannot be anticipated. The prophetic perspective is without time, as the perspective on canvas is without measurable distance. In the prophetic outlook the succession is logical, not chronological. Centuries count for nothing, millenniums are measured by an adverbial phrase such as "immediately" or "after this." It is the principle of history upon which the prophet seizes, the final issue upon which he fixes his eye.

---

### THE BOOK OF JOB.

Job is a drama in three parts: the prologue, the argument, and the epilogue. The introduction has two parts, describing two scenes in heaven, with their

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

correspondent counterparts on the earth. The argument falls into four parts: the dialogue between Job and his three friends; the monologues of Job when he has silenced his accusers, and of which there are three; the four speeches of Elihu, whom Job does not answer, and the double address of Jehovah, before whom Job humbles himself in penitent confession and humble trust. Then comes the epilogue or conclusion, in which Job is vindicated by his Maker, and made the recipient of a double blessing. There are twenty-eight speeches in all, and just one-half of these are credited to Job. The story closes with the statement that Job doubled his possessions; that seven sons and three daughters were born to him, virtually doubling his household—as the dead are not lost—and that he lived to enjoy a sunny old age. The clue to the book is in the prologue or introduction.

Job is first very briefly described as a wealthy prince, whose character commanded universal respect, and whose piety was equally marked. He feared God and eschewed evil. He was the head of a very happy family, all the members of which joined in every feast; while Job himself was careful to intercede on their behalf, by prayer and sacrifice, for any thoughtlessness of conduct into which they might have fallen. The piety of Job, so well known on earth, becomes a matter of discussion in heaven, in a public assembly of the angels who have come to receive their commands, and at which Satan is present. Jehovah speaks of Job in the highest terms. The devil sneers and declares that Job serves God only because God has always prospered him, and challenges the trial of a different

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

policy: "Lay Thine hand upon him and he will curse Thee to Thy face." It is the old charge that every man has his price, and all virtue is varnished selfishness; that principle is only another name for policy, and that men will do right only so long as it pays. That challenge in heaven could not be ignored. It was a lie, but the falsehood required to be exposed by the real trial of Job. Then comes the first visitation of suffering, when, in swift succession, the robbers carried away his wealth and the storm swept all his children into eternity. He heard the news with calmness, until the last messenger announced the death of all his children; then he could control his grief no longer. He arose, rent his mantle, shaved his head, and fell down to the ground. He was heart-broken; but he was not rebellious. With his face in the dust, he worshipped and uttered those immortal words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

---

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUFFERING.

The prologue in Job is a prophecy of the Cross. To the elevated and inspired thought of the author the last word on the mystery of suffering has not been spoken by those who emphasize its retributive and reformatory aspects. These are fully and ably set forth by Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu, but the force of their impassioned speech does not carry conviction to the sufferer. The logic is thus shown to be insufficient. It does not meet the facts of the case. There is a punitive suffering; even Job admits

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

that and declares that he needed no one to teach him that lesson. There is a disciplinary suffering—chastisement, by which good men are made better—but when Elihu commends this thought to Job, the crushed man finds no comfort in it, for his suffering has led him into sin rather than delivered him from it. The suffering of the righteous has a deeper reason. It is based upon a higher necessity. It is the inevitable attendant of the general conflict between Good and Evil wills that challenges God, in the presence of His angels, to give him a fair field among the best of men, declaring that every one of them can be brought to curse Him to His face. The plausible challenge cannot be declined, and the falsehood can only be disproved by actual trial. The moral sovereignty of God is involved in the issue, for if the result shows that no creature will worship Him when He weights him with suffering, then there is no essential reverence and love for Him anywhere, and His government is only of the sugar-plum order; and if God declines to make the trial, He is convicted of moral weakness in advance. Thus we come to the author's great and governing thought, that neither the righteousness of God nor the righteousness of man, neither the moral excellence of the ruler nor the full and unqualified loyalty of the subject can be made manifest and vindicated except by suffering. And such being the case, it should not surprise us that often the best men suffer most; because in them are represented the pivotal and strategic positions of the fierce battle. Nor can it seem strange that the holiest of all men suffered most intensely, because with Him the battle was either for-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ever won or forever lost. This is the profound and permanent lesson of the Book of Job; it is the Old Testament drama of the Cross in history.

---

### THE SCOPE OF THE PSALMS.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” The first word of this sentence, which may be regarded as standing for the text and theme of the Old Testament Psalter, is not an adjective, but a noun, and a noun in the plural number. The tone, furthermore, is one of grateful sacrifice, as if the vision of the good man’s blessedness could not be traced by mortal pen. The sentence ought to end with an exclamation point. It is not an abstract proposition which the author means to prove, nor is it the expression of a pious sentiment, uttered as a prayer or benediction, but the writer’s personal testimony to a fact whose discovery fills him with glad and growing wonder. By a few rapid strokes the character of the good man is described as marked by an avoidance of evil thoughts and men, and by the loving, habitual reverence of the Law of God. Over this portrait stands the golden word “Blessedness,” written with feelings akin to those that master you when you look at one of Raphael’s masterpieces. You are hushed into silence. You resent a whisper as sacrilege and comment as impertinent. It is a picture radiant with celestial light.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

The joys of the good man are so varied, so enlarging, so permanent, that only a plural noun can express them: for the plural, in the Hebrew, is the sign of variety, of completeness, of abiding freshness. Such is the note to which the Psalter is keyed. It is a book of hallelujahs. Happiness is the object of universal ambition and search. The Psalms go straight to the heart of that inquiry. They tell us where and how true happiness may be found, and the information is given in the form of personal experience. The testimony is all the more remarkable because it embodies the result which the Old Testament religion produced in the minds and hearts of those who received it gladly. Of that religion the Law was the great watchword. The word has a stern, hard, uncompromising sound. It seems to summon to a religion of constraint, and to induce a service of constant fear. But the godly man of the Psalms who has read that Law in the light of the older covenant makes it his delight and meditates upon it day and night. He is not driven by it, but drawn to it. Its prohibitions are to him the warnings of love, divine hedges along the path that leads to safety and joy. Obedience to what God has commanded is not felt to be a burden, but a perpetual gladness.

---

### THE PSALMS ARRANGED.

The Psalms fall into three main groups: The Psalms of David, of Asaph, and his associates, and the anonymous hymns. And as Asaph and his associates may

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

be regarded as the lieutenants of David, the collection falls into two great classes, ninety-nine being of Davidic origin or inspiration, and fifty being anonymous, with the grand hymn of Moses as a keystone of Siniatic granite, binding together the two sections of this glorious arch of song. But David's pre-eminence in the Psalter cannot be measured by the number of Psalms ascribed to him. In literature and art it is the quality, not the quantity, which is the decisive test of superiority. The forty-second and the eighty-fourth Psalms are noble specimens of the contributions by the sons of Korah. The fiftieth Psalm shows the lyrical power of Asaph. The seventy-second is in Solomon's best vein. The anonymous ninety-first Psalm is one of the finest in the entire collection. Still David maintains the primacy, in variety of theme, in grandeur of thought, in the musical cadence and march of his verse. Milton recognized him as a poet of the highest order. The twenty-third is the sweetest of all the Psalms of trust, so fragrant are the pastures, so clear all the streams where the flock of God is shepherded. The fifty-first is the matchless Psalm of penitence where the broken heart sobs out its confession and appeals to the multitude of God's tender mercies. The twenty-second touches the greatest depths of distress, whose opening sentence our Lord appropriated when the heavens grew black over the cross. The one hundred and thirty-ninth is incomparable for the compactness of its doctrine, a veritable compound of theology, a delineation of God and of His government calculated to inspire the profoundest reverence and awe. The nineteenth is the model Psalm

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of praise in which heaven and earth, day and night, are represented as engaged in perpetual dialogue, recounting the glory of God, while all His judgments are celebrated as radiant with light and cheer. The one hundred and third is the royal Psalm of thanksgiving, unequaled by any later utterance. The eighteenth is the great Psalm of triumph, in which David, then at the zenith of his power, recalls the terrible straits of thirty years and celebrates the mercy of God, of whom he speaks as his cliff, his castle, his rock, his tower, his shield, his deliverer, the hour of his salvation. It is simply amazing that such and so many immortal lyrics should be born of a single brain and heart. No wonder that David has come to be known as "the sweet singer of Israel." He smote his harp with the hand of a master, and made its voice the gentlest and the stormiest emotions of the human soul.

---

### THE PSALMS AS A SOLACE.

The Psalter is a perpetual crucifixion, followed by a perpetual resurrection; and it is this that has given to the Psalms their infinite pathos and abiding power. What now do these noble Psalms contain? I cannot undertake to answer that question for you. You must read them for yourselves alone, and when your heart is heavy. They are a grand covert when the storms burst over you and the depths are broken up, when heart and flesh fail you. They are pervaded through and through with a vivid sense of the Divine presence. God is always near. That is the golden thread upon

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which the pearls of song are strung, and the God of the Psalms is a being of wondrous majesty and gentleness, with whom there is forgiveness that He may be feared, so strange is the grace of pardon, so sweet is its assurance. In the Psalms it is always the honest soul that pleads. The suppliant's abasement is never his debasement. He is kingliest when he is lowliest. The root of righteousness is in him, and that transfigures his face. These songs embody the highest spirituality of thought in which altar and sacrifice lead to confession and faith in the promises of God. As Stanley says, "they scream for joy." "We cannot pray the Psalms," says one of these most learned and devout students, "without having our heart opened, our affections enlarged, our thoughts drawn heavenward. He who can pray them best is nearest to God, knows most of the Spirit of Christ, is ripest for heaven." Lord open to each one of us this golden treasury of Thy word.

---

### DAVID AND SOLOMON COMPARED.

The difference between David and Solomon is nowhere more clearly brought to light than when we compare the Psalter with the book of Proverbs. The fear of the Lord is with both men the chief duty and glory of man. But with David this personal fellowship is prized for its own sake, constituting not merely the source but the substance of his blessedness. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee," may be regarded as the key to which every other psalm and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

prayer is set. With Solomon, on the other hand, religion is prized for the practical benefits which it secures. It is indispensable to the equipment of the wise man. The sinner is a fool. His rejection of God is the extinction of reason. The temper of David is devotional; the temper of Solomon is philosophical. Solomon looks at the question as a man of the world. The imperial indorsement of man is his reason. To act wisely is his whole duty, and the search for wisdom brings the king to the conclusion, which he places at the front of his maxims, that man's first and greatest need is the knowledge and fear of God.

---

### THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

The book of Proverbs is really a treatise on wisdom. It is the earliest recorded attempt at a philosophy whose conclusions are thrown into the form of addresses to the young, and of short, pithy sentences easily retained in the memory. The Proverbs are peculiar. They are not a collection of popular sayings, current in Solomon's time, and rescued by him from oblivion, embodying "the wit of one and the wisdom of many," but striking statements of his own, and of some other men, embodying the result of wide observation and profound reflection, like the aphorisms of Coleridge and the "Table Talk" of Martin Luther. What we have is only a remnant, though a very carefully sifted and precious one; for Solomon is reported by the author of First Kings to have spoken 3,000 proverbs, and composed over 1,000

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

poems, besides writing treatises on botany and zoology. He was a prolific scientific and philosophical author, the greater part of whose work has perished. We may presume that the cream of his thought has been preserved. And the book, as it stands, is plainly composite in its structure.

---

### A PRICELESS NECKLACE.

The last chapter of Proverbs preserves the words which King Lemuel's mother taught him, and is, in many respects, the gem of the book. It contains thirty-one verses, of which the first nine describe the qualities of a good ruler, and the last twenty-two verses are an acrostic poem, one sentence for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet, describing the virtues and the incomparable worth of the ideal woman, wife and mother. There is a necklace of diamonds in the green vault of Dresden, valued at half a million dollars. There is an African diamond in New York City valued at \$100,000. I held it in my hands a few days ago, and you may laugh at me when I say that I involuntarily kissed it, so radiant was its beauty. But here is a necklace of twenty-two jewels, each one of them a perfect brilliant, which the Bible binds with a golden clasp around the throat of every young woman. How marked the contrast with heathen literature, which speaks of woman only with a sneer, at best only with an air of pity and condescension. The Bible honors woman. This sweet acrostic poem is the divine ring of betrothal conferred upon every maiden, binding her to vows of purity and piety.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.

Proverbs is the great book in the Bible for the young. The proverbs are the words of a father to his children. The main form of address is, "My son," because young men are most exposed and disposed to the sins that destroy character and embitter life. The proverbs are somewhat loosely joined together. There are frequent repetitions, but these repetitions are helpful as emphasizing the main dangers to which the young are exposed. They are especially warned against four sins: impurity, intemperance, lying and robbery. The warnings against impurity of life are the most frequent and solemn. I never read them without feeling that in them Solomon's wounded heart speaks. His domestic life was not a happy one. The yoke chafed him, the chains galled him. He speaks out of his own experience, and the young may well heed his admonition. With terrible vividness does he describe the subtlety of the temptation, the suddenness of the fall, the bitterness of the awakening, the inevitable and long life remorse. The man who loses his virtue takes a viper into his heart. He will always hear the hissing and feel the sting. Young man, read these chapters for yourself.

---

#### WARNING AGAINST ROBBERY.

Solomon warns the young against robbery of every kind, whether it be the robbery of violence or the robbery of false weights and measures. Don't steal. Three feet to the yard! Sixteen ounces to the pound!

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

2,000 pounds to the ton! A fair equivalent in every bargain you make—that is Solomon's advice, and he was a great merchant as well as a king. And all this he advises on the ground of practical wisdom, because honesty is the only safe policy, though he also declares that a violation of these mercantile rules is an abomination unto the Lord. This book is full of downright good common sense, and is the best practical guide for young men to-day.

---

### THE SCOPE AND STYLE OF ECCLESIASTES.

The book of Ecclesiastes is the saddest in the Bible. There is something disappointing in its style. It ranks lowest among the poetical books, without the spiritual fervor of the Psalms, and without the sustained elevation of thought in the Proverbs. Here and there the poetic fire breaks through, and the philosophic temper asserts itself; but it is the effort of an eagle whose wings are broken. There is no Summer in the book. A dull, heavy, grey atmosphere pervades it. The east winds sweep through all its chapters. There is just hope enough to save the writer from settled despair and suicide; not enough to change his moan into a song. It must have been written by an old man who had fallen into a state of chronic melancholy, in whom habitual disappointment had produced mental vacillation, and whose faith in God was little more than a dull resignation to the inevitable, which, in his better moods, he hoped might terminate in a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

rational and happy result. There is a double play of thought all through the book; a perpetual battle between despair and hope; and this has led many to suppose that it is in reality a poetical dialogue, whose divisions cannot now be reproduced with exactness. The transitions are many and abrupt. There is a good deal of drifting, as when a rower loses his oars and is deluged by a wave. There are sudden leaps in thought, as when a skiff rises from the trough of the sea to the crest of the billow. But it will help us to remember that the thought moves always between these two extremes—all is vanity, even righteousness; righteousness cannot be vanity, and it must be well with them that fear God. The antithesis becomes more and more pronounced, until at last conscience triumphs and hope survives.

---

### LEAVING THE PIT OF DESPAIR.

In Ecclesiastes there is a dash of cynicism when men are advised to be neither righteous nor wicked over much. Avoid extremes. It is not very high ground, to be sure; but you must remember that this man is coming out of the pit of despair. This is the first ray of light that comes to him. He sees that man possesses a divine gift for happiness, and that the first law for its attainment is contentment and moderation. The solution breaks upon him in the discovery that God made man upright, but that by his inventions man has marred the divine work. It is an inordinate

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ambition that is man's curse. Simplicity is the direct and sure path to joy. And now a deeper voice makes itself heard. He cannot withhold his praise from wisdom and righteousness. These are good in themselves. It is better to be wise than foolish, better to be true than false, better to be pure than impure. It is the whisper of conscience that he hears, and by it he is led to commend piety, reverence for the character and the commandments of God. There is something pathetic in the closing appeal to the young to remember the Creator in the days of their youth, before the years of infirmity and exhaustion come; before the body has become broken, and the spirit wounded by sin. And with this revived faith in God, and reverence for His law, comes the hope of a better day. It is very dim, but it is there. Every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, shall be brought to light. The righteous and loving God is higher than the princes who delight in oppression. The soliloquy reaches its highest and final ground in the assurance that it cannot be well with the wicked, however he may seem to prosper, and however long his judgment may be delayed, and that it must be well with them that fear and obey God. You may say that there is no argument in this book, and you are right. But it mirrors the thoughts of a man who found himself in the prison of doubt and despair, but in whom the love of life and the authority of conscience demanded a new hearing, and it may do us good to see by what path he slowly and painfully found his way back to faith in the Living God.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE OFFICE OF THE HEART.

I am persuaded that there is no more frequent and fatal mistake than the failure to stand guard over the heart, to keep the inmost self free from invasion and harm. Augustine tells us that his search for truth and peace only brought him increasing bewilderment while he listened to the world's teachers; the precious treasure was found only when he faced God in his own heart. And how stands the case with many of us? We read but we do not think. We believe what others tell us; we are afraid to trust the oracle within us. We are unsettled by a book, thrown into painful doubt and unrest; perplexed by arguments that we cannot answer, whose sophistry we may feel but cannot detect, whose conclusions startle us, when the heart within us, things that we deeply feel, is the court by which every book must be judged. For the soul is greater than any book, and the only authority is that which wins my spontaneous and glad assent. I would not divorce feeling and logic, though feeling is primary and fundamental. I would hug no faith that is not rational; but I would not follow a logic that antagonizes my deepest convictions, and sports with my most crying needs. I would rather follow my own heart than another man's head. Guard your heart. The old advice fits our day. Has it ever come that you ought to have faith in yourself—that you ought to believe that in you, too, there is a heart, a something that has its profound convictions, its needs, its hopes and its fears, its unutterable and persistent hunger? Have there not been moments when God's presence

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

awed you, and when His peace stilled your tumult? The fear that there might not be a God, and that religion was a delusion has frozen you to the core, while the resurging vision of Him has brought the Summer back. Why not trust your heart? Are you an incarnate lie? Is the cry of your nature a mockery? No, therein your heart's need is the impregnable evidence. It was that appeal by which, early in the century, Schleiermacher roused Berlin and Germany from its religious indifference and despair, and in so doing he only followed the earlier apologists, as when Tertullian exclaimed: "The testimony of the soul is naturally Christian!" Are you not weak? Are you not sinful? Does not your heart cry for the living God? At one of the meetings of the American Board held in Cleveland during the past week (October, 1888), I heard a missionary say that the Spirit of God was at work in the heathen heart even before they heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he told of a woman who, upon receiving the glad tidings for the first time, exclaimed: "O, this is the peace for which I have been waiting!" That poor heathen woman did not need the "historic evidences of Christianity" to convince her. The Holy Spirit had been at work in her heart preparing it for the glorious coming of Christ. Oh, my brothers, in that sense of dependence, in that feeling of weakness and need, is the proof that God is not far away, your eternal strength and refuge. Your heart is not lying to you. Believe, too, that there is just such a heart in all other men and women, savage or civilized, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant. There is the same bodily structure in the new born babe and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in the centenarian. Air, food and sleep are needed by all. No amount of mental advance lifts any man above the weakness which his dependence emphasizes, nor above the craving for sympathy when bereavement shadows him, nor above the shame and fear which sin provokes. I do not undervalue the labors of Christian scholars for the faith which we profess, but there is something more direct than argument. God has His eternal witness in every soul, and to that we confidently appeal.

---

### WHY AM I A CHRISTIAN?

I received my first impressions of religion in a godly home, where the Bible was read daily, and where the Sabbath was observed as a day of sacred Christian opportunity and joy. I caught Christianity from the lips and eyes of my mother. An incident in which my mother and myself were immediately interested made an indelible impression upon me. From that event I got a conception of God's methods with His children. My mother caught me in her arms, and kneeling down with me, prayed that God would pardon me for my offense. Then she administered chastisement for my misconduct. There was love and judgment brought in line. It was not love without law, nor law without love. In that one act of my mother's affectionate and dutiful ministry I received the first theological training in my life. In the years that followed, leading up to the hour of conversion, that early lesson exercised a potent influence. You can all trace the way

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

back to the early training of your childhood, and as you reflect, your memory is without even as much as a single conscious struggle for the truth of Christianity. You were helped and succored by the counsels of godly fathers and the prayers of pious mothers. In the power of home influence there is discoverable a duality of testimony as to the Word of God, the testimony of Christian life as we have seen it and felt it, and the witness of the written Word in the Bible. The Bible is but the record of what Christianity has done. The witnesses are united.

---

### THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN.

Of all Christ's disciples, he who was named John understood Him best. It was fitting that he should speak last, when all others had submitted their testimony, and entered their verdict. In saying this, I assume that this fourth gospel was written by John, the apostle. This has been vehemently denied, but the long and fierce debate may be regarded as virtually ended in favor of the traditional judgment. It is conceded, also, that this gospel is the last of all the New Testament writings, composed in the eighth decade of the first century. It represents the ripest fruit of inspired Christian thought. Fifty years had passed since the crucifixion. Paul had been dead twenty years. Fifteen years or more had elapsed since the destruction of Jerusalem. The days of peace had been succeeded by the days of bitter and bloody persecution. Through all these years the beloved disciple had been

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

meditating on his great theme. Each review disclosed a new sublimity, and made his task more difficult. We may well suppose that he was often urged to write his story, and perhaps even rebuked for his strange delay. But he was determined not to be premature, and his hesitation has been to our great advantage. For we have in this Gospel the verdict of a vigorous old age, sobered by fifty years of study, tempered by a long and varied experience, made fearlessly honest in view of the nearness of death. He does not claim to give an exhaustive history, but from the wealth of his material he selects such deeds and discourses as appear to him representative, and as fully justifying the universal faith of the Church. The fourth gospel is really a great argument in historical form. It marshals the reasons why men were urged to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Author of Eternal Life unto all that believe.

---

### THE MIGHTY MESSAGE.

It was an old conceit that represented Mark as giving a human portraiture of Christ; Matthew, as emphasizing his royal dignity; Luke, as dwelling upon his representative and sacrificial mission, and John, as tracing His divine origin and nature—a fourfold picture of the Man, the King, the Sacrifice, and the God. John has combined them all, as underneath his finished sketch, whose incompleteness he freely confesses, he writes: This is the man Jesus, who is also the Christ, the Anointed King, the Son of God, the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Eternal Word, and through whose name eternal life is secured to them that believe. Behold, he cries, the Man, the King of men, the Son of God, dying for our sins and rising again for our eternal redemption. I know it is a mighty faith, but the soul of man needs just such a message as this. For sin and death, judgment and eternity are words of mighty import. The fears that torture the human heart have a terrible grip and are loosed only at the touch of an Almighty hand. I know that it is a mysterious faith, but no more mysterious than life itself, or the conviction of personal immortality. The key of the riddle of human life is here. The one great mystery of the incarnation and atonement makes all else plain and luminous. What a flood of light the manger of Bethlehem casts upon the dignity and the meaning of human life. Childhood, motherhood, toil, suffering have all been transfigured, now that the Son of God has woven them all into His personal and eternal experience. There is nothing degrading in a life which He was not ashamed to share. I confess there is at first something repellent in the pictures which Russian artists have given us of Christ's earthly home. They are too realistic. We cannot imagine that He lived in so humble a way. But He did, and the lesson is that the hut does not measure the man, that the soul is of royal lineage and stature, and that time is the gate of eternity. The cross shows us what provision God has made that we may not fail of our heritage. He was cradled among the poor, and died for transgressors that we might be robed in white and dwell forever with the angels.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### AN UNFALTERING FAITH IN GOD.

Our God is one—one not only in the essence of His being, but one in the perfectness and completeness of His character. Is He the God of the Jew only? Let that question of Paul's ring out afresh upon the ears of men. No; He is also the God of the Gentiles. Is He the God of the Anglo-Saxon alone? No; He is the God also of them that dwell in China and Japan, and in Turkey, and in the recesses of Africa, and in the islands of the sea, and He hath included all men that He might have mercy upon all. We believe in one God, who lays the same law upon every conscience, but whose course is sometimes veiled to the understanding, but disclosed to the conscience; one God who visits every soul of man, who imposes the same conditions upon all who seek His favor, which truth Peter uttered when he declared in the household of Cornelius that they who fear Him and work righteousness are accepted of Him. The ills of life can be more bravely borne when it is known that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord, and you can commend the problems of the future to Him who moves in mysterious ways to accomplish His eternal ends. I do not profess to understand the world I live in; the more I study it the less I know about it. Indeed, it seems to me terribly out of joint, and I cannot begin to justify to myself the inequalities I discover on the right hand and on the left, but I can believe more and more every passing year that I am solely in the hands of Him who has shown His face in Jesus Christ, and in whom there is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

no pleasure in the death of another, but who sent His Son into the world, not that the world might be condemned, for if that had been the purpose He would have simply withheld Himself, but that the world, through Him, might be saved. So I see this little globe of ours swinging in the atmosphere of the divine affection, the divine spirit brooding over all generations and over all nations. That is the love on which I plant my theology. Perhaps there is a better one; if there is, I have never found it. These things belong to Him, and I am sure that He will do what is right. As for the rest, we can afford to wait, for God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.

---

### RIGHTEOUSNESS ESSENTIAL TO HAPPINESS.

You cannot be happy, try ever so hard, unless you are holy, and it is only in the possession of what the Bible calls holiness that you can enter into and enjoy the sweet communion for which you were made, with your Maker. Now, the scientists of our day have made us very familiar with the idea of law, that, however stern the lines may seem to be, and, however all-encompassing they appear, yet they are equally beneficent. There is no chance; all things in heaven and on earth are joined together in the order of an eternal reason. That affirmation we carry from nature into history, and we are reading and writing the history of the race from this angle of observation, that every effect has its cause, and that all things are bound together in an orderly succession. It is this that makes

*THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.*

us impatient of any definition of the supernatural in which the natural does not retain its place; it is this that makes us unwilling to confess that even a miracle is a violation or suspension of the laws of nature; it is this that makes us insist that the higher order which is revealed in the miraculous, after all, is in harmony with that lower order which is called the natural. Even Jesus Christ falls under this law, though He be the miracle of history. He was not the product of His age, but He fitted into His age and His age fitted into Him. We go a step farther and affirm the supremacy of the moral law as applying to the character and destiny of men. We insist that the only beneficent order is the order of impartial and inflexible righteousness. "Oh," you say, "hell is an awful word," and no man should utter it lightly. But I tell you, friends, that the universe in which there is no justice is the universe in which there is no respect for righteousness, and a universe in which men are left to be just what they please would be worse than hell, and there is not one of you but who will say "Amen" to that. The only beneficent order is the order of inflexible righteousness, and the sooner we come to recognize that fact the better. I remember, only a few weeks ago (August, 1887), seeing a picture in a Paris art gallery that impressed me very profoundly. The subject was Brutus condemning his son to death. There sat Brutus as judge. To his hands was committed the order of the state. Before him stood his boy—fair-haired, blue-eyed, and hardly more than a child—looking with pleading eyes upon his father's stern countenance. About the lad were gathered his friends in

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

every conceivable attitude of agonizing entreaty. It seemed to me that I could read the conflicting emotions in the father's face, but Rome was greater than any one man, and the order of the state must be maintained. Far be it from me to push unduly the logic of analogy, but I do think that a great many of the objections that are brought against the atonement, against moral retribution, vanish on sight of that canvas, and this one lesson that the order of righteousness must be inflexibly maintained is thereby taught.

---

### GOD, THE SOUL, AND THE BIBLE.

Let me ask your attention to the two first great primary convictions of our Christian faith—the doctrine of God, and the doctrine that the soul has a real existence. Bring these two in relation. God seeks man and man is made that he must seek God if he would be happy. You have prayer on the one hand, and the promptings of revelation on the other. Revelation is the movement of God manward, and prayer is the movement of man toward God, and the religion that has no revelation in it can have no prayer in it. Strike down one and you strike down the other. Of this mental gravitation, the gravitation of man towards God and the gravitation of God towards man, the gravitation is strictest on the part of God, and thus you reach the possibility, the probability, and the reasonableness of the revelation of God to man, and thus lay a broad foundation for that Christian affirmation that we have in Holy Scripture, which is revela-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tion in historic form. With this the inspiration of the Bible is perfectly reasonable, and it is one of the elements of common universal testimony. I do not say that man must have a definite theory of inspiration, but that the universal faith of the church agrees in this, that in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments we have an authoritative disclosure of the mind and the will of God. And now, when we come to open the Scriptures, what more do we find? Does it reveal to us another element of Christian testimony over and above those to which we have already adverted? What is the substance of the prophetic and apostolic testimony as that testimony is to be found in the Bible? Let me answer that question. The beloved disciple gives as the answer in that short sentence in which he declares that "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Some people will tell you that they can prove almost anything from the Bible. But the Bible was not given as an authoritative text-book of all possible matters of science and philosophy. Its theme is one, and that theme concentrates itself upon the personal dignity, and mission, and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Christian doctrine, therefore, deals pre-eminently and specifically with what Jesus Christ has done, and with what He will do. In other words, it affirms especially this fact, that in His person He is truly and properly divine, and to this it adds another fact, that by His obedience, by His atonement and death on the cross, and by His perpetual intercession at the right hand of God, He becomes the source of energy and of redemption for man. It may be impos-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

sible for any of us to fathom the philosophy of the Trinity, but the universal church has always testified in all her creeds, in all her prayers, and in all her songs, that in Jesus Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. "Let us hold fast to that. The atonement may be an unfathomable secret to you and me, and any statement that you may have heard may not have been satisfactory to you, and certainly none that I have ever heard laid down has been satisfactory to me, but the truth is grander, broader, deeper, and higher than any exposition of it that has fallen from the lips of man, or that has come from his pen.

---

### THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

There can be no permanent peace in society that does not build on universal and eternal justice, in which manhood, protected by law, supersedes the necessity of class legislation, and quietly obliterates the prejudices of race and rank; and the best prescription for much of the shallow and sickly thought of our time, in discussions concerning the true social order, would be a hearty dose of Cicero. We shall never reach settled results until we assume that social institutions are not creations or inventions, but living growths, and that social justice can deal with classes only by dealing with individuals. The administration of public righteousness must be personal and impartial; upon any other basis it is tyranny, by whatever name it may be called. The ideals of Plato and of Cicero have never yet been fully realized; but the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

travail of the ages has been along the lines they have traced, and only by the supremacy of a law from which "neither the senate nor the people can give us any dispensation," whose "seat is the bosom of God," and whose "voice is the harmony of the world," can the happy goal of the future be reached.

If Greece is the sanctuary of speculative thought, and Rome the great school of practical statesmanship, England is the foremost representative of the commercial idea as entering into the life of nations. Her energies have been concentrated upon the production of wealth. Her economists, following the leadership of Adam Smith, have discussed the philosophy of trade, the sources of wealth, and the laws of distribution. The Anglican and the American are known throughout the world as worshippers of "the almighty dollar." But even the spiritual Plato says that man's first need was food, his second a house, and his third a coat. If "nine-tenths of life deals with human conduct," a very large part of that conduct is concerned with the homely questions of bread, raiment and shelter. To make these questions predominant and exclusive is undoubtedly demoralizing and debasing; but to ignore them, or to remand them to a region in which righteousness gives no law and imposes no checks, is to remand nine-tenths of the human race to the slavery of irresponsible and fierce commercial competition. There must be a morality of bread-winning, otherwise morality is stripped of universal sovereignty; and if righteousness cannot bear rule in factories and on ships; if it cannot mediate between capital and labor, we might as well burn our Bibles and close our churches.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.

They cannot reserve piety by sacrificing humanity, they cannot keep alive faith in heaven, if the earth is to remain a living tomb.—*Socialism and Christianity.*

---

### MODERN SOCIALISM VERSUS CHRISTIANITY.

Modern socialism affirms that it is the business of the state to so regulate industry that no man shall be compelled to beg for work, nor to labor for simply the necessaries of subsistence, nor be haunted by the fear of future want. It would levy a tax sufficiently heavy to make hunger needless, and to sweep every hovel from the face of the earth, compelling every man to work, and guaranteeing him against every form of suffering. The socialist affirms that poverty is a crime, not of the individual, but of the state; that pauperism is the artificial and cruel creation of capitalistic organization, and with the overthrow of the latter the former would disappear. Herbert Spencer regards governmental interference as indefensible and unjust; the school of Marx demands it as an inherent and indefeasible right. The former divests the state of all responsibility, the latter places the government in "loco parentis" to every man. The former would have every man bear his own burden, the latter would compel somebody else to bear it for him. Christianity commands us so to bear each other's burden that every man shall be able and willing to bear his own.

But what is pauperism? An invisible life separates it from poverty. The latter has been called the great industrial crime, the parent of ignorance and vice, the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

social hell engulfing more victims than pestilence and war. And such utterances appear in a pamphlet whose title page contains the quotation from "Jesus, the Carpenter's Son"—"the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The text does not fit the indictment; one of the two must be surrendered. For the prizes of life were within the Nazarene's reach; the path of wealth and power was open to Him as to no other born of woman. He was deaf to the solicitations of carnal ambition. He toiled with His own hands to earn bread for himself and His widowed mother, and through His exacting public ministry He never ceased to care for her. He never asked alms of any one, but encouraged His disciples in pursuing their ordinary callings, and carefully to husband their united incomes, that they might be chargeable to none. There is not an intimation from His lips warranting the claim that the state is any man's industrial debtor. The rapacity of the rich is denounced in scathing terms, but the extirpation of poverty does not appear as a part of His mission. He summoned to faith in God, who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows, deprecated the brooding anxiety that gave the foremost place to food and raiment, and exhorted men to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, to labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. And as He taught, so acted His disciples. After His resurrection they went back to their boats and nets. Paul labored with his own hands, though he did not refuse occasional gifts from the churches whom he had served, and to the idle throng:

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of his day he said, "If any would not work, neither should he eat," commanding all to work with quietness and so to eat their own bread. The communion of the early church was purely voluntary, and seems to have never been transplanted from Jerusalem, where it came to a very speedy end, while charity was never urged as a righteous claim of the poor. To the lame man at the temple gate Peter gave something infinitely better than alms, the ability to walk, leap, and earn his own living. The elimination of poverty never has been, and is not now, one of the Utopian schemes of Christianity; it does urge to self-reliance, industry, thrift and contentment.

But while Jesus and His disciples were poor men, they were not paupers. They did not ask other people to support them. They maintained their independence and themselves gave alms according to their ability. Here is the invisible line that separates pauperism from poverty, a line that is also an impassable gulf. The pauper and the poor man stand at opposite poles; the whole diameter of manhood stretches between them. Pauperism is the state of voluntary want, and must be heeded as such. The pauper is really a drone and a thief, who wants to live by the industry of others; and from this view the social problem resolves itself into this: "What shall we do with the lazy?" And the lazy, where are they? Not only in hovels and cellars, but in palaces. Not only in rags, but beneath broadcloth and velvet. Every man has the poison of pauperism in him who wants something for which he has not given a fair equivalent, who wants an easy and genteel place, with good pay, who asks other hands than his

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

own to clear the path for him. There are paupers in ceiled houses, in government offices, in the pulpit. Thomas Moore denounced the idleness of princes no less than the violence of thieves, and the vagrancy of the indolent poor. He discerned in the former one of the most potent encouragements of the latter. The poison at the head embittered the whole stream; and the only remedy was the heroic one of compelling every man to work. For so long as wealth is regarded as enabling some men to live without productive toil, others will study to secure places where the demands are least exacting, and others still will be content to be always idle so long as they can satisfy their hunger and cover their nakedness. It is not the millionaire who makes the tramp, but the idleness which the rich man encourages in his home reappears in the beggar of the street. It is not poverty, but laziness, that calls for a war of extermination.—*Socialism and Christianity.*

---

### TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN PLAN.

The controversies of our time on the subject of socialism are new only in their form, and in the growing earnestness with which they are conducted; that their difficulties may be traced to the deep-seated selfishness that controls and deforms human nature; that their increasing bitterness is due to the spread of intelligence and the development of conscious manhood among all classes, and that only an industrial and social economy, in which manhood as well as mer-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

chandise comes to its rights, can hope to lay the foundations of the future state. But the regeneration is provided for in the principles and precepts, the doctrine and the spirit, of Christianity. The discontent of our time is hopeful, if only we deal with it wisely. Humanism has its birth and support of the gospel, and every new accession of conscious manhood is a heavenly baptism, for which we should give thanks. The danger is that zeal may outrun knowledge. The engine, under full pressure of steam, may jump the track, and hurl the great train down the embankment. Liberty must honor the authority of law. Men cannot have what they want simply for the asking. They will starve if they do not work. They will not rise unless they become intelligent. They will remain poor unless they are temperate and thrifty. They will provoke resentment and organized retaliation if they become unreasonable and despotic in their demands. Fire is sometimes fought by fire, and the very strength of a party has frequently become the prelude of its disgrace and overthrow. Justice is the security of the state and the guarantee of victory. And justice, though heaven-born, has always tabernacled on earth, and wrought among man, and found embodiment in law. Her banners do not lead the army of destructive revolution. She wins by appeal to reason's ear, and by the policy of patient, dignified demand. Let the panting engine be firmly kept on the ancient tracks of steel. The world's regeneration, in shop, and home, and state, is to be sought along the lines of past endeavor, lines that are clearly manifest in the Christian Scriptures and in Christian history. Capital will not become com-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

munal possession. Private property will not disappear. Superior endowments and unflagging industry will continue to command exceptional reward. Competition will not cease. But these elemental, industrial and social forces will come under a higher law, and be knit into a compacter and loving partnership. The lines of power that now are strained upon the shoulders of some, and slack upon the necks of others, will be gathered up and held with even firmness by the palms that bear upon them the print of the nails, witnessing to His equal love for rich and poor. And when He rides in the chariot of the world's industry, the days of peace will have come to stay.—*Socialism and Christianity.*

---

### GNASAPHTHANI? GNANITHANI!

*A Paraphrase of the Twenty-second Psalm.*

BY REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

My sorrows have been great and sore,  
As years have come and gone;  
But never in the days of yore,  
Had I been left alone.

One face gleamed through the darkest night,  
To cheer me on my way;  
One voice smote with its secret might,  
The battle's fierce array.

It came at last, the dark, dread hour,  
When God did hide His face,  
While hell arrayed its hostile power,  
My shame in blood to trace.

A scoffing and a scorn was I.  
Alike to friend and foe;  
The mocking lip, the lifted eye,  
The bitter hate did show.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

With hungry haste the lion nears,  
Scenting afar his prey,  
Riddled with arrows, torn by spears,  
I, panting, helpless, lay.

My lips were parched, my heart stood still,  
Despair my vitals froze;  
The heavens above, with icy chill,  
Looked down upon my woes.

Save me, O God, my God, I cried,  
Recede Thou not from me;  
Draw near, O hasten to my side,  
Thou art my only plea.

Holy art Thou, and I am vile,  
But Thou art Israel's praise,  
Though Satan rage and men revile  
Eternal is Thy grace.

Through the Red Sea, 'neath Horeb's fire,  
Thou didst Thy people lead;  
O crush Thou not my heart's desire,  
As in the dust I plead.

The brazen serpent Thou didst rear,  
And they who looked did live;  
O, quiet Thou Thy servant's fear,  
Send me Thy glad reprieve.

I've counted all Thy mercies, Lord,  
Engraved on history's page;  
My heart is trusting in Thy Word,  
Check Thou the lion's rage.

Show me Thy face! then let Thy sword  
Upon the suppliant fall;  
For naught affrights my soul, O Lord,  
When I can hear Thy call.

He answers not, His lips are dumb,  
His face I cannot see;  
My breath recedes, my hands are numb,  
Lama Gnasaphthani?

Eli! Lama Gnasaphthani?  
Where are Thou, O my God?  
Forsaken? No, it cannot be!  
I drive away the thought.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Gnanithani! What do I hear?  
My pulses leap and bound,  
My prayer is heard, laid all my fears,  
The voice of hate is drowned.

For when God speaks a holy calm  
Broods over all the earth,  
While stars and seas join in the psalm  
To which his smile gives birth.

Hallel! Hallel! Praise ye the Lord!  
And celebrate His name!  
I trusted in His holy word,  
Nor was I brought to shame.

His heart doth hear, His oath is sure,  
The orphan's cry He heeds;  
He spreads His banquet for the poor,  
With finest wheat He feeds.

To all the world will I proclaim  
His glorious faithfulness,  
And summon all who know His name  
To serve, adore, and bless.

The kingdoms of the earth are His,  
The nations great and small;  
His loving hands my lips shall kiss,  
O crown Him Lord of all!

—*Brooklyn Eagle*, May 5, 1889.

---

### PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XVI.

BY REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

Eternal God, I hide in Thee,  
My sovereign and my song!  
I look to Thee, alone to Thee,  
Amid the hostile throng.

The princes of the earth are they,  
Thy grace in sainthood keeps;  
And when they fold their hands to pray,  
My heart with rapture leaps.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

I will not join with them who stand,  
Neath shrines of lust and blood;  
Their names my lips shall never brand,  
O Thou most holy God!

My heritage art Thou, O Lord,  
And Thou my daily bread;  
Though Satan should unsheathe his sword,  
I sing, and know no dread.

The hand which hollowed out the seas  
And gave the lands their form,  
Hath given to me a realm of peace,  
Of sunshine without storm.

A land of gardens and of flowers,  
Where Spring immortal reigns,  
With palaces and leafy bowers,  
Whose like no monarch gains.

When I need counsel, Thou art near,  
Though slumber hold mine eyes;  
My steadfast heart can know no fear,  
Though hosts against me rise.

Merry am I, my heart doth leap!  
I lay my body down,  
For Thou, O Lord, my soul dost keep,  
Though death upon me frown.

Each morning brings me glad release,  
And I go forth refreshed:  
Through Sheol, too, my path is peace,  
I am forever blest.

I cannot see the way, O Lord,  
The shadows are too deep,  
But I have heard Thy promise, Lord,  
The oath which Thou wilt keep.

The day will come when I shall see,  
Thy glory face to face,  
Where everlasting pleasures be,  
And hearts o'erflow with praise.

# THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

## PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XIX.

BY REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,  
And earth joins in the strain;  
Each morning smites the golden chord,  
Night echoes the refrain.

Speech there is none, the lips are mute,  
In this great choral song;  
Yet round the earth with silver flute,  
Moves on the endless throng.

Arcturus sings, the Pleiades  
With sevenfold harmony,  
Orion's deep-toned melodies  
Enrich the symphony.

In dazzling robes the Sun comes forth,  
With hand on harp of fire,  
While from the South, and from the North,  
Their cymbals strike the choir.

Over the arched firmament  
Their path of triumph lies;  
And whereso'er their steps are bent,  
The sable monarch flies.

On mountain top, 'mid snow and rain,  
The sunbeams dance and play;  
And when they kiss the sheeted plain,  
The frostwork melts away.

Pastures are robed in living green,  
Spangled and fringed with flowers;  
The hills reflect the golden sheen,  
Joy reigns in all earth's bowers.

A resurrection glory rests  
On Esdraelon's vales:  
And distant Hermon's many crests  
Are fanned by summer gales.

Thy law is like the Sun, O Lord,  
It bringeth light and life;  
Great strength Thy promises afford,  
And wisdom for the strife.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Pure are Thy statutes, clean Thy fear,  
Enlightening the eyes;  
Transfiguring each silent tear,  
For him who to Thee flies.

The finest gold from Ophir's mines,  
And pearls from ocean's bed,  
Compare not with the gracious lines  
In which Thy truth is read.

The sweetness sipped from lilies fair,  
Or drawn from Sharon's rose,  
Seems bitter when the peace I share  
Which from Thy statutes flows.

Nor do the thunders from Thy voice  
Affright my listening ears;  
Thy judgments make my heart rejoice,  
And keep mine eyes from tears.

Righteous art Thou, I give Thee praise!  
For Gilead's balm is Thine!  
The stain of sin Thou can'st erase,  
And cause my face to shine.

Preserve my lips and keep my heart  
From all transgression free;  
Thy grace, O Lord, to me impart,  
For I would holy be.

My Rock art Thou, my Fortress strong,  
My ever watchful friend!  
From danger guard, keep me from wrong,  
Thy servant, Lord, defend.

---

### SING TO THE HEART OF JESUS.

*Translated from the German.*

BY REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

Sing to the Heart of Jesus,  
O heart of mine, in love,  
And let the joyful anthem  
Pierce all the clouds above.  
With praise and benediction,  
Now and on every shore,  
Hail to the Heart of Jesus  
The holiest evermore!

THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

O Heart, in anguish broken,  
For me, from love divine,  
By point of spear pierced sorely,  
Thro' this great guilt of mine.—REF.

O Heart, so gently streaming  
With water and with blood,  
How from Thy Cross, uplifted,  
Grace rushes like a flood!—REF.

O Heart, in purest fire flames,  
Consumed by love divine,  
All things to me are granted,  
In that dear Name of Thine!—REF.

O Jesu-Heart, one prayer  
On earth I breathe to Thee:  
Keep in its secret shrine, Lord,  
A little place for me!—REF.

True, I am very sinful,  
A lamb, soon led astray:  
But, lo! I let Thee find me,  
Good Shepherd, be my Way!—REF.

O cleanse my soul and spirit  
In Thy Heart's precious blood;  
Then, as Thy bride, elect me,  
O Thou, my highest good.—REF.

As Thy great heart was gentle,  
Holy, and without pride;  
So be my heart, in likeness,  
To Thine, dear Lord, allied!—REF.

Begone all vain ambitions,  
The world's consuming fires;  
I will love only Jesus,  
To Him my heart aspires.—REF.

Oh! who'll give me the dove wings,  
Plumed for that Heart divine?  
I'd soar o'er mount and valley,  
To make that refuge mine.—REF.

Thy wounds, Heart-Jesu, draw me,  
For rest to them I fly;  
And thence, in weal and anguish,  
To all the world I cry:—REF.

THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

And when my eyes are breaking,  
When sun and stars decline;  
Dying, my lips shall whisper,  
O Jesu-Heart, I'm Thine!—REF.

---

LORD, I'M TRUSTING.

*Translated from the German.*

BY REV. A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth,  
Guard me from the world's deceit,  
For Thou art my friend and keeper,  
Throned upon the mercy seat.

In my trusting,  
In my hoping,  
In my loving,  
Strengthen me.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Should all men forsake and leave me,  
Thou wilt not deceive me, Lord,  
Naught, O Lord, is hidden from Thee,  
Perfect peace Thy words afford.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
One true God in persons threefold,  
Who in light unclouded dwell,  
Same in essence, power endurance,  
All Thy works Thy wonders tell.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Father, in the heights celestial,  
Upon Thee I fix my heart;  
Should all men and devils hate me,  
Thou from me wilt never part.  
In my trusting, etc.

THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Son of God! Thy cross and passion,  
Save me from eternal death;  
By Thee are the heavens opened,  
Thee I praise with joyful breath.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Holy Spirit! let me never  
Feel the kindling blush of shame,  
Make me bold the faith to honor,  
And to bear the Christian name.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Thou shalt be my only treasure,  
Thou shalt be my only joy;  
And the task which Thou approvest,  
Shall in love my hands employ.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
Naught from Thee shall separate me,  
Though the world its firebrands wave,  
Thus to force me to deny Thee,  
I will sing while yawns the grave.  
In my trusting, etc.

Lord, I'm trusting,  
Lord, I'm hoping,  
Lord, I love Thee from my heart!  
When my breath grows faint and feeble,  
And I'm numbered with the dead,  
Graven on my heart forever,  
Radiant, shall these words be read:  
In my trusting, etc.



# Lord I am Trusting

(Arranged by Lewis H. Moore)

1. Lord, I'm trust - ing, Lord, I'm ho - ping, Lord, I love Thee

The first system of music features a treble and bass staff in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "1. Lord, I'm trust - ing, Lord, I'm ho - ping, Lord, I love Thee".

from my heart! Speak, O Lord, Thy ser - vant hear - eth,

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "from my heart! Speak, O Lord, Thy ser - vant hear - eth,". There are rests in the melody for some notes.

Guard me from the world's de - ceit, For Thou art my

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Guard me from the world's de - ceit, For Thou art my".

friend and keep - er, Throned up - on thy mer - cy - seat. In my

The fourth system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "friend and keep - er, Throned up - on thy mer - cy - seat. In my".

trust - ing. In my ho - ping, In my lov - ing, strengthen me!

The fifth system concludes the piece. The lyrics are: "trust - ing. In my ho - ping, In my lov - ing, strengthen me!". The piece ends with a double bar line.

# Hail to the Heart of Jesus

(Arranged by Lewis H. Moore)

1. Sing to the Heart of Je - sus, O heart of mine, in love, And  
2. O Heart, in an - guish brok - en, For me, from love di - vine, By

REFRAIN.

let the joy - ful an - them Pierce all the clouds a - bove. With praise and ben - e -  
point of spear pierced sore - ly, Thro' this great guilt of mine. With praise, etc.

dic - tion, Now, and on eve - ry shore, Hail to the Heart of Je - sus, The

Holiest, ev - er - more! Hail to the Heart of Je - sus, The Holiest, ev - er - more!



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### INTRODUCTION TO BIRDSEYE VIEWS OF THE BIBLE.

Our traditional estimate of the Bible, as a book standing by itself and apart, often places the reader at a certain disadvantage. It creates an intellectual prepossession that prevents a natural and free handling, and in this way its mightiest charm is lost. Its voices sound hollow and distant, when they are really living and near. The Bible is as really the product of human conviction and experience as it is of Divine inspiration. It is no less from man than it is from God. I propose, in the present series, to approach the Bible from its human side. All I shall assume is its historical genuineness. I shall not deal with critical questions. I shall not enter upon minute interpretation. I shall take each book by itself, read it carefully in its historical setting, and inquire for the main impressions which the author had in mind, and which he intended to convey; and in so doing, I am sure that we shall learn the lesson which God intended to teach. We begin with Genesis, the Book of Origins. It contains fifty chapters, and an unsurpassed wealth of material. But the material is not loosely put together. I know of no compacter writing; thirty-seven pages covering a period of nearly twenty-four hundred years. The book falls into two divisions. The first comprises eleven chapters, extending from Adam to the Call of Abraham, a period of over two thousand years; the second comprises thirty-seven chapters, extending from the Call of Abraham to the death of Joseph, a period of nearly three hundred years. The Call of Abraham is the point on which the book swings.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

It is the history of a single family with which the greater part of the book deals, and all that precedes the twelfth chapter is really of the nature of a preface. In this preface there is a studied and deliberate brevity. It gives a rapid account of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Deluge, and of the Dispersion at Babel. And of this compact story the salient features are the unity and holiness of God, the dignity and freedom of man, the nature and awful consequences of sin, the righteousness and mercy of God's moral rule. These are the great intrinsic evidences of its truthfulness. But how could Moses have known these things? The genealogical tables supply the answer. From these it appears that Adam lived to see the eighth generation of his descendants, overlapping the birth of Methuselah 243 years, and that of Lamech 56 years. To all these generations Adam had communicated the facts with which he was conversant. Methuselah lived until the very year of the Flood, overlapping the birth of Noah 600 years. After the Flood, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years, dying only two years before Abraham was born. Methuselah, Noah, Terah, these are the three links by which Adam and Abraham are joined, and through whom the primitive traditions were carried over a period of nearly 2,100 years. And with the time of Abraham we are in the period of written documents, to which Moses must have had access. But it is with the Call of Abraham that the real history of Genesis begins. Abraham is the hero throughout; and to understand him is to pierce the secret of this book. Simple, strong faith in God, whom he obeys without hesitation, is the dominant trait of his

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

character. In Jacob we come to the tragic chapter in the history of this wonderful family. And when you read the life of Joseph, it seems almost as if the innocence of Eden had been restored. Surely, to have had such a grandson as Joseph must have been reward enough for Abraham's exile. Abraham preaches faith; Isaac preaches patience; Jacob preaches the necessity and the aim of moral discipline, that piety and purity may not be severed; and Joseph preaches the beauty of holiness, and the honors that await the righteous.

---

### MISSIONARY PHILOSOPHY.

The Gospel is ours in trust for the world, and our passion for its dissemination must be world-wide. It is for the world what the Nile is to Egypt. That land was once a garden. It is now a comparative desert. What has made the change? Neglect of irrigation. The Nile is as friendly as ever; but miles of canals have been abandoned and fallen into neglect. The Gospel is a river of life. Its banks are the Christian nations. When you plant a mission at Bethseda, among the freedmen, on the Pacific Coast, in China or in Africa, you are digging a canal through which the healing stream begins to flow. We must keep in repair all that we have, and we must dig many more until the whole earth shall be covered with a network of them. Then shall the wilderness blossom with roses and echo with the voice of gladness. This is the first and the final, as it is the conclusive argument for missionary devotion. I do not say foreign missions as

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

distinguished from home missions, for in the last analysis it is all home missions. "The world is my parish," cried John Wesley. Commerce exacts tribute from every clime, and there is not a day that passes over your head when the whole world does not contribute to your comfort and security. The round earth is every man's home. And so I might reverse my plea and lay siege to your thought at the gate of self-love. You can accumulate only by giving away, by intrusting to other hands what you have. You grow poor by hoarding. Astronomers tell us that Orion responds to every pulse-beat. The universe is one, and the pebble at your feet would be shattered should the planet above you break forth from its moorings. There must be order everywhere, if there is to be order anywhere. A murder in Whitechapel alarms the world's metropolis, and sends a thrill of horror through all lands. You cannot have pandemonium in one ward and paradise in all the others. The entire city must be under control. Municipalities and states touch each other, and nations must act in concert to preserve the peace of the world and maintain their own safety. You may keep the Chinaman out if you like, by legislative enactment; but if you think that 300,000,000 of Mongolians, a fair specimen of whose race you have probably never seen, are to be kept from the world's council chamber, you are to be pitied. If the morality of the Occident cannot make its way into the Orient and subdue it, then the life of the Orient will swamp the morality of the Occident. The battle must be fought. I confess that I am not wholly unselfish in my zeal for missions. My own redemption tarries

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

until the whole earth shall have been won for Christ. That day may be hastened or hindered, and I want it hastened. I am anxious for the crown and the rest; but I must wait for the final and eternal award until the last stronghold of paganism shall have been captured. Therefore do I want to do my part, and I want you to do yours. Therefore am I anxious that we shall not lag behind the Providence of God, but occupy every post that we can command. Of the issue I have no doubt. The tide of the world's battle turned when the stone rolled away from Joseph's sepulcher. The risen Christ hurled Satan from his seat of power. It is a broken army whose columns we are pursuing, and what we need is to push the pursuit vigorously, giving the enemy no chance to recover his breath. It might be said that the churches are doing all they can. There are heroism and generous giving. But they are the exception. Of the 4,404 Congregational Churches in the country, less than 1,500 gave \$25 each last year to the American Board; 1,000 gave only \$50 each, and less than 750 gave \$100 each. Surely there is room for improvement (October, 1888). But I can reach only you. Have you done what you could? Cannot you increase your gift 30 per cent. for Christ and the world's sake? Let me say, too, that the modest gift has the promise of a blessing and the pledge of power. The pennies of the children, the dollar of the working man, the check of the rich, are all needed. They will not quarrel on the plate. They clasp hands in the bank. They will go together on their mission of healing to the ends of the earth. Do what you can; pray as you give, and give as you pray.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

[Instead of the 30 per cent. increase as suggested by Dr. Behrends, the congregation responded at the rate of an increase of 300 per cent.]

---

### HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

The noble minded man is, first of all, open to conviction. He does not assume to be omniscient. He does not claim infallibility. He is willing to learn from any one, and is ready to deal fairly with any new doctrine. But while he holds the scale with impartial hands, he has his weights, by reference to which his judgments are determined. He has his tests by which he distinguishes the true metal from its imitations. He does not bankrupt himself at every adventurer's bidding. There are things in regard to which he refuses to be drawn into debate. He is sure of them; and by them he tests the novelties that he is asked to believe. To act on any other principle would make all progress in knowledge impossible, and introduce the reign of an eternal moral chaos. Is not that the way in which we proceed in science and invention? The toilers in these departments constitute a guild, building on each other's achievements, carefully preserving and guarding each slightest advance. There is a vast amount of old-fashioned thought that we consolidate into our submarine cables, and into our bridges of steel. The new is evermore dovetailed into the old. It is only common sense as applied to religion to follow the same rule. God has at no time left Himself without witness. His character and the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

principles of His government are not a modern discovery. Even where the Bible has not been known the stars have lighted the way to His throne and conscience has interpreted His judgments. The tragic poetry of Greece is full of the soundest orthodoxy. On this bedrock of natural religion the Bible builds, assuming the existence, the omnipotence, the holiness of God, the spirituality and immortality of the human soul and the universal reign of moral law. And though there be two sections in the Christian's Bible, separated by four hundred years, they are as inseparable as are the trunk and the roots of a tree. The Bereans were right. They were open to conviction, but they had a Bible in their hands, and even Paul must prove that his new and startling message about a Risen Christ harmonized with the older revelation. And so they searched the Scriptures daily, bringing to their task both patience and critical sagacity. They avoided both superficiality and hastiness. The question is still a perplexing one to many readers. Shall I read my Bible as a Divine or as a human book? Is the doctrine of its inspiration a preliminary assumption for its right interpretation? To this we may reply that even on the most extreme conceivable theory, that of inspiration by verbal dictation, the thought of God is expressed in human language, in words that have a definite grammatical, historical and national stamp, and only through these words can the creative and inspired thought be reached. For us there is no alternative; we must pass from the human to the Divine. Our intuitions and our spiritual elevations will not relieve us from the drudgery of using

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

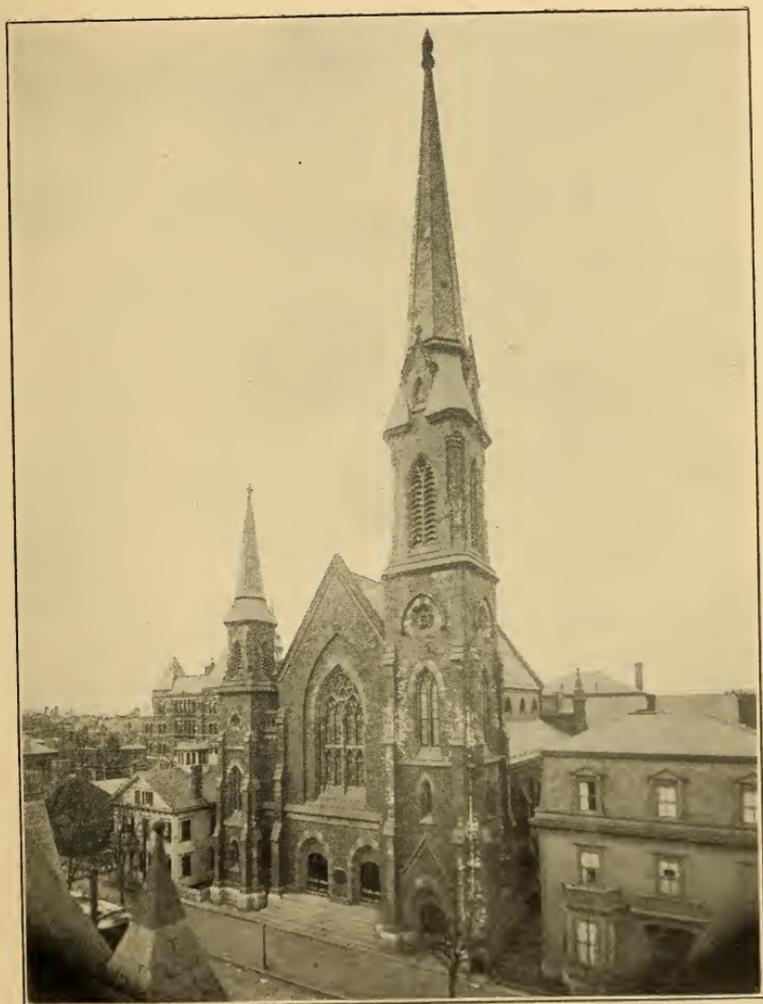
our grammars and lexicons. We must use our hammers with skill if we want to get the sweet, unbroken kernel. We ignore prepositions and conjunctions, and cases and moods, and tenses and idioms at our peril. There is no kind of painstaking labor from which we can be excused in the study of the Bible, which we do not think of avoiding when we read Aristotle, or Goethe, or Shakespeare. So that the question involves nothing practical for the work of the interpreter; the exact meaning of the human words is the portal, for us, to the exact thought of God.

---

### THE NAME OF JEHOVAH.

That single word, Jehovah, on David's lips, was a compact, historical argument. It was as if he had said to every despondent heart: "God has proved Himself faithful to His covenant for a thousand years. Why cannot you trust Him for threescore years and ten?"

Now, that name to-day means a great deal more than it ever did. Its significance is increasing all the time. Around that thought of Jehovah there gathers to-day the additional testimony of three thousand years. For it was not a speculative, an unknown and hidden God before whom this old Hebrew stood when he said: "Be dumb before Jehovah." But it was the incarnate God; that is to say, the Deity embodied in all the history of a millennium. You and I have four millenniums instead of one, by which to secure support of our faith and inspiration, to our patience and hope. For four thousand years God has vindicated



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO  
(Dr. Behrends' Second Pastorate)



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Himself in His character as Jehovah, a covenant-keeping God. You know how, after David's time, Israel seemed to be in danger of being ground to powder between the millstones of Eastern and Western aggression. You know how it was only the voice of prophecy that kept alive hope in the hearts of a despised and captive people. You know how at last the fierce legions of Rome trampled Jerusalem into dust; but not until the foundations of a greater and more imposing commonwealth had been laid in all the great cities of the Roman Empire. You and I must add the triumphs of the Gospel through these eighteen centuries to the associations which clustered around that ancient name in the thought of every pious Israelite; and on that account the historical argument is, for us, all the more impressive. We may say, "If God has been faithful to His pledges for four thousand years, why cannot you trust Him for threescore years and ten?" Behold, how marvelous His ways have been! Think of it! Nearly six hundred years intervened between the promise that God made to Abraham, "This land I will give unto thee to be thine heritage forever," and the day when Israel, with flying banners, and marching behind the ark of Jehovah, forded the Jordan, and the walls of Jericho fell! How many times their hearts must have been despondent! But a thousand years in the sight of God are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years. This is the great argument, compacted into this single word: "Be mute before Jehovah." It is not an unintelligent silence. It is a silence which grows out of a vision that is broad and deep; out of a faith that feels itself stand-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ing upon foundations that cannot be removed. I need hardly remind you with what satisfaction your pastor has traced this great argument in showing that the divine origin of Christianity is indicated by its historical effects. This is one of the great Christian evidences, ever growing in emphasis and force: for every added century does but make more impressive this great argument of God's incessant and continuous fidelity.

---

### THE SPIRIT IS WILLING BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK.

No contrast can be greater than that between Gethsemane and the upper room where Jesus celebrated the last Passover with His disciples. In the chamber He had spoken of His death with radiant face and ringing words, and in His prayer had brought the heavens near; in the garden His soul is troubled to its secret depths, and He shrinks from the cup of suffering. It was only human. This is the law of all strong emotion—from laughter to tears and from tears to laughter. You will recall Luther's entry into Worms, defiant and strong, and the sleepless night given to agonizing prayer before the immortal defense on the succeeding day. All wondered at the calmness of the monk of Wittenberg. They did not know that he had fought the battle on his knees. Even so does the agony of the garden lie between the glory of the upper chamber and the holy calm in Pilate's hall. We see a similar reaction, though on a much lower plane, in the disciples. From sundown until midnight

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

these men had endured the severest mental and emotional strain. The entire week had been full of excitement—the entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the debate with the Scribes, the treachery of Judas. Their sleep had been broken and scanty. There is no record of what was said or done during the walk from the city to the Garden of Gethsemane. The streets were deserted, and I can see the eleven with their Master walking in silence. The midnight is coming upon His spirit. Never was He so wide awake, though He could sleep in a rocking and half submerged boat. He withdraws to pray. But no sooner does His face vanish among the olive trees than the exhausted body exacts its rights from those who have been left to watch. Even Peter and John sleep. They were not heartless; they were simply tired; and though waked once, they could not keep their heavy eyes open. I cannot blame them, for Christ did not, leaving them undisturbed when He came to them the second time. It made Him sad to find that they could not watch with Him one hour; He saw and pointed out the peril to which their weakness exposed them, and urged the necessity of vigilance and prayer; but the tones of His voice must have been full of gentleness when He spoke to them as the unwilling victims of bodily infirmity. They meant to watch. They slept in spite of themselves.

The exhortation to watch and pray emphasizes the danger of yielding too readily to the ease which the body craves. The apology recognizes the fact that the body does impose limitations which no ardor of the soul can surmount. We are not to permit the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

body to have its way, and we are not to fret because we cannot transcend the limits which it imposes upon our energy. A very large part of our practical piety has to do with the proper control of the body. It can become your tyrant, and you can make it your ready and needful servant. Paul frequently speaks of the Christian as an athlete running a race, engaged in a wrestling match. Such a man, he reminds us, is temperate in all things, keeping his body under. The contrast between the spirit and the flesh enters into the framework of the great apostle's thought, and while by the flesh he frequently means the whole man under the power of sin, there lies back of this representation the idea of the body as the sphere within which sin most easily assaults the spirit. We know that this is true. Drunkenness, gluttony, lust, indolence are the vices most widespread and destructive. There are subtler sins, such as selfishness, arrogance and pride, together in fiber and more difficult of conquest, but the sins of the body lie near at hand. Their general form is that of indolence—letting the body have its way, with no care for higher interests, and no regard for the future. That is the essence of barbarism, and there is a good deal of truth in the saying that laziness is the original sin under whose curse the race has fallen.

It has surprised us sometimes how men of vigorous frame accomplish so little and how men of splendid physical energy achieve so much and live so long. The secret is in the mastery which the will secures over the body; and to that extent there is truth in the mind cure idea. There comes a time when it is better

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

for a man to jump out of bed and throw the medicines out of the window. A resolute will breaks the force of many a slight ailment, and turns the scale in more serious disease. No man can afford to ignore the fact that the body is a drowsy giant who must be always under the lash. The dead line is reached when you throw away the whip. I find it harder every year to gird myself for work with the pen, and the temptation grows to take things easy; but I mount the saddle, dig in the spurs, until the blood leaps, and then I drop my bridle in the swift and exhilarating race. The body only waits to be crowded, but crowd it you must, or its lethargy will drag you down.

You are busy men. You work at high pressure, and the world will not let you do anything else. But your plans are always larger than your achievement, and the harder you work the more there is to do. The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. You are lovers of your kind. The public good lies near your heart. The sins and the miseries of the world oppress you. If you could only have your way the earth would be a paradise at once. The spirit in you is willing. The prayer is on your lips: "Thy kingdom come." You mean it. You do all you can, perhaps, to hasten its advent. But the flesh is weak. You are not master of the situation. You cannot bring others to your way of thinking. You must bear with evils which you hate. The saloon makes you shudder when you think of its infamous history and deadly ruin, but you cannot close its door. The Sabbath desecration pains you, but you cannot stop it. Your heart bleeds when you think of the world of suffering, but you cannot

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

lift the burden. You do what you can, but your hands are tied, and your means are limited. The flesh is weak. All this is as true of me as it is of you. Every day makes me more conscious of the limitations which the body imposes. There is so much that I want to do for you and the thousands in this city that words of praise shame me, and I have no heart to review the past. I feel as if all my work were broken and partial, and the wonder to me is that anything remains. I have my ideal, but I am further from it to-day than I ever was. I long to know you as members of a household know each other. I would know your griefs and your joys, and bring close to you the ministry of courage and patience. I cannot seek you out; will you not come to me, or send for me when you think that I can do you good? I am not here to win applause; I am here to speak the great Master's words and to make life sweeter for you all. There's not one of you, from the youngest to the oldest, in whose present and eternal welfare I am not deeply interested. It is enough for me to look into your eyes, and I pray for you.

---

### THE NINETEENTH PSALM.

There is an abrupt transition in this psalm at the seventh verse, which has led some to suppose that the fragments of two poems were joined together by some unknown editor, and then credited to David. Ewald's theory is that the first six verses are a "splendid but unfinished fragment of the time of David, to

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which a later poet added the section in which the Law is praised." This is a specimen of the arbitrary methods in which the so-called "Higher Criticism" indulges, and which discredit its claims to cautious and conservative minds. The unity of a poem is not destroyed by a change in the meter, nor by a transition from description to doctrine, and that is all we have here. The first six verses are lyrical, the next five are didactic, and the concluding three are devotional. It might as well be said that the psalm is composed of these fragments. Nor can I accept the more general view that two separate topics are treated in the psalm, as if the first part was devoted to the revelation which God makes of Himself in nature, while the second part sets over against this His revelation in His word: the bond of literary unity being that of contrast. It seems to me that there is a much simpler view. I am not willing to suspect an author, much less an inspired author, of looseness, in his unfolding thought, unless the evidence be very much stronger than that which this psalm supplies.

The theme of the psalm is the Law of God, as contained in promise and precept, enlightening, enriching and defending the soul. In six crisp sentences its glory is described, and these are followed by four others, dwelling with loving eagerness upon the completeness with which it provides for man's present and prospective needs. This is the heart of the psalm, beginning with the seventh and ending with the eleventh verse. If I may call this psalm a temple I should say that these verses are the main building. Leading up to it is a broad flight of steps and a double

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

row of magnificent columns, as in the Madeliene at Paris. The great theme is approached by an impressive introduction in the opening stanza of six verses. And this building is crowned by a great dome, or a lofty spire, whose lines blend and are lost in the open air, as befits a house of prayer. The great theme provokes to self-examination and confession, and is crowned with a plea that leads the soul into the presence of Him whose glory the heavens declare. The theme has its fitting preface and conclusion; the psalm thus naturally falling into these clearly related divisions.

And first as to the introduction. It is the greatness of God, from whom the law proceeds, that it is here celebrated. It is more than descriptive poetry, of which there are many specimens in ancient and modern literature, in which the charms of nature are recounted. The psalmist writes in a loftier strain. All this beauty of heaven and earth has a voice, and it is this music that fills him with wonder and delight. He tells us that what he hears is not imaginary: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament brings to light the work of His hands;" brings to light as genius is disclosed in a statue, or a cathedral, or a book. Nor is it merely here and there that nature makes known the greatness and the glory of its Maker. The revelation is universal, continuous, copious. Every day pours forth the story, as full streams flow from inexhaustible sources; and night is represented as breathing knowledge, imparting it freely and without stint. True, there is no speech, and there are no words. No lips are seen to move, no articulate sen-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tences are heard. Yet no oratory is so penetrating nor reaches so far. This line goes out into all the earth, and their unspoken words are heard in all the habitable world. It is a beautiful picture. The line is the string of a lyre or harp, and so comes to stand for the sound which the harp emits when its strings are swept by the hand. Nature is a harp, whose vibrating tones reach to the earth's boundaries, over mountains and seas, into desert and cave, through all the heights and all the depths, and wherever men go to build their homes they hear the sweet and familiar music. And that music is the glory of God. His power, His wisdom, His unchanging goodness. These home voices precede and follow us; make populous and radiant the bleakest solitude. Never are you alone; never need you lack for inspiring and profitable companionship. Conspicuous among this great company of singers and teachers is the Sun, who, as their chief, never wearies in proclaiming the greatness and glory of God. Every morning he flings aside the curtains of darkness radiant and refreshed. He is eager for the race. He leaps upon the path like a man of might, who does not know what to do with his superabundant strength. He takes no rest. He does not so much as stop to take breath in making the vast circuit from dawn to dawn, and with each daybreak he answers the call. Nothing is hidden from his heat. The mists scatter, the clouds melt away, the mountain tops grow bare, the rivers break their icy fetters, the birds wake, the Summer hastens, the harvests grow golden. We may judge the Maker by this single specimen of His handiwork. If the Sun

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is so unwearied, so prompt and rapid, so mighty, pervasive and beneficent, what must He be who made the Sun? This is the undertone; God is never weary, His resources are abundant. He moves with rapid and strong step, and nothing can resist His power, an energy which enlightens and enriches. Thus the Sun suggests the very perfections of God which His word brings into clearer prominence, and on which faith reposes.

The introduction brings us to the theme. No paraphrase of this part of the psalm is better known and more justly entitled to praise than the stanzas of Joseph Addison, which I cannot refrain from reading here:

"The spacious firmament on high,  
And all the blue ethereal sky," etc.

When David wrote this psalm there was no science worthy of the name. There was no geography, no geology, no astronomy. To us the universe is infinitely more complicated, vast and wonderful than he knew it to be, and our conception of the creative and supporting power of God ought to be proportionately clearer and more impressive. It is sometimes said that science is atheistic, that law and evolution have eliminated the idea of God. I do not believe it. On the contrary, every advance in science has deepened the spirit of reverence by disclosing the wonderful unity and unbroken order of the universe, and science is rapidly making it impossible for any thoughtful man to be an atheist in philosophy. Pierce the words, law and evolution, to the core, and you find that they

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

assume an eternal, almighty, ordering intelligence. We have mounted the steps, we have passed the threshold.

We come now to the shrine where God speaks to man, and we find that His utterance is worthy of Him, and adapted to ourselves. It is just what we might expect of Him, and it is just what we need. Here we have the supreme test of a Divine revelation. It is not miracle. It is not historical evidence. It is the intrinsic excellence of what is declared, and the power of that word upon the hearing soul. That line of thought is three thousand years old. From the knowledge which David had gained by an attentive study of himself, and of the world in which he lived, he turned to the study of the Law—the Bible in his hands, and he exhausts his vocabulary in describing its excellence, and its salutary effects. It is pure, as incapable of improvement as is the sunbeam; it is perfect, all its parts thoroughly consistent; it is sure, an eternal Amen, dealing only with indispensable truth; it is clean, enduring forever. The purest gold in unlimited abundance, cannot so enrich the soul. The dropping of honeycombs is not so sweet. There is safety in the admonition of the Divine precepts; there is great reward in their observance. You see the tribute is two-fold, from examination and from experience; just as there are two ways in which you can test the value of a gold coin, by its ring on the table and by its use in exchange. Read your Bible attentively; mark the things in it that commend themselves to you, alike in promise and precept, and then put them to the test in practical obedience. It is a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

simple and a sensible test, and a month's honest trial would kill the strongest scepticism, and change indifference into enthusiasm. When you stand on the summit of a mountain, or pace the deck of a great steamship in mid-ocean, you feel your insignificance and weakness. So, face to face with the greatness of God, in power, wisdom, holiness, and love, the psalmist is startled by his own ignorance and moral imperfection. He dares not trust his own judgment. The approval of conscience is good, but he does not rest in that. God is the only infallible judge and therefore he is anxious that God shall pronounce him innocent. Strength of will is good, nay, indispensable, in resisting temptation, but that does not make him invulnerable and infallibly secure; and therefore he asks God to keep him.

These are the three things in his earnest prayer: His inmost heart is set upon being holy in God's sight. He pleads for the Divine forgiveness, and he implores the continued almighty protection of God. He holds fast to God and asks Him never to permit him to wander from His side. So intent is he on having the Divine approval, that he wants not only his spoken words, but the murmur of his heart to be acceptable to God, whom he addresses as his Rock, unmoved and immovable, and as his Redeemer, his God, his kinsman and defender, who is pledged to maintain his cause against all enemies.

It is a great thing to have God's approval of our conduct. It is a greater thing to have God's approval of all we say, kept from all hastiness and bitterness of speech. But the greatest thing is to have a heart

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

that never vibrates to a false note, whose lowest murmur makes the face of God smile with loving approval. Ah, that prayer cuts deep! It leaves no room for self-complacency. But the peace that endures forever, and the joy that is unspeakable and unclouded come only with a purity in which the murmur of the heart answers the holiness of God. That is the redemption we need; none other can satisfy us; and the promise of God in Jesus Christ pledges its ultimate and eternal possession to every penitent and trusting heart.

---

### A CALL FOR CHURCH UNITY.

I believe there is a constant, steady and quiet pressure toward the elimination of the bounds of antagonism between denominational bodies. I have looked at this matter closely for fifteen years (December 21, 1888), and I think I judge the tendency aright. I will not live to see the differences obliterated—I don't want them obliterated if they represent principle, conscience. There can be no true fusion except on intellectual conviction. I believe, nevertheless, we have passed the point when divisions will go on increasing. I do not look for any more denominations. The pressure will go on until Christianity will crystallize into a few great booms. That sort of fusion is likely to continue. I would not be surprised to see the Presbyterians and Congregationalists falling into line soon. The differences that separate us are petty—they don't amount to anything. The love of the Master is the main fact, and on that we are agreed.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.

### THE NATIONAL COVENANT WITH THE NEGRO.

The Emancipation Proclamation was a solemn national vow, for whose faithful performance God will hold us to strict account. The Constitutional amendments are part of the organic law of the nation. They must be obeyed from Maine to Louisiana. The sooner that is plainly said and perfectly understood the better. There will be no peace until the nation keeps its compact sealed in blood. The cry of social equality has nothing to do with the matter. The nation has nothing to do with that. It is political equality upon which we must insist—a free ballot and an honest count. Gentlemen, the corruption of the franchise is the gravest danger of the hour. Bribery at the North, and intimidation at the South, must be frowned down and extirpated by the strong hand of the law, or the Man of Destiny will plant his feet, under cover of the popular demand, upon this Western Continent. When I am told that we are forcing a race conflict by preaching political equality, I answer that this is the only way of avoiding it. Intimidation and oppression will heat the coldest blood. The negro has the spelling book and you cannot tear it out of his hand. He has tasted liberty, and he will not go back to the hoe cake of slavery. He is patiently waiting for justice and he has waited long; but he will not wait forever. The only way in which a race conflict can be avoided is by keeping our promises, by dotting the South with school houses, by developing and fostering a varied industry, by stimulating intelligence, thrift and Christian morality; and in this work the white men and women of the South

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

should be foremost. All honor to that noble band, in those States, who respond to this view of the problem. Let us strengthen their hands and cheer their hearts, and let us hope that the Republican party will wisely and bravely solve that problem, until the shackles of prejudice and passion shall be smitten by the hands of reason and law, as the chains of slavery melted in the fire of war.—[Address at Union League Club, February 13, 1889.]

---

### STUDYING THE BIBLE.

There are two practical methods open to busy men. In the first place, Christianity has been in the world for more than eighteen hundred years. It may fairly claim to be a respectable institution. It has never secreted the documents of its faith. It has had an intelligent and virtuous constituency. It cannot be supposed to have been founded upon deception, and to have been maintained by fraud. The record it has made counts for something, for the tree is known by its fruit.

In the second place, common sense would suggest that the excellencies of the Bible should not be thrown overboard on the plea of difficulties or defects. To use Coleridge's illustration, would any sane man decry the Parthenon because here and there he had found a flaw in the material? To say, as Coleridge does, that the Bible is inspired only so far as it finds us may not be the best theology, but it suggests a very practical way of dealing with the Bible. If any one should

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

offer you ten tons of quartz, would you reject the gift because it contained only ten per cent. of gold? And would you deem it a waste of labor and beneath your dignity to smelt the entire mass for the sake of the precious portion? No, you would get every grain of gold out of that heap. Deal with your Bible in the same way. There are things in it that perhaps seem to you extravagant and puerile. You do not know what to make of Jonah and the whale. Does that affect the Ten Commandments? Does that destroy the value of the Book of Psalms? Does that make the Sermon on the Mount worthless? Does that detract from the matchless life of Christ? Go with the most advanced critics, multiply the flaws and the faults as you like, and it still remains that there is more gold in this one book than in all the literature of the world beside. Hold fast to that and shape your conduct by it. I have Christ's authority for saying that you are not required to do more than this, and His assurance, also, that by following this simple method the difficulties will diminish as you proceed in your reverent study. Let Coleridge give his testimony on this matter, than whom no man ever handled the Bible more freely: "This I believe by my own dear experience, that the more tranquilly an inquirer takes up the Bible as he would any other holy or ancient writings, the livelier and steadier will be his impressions of its superiority to all other books, till at length all other books, and all other knowledge, will be valuable in his eyes in proportion as they help him to a better understanding of the Bible. Difficulty after difficulty has been overcome from the time that I began to study the Scrip-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tures with free and unboding spirit, the difficulties that still remain being so few and insignificant, in my own estimation, that I have less personal interest in the question than many of those who will most dogmatically condemn me for presuming to make a question of it." That confession I can most heartily indorse, for I have found many a paragraph luminous with instruction when read in the light of its simple historical setting, and many a book to become radiant when allowed to tell its own story. For practical life, too, the principle emphasized by our Lord has its supreme value.

---

### THE NAME OF GOD.

In the mirror of history David read the vocation of man, and the mind of God as righteous and true, as long suffering and gracious, as able and willing to save. How much more clearly you and I should read and ponder that great lesson. David had a single page; we have a library at our command. We expect from our candidates for the ministry some knowledge of what is called Church History, the conflicts and triumphs of Christianity through the last eighteen hundred years. It is a history full of thrilling chapters, of wonderful preparations and deliverances, of steady and beneficent advance. We have three thousand years more to teach us than had David. And what is the burden of these thirty centuries? That freedom is man's prerogative, that intelligence is his glory, that righteousness is almighty and sovereign,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

that man is marching with steady feet toward his deliverance from every form of bondage. And man is doing all this, because such is the election of God in his behalf, because an invisible guide beckons him, because a secret voice inspires him with courage and hope, because an invisible arm supports and defends him.

Across the centuries, leaping from mountain top to mountain top, echoing through all the valleys, bounding over all the seas, heard in palaces and prisons, the terror of the wicked and the comfort of the oppressed, sound the trumpet tones of righteousness and peace. And yet men live but threescore years and ten, and with each twoscore years a generation passes away. By what and by whom are individual men linked together? By what and by whom are generations locked? By what and by whom are hostile races and nations welded into partnership? By what and by whom are the centuries made to keep step? Who beats the drum? History is more than humane; for man is under the dominion of a selfishness which, if left unchecked, would plunge the world into hopeless anarchy. History is divine and discloses the excellency of God's name, who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and overthrows the conspiracies of the wicked; who is true, and righteous, and patient, and full of thoughts of blessing. With tenfold emphasis may we exclaim: "Trust in God, O, ye saints, at all times, and do not turn into folly." For God is the universal and infallible Judge, and they that obey His voice shall have abundant cause to praise the excellency of His name.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

It was with great difficulty that the church came to grasp the thought that there must be a conquest of the whole world for Christ before He should come into glory. She did not dream of worldly empire until Rome fell before the Goth and the bishop was invested with political influence. The conversion of Constantine suggested a new policy and gave a new outlook. Missionary enthusiasm rose to the highest point. The cross was planted in France, Germany and England. Europe became nominally Christian, and in the crusades the crescent was to be driven from Constantinople and Jerusalem. The motive was a good one: the means used to secure it were bad. The world was to be conquered by the sword, not by the Gospel of Christ. The bishops were to become princes, and the Pope universal emperor. Luther shattered the plan. Men came to see that this plan of empire was not of God, and that the conquest of the world must be by moral forces and for righteousness. By the foolishness of preaching men are to be saved, and nations to be reformed, and the earth to be made a paradise. It is a project of overwhelming magnitude. It requires heroic faith and unlimited patience. To many good men, even in our day, it seems chimerical and unwarranted, either by Scripture, or reason, or history. With scores and hundreds of devoted men the mission of the Church appears to be the saving of individual souls, not the regeneration of human society; and the old longing beats in many a heart—the advent of Christ to end the present conflict. But what saith He

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

who sitteth on the throne? Hear it, my brethren: "Behold, I make all things new!" Not "will make," but "make;" not the future, but the present tense. He is doing it now. The regenerating influences are at work; just as the Summer night works in the sheeted earth and through the leafless forests. The undying, victorious life is throbbing in the pulses of history. Old things are everywhere passing away; all things are becoming new; and the point of departure is that first glorious Easter morning. The power that rent the grave has come to stay, and it will redeem the world. The Church of Christ is called to empire by the preaching of the Gospel. What an enlargement this gives to your work and mine, and what an argument it is to patience and endurance. We preach and teach, we plant churches and schools, not simply that men may be prepared for death and heaven, but equipped for intelligent service and for aggressive work, until every community shall be made radiant in the garments of Christian holiness. All things are to be made new. The process is going on under our own eyes, and we may have a part in it.

I summon you on this glad day to send the light of this Gospel into all the earth, into all climes, and to all races. Send it into China, into Japan, into India, into Africa. Send it, with all possible speed, into every corner of the American republic, into new lands that are opening to eager emigrants, into the older regions just waking from the slumber of a century, into the great plains, where a newly emancipated race is just beginning to become conscious of the responsibilities of manhood and citizenship. The push of Christian

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

civilization has been toward the setting sun: from Jerusalem to Corinth, to Rome, to London, to the North American Continent, and from the Golden Gate it must leap into Japan and China, until the magic circle is completed and Jerusalem welcomes her long-discarded prophet.

This plan of campaign involves two things, aggressive advance, and consolidation of resources. We must throw out our picket lines, seizing the strategic points, gaining a foothold in every land, while the main army steadily advances to complete the conquest and to guard against reverses. No enemies must be left to create mutiny and to foster the spirit of rebellion. Nations must be thoroughly Christianized as well as individuals; welded into common sympathies and aims. Much remains to be done in that direction in our own country. The North and the South must become one by the diffusion of intelligence, by the elimination of race prejudice, by the power of religion that shall master the judgment and mold the character. Foreign missions are in the hands of the Church filled with gifts for all the world; home missions are the muscles of the arm by which the hands are moved. We must make the muscles of our American Christianity strong and supple, moving in obedience to a common will, if we are to do the best for the world. Every intelligent observer knows that we are still in our formative period. Twenty-four hours carry you from one type of civilization to another. New England and Western North Carolina are centuries apart. Massachusetts and Mississippi seem to have little in common.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

The better day is coming, and there are three things that are hastening it: the railroad, the school and the Church.

---

### THE LAW OF WORK INTERPRETED.

Life has never been a play. The law of work has always been exacting. It has always been hard to make both ends meet. Sickness and death have shrouded every age. But granting even that matters have been steadily going from bad to worse, granting that the past embodies all that is excellent, how can that be any help to me? When a man is caught in the whirlpool, it is poor comfort to shout to him that a mile above the stream is perfectly smooth. When a ship is helplessly tossing in the storm and rapidly filling with water, how much good would it do to tell the passengers that yesterday the ocean was radiant and calm? Go to work at the pumps. Keep your tongues still and your hands busy. That is the sharp advice you would give. The time of danger is not the hour for speculation and sighing. This is the temper of the ancient and anonymous preacher when he says, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." He answers the question as our Lord replied to the disciples when they asked, "Are there few that be saved?" In plain English the answer is this: "That is none of your business; do the best you can to save your own soul and to help your fellow-men." I think this man had found out that the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

debate between optimism and pessimism is one that can never be settled; the conclusion would not furnish us one iota of relief. For if the world is getting better it is only because heroic men and women, under God's blessing, are uprooting its evils; and if the world is growing worse every day, it relieves no true man from the duty of holding his ground as long as he can. If the devil is retreating, it is because the bayonets are gleaming in his face; if he is advancing, every inch of his progress must be stubbornly resisted. In any case, cowardice and inaction are inexcusable and criminal. "Face to the front and to the foe," is the order that sweeps along the lines. Now that the Centennial celebrations are over (May 5, 1889), it may be well for us to heed this sober advice. The law of reaction is always at work in periods of great excitement. The shout of the many provokes the sigh of the few, and the few are not altogether in the wrong, however their silence and reserve may annoy us. Our eulogy is apt to become extravagant, and the dead are clothed with virtues which they never possessed, and credited with a sagacity which did not belong to them. When we come to know them better, we find that they were men of like passions with ourselves, that they builded better than they knew, and that the secret of their greatness was an incorruptible devotion to present duty. And so it happens that when eulogy transcends its sober bounds, the contrast between the past and the present is sharpened, and some turn the tribute of praise into a scathing indictment of the present. The shadows are always deepest where the light is most intense. The gleam of the electric arc above

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

traces every twig and leaf of tree in sharpest outline and deepest black upon the sidewalk. The pessimistic philosophy ignores the fact of Divine providence and the kingship of Jesus Christ. There is a Divine order in human history, and that order is never broken. God's thought moves on with resistless might and in ever widening circles. And that thought is one of Redemption. The burdens are to be lifted. The shackles are to fall. The oppressed are to go free. As our City's motto has it: "Right makes might." There may be a Bull Run at the beginning, but there will be an Appomattox at the end. And what a jubilee that will be when the Incarnate Son of God leads His blood-washed and triumphant army through the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

---

### CHRIST'S LIFE NOT A DREAM.

In the case of Christ, the conclusion of the First Century is the conclusion of the Nineteenth. That First Century was marked for the intellectual activity of its Christian communities. Within thirty-five years the whole of the New Testament had been produced. The facts of Christ's life had been collated. His teachings had been weighed and compared with those of the Old Testament. His character and mission had been analyzed, and in his old age John sums up the universal judgment that the son of Mary was none other than the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, the Eternal Word made Flesh. The force of that conviction may be measured when we remem-

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

ber that the first heresies called in question the reality of Christ's humanity, but not of His deity. The evidence of His Godhead was so overwhelming in that early time that men found it difficult to believe in His manhood. The doctrine of the incarnation was not the invention of a later time. It was not of legendary growth, but entered into the primitive apostolic creed, and it has ever since remained the great fundamental confession of Christian believers. There are many doctrinal questions on which I am not disposed to catechise applicants for church fellowship. But there is one point on which I am always anxious to secure the plainest evidence and confession, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is God over all, and that He is entitled to the same honor and worship with the Father. Take away the God-man and Christianity crumbles into a mass of hopeless ruins. And yet, this is an amazing affirmation, the most awful blasphemy if it be not strictly true, and one which no man should make without clear knowledge of the grounds on which it rests. Now, we affirm it, because the New Testament plainly teaches it.

But how did the writers of the New Testament reach their conviction? Must we depend simply upon their testimony, or can we examine the original evidence by whose study their faith was produced? Here it is instructive to discover that they have not only registered the conclusion, but have shown us how they reached it. John tells us how he and others became convinced that He who was born in Bethlehem and crucified on Calvary was none other than the Eternal and Only Son of God. They beheld His glory "full

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of grace and truth." The clause is interpretive. The Divine glory in Christ was revealed in the fact that He was full of grace and full of truth, that absolute veracity and absolute unselfishness constituted the basic and dominant qualities of His character. Their attention was fixed upon what He was, and not primarily upon what He said or did. They were impressed by His miracles; they were more impressed by His teachings; they were most impressed by His personal character, by His singular truthfulness and self-forgetfulness. Now, this moral uniqueness and pre-eminence of Christ is as potent to-day as it ever was. Public thought in our day has become intolerant of any language reflecting in the slightest degree upon the personal integrity and purity of Christ. The church finds many severe critics, the Bible is handled without gloves and freely discredited in part, but no man who values his reputation for honesty ventures to cast reproach upon Christ. The public would turn their backs upon such a man as they would hiss any one who should traduce George Washington. And for the very same reason, that history has rendered its verdict. Theories of imposture, of enthusiasm, of political ambition, have had their day. They have been discredited and discarded. The last word in the long debate has been spoken, and there is none bold enough to call in question the unblemished personal character and the unselfish devotion of the prophet of Nazareth.

But you will say, granting all this, how does this concession conduct to the startling conclusion that this man was God manifest in the flesh? By a very brief and direct path. If Jesus Christ was full of truth

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

He could not have been self-deceived, and He could not have made false claims. If we believe in Him, we must also believe Him. And if He was full of grace, thoroughly unselfish in His temper, He cannot be suspected of having been ambitious to secure a recognition to which He was not entitled. There is only one way of evading the force of his personal testimony as to who and what He was, without impeaching His personal integrity, and that is by discrediting the gospels by maintaining that they are romances, not histories; that the words of Christ therein reported are words which later writers have attributed to Him, and not such as He actually uttered. But the idea utterly breaks down when it is remembered that the gospels were written under the full blaze of a generation that was familiar with the facts.

---

### THE DOUBTING APOSTLE.

Thomas has passed into Christian history as the doubting apostle. His scepticism concerning the resurrection of Christ has produced and perpetuated an unfavorable judgment of his character. We know very little of him, but there are three brief references to him in the fourth gospel which show him to have been a man of sincere intentions, of strong attachments, disposed to look at the dark side of things, and extremely slow and cautious in his mental processes. When Jesus, having predicted His impending death, answered the call from the bereaved household at Bethany, Thomas said: "Let us also go, that we die

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

with Him." This was the language of determination and despondency. When, on the night of His betrayal, and after the institution of the Holy Supper, our Lord said to His disciples, "Whither I go, ye know; and the way ye know," Thomas answered: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" His perplexity was profound. He could understand neither Christ's object nor His method; neither what He had in mind, nor how He proposed to secure it. And when not only death came, but death by crucifixion, Thomas was completely dazed. It was all dark to him. He brooded in solitude. He kept away from his former associates. He paid no attention to the reports of the women. The testimony of the ten he dismissed as incredible. What! Had not the side of Christ's body been pierced by the soldier's spear, water and blood flowing from the wound, proving beyond all possible doubt that the heart had been reached by the deadly thrust? The Master was dead, and he, for one, would not believe that He had risen unless he could touch the nail-prints and lay his hand in the mortal gash. Bitterly had he been disappointed, and he would not permit himself to be deceived again, and cherish a wild delusion.

---

### CHRIST'S METHOD WITH THOMAS.

Our Lord's treatment of Thomas shows that He appreciated his honest perplexity, and that He did not regard his hesitation as wilful and wicked obstinacy. There was an honest soul and an ardent heart within

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

this man whom it was so hard to convince. Convinced he was, and Augustine rightly interpreted the scene when he said: "Thomas doubted in order that we may not doubt;" that is, his prompt and joyful assent makes it certain that the resurrection of Christ is not a fancy, but a fact. He performed a most valuable service at a critical time. Had he been quietly ignored, or held up to reprobation as obstinate and discourteous, we should find it extremely hard to accept what he had refused to believe. It is a stupendous fact which we are summoned to believe, which every Easter brings to the front, which every Christian Sabbath commemorates; and it is well for us to review the historical evidence upon which it rests.

---

### THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION.

Whatever may be true of other features of Christianity, the primary evidence that Christ rose from the dead must be similar to that which warrants our believing in the voyage of the *Mayflower*, and the settlement of the Plymouth Colony.

Now, the first thing to be considered is the fact that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a recent invention. It can be traced back more than 1800 years. It lies like a belt of light across many centuries. It survived the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of Rome. It ruled through all the ages of mediæval anarchy. It was carved upon the tombs, wrought into creeds, embodied in song, chiseled and built into the cathedrals. It has been incessantly challenged, but has

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

refused to succumb. It has been the faith of the Greek, the Roman, the Celt, the Goth, the Slav, the Saxon. There is something wonderful in this pertinacity of conviction, maintained simply by an appeal to evidences, in the face of the fiercest criticism among the most advanced races. The path of these centuries is crowded with the ruins of empires, of ambitions, of philosophies, of wierd experiments, of fanciful adventures. But with every Easter the great church of God, merging all its minor differences of creed and ritual, rises in her might and proclaims with joyful assurance her unshaken faith in her Risen Lord. Is it all a dream? Then, why has it not long since been dissipated and discredited? Can you point to a single instance where delusion has not speedily collapsed under exposure? Who cares now for the false Decretals? Who believes in the Maelstrom? Who troubles himself about witchcraft? But we still stand on the open grave with uncovered head and exultant heart. Eliminate physical miracle and you cannot get rid of this historical miracle—this deathless vitality of our stupendous confession.

Remember, too, that the origin of this faith requires explanation. It is not enough to deny it. Possession is nine points in the law, and though a hundred men should call in question your right to live in your house, you would shut the door upon them, the burden of proof. They must invalidate your title, and the evidence must be conclusive. Christianity is in possession, and he who denies its central testimony must show how and by whom the falsehood was originated. There is no longer any doubt that from the very first

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Christians believed that Christ had risen from the dead, and that this was the prime article of their faith. How came they to believe it? Pliny's letter to Trojan shows conclusively that by the year 100 the Lord's day was widely observed; songs and prayers were offered to Christ as God, and the communion was celebrated, while the pagan temples were deserted; while the matter was serious enough to lead to a correspondence between the Governor and the Emperor. And of those whom Pliny had examined, some had been Christians for twenty years. Against that rock every mythical and legendary theory has been shattered. It is an unheard of thing. Would it be easy to create such a faith to-day? Would you believe the story of Abraham Lincoln's resurrection? And can you imagine that such a report would continue to be believed for a single generation? But the fact is undeniable that the Christians of the First Century did believe in the resurrection of Jesus, maintaining their testimony against all the world, and compelling, at least, the homage of the proudest court that ever ruled Europe. Nor is this all.

We are on confessedly historical ground when we pass from Pliny to Paul, when we read Galatians, Romans and Corinthians. The first of these epistles was written in the year 52, and the second chapter contains the plain statement that more than fourteen years had elapsed since the author had become a Christian convert. This brings us to the year 38, within half a dozen years of Christ's death. Not only are these epistles full of declarations that Jesus rose from the dead, but Paul makes that fact the corner

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

stone of his preaching, and shows that it was infallibly attested and universally believed. You know Paul's lineage, his educational advantage, his early prominence, his burning zeal in persecuting the church. The critics confess that they do not know what to make of him; that his conversion is incapable of "psychological explanation." It is incredible that he should have been deluded or deliberately given credence to what he knew to be a lie. That he was familiar with all the facts, had carefully examined all the available evidence, and had acted under the impulse of an irresistible conviction of its truth, is plain from the opening verses of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The man bears the stamp of a high order of intelligence. His character is beyond reproach, and his public ministry is the embodiment of unwearied activity and of unselfish devotion. It will be hard to make men believe that he lived and died the victim of an awful delusion.

---

### VIGILANCE INDISPENSABLE TO MORAL SAFETY.

Vigilance is indispensable to moral safety. No doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, no theory that regeneration carries with it the infallible certainty of final and eternal blessedness, should be permitted to blind us to this solemn truth. So long as our mortal life endures, and for aught I know, forever, we must take heed to our steps; for whatever added security the future may bring, it can never encourage inattention and carelessness. You know the differ-

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

ence between walking in the open light of day and in the midnight gloom, or with bandaged eyes. The blind are easily tripped. The darkness bewilders you. And what eyes and light are to the feet, vigilance is to moral safety. But whom, or what, shall I watch? There was only one antagonist whom Paul feared, and upon whom he fixed his vigilant eye—himself. He was afraid of nothing else. He was not afraid of God, nor of the devil, nor of men. He felt that the sources of moral danger were in himself, not outside of him; and the mastery of that lesson is of the utmost importance. Toward God, the only rational attitude is that of unqualified and habitual confidence. No shadow of doubt rests upon the unspeakable love of Christ. Paul's deepest persuasion was that not even "any other creature" or "creation" could separate him from the love of God. This is the bedrock of truth. Upon this the pillars of eternal government rest. No tremor comes to this foundation. You need not watch God. Trust Him. He seeks only your good, and the good of all men. That assurance makes luminous and radiant every page of the Bible; and I am free to say that so clearly fibered upon my mental life is this conviction, that if you could persuade me that the Scriptures limit this infinite love for men by a decree of unconditional election, I would throw my Bible into the sea. But God loves the world, and that weaves a crown of light around every infant brow. God is to be fearlessly and joyfully trusted. I have little interest in the debate about a continued probation, because I am sure that the Father of all souls will deal gently and impartially with each. God is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the object of trust, not of vigilance. Shall we watch the devil? Some tell us that there is no such being; that the word Satan does not represent a personal evil spirit, but is the personification of evil. Paul believed in a personal devil, and so do I. But the time spent in watching the devil is worse than wasted. The best thing to do is to ignore him; for the pierced hand of Christ has broken the scepter of Satanic power, and hurled the prince of darkness from his throne.

Nor are our fellowmen the proper subjects of that vigilance which is enjoined. We are too much given, I fear, to watching our neighbors, for purposes either of criticism or of imitation. We judge men by what appears upon the surface, and nothing is easier than the cultivation of a misanthropic temper. Our vigilance makes us suspicious, until we are in danger of regarding all men as rogues and unworthy of generous confidence. But how scanty is our knowledge of man at the best. Did we but understand their intentions, their ungrained infirmities, the terrific fight which they have with their surroundings, the burdens which crush and embitter them, we would often pity and pray where we are tempted to condemn and curse. It is better and much more reasonable to suspend judgment, to be slow to anger, and reserved in speech, to think as well of our neighbors as we can, counting all to be for us who are not openly against us. And surely the vigilance which makes the judgment of another the rule of conduct is the badge of moral slavery and the surrender of moral independence. In a recent debate on hypnotism, which is only a new name for mesmerism, there was universal agree-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ment that they who permitted themselves to be experimented upon suffered serious and certain injury, physical and mental, resulting in degeneracy of nervous tissue and in the loss of will power. Thirty years ago, in my early college days, I took that ground among my classmates, and was laughed at. But I held then, and I hold now, that the man who surrenders himself, body and soul, to another's will, abdicates his manhood, and commits moral suicide. God alone has the right to rule you, and to prescribe the rule of your conduct. Your safety lies in exclusive loyalty to Him, in seeking His guidance, and His alone. When a great and grave crisis confronts you, it is best to court solitude. Abraham did this when he was commanded to leave Chaldea, and again when he was ordered to sacrifice Isaac. Moses did this when he spent forty days on Mount Sinai. Our Lord did this when he retired into the wilderness. Paul did this when he sought refuge in Arabia. Live face to face with your own conscience in the light of God. It is rarely that a thoroughly honest man will be mistaken in his moral perceptions and decisions, and I would give more for an hour's sincere and earnest cross-questioning of self than for a year of parliamentary debate. And so I come back to this, that the only proper object of vigilance is yourself. There is nothing else to be afraid of. The sources of moral danger are in you, not outside of you.

---

### CHRISTIAN UNITY.

At the services for the installation of the Rev. James M. Farrar, D.D., as pastor of the First Reformed Church in Brooklyn, the Rev. A. J. F. Behrends,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

D.D., preached the sermon (Thursday evening, September 26, 1890), his text being Ephesians iii: 15 and 16. Here is a portion of the discourse:

I know not how it may be with others, but this I do know, that with myself, as the years pass, such utterances as this in the Bible, which outline the duties of the followers of Christ, impress me more and more powerfully and pathetically. Perhaps the reason of this is to be found in my own religious history, which was peculiar. My father was a German and a minister of the Lutheran Church. My mother had the purest of Dutch blood in her veins, and I myself was born in Holland. I was baptized at the hands of a Dutch minister, and was carefully trained in the Heidelberg catechism. As was the custom in the Lutheran Church, at 14 years of age I was confirmed. However, I was a Christian only in mental conviction. My head was in alliance with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, but my heart had not been touched. It was thirty years ago, but I remember distinctly the conversation that occurred between my father and myself relative to my entering the ministry. My father desired that I should become a minister of the gospel, even as he was himself, and he asked me to acquaint him with my decision to study for that profession as early as I could. After weeks of thoughtful meditation, I cannot say prayerful, I told him that I had to decline to accede to his wishes. On being asked why, I remember that I replied that it was my conviction that an aspirant for the ministry should be quite sure that the spirit of God calls him to devote himself specially to that pur-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

pose. He made no answer, nor even ever again reverted to the subject.

When I left home and was thrown upon my own resources I had no love in my heart for my God, though I scrupulously kept the Sabbath, though I avoided and resisted the temptations that beset youth away from the restraints of home, and though I never ceased to bend my knee before my bed, and say the prayer that my then already sainted mother had taught me. It was a Methodist circuit rider, in one of the Southern States, who made me feel broken, and when in consequence the question of associating myself with some church came up, I drifted from the Lutheran, in which I was confirmed, and the Dutch, in which I was baptized, into the Baptist. About fifteen years ago, without even endeavoring to outline the intellectual struggle it cost me, I drifted into the fellowship of the Congregational Church. Now I hardly know where I belong, and do not know that I care. I have found the truth in all these churches. I have found the love of the Master in them all, and hearty consecration to His work. Perhaps, as I have already intimated, it is because of this peculiar religious history of mine, that such passages concerning unity among Christians make such an impression on me. The apostle's frequent exhortations to unity betray the fact that the church was not then one and undivided, wherefore the tendency to religious division is not of modern origin. The traces of that kind of division, indeed, are on every page of history. There are a good many to whom doctrinal divisions are matters of serious regret or criticism. If they do not go so far they

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

do insist that the church of to-day has sadly apostatized from the church of the first century. These divisions do not discredit the Christianity of the present time, for they existed in the beginning. They do not, therefore, prove an apostasy. There were divisions in it because the church was organized around a person, and not built upon a creed, because the heart of a Christian religion is personal fealty to a Lord and Master, and not to the teachings of any school, however august it may be, whether Wesleyan or Augustinian or else. Diversity of intellectual apprehension is inevitable and never could be otherwise. The subject, moreover, is too great for us, and there will be diversities in interpreting it just as long as men are finite, just as long as man is controlled by his mental apprehension and not by his emotional. Moreover, the subject is too great and profound. It is our duty to cultivate the temper of mutual tolerance. It need not disturb the ministry. I would not be happy in a church where everything I said was believed. Rather would I infinitely prefer that my every utterance were tested by the Word of God. If the apostles were not discouraged by earnest debate there are no reasons why we should be discouraged. We are one in the Master whom we serve. It is only ritual questions which divide us, questions about whether or no we shall have bishops or presbyteries, or whether we shall make the church rule itself without any power of appeal anywhere: whether we shall baptize children, or make faith precede baptism. They are merely questions of government, and I am ashamed that they should cause such a din of controversy. It

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is the spirit of God that is necessary. God looketh upon the heart. These things do not differentiate us in His sight. It is a lesson which every minister needs not only to have, but to exercise himself in continually, that the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers is an actual and mighty fact; therefore they should never attempt to lord it, but to endeavor to do good. To sit at the feet of Christ is a minister's safety. To sit at the feet of Christ is a church's hope.

---

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF PREACHING.

Logically, future probation is the necessary conclusion of the New England Calvinistic theology; and a rejection of the conclusion involves a radical reconstruction of the Calvinistic system. That reconstruction is going on, and it will, before long, give us a different theory of missions from that which was current one hundred years ago.

For myself, as you well know, I do not plead for missions at home or abroad, on the ground of getting men into heaven, or keeping them out of hell. Be my philosophy of preaching right or wrong, it is my own, wrought out in anguish of spirit through a ministry of more than twenty-five years (October 19, 1890). I do not regard it as my vocation to anticipate the retributive judgment of God, nor to lay a foundation for its exercise. I believe the preacher's calling to be a special and a limited one—to bring men to Christ here and now—to deal with the living, not with the dead—to make a conquest of the earth for righteousness. It is this globe which we are to conquer

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

until the habitations of cruelty shall be made radiant in the purity and the peace of Jesus Christ. That is our task, our great and only one. From this point of view all speculations about the intermediate state and continued probation are out of place and superfluous. I believe in heaven and hell, though I do not in any doctrine of election which limits the universal and impartial and infinite love of God for all men. I believe that the Bible teaches that Christ died for all men, and that all men, without exception, are under grace, and they are under law. There my Bible leaves the matter, and there I rest. He who shall judge all men at the last day is He who died for them on the cross; and His decision, I am sure, will be tender and true, breaking no bruised reed, quenching no smoking flax. That is His eternal, uncommunicated secret, and I leave it with Him. Our task is more simple and direct, to make this present world what it ought to be, what it may be made by the obedience of Christ, what it must and will become before the great white throne casts its blinding splendors over heaven and earth.

---

### THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

Progress always means more than advance. It is advance joined with living continuity. As the roots of a plant are indispensable to its existence, so is our connection with the past necessary to our spiritual existence and growth. No Christian can cut loose from the Holy Catholic Church. We ought to rejoice in communing with the saints. You know that this

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

is an age of unsettlement everywhere. Men tell us all is wrong, and that the only hope is to pull down the existing structure of society. This, too, they say, is necessary to the church. Sweeping destruction is their aim. Chaos would be the result. We are not anarchists, either in political economy or in theology. We believe in slow progress in the past, and so in the future. These are not things to be scorned or scoffed at. We believe that there was wisdom in men of the past. I am not one who is ashamed to stick to the ancient landmarks, the liturgy and the creed, which the church has used. They have served as a bridge for millions in the past, and for enormous burdens; certainly they will bear my weight. The love of Christ and the religion of the Bible are not of recent discovery. They are not untried. They have served all the saints. Enoch, Elijah, Luther, and Calvin, found their safety in them. Let us hold fast to that treasure, and see to it that no one can ever take them from us. Let not a spirit of intellectual and spiritual isolation prevail, but let there be full concord and harmony in your work. The Scriptures are never rightly understood until they transform us. The results are not specific, but vital and practical. They constrain, and at the same time impel us ever onward. We must be filled with the fullness of God's love.

Now, we never can equal God in everything. Let us not, then, sink back, and in the spirit of Herbert Spencer say that the ultimate ground can never be found out. Let us make the attempt at least. God surpasses us, and ever will in eternity, in omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and infinity; but then

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

there is a possibility of sharing some of the communing attributes of God. We can be like Him in veracity, patience, peace, righteousness and compassion. We can be like Him in holiness, in the white light of His moral excellence. We can be filled with the moral excellence of God. We can be like Him in righteousness and peace. We can be like Him in justice, as the dewdrop that hangs on the blade of grass is like the boundless ocean whence it was distilled. Christian excellence is worth nothing unless it results in crystallization of character. No ecstasy of religion counts for anything unless in crystallization of character, in greater purity, devotion to duty, truth, and hatred of sin. Love of Christ is quickened in us, and makes us more and more like Him. This is the great work of the church. The church accomplishes this result, not so much by writing books and planting institutions as by rearing holy men and women. No sceptic can ever upset this work.

---

### THE SURVIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY.

There is nothing new in the charge that Christianity is a fable. From Peter's day down to our own the challenge is the same. The main attack is always upon the historical element in Christianity. Before any gospels had been written, the original witnesses were defamed and discredited. Now that they are gone, the written gospels are thrown into the crucible, and their testimony belittled. In one respect our task is a much harder one than that of the first Christians. A great gulf of more than eighteen hundred years separates us from the facts. Numerous legends and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

forged documents, apochryphal gospels, and unscrupulous interpolations add to our perplexity. It is not an easy thing to cut your way through these tangled thickets, clearing a path to the manger and the cross, and the empty grave. But it has been done, and the truth of the Christian message was never so clearly and abundantly established as it is to-day. Far removed as we are from the original facts the present situation has its compensating advantages.

Christianity has held its ground. It has not proved to be a nine days' wonder: a momentary wave of excitement, such as from time to time appears in savage tribes and civilized communities. Its history has been very different from that of the witchcraft delusion in New England, or that of the crusades in mediæval Europe. It entered the old world to stay; it dominates the Western Continent, and it is pushing its picket lines into all lands. Whatever prestige belongs to endurance belongs to the Christian faith. Driven out of Palestine, it seized Asia Minor and Northern Africa, making Antioch and Ephesus and Alexandria illustrations; driven out thence by the armies of Mahomet, it seized and fused the Latin and Germanic races, making them the leaders of the world's civilization. Repudiated by the people among whom it first appeared, it found a welcome among men who had been very differently trained, who possessed an elaborate mythology and imposing ritual, but who surrendered their gods and their altars to faith in the crucified. If Christianity be a delusion, it is a very remarkable one by its long continuance. Possession is nine points in the law, and the Gospel is in possession.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

It is conceivable that through all these centuries the peoples who have planted schools, created science, art and literature; who have been inventors and discoverers; who have fought for liberty and secured independence from ecclesiastical dictation, who have enjoyed free speech and a free press, have been deceived, but the supposition is an extremely violent one. Delusions do not have so long a run among men who are critical in temper, and who are left free in their studies. Christianity is too old to be dismissed with a sneer; the presumption is in its favor, even on the Darwinian theory that in the struggle for existence only the fittest survive. Christianity survives.

The Christian conception of God, as the eternal, self-conscious spirit, infinite in power, wisdom, truth, holiness and goodness, is absolutely imperious to hostile criticism. Its conception of man is no less lofty, as bearing the image of God, and capable of eternal and blessed fellowship with Him. No one would think of reversing or modifying any one of the precepts of Christianity. They constitute a perfect rule of life, and no one would regard universal obedience to the Sermon on the Mount as anything but an unqualified blessing. This fact is strong presumptive evidence that Christianity is true in its historical contents, for pure and elevated doctrines are not likely to proceed from men who are engaged in concocting fables and in spreading delusions. The lie is sure to stamp itself into all their words. Where the body of doctrine is beyond all possible impeachment, the presumption is that there has been no tampering with the facts.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Christianity has not been a dead or a speculative religion. It has abounded in good works. It has never been indifferent to human weal. It has guarded the cradle, honored woman, defended the home, cared for the sick, liberated the slave, abounded in provisions for the poor, the unfortunate and the vicious. It is determined to crowd into every place. It is not baffled by apparent failures. It has a deathless love for men, and refuses to abandon them. It is pre-eminently a religion of personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, its founder, who is to be loved, obeyed and worshipped. No other religion has ventured thus to identify itself with its founder. We have not believed cunningly devised fables. The old faith comes back out of the fiery furnace, a faith which every one of us has felt ought to be true, even when our doubts have been most painful. And it is true, if there be any truth in heaven, or on earth, or in recorded history; and the truth is this, that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost, to preach the forgiveness of sins in His name, and to open for us the kingdom of heaven.

---

### PARAPHRASE OF ROMANS III:21-26.

Such, then, being the case, that under the law of holiness all men are hopelessly guilty, enslaved, and condemned, God's way of delivering men from this deplorable condition is now made known, though from the very first clear intimations have been given of it by the law itself and by the prophets, namely, by *faith*

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in *Jesus Christ*; a boon which is offered to Jew and Gentile alike, since there is no difference, for all men are sinners, and are lacking in what God prizes and approves.

We are therefore *to be justified*, if at all, regarded and treated as holy; provision is made for our deliverance from sin, we can be forgiven, renewed and made perfect in holiness, *freely*, not as something, to which we can lay claim by purely personal merit. We are beggars and bankrupts, hopelessly condemned by the law of God at the bar of our own consciences. Our only hope is in executive clemency and interposition. We are utterly dependent upon *grace*, upon the voluntary, undeserved, self-moved compassion of God. That compassion has taken form in the *redeeming act of Christ Jesus*, which redeeming act consisted in our Lord's *sacrifice of Himself unto death*, the power of which we appropriate by *simple faith*; which redeeming act God had in mind or purposed from all eternity as a means of giving force to His redeeming mercy (*propitiation*). That which has taken place in time was freely determined from everlasting. But God's eternal way of dealing with men, and saving them from sin, has now been shown in *act*, it has been clearly and unanswerably made manifest. In the light of that act, giving force to God's redeeming mercy, we can now understand the riddle of God's past treatment of a wicked world, when His forbearance had the appearance of indifference to the sins of men; and in the light of this act it is also clearly seen that in saving him who believes in Jesus, God is dealing righteously.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THANKSGIVING OBSERVANCE.

How shall we keep our Thanksgiving? (1890) It is not a day of gluttony. It were better to remember the hungry and the naked than to stupefy ourselves at our overloaded tables. The French revolution was precipitated by a royal feast while thousands were clamoring for bread to keep them from starving. Our land is one of unparalleled abundance. Our plenty is such that we waste more than we use. Let us eat the fat and drink the sweet; but let us not forget the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus. When our hearts grow heedless of the poor, who are always with us, the curse of God is not far away. Let us give at least a portion to those less fortunate than we are, and our own bread will be the sweeter for our charity. Charity! I am almost sick of hearing the word. I resent the beggarly meaning with which it is invested, the condescending air with which we dole out our alms. Would you call it charity if it were your child which needed your help? And are not all men our kin, or is universal brotherhood only a phrase to be played with? I do not forget that there must be righteousness in our benevolence. We are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. And if we will eat only the bread of our own earnings it is right and proper that we should compel all others to honor that law. I have no sympathy for that modern notion that it is the business of some to take care of others. That is only another way of saying, that some men were born to rule and others to be dependents. That degrades manhood, and manhood is what the world needs. The law is a wholesome one, that if a man

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

will not work neither shall he eat; and that he who is lazy, or who spends his earnings for drink, should be left in his rags to suffer his hunger, that he may be driven out of his madness, as was the Prodigal Son. But all this should not blind us to the fact that there are worthy poor, and that even when men sink down into the gutter they are not beyond rescue. It were better for us not to have Thanksgiving days than to make them seasons of selfish personal congratulation and indulgence. They ought to be national in their outlook, and when they are such our sympathies will have the widest scope and the most generous expression, and they will become mighty advocates in fraternal helpfulness.

As the day lifts us out of our personal environment to rejoice before the Lord in a common heritage, so it summons us to lay aside all partisanship and sectionalism. This day is sacred to American patriotism, without which no party is entitled to a hearing, and which all parties are forward to profess. We rally under the Stars and Stripes, one and indivisible through all the fierce conflict of opinion, and through every form of political revolution. Thorough discussion is the safety of free institutions, and frequent changes of political responsibility, on the whole, help the cause of good government.

\* \* \* \*

You may be selfish in your patriotism, but unselfishness may make your love for the Stars and Stripes only deeper and more intense. For new as the word solidarity may be, the thing represented by it is as old as the race of man. Whether we purpose it or not,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

whether we like it or not, we are helpers one of another. I am not a patriot merely because the land of my adoption is the freest under the sun, but because this seed of freedom is destined to become the bread of a hungry world. I know that we are told that this is an age of discontent, and men are restless and uneasy, and that these things are ominous mutterings of impending earthquakes. I heard it once said that the most contented people on the earth are the Esquimaux of Greenland, who are dwarfed in body, eat blubber and live in ice huts. So are the people of Greenwood Cemetery contented, but there is no reason for making the whole world a graveyard. For myself, I love a restless age, for motion is the evidence of life. The seed is restless in its play. The boy looks with hungry eyes into the future. As the world is to-day, I do not want to see it contented. I want to see it seething and boiling, until all iniquities and wicked irregularities shall be swept away, and righteousness shall be enthroned. It is a noble gospel which this nation is preaching. It is a sublime experiment which we have undertaken, and its success cannot fail to be a blessing to all nations. Only let us not forget the earnest reminder which Moses introduced into his statute appointing the feast of tabernacles: (Deut. xvi:12) "Observe and do these statutes." Observe them. Keep your eyes open. Indifference is the bane of a free people, the unguarded gate through which despotism creeps in; and the camel's head once in the tent, the owner will be driven out. Observe then, and do! Rectitude is our impervious armor. Righteousness alone exalts a nation.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### MEANING OF THE DIVINELY INSPIRED BIBLE.

What do we mean when we say that the Bible is divinely inspired?

We mean that the writings so designated are divinely authoritative, binding upon us as an infallible rule of faith and practice. It does not follow that a man is inspired because he is a true man; it does not follow that a book is inspired because the author has been careful to give us a true account of what he believes. No liar can be inspired. No forgery can have in it the breath of God. But the opposite of these statements cannot be maintained. Inspiration is not the universal attribute of true and truthful man, nor a necessary quality of the truth-telling books. True men have been false guides, as Coleridge said long ago: "I believe a Unitarian may be a Christian, but I am sure that Unitarianism is not Christianity." And bad men have written books which were a true expression of their thoughts; as when Rosseau wrote his Confessions, and Thomas Paine, the Age of Reason; but no one regards these books as inspired. When we say that the Bible is inspired, we mean something more than that its books were written by honest men, who have told us what they believed. We mean that the breath of God pervades these writings; that through them the infallible authority of God is conveyed to us; that the message which these men delivered was given them of God; that they were the conscious subjects of a personal Divine revelation and guidance. This is the habitual claim of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the Apostles. They speak not merely as good and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

true men, but as consciously moved by the Holy Spirit; and that makes their message authoritative.

When we speak of the Bible as inspired, we mean that the Divine authority extends both to the thought conveyed and to the language in which it is found. The phrase, "verbal inspiration," is loose and indefinite. For the Latin word *verbum*, like the Greek word *logos*, means both word and discourse. It means both language in general, and separate words in particular. And the essential thing contended for in "verbal inspiration," is that the language of the Bible authoritatively conveys the thought of God. That position must be maintained in any rational and consistent doctrine of inspiration. For thought and language are inseparable. The metaphysicians have debated whether thought is possible without language; but certainly there can be no communication of thought from man to man without language; and the supreme question for us is whether the writers of the Bible have given us, in the language which they used, the thought which God gave them. We are not primarily concerned with the problem of the nature and the method of that impact of the Spirit of God upon the mind of the prophet or of the apostle by which they were put into possession of the Divine thought. The revelation was given for purposes of communication to us; and to secure the accuracy of that communication, the language was not a matter of comparative insignificance. We can get at the thought of God only by the most careful study of the language. We cannot neglect idioms, not even particles, and moods, and tenses. We must master the language of the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

prophet, in which alone he could communicate the Divine message. If I want to make my thought clear to a child, so that he can communicate it clearly to others, I must put it in the terms of that child's language, no matter how imperfect it may be. I must use the child's logic, rhetoric, and vocabulary. And when God would make His will known through a prophet, He could do it in no other way than by accommodating Himself to such mastery of language as the prophet possessed. For the aim of revelation is not the illumination of the prophet, but the communication of truth to us through the prophet; and hence the Divine superintendence must extend to, and include, the language as well as the thought. Hence the words of Scripture must be carefully and closely studied, if we want to reach the thought of God; only the separate words must not be dissected by the entymological knife-blade, but treated as the members of living discourse. And as no two men use language in exactly the same way, we must not lump the Scriptures, but carefully study the idiom and verbal peculiarities of each writer, with constant reference to his literary, social, and religious environment.

When we speak of the Bible as inspired, we mean—and it is of supreme importance to remember this—that it is infallibly authoritative for a definite purpose. Inspiration did not impart omniscience. It did not eliminate ignorance of every kind. It did not guarantee infallible authority on all subjects. It guided men only along that single and definite line where authoritative guidance was needed. It did not busy itself with genealogical registers, or chronological

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tables, or scientific theories, or an annalistic treatment of the history. It was simply intent upon making known to men the mind and will of God concerning righteousness and redemption. It was said long ago, by a Catholic theologian, when Galileo was tried for heresy: "The Scriptures do not tell us how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven." When we say that the Bible is inspired, has in it the breath of God, we also limit the inspiration; we simply mean that they authoritatively teach us what God is, what God has done to save us, and what we must do to be saved.

---

### STATEMENT AND TREATMENT OF SCRIPTURAL DIFFERENCES.

There are many types of doctrine in the Old and New Testaments, and one of the most fruitful of modern studies has been the setting forth of these differences. There is a theology of the Pentateuch, if not several; there is a theology of the Psalms, and that, too, has its varieties; there is a theology of Hosea, of Amos, of Isaiah, of James, of Peter, of Paul, of John. It is the same precious metal held in a variety of molds. The diversity is not contradiction. The later statement does not supplant the preceding ones. It complements and crowns them, as the stalk crowns the root, as blossom and fruit crown the trunk. The variety has disclosed the deeper unity of Scripture, and the steady advance of revelation from Moses to John. Moses did not know it all, and he did not say it all. Isaiah did not know it all, and he did not say it all. Paul did not know it all, and he did not say it all. We

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

must join them all together, when we want the message in its completeness, with Christ's own words to illuminate the whole. It is just this which makes the Gospel of John, latest of all the inspired writings, of such transcendent importance, because in it we discover the depth and height of our Lord's teaching, as we do nowhere else.

Inspiration is not inconsistent with inaccuracy in statement, and with imperfection of unimportant details. There are many admitted difficulties and discrepancies of verbal statement in the Scriptures. The Ten Commandments are differently phrased in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. In many particulars the Book of Chronicles differs from the Book of Kings. The genealogies of Matthew and of Luke have never been satisfactorily harmonized. The Lord's Prayer is differently reported. The Sermon on the Mount is not verbally the same in Luke as in Matthew. The details in the different accounts of our Lord's resurrection are not capable of being perfectly harmonized in the present state of our knowledge. The discourses of our Lord as reported by John, show marked peculiarities of thought and expression, when we compare them with the discourses preserved in the earlier Gospels. No one denies these facts; no one can deny them. They are not all due to the carelessness of copyists. Some of them undoubtedly are; but many others belong to the very fiber of the Scriptural narrative. And no considerate theologian holds a doctrine of inspiration which compels him to deny these differences and discrepancies. Even those who would make the word "inerrancy" a test, a word which is found neither in the Bible nor in

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the great Protestant confessions, and cannot therefore be made a test of orthodoxy, only mean by it accuracy, the absence of positive and serious error. They freely admit difficulties and discrepancies. They deem silence wiser and more reverent than dogmatic speech. They insist, however, that the general law of Scripture is accuracy, giving us a true picture of fact and an authoritative disclosure of the mind of God.

: "Errors and inaccuracies," says Van Oosterzee, "in matters of subordinate importance are undoubtedly to be found in the Bible. A Luther, a Calvin, a Coecejus, among the older theologians; a Tholuck, a Neander, a Lange, a Stier, among the more modern ones, have admitted this without hesitation. But this proves absolutely nothing against the trustworthy authority of the Word of God, where it is speaking of the Way of Salvation." Dr. Henry B. Smith, speaking of those who have maintained that all the contents of the Bible were dictated word for word, and syllable by syllable, adds: "This theory has now scarcely any advocates. It has to be explained so as to be consistent with different reports of the same sayings, and with different details of the same facts, and with different citations of the same passage; and after it has been subjected to these modifications, it is no longer a commanding theory." And Dr. Charles Hodge writes: "The errors in matters of fact which sceptics search out bear no proportion to the whole. No sane man would deny that the Parthenon was built of marble, even if here and there a speck of sandstone should be detected in its structure. Not less unreasonable is it to deny the inspiration of such a book as the Bible, be-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

cause one sacred writer says that on a given occasion twenty-four, and another says twenty-three, thousand men were slain. Surely, a Christian may be allowed to tread such objections under his feet." To which it is proper to add that a reverent student of the Bible must so frame his doctrine of inspiration as to leave room for such differences as Dr. Hodge instances, and for many others which are not so easily explained. We may rest assured that the plenary authority of the Bible will not suffer by dealing with it honestly and fearlessly. There is some justification for impatience with those who spend all their time and energy in picking flaws, in pointing out and magnifying the specks of sandstone in the temple of God's truth; but neither should a speck of sandstone be ignored and labeled by some other name. The great evangelical contention is that the Holy Scriptures are authoritative and binding in their essential contents, in what they teach of righteousness, and redemption, and the kingdom of God.

---

### THE CONSTRAINING LOVE OF CHRIST.

There is work for us to do, as well as burdens to bear. It is often discouraging. We look with longing eyes for the harvest. We wonder whether we are not spending our strength in vain. There is but one motive which can supply us with needed strength and tenacity—the love of Christ for men. Solicitude for their personal safety, here and hereafter, is something which cannot be for any one of us an habitual and conscious incentive. We should be raving maniacs in a month. More legitimate is the motive which

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

springs from the love of righteousness. But that takes the form of duty rather than of inspiration. It gives no wings to endeavor. Higher and mightier still is love for our Saviour. But love in us is not self-fed and self-moved. It is subject to many fluctuations. It has flood and ebb, and the tide must come in every day. Ah! That is what the church needs, the tide, the baptism of the spirit, the vision of Christ's love for the world, whenever the trumpet calls to service, though the path lies through the death shades. The love of Christ must constrain us. For in that love there is an intensity, a universality, a tenacity, a wealth of resources and appliances which will impart to us a holy and undying enthusiasm. Whether we think of the heathen abroad, or of the heathen who throng our own streets, we shall go with winged feet and with an indomitable assurance of ultimate success, if we make Christ's love our theme and inspiration. By that sign we conquer, mastering our fears and doubts, perpetually refreshed for service, anticipating the glory of the hastening triumph, and facing death with banners unfurled, and with the spirit of victory upon our lips.

I am standing at the gate of a palace. There are no grim sentinels to crowd me back. I am weary, hungry, homeless. The night has settled down upon me, and in the fierce North the tempest is gathering. Food and rest and safety are within sight, but I dare not claim them: for my longing and my need are no assurance that I would be welcome. I feast my eyes upon the light, upon the tables spread with generous abundance, and upon the guests whose shining faces

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

speak their joy. But the vision only makes more sad and conscious plight. Nor am I alone. I am one of a great company huddled at the gateway, hungry, ragged, weary unto death. Suddenly the palace front blazes with electric lights, whose message burns its way into my heart. I read: "Welcome to every wanderer, to all who are footsore and friendless. Whosoever will, let him come." And the doors are wide open.

This is not a dream. It is a blessed reality. An outcast there is not on the face of the wide earth. A friendless soul there is not among the millions of the race. For though man may repudiate the claims of brotherhood, God does not surrender His Fatherhood. Though it be but one sheep out of a hundred, or one coin out of ten, he misses and wants His lost possession. It is lost to Him. Every wandering prodigal leaves a vacancy in His heart, and rouses His intensest solicitude. Forgiveness and healing, the joy and the inheritance of sonship, are within the reach of all. This is the Gospel, the glad and inspiring message which Jesus Christ bids us carry to all men. You have believed it, and you have taken God at His word. You are resting on God's love. It has brought you peace. It stirs you to purity. It makes you submissive and patient. It fills you with the hope of glory. Repeat the story to yourself every morning as you begin your work, and at night when you lie down to sleep. And tell it to your neighbor, to the children, to the young and to the old, to rich and poor, to those who laugh and to those who weep, to the broken hearted and to the despairing, until all faces shine, and all hearts are glad, and all lives are pure.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.

### THE LATER RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.

We are slowly learning to fix our eyes on the present life and upon this planet, as the sphere into which we are to look for the fruits of the preaching of the Gospel, and this is making us clamorous for a working theology, a theology which shall show us how most intelligently and successfully to deal with practical problems (1892). We do not believe less in heaven and hell, but we believe a good deal more in the earth than did our fathers. Ours is a great missionary age. Salvation has a large, practical meaning. It involves something more than rescue from future perdition. It is a present deliverance from the power of sin, and a present reign of righteousness. It concerns the individual, the home, the city, the nation, the world, capital and labor, art and science, work and play. We speak more of duty than of destiny, more of the present than of the future. The mission of the church is with the present, ungodly world, to subdue and transfigure it, and the Scriptures are our armory in conducting that campaign. We are not preaching the Gospel merely as a testimony against the nations, or, as Dr. Van Dyke is reported once to have pithily said, "to furnish Almighty God with a good and sufficient reason for damning the people who refuse to listen to us;" nor are we preaching the Gospel as a means of gathering the elect, which practically amounts to the same thing, but we are preaching the Gospel to redeem the world. And here we only retreat to the position of prophets and apostles, the horizon of whose vision was always bounded by a renewed and redeemed earth. Daniel's

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

fourth and eternal kingdom is an earthly kingdom. John's city of jasper and gold, the New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven; it is the capital of an earthly empire, where temples are no longer needed, and where the night never comes. To this kingdom belongs the eternal future, whose king is Jesus Christ. Be it ours to crown Him Lord of all in our own hearts, and to fight under His banner, that when the silver trumpets of victory sound, we may march in the conquering ranks and receive our reward.

---

### THE ATONEMENT.

God makes His redeeming mercy effective in Jesus Christ, who, by His incarnation, holy life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, paid the price of our moral emancipation. A sinless man, victorious over death, is the salvation of our guilty and enslaved nature. The substitution is personal. He took our place. He became man and conquered in the bitter fight with sin. He reversed the moral history of the world. He did not endure the wrath of God, for God sent Him to give effect to His redeeming mercy, and He was always the well-beloved. He did not suffer our deserved penalties, for He was not a sinner, and could not, therefore, experience guilt, or shame, or penitence, or remorse; and beside, the penalties of crime cannot be transferred. He did not suffer what was an equivalent to our punishment, because a perfect moral law cannot compromise its claims. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. His sufferings were simply such as were inevitable in overcoming sin and death,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in giving force to God's redeeming mercy. When, the other day, that brave man plunged into the moving ice to rescue a drowning woman, he risked his own life in the attempt. The water chilled him to the bone, the ice cut his hands and face. But you would not call his suffering penal, nor would you say that his suffering took the place of the woman's suffering, whose cry for help he had heard and heeded. He took the woman's place, wedded his life to hers and let her go only when his numb hands became powerless. His suffering was purely remedial—there was no transfer in the case. Jesus Christ made common cause with us when He became a man. He plunged into the chilling tide of death to save us. I am careful to look at this matter in the simple and Scriptural form in which the Scriptures deal with it, ignoring the interminable metaphysics with which the doctrine of the atonement has been overlaid. I will not preach what I do not understand. And I do not understand the theologians, much as I believe in theology. The Scriptural language I can and do understand, when it represents Jesus Christ as the gift of God's redeeming mercy, who in His own flesh destroyed the power of sin and of death, and so inaugurated the eternal redemption of my nature. I only need to surrender myself to Him, and let Him repeat that conquest in my flesh, and I shall be what He is. The great atonement, as an act of glorious emancipation, to which deliverance I became heir by faith in Christ, I can understand; and that is the form in which it is most frequently set forth in the Old and New Testaments. The most terrible fact about sin is my bondage or

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

enslavement to it. Pardon is of little avail. I must be emancipated. Some one must kill the tyrant who has me in his grip. That Jesus Christ has done, as plainly appears in His holy life, and in His victory over death. The secret of salvation is in His hands, and He only can impart it to me. Therefore, faith in Him becomes the natural, the necessary and inevitable channel of redeeming power. I must be in Him, and abide in Him as the branch is and abides in the vine. If to some of you this has a strange sound, let me say that I have struggled through every theory of the atonement which has been propounded, and this is the only construction of it which I can understand, and which is verified to me in my personal experience. In Jesus Christ I find the conqueror of my sin. As I come near to Him, and surrender myself to the power of His spirit, sin is hated, holiness is loved, temptation recedes, penitence is quickened, and purity, like a winged white dove, broods over the disturbed depths of my spirit. I know it, I know it! and through my experience, and the part which He shares in it, I read the secret of His mighty passion, and of His glorious redemption. In Him God has made His redeeming grace effective.

---

### UNITY IN CONGREGATIONALISM.

The secret of unity lies in independence, and in the right of association which such independence involves; leaving doctrinal, ritual, and administrative preferences to express themselves freely and without damage or loss to universal Christian fellowship. When we shall come to see that the church makes the denomi-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.

nation, not the denomination the church, and that the church may be a church with or without denominational affiliation, as a man may be a man in rags or in purple, the problem of Christian unity will cease to vex us, and the way will be prepared for Christian federation. I believe, therefore, that Congregationalism still has a mission, as a repudiation of theological dogmatism, as a protest against ecclesiastical centralization and as involved in these, to point the simplest way to the unity of Christendom. Congregationalism boldly takes the ground that fellowship in Christ is the only countersign in the Christian brotherhood; or to use Robert Hall's phrase, coined for a different purpose, but applicable here: "Nothing may be a term of communion which is not a term of salvation."

---

### END OF TEN YEARS IN CENTRAL CHURCH.

I am to speak of the principles which have shaped my ministry, and more especially my public utterances, for my main work among you has been from the pulpit. And in calling your attention to these principles, my embarrassment is greatly relieved by the reflection that my predecessors and myself have walked in the same steps, and have been of the same mind. Your pastors have changed, but the tone of their preaching has been the same. And it has been the same because not one of them has dared to speak otherwise than as the oracles of God dictated. You have been kept in line with the company of prophets and apostles, of martyrs and of saints. Each man has builded in his own way, but the foundation has neither been dis-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

turbed nor disregarded. This pulpit has never been a free lance, and I hope it never will be. For the Christian Church has a definite mission, and the Christian ministry has a clearly defined vocation. It is not commissioned to enter the field of political reformation, nor to assume leadership in industrial and economic movements, nor to pose as experts in science and letters, nor even to engage in theological disputes. Its simple task is to preach the Gospel; to tell the old story, than which no better one was ever told, and to tell it with such directness, freshness and force, that it shall burn its way into the hearts of men, and so transfigure their lives. Some may regard this as a very restricted vocation; but it is the narrowness of Paul and of Jesus Christ which aims at the innermost life and leaves the rest to be molded by it. It is a limitation divinely imposed, the wisdom of which has been amply justified in the history of the past and in the record of present Christendom. A courageous acceptance of that limitation is the preacher's safety, and it is his strength. In adhering to it he avoids a thousand entanglements, and secures for the Divine message the ear of an undivided and undistracted constituency. It is the dictate of prudence, and it is the high behest of that loyalty which he owes to Jesus Christ, the Master.

---

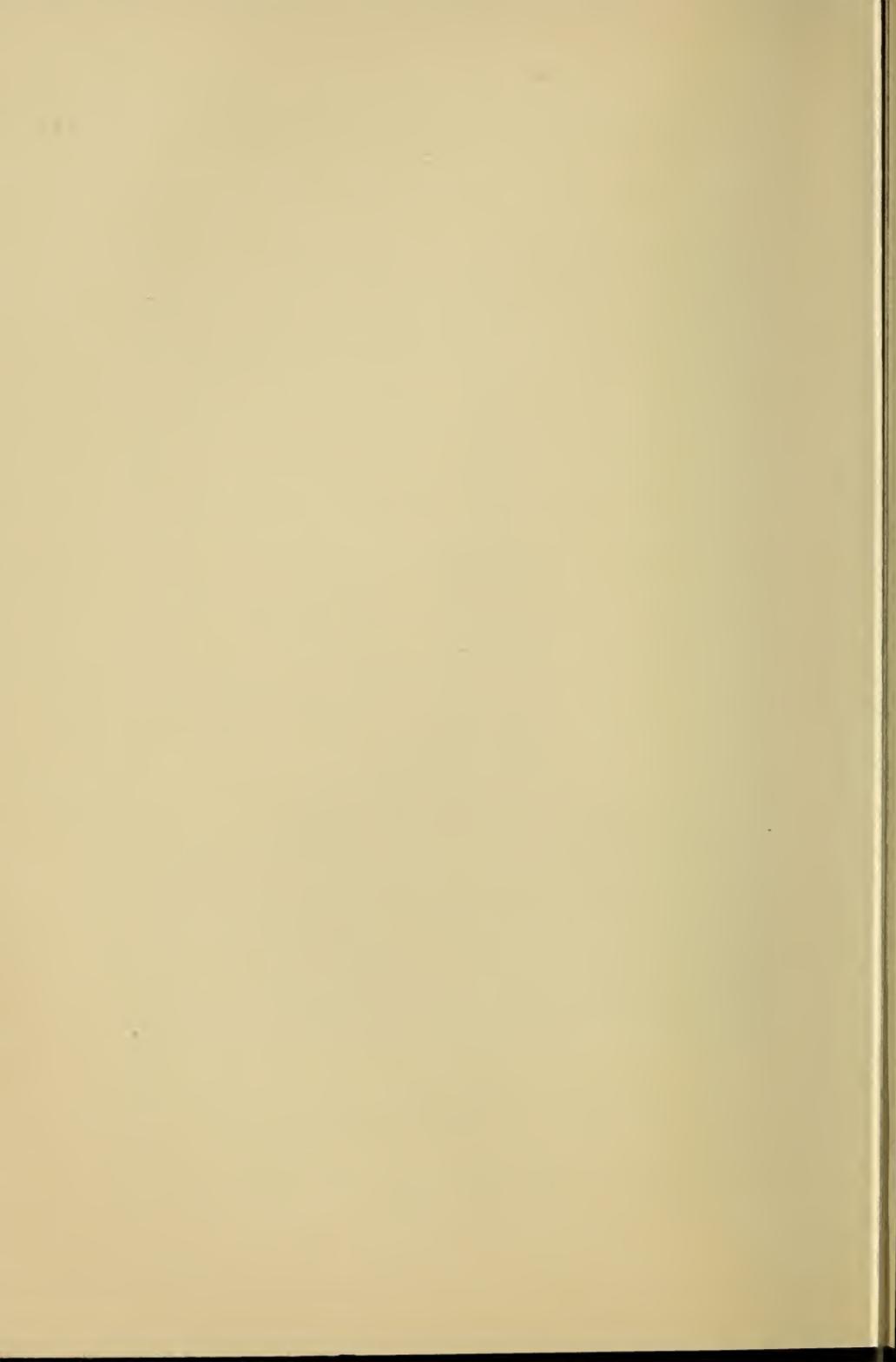
### FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

The doctrine of eternal punishment must be separated from the notion of a divine vindictiveness. I have seen the statement in cold type, that in order to reveal His glory, God must have subjects of grace



UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

(Dr. Behrends' Third Pastorate)



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and victims of wrath. Nothing can be more false. The State does not need criminals to give expression to its righteousness. By its reformatory institutions it seeks to reduce the criminal class, and would be glad to eliminate it altogether. The glory of the State is not in its penitentiaries. And God does not need sinners for the display of His justice. He hates sin with an infinite hatred. He does not permit or use it as an occasion for the display of His justice. He would rather not use His punitive justice at all. Judgment is His strange work, from which He shrinks. His rule is one of remedial agencies in which all things are so ordered as to check sin and save the sinner. The bolt leaps only when it must, when it can no longer be held back. He is long suffering. He has no pleasure in any man's death. He wills every man's salvation. God loves all.

Christ died for all. Truth and the Holy Spirit are for all. There is plenary ability and gracious opportunity for all. These things the Gospel places in the foreground. There is a book of life; but it has well been added, there is no book of death. When a soul is saved all heaven is glad, and God records the name; but when a soul is lost God has no heart to write the name in a book kept for that purpose. We do read of names that are blotted out of the book of life, a thing which implies regret; but we read of no erasures in the book of death, because there is no such book. God has but one book, the book of life. In that book every name is written in lines of blood, and where any name is blotted out, it is because the grace that saves has been wilfully and wickedly rejected. God wants

*THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES.*

no victims of his wrath. He does not need a hell to magnify His justice, and its presence must be a perpetual sorrow to Him as we deplore the necessity which, in the interests of public security, compels us to send men to Sing Sing. God is not vindictive.

The doctrine of eternal punishment must be separated from the notion of external infliction. When the Bible speaks of "stripes" we are to remember that the language is figurative. We are not to think of a whipping post to which men are tied while so many lashes are laid upon their backs. The soul lashes itself. When the Scriptures speak of a prison of outer darkness, and a bottomless pit, we are not to materialize these phrases as if they meant definite places, fitted up with all the means of inflicting penalties. The soul holds all these. It is not in them, they are in it. Heaven and hell, the glory and shame, are in us. Hundreds of men have been thrust into prisons who were not branded thereby. It is no disgrace to Paul and Bunyan that they were flung into dungeons. The criminal brand did not adhere to them. It was no shame that Christ died on the cross. The martyrs suffered no ignominy because the fire consumed their bodies. A thousand judges cannot break his spirit if he be entrenched in conscious innocence. Shame and disgrace and misery come only by self-judgment. "Myself am hell," Milton makes Satan say; and the blind poet was right. The broken law is not enforced by external penalties; the judgment of God, whatever it may be, is always articulated and enforced in the self-judgment of the man. The soul is its own and only chamber of torture.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

The doctrine of eternal punishment must be separated from the notion that physical suffering is the penalty of sin, or its main ingredient. There is a conception of eternal punishment which commends itself to my rational judgment, but the infliction of physical torment is something which fills me with unqualified horror, and the God which would do such a thing would simply be an omnipotent and unmitigated devil. Righteousness is not cruelty. But do we not read of the fire that cannot be quenched, and the worm which dieth not, wailing and gnashing of teeth, the outer darkness, hell fire, the bottomless pit, and the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone? Yes; but if you will locate the imagery you will see that it does not suggest the idea of torture. The hell of our English speech is simply the Greek word Gehenna, and that is simply the Hebrew Ge Hinnom, the Valley of Hinnom. And what was this Ge Hinnom? It is a deep, narrow ravine to the south of Jerusalem, and outside the city walls, where Alhas had located the worship of the fire gods, and where living sacrifices had been offered to Moloch. Its associations became so abominable that it was made the dumping ground of the bodies of criminals, of the carcasses of beasts, and of everything that was unclean. And to prevent the place becoming a breeding ground of pestilence the fires were kept perpetually burning. No living thing was tortured there. Only the putrid and loathsome were deposited there, the things which were dangerous to health, and the fire was simply a sanitary provision. It prevented pestilential contagion. The idea, therefore, in the terrible imagery, is simply that of separation of the un-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

clean from the clean, and the unholy from the holy, a separation completed by forever putting an end to the corrupting power of the unclean and the unholy. The fires of judgment are a purifying agency, making an end to the power of sin; they are not a means of torture. Gehenna stands for the destruction of sin—putting an eternal end to its power for moral mischief and misery.

We reach the same conclusion by another path of reasoning. The imagery of the final judgment is local. It is drawn from the judicial methods then in vogue. These included physical torture of the most barbaric kind. The prisons were made living and loathsome tombs. One cannot now inspect them without indescribable horror. I entered only two of them in Rome, and I had enough for a lifetime. It makes one faint and sick at heart to look at the instruments of torture freely used to extort confession. And when death was inflicted it was with a fiendish glee. Men and women were flayed and sawn asunder, and disemboweled, and quartered, and crucified. But I spare you. It is too horrible for description. Now, the judicial procedure must be taken as a whole if we are to read aright so much of it as has been incorporated in the Biblical description. The largest part of it finds no place in Scripture. It is a fact of great significance, which has not been sufficiently considered, that physical torture finds no place in the examination by which eternal destiny is determined. Souls are not starved into confession. The truth is not extorted by thumb-screw and rack. The nations are self-convicted when they appear before the Judge. They have not

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

been brought out of dungeons. They are not scourged in His presence.

Now, the first great reform in the judiciary was the elimination of torture from the trial of the accused. The court room was purged of it. That feature has dropped out of our modern procedure, and with it have gradually disappeared the means once freely employed in the prisons to make the life of the inmates one of physical torment. They are punished, but they are not starved and flogged. It is not upon the body that sentence is executed. Physical torture could hold its place in the prisons only so long as it was legitimate in court where the criminal was tried. When the judge repudiated it, the warden could not retain it, and we have come to brand it as indefensible cruelty.

The argument, as applied to God's judgment of men, is simply this: Physical suffering is not used to secure the confession of guilt and the conviction of the guilty; it cannot, therefore, enter into the penalty which is imposed and executed. The judgment itself is always represented as a free moral process without the use of physical force, resulting in self-conviction; and that makes it impossible for physical torture to enter into the penalty. Thus, when the Scriptural doctrine of the final judgment is treated as a unit, the notion of physical suffering is summarily discredited. It should be repudiated in toto, and with unmistakable emphasis. Torture is something which has no place in God's moral economy. He destroys the power of sin, but He does not stretch the sinner on the rack.

The doctrine of eternal punishment must be separated from the notion that the penalty is conscious and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

continuous mental agony and torment. This more refined theory is as baseless as that of physical suffering. The penalty is declared to be death, the second death, eternal death. But death is not a state of conscious suffering of any kind. What is death? We define physical death as the separation of the soul from the body, but that is only the immediate cause of death. That is not death. Death itself is the stagnation of the bodily organs issuing in disintegration and decay. The heart ceases to act, the muscles become rigid, and the nerves lose their sensitiveness. Eternal death, we say, is the eternal separation of the soul from God. That is only the immediate and the eternal cause of the soul's death. In its resultant effects upon the soul it can only be stagnation, the collapse of its powers, the darkening of the mind, the hardening of the sensibilities, the searing of the conscience, the weakening of the will. To mistake falsehood for truth, to become past feeling and past moral endeavor, is the ruin of the soul. So far is it from being true that men become more sensitive as they become more wicked, that the very reverse is the case. It is the youthful criminal who feels his disgrace most keenly. The old offender becomes hardened and falls into a dull contentment with his degraded lot. His own conscience does not trouble him, and the public frown does not disturb him. There is hope of a man so long as he is morally sensitive. His degradation is most complete and hopeless when he has become totally indifferent. Tell me, when is manhood or womanhood in ruin? Not among those who blush for their shame or the victims of remorse. Such people are not ut-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

terly dead. The saddest spectacle on earth is a soul which is content with its degradation, which feels no shame, and which has ceased to care for the good. The absence of mental suffering in such cases is only an index of the darkness and death into which such a soul has fallen. We speak of such people as wrecks, in whom all that is noble has suffered collapse. They lie stranded upon the beach of life. And eternal death can mean only one thing, the hopeless and eternal wreck of the soul, in whose awful crash reason, sensibility, conscience and will go down together. It is moral annihilation. It is not ceasing to be. It is not endless physical torment, it is not conscious eternal shame and remorse. The soul is dead, and if there be anything sadder than that I cannot imagine what it is. The Lord preserve us all from that.

The doctrine of eternal punishment must be separated from the disputed question whether probation ends at death or at the final judgment, or whether it is indefinite. Some say that God never shuts the door, that pardon and salvation will forever remain possible. The debate at this point can never reach a settled conclusion, for the argument is conducted upon purely speculative grounds. If I were asked the hypothetical question, "Suppose that in the endless future a succession of lost souls should sincerely repent and plead for mercy, would Jesus Christ avert His eyes and strike down their hands?" I should answer promptly and emphatically, "No!" But I cannot see that there is any very great relief in such a solution. It remains to be seen that impenitence gradually wears away, and does not tend to permanence; that hardness of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

heart disappears in time, instead of becoming more absolute. The known facts are all in the other direction. The probabilities of moral reformation diminish as men grow older. All are agreed that childhood and youth are most favorable to goodness. Character seems to tend to moral permanence at a very early period, and there is nothing to warrant the idea that millions of years hold in them a mysterious grace which is less active in the earthly life, and even were the suggested possibility admitted it would not follow that ultimately all souls would repent and so be saved. The awful fact of a judgment involving the possibility of the soul's eternal ruin remains, however far into the future it may be pushed. It cannot be eliminated from the New Testament. It cannot be expunged from the teachings of Christ, and I say to you with perfect frankness that I could be a Universalist only by ceasing to be a Christian minister, and by ceasing to bear the Christian name. I do not say that a man must believe in eternal punishment in order to be a Christian, but I do say that, so far as I can see, there is an eternal logical contradiction between the recognition of Christ as an authoritative teacher and the positive affirmation that there is no such thing as the hopeless and eternal ruin of the soul. Jesus Christ says there is, and that, for me, ends the controversy. I find no pleasure in the thought. I would rather that it were not so. Reduce the number as you will, bring it down to ten, or even one, and my heart is oppressed. It is not numbers that startle me, but the awful fact itself, the simple idea of an eternally ruined soul—heedlessly unfeeling, wrecked. In fact, I am

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

not sure that a reduction in numbers does not aggravate the burden. That one soul had a mother, and that mother's heart must forever carry the sorrow and cast a shadow upon the heavenly bliss. For heaven cannot mean oblivion and the death of natural affection. I would rather that all men are saved. And I believe that God prefers that. He shrinks from blotting any man's name from the book of life, and when it is blotted out the vacant space must cause Him deep and eternal grief. He is not anxious to doom one man to eternal death. But sin means ruin, and God Himself cannot prevent the death of the soul which will not repent and abandon its wilful wickedness. I do not know of any one who has phrased the matter more happily than Dean Alford, who holds a deservedly high place among modern New Testament scholars, when he says: "There is election to life; but there is no reprobation to death; a book of life; but no book of death; no hell for man, because the blood of Jesus hath purchased life for all; but they who will serve the devil must share with him in the end." This is only saying that sin brings moral ruin; a ruin ever deepening as sin is unrepented of and unforsaken, until at last, by persistent impenitence, the ruin becomes hopeless and eternal. God saves all whom He can save; and he would gladly save all. But He can save from sin and redeem to holiness only such as hunger and thirst after righteousness. He can save only such as want to be saved. The freedom of the sinner is the one thing which He cannot force, and which may thwart His grace forever. The eternal ruin of a soul, therefore, is something for

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which He is in no way responsible, except so far as He is responsible for making us free and responsible agents. Or, to quote again from Dean Alford, "All man's salvation is of God, all his condemnation from himself." We live in the economy of redemption, where God leaves nothing undone that can be done to save every man; and where only deliberate and persistent wickedness can doom a soul to eternal death.

All souls are made to be saved, and one soul as much as another. I cannot believe anything else when I face the Father in the Son of Man. And yet the terrible shadow will not lift. Infinite love, welcoming the agony and the cross, that all men may be redeemed, enduring them in fulfillment of the purpose of universal redemption, declares that the soul may sink into the sepulcher of an eternal death. Upon how many that doom may fall I do not care to ask. Numbers do not enter into the perplexity and pain with which I am to confront the problem of man's eternal destiny. It is not a question of arithmetic; it is a question of morals. It is a question of paternal treatment. I could hold my judgment in suspense if I were dealing only with prophetic and apostolic testimony.

There is but one witness whose words I dare not deal with as rhetorical and exaggerated. It is the testimony of Jesus Christ, which checks my speculation. And He checks me because His tone is so intense. My dread of their possible ruin is as a point in an infinite line, as a single drop in all the seas, when measured against His. It is the authority of infinite and self-sacrificing love which makes His work final to me. And He tells me that there is an outer dark-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ness from which the soul never emerges, a second death from which there is no resurrection. The soul may fall into hopeless ruin. It may defy all that infinite mercy can do to win to holiness and heaven. I am sure that the doom is reluctantly permitted. It is not a positive infliction in the form of external penalty. It is not endless physical torture, nor endless conscious mental suffering. It is death. It is the soul's collapse, is eternal wreck and ruin. The utmost that God in Christ can do is done to prevent it. It is the awful exception in the divine economy, and however few the graves in which dead souls are buried, the divine pity will never cease to canopy them. So it is not God of whom I am afraid. He will not be false to His fatherhood. I am afraid of myself, lest sin unrepented of and unremoved work eternal death to me. Save us, Lord, from ourselves, in Thy compassion.

---

### ATHANASIUS AND THE INCARNATION.

There never was a fiercer nor a more protracted theological conflict than the one which, more than fifteen hundred years ago, Athanasius conducted. He was born in the year 299, and died in the year 373, and, during the forty-five years of his Alexandrian episcopate, the intensity of his doctrinal struggle never abated for a moment. He was short in stature and insignificant in appearance. But in keenness and vigor of thought he was more than a match for his opponents.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

He may almost be said to have fought single-handed, so that "Athanasius against the world" passed into a proverb. The ecclesiastical and political odds against him were tremendous. Five times was he driven into exile, but no suffering could break his superb courage, and when he died the victory rested with him, a victory whose laurels fifteen centuries have not withered. To all who sought to dissuade him he had one reply. "Our all is at stake," was his answer. Time has proved that he was right, and Christendom has been and is as much indebted to him as to Augustine or Martin Luther. I am not sure but more.

For the controversy in which he was the most conspicuous figure concerned a theme more vital and fundamental than those which engaged the attention of later theologians. Augustine grappled with the doctrine of sin and grace; Anselm pondered the nature and the necessity of atonement; Luther emphasized justification by faith; Calvin made prominent and luminous the sovereignty of God; Wesley made regeneration a conscious experience of saving grace.

Athanasius is properly called the father of theology, because the one theme to which he devoted his extraordinary powers was the Deity of Jesus Christ, which he vindicated by the most luminous exposition of Scripture, and the keenest philosophical argumentation. Not that he created the faith, but he vindicated it so triumphantly that it has never been seriously assailed since. It is sometimes said that in theology nothing is ever settled. But some things are settled, and have been settled for many centuries. There is no church anywhere which would not be instantly

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

and universally repudiated as entitled to the name of Christian if it should deny the unity of the personality of God. And there never has been a period when the overwhelming majority of Christian believers has not with equal emphasis repudiated any estimate of Jesus Christ which made Him less than God manifested in the flesh. The Greek Church, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism in all its great divisions, Lutheran and Reformed, all occupy the same ground here. They insist with Athanasius that not only is God revealed in Jesus Christ, but that God is incarnate in Him. It has often been flippantly said that the Nicene theologians fought over a single letter. Yes, they did; but the presence or absence of that single letter carried in it the tremendous difference between Christ as a creature and Christ as God. The presence of that letter affirmed His likeness to God, which is true of every man; the absence of that letter affirmed Christ's identity with God, which is true of no creature. That was the heart of the great controversy. In the course of it many things were said which have not commanded acceptance, and phrases were put into creeds which later confessions have omitted as unauthorized; but that Christ, in the indivisible unity of His person was, and forever remains, true God and true man, has been and remains the clear, explicit and unwavering confession of the Christian church.

The mystery of the incarnation still remains, and no age has been more prolific of earnest thought upon it than our own; but the fact of the incarnation has not been a question of internal doubt or discussion

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

since Athanasius conducted the argument to its close. I know of no modern heresy on this theme which was not suggested during the century in which he lived, and which was not of intellectual athletes, and no controversy was ever conducted to so speedy and satisfactory an issue, and the men who, in modern times, have challenged the faith of the church in Christ as God incarnate, have only reproduced the sophistries which Athanasius exposed and riddled. Of many things it has been said that they are the articles of a standing or falling church. There is but one such article. Christ has told us what it is, when He told Peter, who had just confessed Him to be the Son of the living God, that upon this rock He would build His church, eternally secure against the most violent assault.

The incarnation is the bedrock of our Christian theology, and here we can permit no hesitant confession on the part of those who claim to represent the Christian faith. Our all is at stake at this point. With the incarnation we have everything. Without the incarnation everything goes out into the night of uncertainty. We may still be theists and believe in God; but we cannot be Christians, in any true and deep sense, when Christ loses His eternal Divine dignity. The incarnation is not merely one doctrine among many. It is the central and creative conception of the Gospel. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question which goes to the very roots of Christianity. The answer to that question determines the answer to every other question.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE INCARNATION AND SIN.

We are born sinners, it is said. We are tainted before birth. We start with a corrupt nature. Are we born sinners, then, in the same sense in which we are born with blue and brown eyes, with a fair or a dark skin? Is sin an involuntary twist in our moral constitution? If that be true, then my moral deformity is no more reprehensible than my physical deformity. Physical deformity may be repulsive, but you do not punish men for it. You pity them. And it must follow that moral deformity may be repulsive; but if it be con-natural, hereditary, ingrained, involuntary, God ought not to punish me for it. He should pity me. Not one of us can be held responsible for a corruption in which the first cell from which we sprang was steeped.

Now, then, what has the Incarnation to say to all this? Christ had a body, with all its constitutional appetites and instincts; but it never became the occasion of sin to Him. And so we conclude that sin is not to be explained by the fact that we have bodies. Again, Christ shared with us all the limitations of our physical, mental and moral nature. He grew in stature, in wisdom, in favor with God and man. He learned to walk, to speak, to read as we do. His understanding developed. He advanced in piety. But He never sinned. There were no moral mistakes or blunders in His life. And so we conclude that sin is not to be explained by the fact that we are limited in our powers. In our limitation we may be, and are bound, to pursue our integrity, even as He did. All

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

that comes to us by ancestry and environment came to Christ. If original sin is our guilt by imputation of Adam's apostasy, or if our nature is morally corrupt by ancestral heritage, these things must be as true of Christ as they are of us. You remind me that Christ was miraculously begotten and born, that He had no human father. What difference does that make? Joseph was not, it is true, His father; but Mary's father was His grandfather, and from His grandfather on to Adam His lineage, paternal and maternal, was exactly what ours is. He had a human mother. He was not created; He was born. He was born of Mary's bone, and blood of her blood, and Mary was a sinner. Whatever moral corruption flows through ancestral lines, it submerged Him as it submerges us. His ancestral heritage was neither more nor less than yours and mine. His share in original sin, as determined by descent, was identical with our own. His environment was that of a country town, whose reputation was unsavory. They were not pure streets on which He walked. They were not pure schools which He attended. They were not pure men with whom He came in contact. It was a wicked world in which He grew up. But He was sinless from the start, and all the way through. Whatever came to Him by way of heritage, did not crystallize into sin. He was the holy child at birth and before. Whatever there was unfavorable in His circumstances did not surprise Him into sin. And so we conclude that men are not sinners because they are born so, nor because of their unfavorable environment. Sin is not a matter of either inheritance or circumstance.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Mark, I do not say that men cannot be born sinners. The beginnings of moral life are beyond our conscious location. But it is one thing to say that sin may be present at birth, or even before, and quite another thing to say that sin is due to birth. It is one thing to say that I sinned before I can now remember, and a very different thing to say that I was the passive victim of the first stirring of sin. The first is true, the second is false and blasphemous. Sin was my voluntary action, no matter when it first appeared. It was I who sinned, not somebody or something in me. Christ was born, and born as we are. But He never knew sin. And so I conclude that birth makes no man a sinner. Sin is always voluntary, spiritual, personal. It is in the will, and nowhere else. It is not in the blood, nor in any law of transmission. In a word, sin is not a constituent element in human nature. It was not so at the beginning, and it is not so now. Sin is the wilful perversion of human nature. Adam wilfully corrupted his own nature, and every one of us has done the same thing.

The clear judgment of every honest conscience is that every man must bear the guilt and the shame of his own sin, for which neither his father nor his grandfather, nor Adam can be blamed. If Christ was a true man, sin cannot be any man's inevitable necessity. It can only be the guilt of his own will. Coleridge was right when he said that original sin is the only sin there is; that is, sin is sin, involving culpability and guilt, only, when it is original, having its sole cause in the individual sinner. It cannot be derivative, secondary, transferable. Its ruinous effects may be continuous.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

It may weave snares and dig pitfalls. It may make a life of virtue so hard that effective resistance may be hopeless. The consequences of sin may constitute a calamitous heritage, crushing the soul at the very beginning of its moral career. But so far as this is true, no man can be regarded as responsible for it. He is responsible only for the voluntary consent of his will in his moral bondage. There, in the will, and there alone, is the seat of sin. Kant said a good will is the only good there is. And we may add that a bad will is the only bad there is. Aside from that there is nothing common or unclean. The only bad thing in man, the only bad thing in devils, is the bad will. Nature is not corrupt. Human nature is not corrupt. Human nature is good, only good, supremely and eternally good. Its corruption is simply its perversion, and its perversion is its facing the wrong way. Sin lies in the wicked use which we make of our bodies and souls, not in the bodies and souls as such. It is simply as John said, lawlessness, which is chargeable to our will and not to our nature.

I know how deep this conclusion cuts, and how weighty its corollaries. But the true humanity of Christ, which was absolutely sinless and holy, will permit no other verdict than that sin is not due to the body, nor to our finiteness, nor to any ancestral inheritance and educational environment. That holy human life proves once for all that birth does not involve moral contamination, and that human nature is not, and cannot be, corrupt by ancestral inheritance. Human nature, whether created or derived through birth, is good; it is the evil will which is the source of sin, and

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

that alone, and that evil will it is which turns every good gift of God into a curse. It is the evil will which abuses the body, and the collapse of the body under such treatment shows the ingrained hostility of the body to such abuse. From every nerve-fiber comes up the pathetic appeal, "Don't use me that way!" It is the evil which makes the house a hell, and which lets loose the hounds of war. I tell you, the world, including human nature, is good. Only man is vile, and he is vile only by his evil will. That is, the only satanic and damnable thing there is under God's stars, and for its presence in him every man is chargeable with the sole responsibility. Jesus Christ was not a sinner, and I have no business to be what He was not. It is a most startling conclusion, and for one, it fills me with keenest moral agony. It sweeps away every refuge of lies into which I would run to excuse my moral lapses. I am utterly without excuse, and so are you. My captivity is of my own surrender, and in that surrender I have become helpless. For the time to put on the brakes and reverse the lever is at the first signal of danger. It may be too late a second after. The first sin does the mischief, and who of us can locate that? It lies beyond the record which memory has made. It is, so to speak, prehistoric. But it was voluntary, and the evil will, having secured initial movement, laughs us to scorn ever afterward.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE ONLY WAY OF ESCAPE.

How extremely difficult the prevention of this initial movement of the will to sin is clear from the fact that in Christ only was it prevented, and in Him it was prevented because He was very God as well as very man. The prevention required all the moral omnipotence of God, the energy of the Divine will pervading the energy of the human will. The man Christ Jesus was absolutely sinless, because in Him the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Perhaps too much has been made of the argument proving the Divinity of Christ by His sinlessness. That does not follow. Gabriel is sinless and holy, but he is not God. The true order of thought is this: "Christ was sinless. But sinlessness guarantees absolute veracity. A sinless man cannot deceive himself, and will not deceive others. Christ was sinless, and affirmed His equality with God. He must, therefore, be believed." But while the sinlessness of Christ is not the immediate proof of His Divinity, we have this fact, that of all the sons and daughters of Adam the only sinless man is the man in whom God is Incarnate. When we regard Christ simply as sharing our human nature with us, His sinlessness compels the conclusion that sin is not our voluntary bondage; that we sin only because we will, not because we must. But when we consider that Christ shared our human nature with us under peculiar conditions; that His human nature was a God-pervaded and God-controlled human nature, and that only in this way did His absolute sinlessness emerge, we encounter another fact of tremendous import, the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

enormous difficulty of initial holy self-direction. Adam was created upright and pure, a full grown man, acting deliberately in the face of earnest warning. Yet, at the first solicitation to disobedience, he sinned. If in him holy self-direction proved to be difficult, must it not be with us, born in the helplessness of childhood, with wills already self-perverted when moral consciousness awakens? The mystery of the will's initial self-direction eludes me. It is the darkest of abysses. When and how I perverted my nature I know not. But I do know that it is self-perverted in me and in all men, and that the Man in whom God is Incarnate is the only exception to the rule. What follows? This: That His is the only name under heaven whereby men must be saved. Infancy needs Him as much as manhood. His redeeming might must save the children as well as the adults. He is the only gate into holiness and heaven. The lips which never opened on earth must sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Without Him we can do nothing. As the branch can live only in the vine, so must we be engrafted with Him by faith, His Divine life purifying and perfecting our own. We must live in Him, and He must live in us. And we cannot begin too soon. Better in manhood than in old age; better in youth than in manhood; better in childhood than in youth; better in infancy than in childhood. Let us bring our babes to Jesus Christ, not only in prayer for them, but with them, in such sweet and winning words that their wills shall own His early sway. Jesus Christ has given to the world the secret of sinlessness and moral perfection; a greater and more wondrous secret than any dis-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

covery of ancient or modern times. For, give us only holy men and women, give us only men and women who habitually and earnestly will to be holy, and this planet would be an Eden.

And what is Christ's secret? It is the spirit of Sonship. The whole of Christ's moral life was compressed into two words, "My Father." He lived as a true Son, and that made Him every man's brother. That made Him the friend of publicans and sinners. That made Him pray for His murderers, and open heaven to the thief on the cross. "Liberty, equality and fraternity." These are the great watchwords of our time. Christianity, we say, is the religion of universal brotherhood. And we say true. But brotherhood is the fruit of Sonship. They are brothers who acknowledge a common fatherhood. The spirit of adoption is what the world needs, and it is the peculiar gift of Christ to men. By faith in Him we become the children of God. Here is the secret of victory over sin. Christ's life was absolutely sinless, because it was absolutely filial. Let us live as did He. Let us live and toil and suffer as the dear children of God. That is the narrow and blessed way which leadeth unto life eternal.

---

### REVOLUTIONARY DEMANDS OF SOCIALISM.

Sociology and socialism are two very different things. Sociology is the science of society, and as such it deals with facts, just as botany deals with plants and astronomy with the stars. But socialism cares

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

nothing for the stern facts which face us, and jauntily informs us that facts are not of much account, and that men can make any society they choose. Socialism recognizes no law except the will of the majority, and practically only the will of the fourth estate, the proletariat, the men who have nothing and need everything, and therefore ought to claim everything. My own careful studies convince me that Dr. Robert Flint is not far out of the way when he says that socialism fights against industrial liberty, and advocates the régime of industrial slavery, when "the people" shall appropriate all the products of labor and seize all the land and all the machinery of industry, and parcel out to every man the work which he may and must do, and the wages he is to receive. It is the old fight whether a man owns himself or whether the State owns him. Christianity and common sense teach that, under God, every man owns himself, and that law is the reasonable regulation of liberty, not its suppression. There are some who talk of Christian socialism; but you might as well talk of a round square or a hot iceberg. Socialism is not Christian, and Christianity is not socialistic. Christianity is the religion of individual liberty and of free co-operation, secured in Christ, and regulated by the law of Christ.

The demands of socialism are revolutionary. While Socialists do not agree in their definition, there are certain economic doctrines which they maintain in concert, and advocate with ardor, creating widespread unrest and stimulating hopes which are doomed to bitter disappointment. For no rage of multitudes can for a moment annul or mitigate the laws which God

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

has incorporated in nature and in the soul of man. There are three main demands which socialists make, and I very much mistake if those who hear me do not agree with me, that in securing them civilization would go down in chaos and night. The three great assumptions which characterize consistent socialism are, that labor is the sole constituent of value, that private property in land is a crime, and that the State should own and control all the machinery of industry.

Is labor the sole element in value? It will occur at once, to one who soberly thinks about the matter, that labor must have something to work on. Labor cannot create the materials which it handles. It will do a man no good to saw the air with his arms ten hours a day, and then claim that because he has worked very hard, he ought to be liberally paid. Labor alone produces nothing. It is a factor in wealth, and a very important factor. Nature provides the materials, without which labor could produce no wealth. Labor must not only have something to work on, but something to work with. It must have tools, be it a hammer, or a saw, or a shovel, or a printing machine, or the plant of a factory. It may be said that all this is coagulated labor. Very well, but it is coagulated labor which neither the individual laborer nor his class has produced, and it is generously placed at his disposal. He reaps where discoverers and inventors have sown. There is possible wealth in his productive work, because some men worked with their heads more than with their hands,—because they invented the locomotive, and planned the steamships, and brought the instruments of industry to their present state. Labor

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

would be helpless without the coagulated brain of the world, which has had so much to do with the enormous increase of wealth. The man who turns the current on or off, and who handles the lever, has at his command millions of invested capital, not one dollar of which he provided, and thousands of skilled workers, without whom his own work would be utterly unproductive. In all the higher grades of industry it is the machinery which gives value to the product, not the man who handles the machine. But was not the machine made by somebody, and ought not the men who made the machine own it and get all the profit out of it? But who made the machine? Can every man who uses a hammer and turns a lathe make a machine? Must you not have the inventor, and the draughtsman, and the superintendent of construction? These men, perhaps, work very little with their hands, but they work with their heads; and in a world where heads are so necessary they have to be generously paid for. Labor must not only have something to work on, and to work with, but it must be under intelligent direction.

Collectivism is the doctrine that the State should own all the instruments of production, assigning to each man his work, and determining his wages. The mills, the railways, the merchant marine, the printing establishments of the country are to be owned and run by the State. Society must be reduced to one huge political machine, where every man holds an office and wears a uniform. How this is to be brought about we are not told. This is apparently a small matter in the judgment of these prophets and reformers. In-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

dividual proprietors are not likely to tumble over each other in order to make the State sole owner ; and the State could not buy them out without creating a debt, the interest on which would bankrupt any nation ; and the only method would be to confiscate all private property. This is exactly what socialists contend must be done ; and so their millennium must be ushered in by one great act of legalized theft ! It passes my comprehension that such an act of absolute tyranny should be heralded as the gospel of industrial emancipation. And then, when it has been accomplished, every man must do only what the State permits him to do. His personal preferences are to count for nothing. A committee must pass upon his application ; and woe to him if he has no pull. Parents are to have no rights over their children ; the State is to take charge of them. No books are to be printed, no papers are to be circulated, unless the committee approve. Churches, of course, must vanish, for the State cannot permit any independent voluntary associations. Our religion will be determined by popular elections, just as our bread and butter would be. But, then, suppose at some election all this collectivism should be overthrown—what then ? For history teaches us that no flood of tyranny can quench the fires of liberty ; and collectivism is absolute, grinding, unqualified tyranny. That is the rock upon which socialism is doomed to go to pieces. For one I do not dread its triumph. It is too late in the day to clip the wings of freedom. Men are bound to be free—all men, those at the bottom and those at the top ; and no system has any hope of success which does not leave the individual perfectly untrammelled, so long

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

as he does not interfere with the freedom of others. Our bodies and our souls, under God, are our own, and we will let the lash come upon neither. Our homes are our own, and we will permit no king to rob us of them. Our industries and avocations are our own, and we will not let others choose them for us, or interfere with our management of them. Our churches are our own, and we will let no State cabal invade them. Our thoughts are our own, and we will speak or publish them without asking any man's leave. We make no idle boasts; but the world is as ready to-day to do earnest battle for personal freedom as it ever was; yea, an hundredfold more so. And in no land under the stars is slavery of any kind less likely to come than on the free soil of the American Republic, with its double baptism of blood upon its broad acres. Youngest of nations, our flag is the oldest of national banners. And so long as the Stars and the Stripes are flung to the breeze, this republic will be a nation of freemen, jealous of liberty in thought and speech, in home, and shop, and temples of prayer.

---

### THE SACREDNESS OF THE SABBATH.

For more than eighteen hundred years the influence of the weekly Sabbath has been elevating and refining. It has brought rest to body and mind. It has deepened and strengthened the domestic affections. It has been the friend of the poor. It has eased the grinding yoke of toil. It has ennobled men by reminding them of their divine and eternal dignity. It was made for man as man, and therefore in the interests of humanity it

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

should be jealously maintained. I am not willing that it should be surrendered to a traffic which fills our jails, and almshouses, and insane asylums. Why should drunkenness be permitted to run riot on the one day when our streets should be radiant with peace? I am not urging the Divine authority for the Day of Rest. God has commanded us to keep holy one day in seven, and every man who believes in the God of the Bible must reverence His Sabbath. But I do not lay emphasis on this. For, however true this may be, the State is prohibited from legislating on religion, and, by implication, it is prohibited from legislating upon religious grounds. Much as I prize the Sabbath, I do not want the State to enforce its recognition, because God has instituted it. But I do submit that there are two considerations which make it imperative upon the State to maintain and guard the day of rest—its ancient and fundamental rank among our social inheritances, and the universally beneficent results of its observance. These entitle it to the respectful and reverent consideration of every true patriot and lover of his race. Ancient institutions should not be ruthlessly disturbed. The lines within which civilization has moved for thousands of years are presumably lines wisely laid. They have survived because of their fitness. The origin of the Day of Rest is lost in the depths of antiquity. Its birth cannot be located, either geographically or chronologically. It was already ancient when Moses wrote the Decalogue, as the very phrase, "Remember the Sabbath day," implies; and the bricks of Mesopotamia tell the same story. It sprang up, no one can tell how, any

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

more than the origin of the monogamic family can be located. The Sabbath is as venerable as the home; and it has shared with the home, not only in antiquity, but in fundamental rank. Wherever the Christian home has become established the Christian Day of Rest has become naturalized. It has appeared everywhere as an inseparable feature of the civilization which Christianity has created. The State does not emphasize the Divine origin of the home. It simply guards the family as an ancient and fundamental institution, as one of the great and valued heritages of the past. For the same reason should the State guard the Day of Rest.

We are bound, as sober and wise men, to resist any movement which cuts the threads by which we are related to all that is best and richest in the past. The Sabbath stands as one of the few great institutions which have maintained their places amid wars and tumults, amid the birth, decay and death of great and powerful empires. It is vandalism of the most reckless type which is disposed to eliminate it from the public life of our time. We condemn the hands which mar the monuments of the Middle Ages, which have defaced the abbeys and the cathedrals; what shall we say of those who would trample the home in the mire, or for those who clamor for the abolition of the Day of Rest, demanding their right to change it into a wild and reckless revelry? Ancient institutions which show no sign of decadence, which maintain their vitality through successive generations and centuries, are entitled to reverent consideration, and are not to be surrendered at the clamor of a clique.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Upon two things there should be no compromise: First, whatever changes are made in Sunday legislation should be made in terms of universal enactment. Second, whatever changes are made in Sunday legislation should be made in the interests of the maintenance, by law, of Sunday as the weekly Day of Rest. The first is demanded by the political autonomy of the State; the second is demanded because of the antiquity and beneficent influence of the Christian Sabbath as a social institution. And both are demanded in the interests of public peace and prosperity. For liberty, without the safeguards of ancient and general law, is the corruption and death of all social order. And in the coming election (October, 1895), inasmuch as the platforms of both parties can easily be manipulated to mean anything and everything, and nothing in particular, let us remember that laws are made in this State by members of the Assembly and of the Senate. Party affiliations should not bind us. They should snap as threads of tow when a question of general public morality confronts us; and the Day of Rest is one of the last things to be made the football of political contention. Vote for the man whom you know will maintain the decent observance of Sunday. If he belongs to your party, vote for him. If he belongs to the other party while your own party candidate would betray you, then vote for the other party, however much you may hate it. And if such a man is on neither party ticket, then vote for the other party, that your own party may be defeated and rebuked and disgrace fastened upon the other party. For the maintenance of the Day of Rest outranks the tariff, the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

silver question, the negro problem, the Monroe doctrine. It fundamentally affects our public morality, which we cannot afford to lower. Whatever the issue, I shall not despair; but I have spoken this plain and earnest word because I dare not be silent in such a crisis.

---

### TWO FORMS OF CRITICISM.

It is unfortunate that the words "lower" and "higher" have crept into use. Many regard them as invidious, and use them under protest. They are not properly descriptive. It were better if the first department were known as "textual" criticism, which would indicate the exact nature of the task set before it. And the second department should be divided into literary and historical criticism; literary criticism dealing with the analysis of the books, and with the internal evidences indicating their structure, authorship and time of appearance; historical criticism dealing with the external evidences supplied by various quotations and references to contemporary literature, inscriptions, monuments and the like.

It is to be regretted that so many of the Biblical critics are wanting in exact and comprehensive knowledge. They look with some disdain upon the students of archæology, and they minimize the established results. But problems of authenticity and of integrity cannot be determined by literary analysis alone. The problem is pre-eminently a historical one, and historical evidence alone can solve it. Literary criticism cannot possibly determine by whom a book was writ-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ten, and if it venture to cast doubt upon the clear and unequivocal statements in the book itself, denying them altogether, or reducing them to a minimum, it simply buries us in hopeless bewilderment. Then it is said that the Pentateuch does not claim to have been written by Moses. But the critics also grant that some things were written by him. And the frequent recurrence of the phrase, "The Lord said unto Moses," which runs like an unbroken thread through the Levitical legislation, could have been warranted only because the tradition assumed authoritative form in his day. To discredit that testimony is to make the problem hopeless of solution. When it is denied that the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are from the pen of that prophet, the fact that the book of Isaiah has always contained them must be allowed to have some weight, and the most positive evidence must be produced that the natural and inevitable influence of a single authorship is not only unwarranted, but contradicted by the plainest facts. It is a suspicious fact that they who deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and who declare Isaiah to be composite, can do no better than to assign it to some great unknown, and cannot even fix the time when he lived. The result only gives us an indefinite number of Elohist, and Jahvist, and Deuteronomist, and Redactor, shadowy and unsubstantial figures, whose number even cannot be determined. The once famous Fragmentary Hypothesis broke down under the weight of its arbitrary assumption, and it begins to look as if the present theory would be soon involved in the same fate. The evident unity of the books contradicts

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the theory of mechanical composite structure. The scissoring and patching becomes bewildering. At all events, the result leaves us in a hopeless muddle, and when that is the only thing settled the proposed solution is self-condemned.

It has become the fashion to cast discredit upon tradition. But a traditional solution is better than one which leaves everything hanging in the air, which begins with guesses and ends in fog. The criticism of tradition is legitimate. It may be exaggerated, and it may be false, but whether tradition is exaggerated or false must be historically determined. Modern criticism simply assumes that tradition is not a competent witness. Its voice is silenced. That is arbitrary, unscientific and unhistorical. Traditions are rarely, if ever, wholly fictitious and legendary. There is in them a kernel of historical truth, and the more widely traditions have gained currency the longer they have held their ground; challenged or unchallenged, the more are they entitled to respectful treatment. Thus, it is only by tradition that we assign the first three gospels to the writers with whose names they are associated. Judged simply by their contents, they are anonymous. The traditional account holds its ground for the simple reason that it cannot be discredited by equally good external evidence. So the Pauline epistles have the Pauline signature stamped upon and into them, and to discredit their Pauline origin demands evidence of the most positive and overwhelming character. It is easy to deny authenticity and integrity, but the denial must be made good. The burden of proof is upon him who denies. He must show that in detail and as a whole

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the traditional view is false. The grounds upon which, for example, the unity of Isaiah is denied are so shadowy that they cannot be said to nullify the evidence that the book, so far as we know, has never existed in any other than its present form, and has always been attributed to Isaiah. The Pentateuch has always been credited to Moses, and Mosaic authorship is stamped upon every one of its parts, while not a particle of external evidence can be produced against the universal tradition. The synagogue is not infallible, but the synagogue, from the first, regarded Moses as the great author of the Pentateuch, so that from the time of Ezra down this tradition is the only one invested with evidential authority. The tradition will hold its ground, and ought to hold its ground, until the critics do something more than substitute queries for facts.

---

### THE JEWS AS CONSERVATORS.

We are assured that no harm can result from the collapse of traditional views. Canon Driver solemnly declares that critical results do not destroy either the authority or the inspiration of the Old Testament. That declaration must be accepted as sincere. Wholesale charges of irreverence and of infidelity do more harm than good. They are not true. No one can read what many of the higher critics have written without being impressed with their industry, learning, sincerity and reverence. But it must also be said that in many cases judicial temper is wanting. They deal in possibilities and probabilities. They approach the prob-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

lems with a prejudice against the traditional view, and with a depreciatory estimate of historical evidence. They assume that unless the traditional view can be proved, it must be regarded as false, or as at best an unsupported guess. Silence at a certain point is construed as evidence to the contrary. Thus in many cases, there is a break in the testimony, at the year 79, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus; and although at that period the tradition is definite and fixed, the absence beyond that period of positive evidence is construed as implying ignorance or doubt. But there is no evidence confirming that conclusion; such evidence as there is is all in favor of the traditional view, so that the critical logic breaks down because it has nothing whatever upon which it rests. The choice must be between careful sifting of tradition and agnosticism.

Professor Buhl of Leipzig shows a most commendable temper of mind when he frankly concedes that the Jews must be regarded "as the authority on the question of the Old Testament canon." The people of Israel, to whom the Old Testament revelation had been intrusted, and whose life task it was to preserve it uncorrupted, are in fact the legitimate and competent judges when it has to be decided in what writings this revelation appears in purity and free from all foreign and mortifying elements. That we are no longer in a position fully to trace out the principles which led the scribes to their determination regarding the canon, and that those principles which can still be understood are in many cases extremely peculiar, cannot be regarded, as in this connection, of any importance. For it is not with the views of the scribes that we have

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

to do, but only with the favor shown to the Scriptures and their circulation among the people, of which the decrees of the rabbis as to the canon are simply an echo. The spread and recognition which the books had won in the genuinely Jewish community is the material which the scribes had to work in their own way; but how they succeeded in this is only of secondary interest, while the firm position of the writings among the members of the community affords the special guarantee that they recognized in them a true reflection of their spiritual life, and that those writings, therefore, must be accepted by us as the canonical means of learning "to know that life." In a later part of the discussion Professor Buhl declares that the frequent charges of serious corruption in the text of the Old Testament are absolutely without foundation, and are discredited by the high reverence with which the Scriptures were treated.

It is refreshing to note such a return to the historical temper. Its cultivation must issue in the modification of many current critical judgments, and in the withdrawal of not a few. For while the historical evidence needs to be historically sifted, it cannot be ignored, especially when it is remembered that all the historical evidence there is is in favor of the traditional view. And that traditional view, as Buhl states, was not created and imposed by the scribes, but was simply recorded by them, as the sifted result of ancient, transmitted, national conviction.

There is one fact which remains fixed and historically assured in the bewildering debate, and which is of supreme and decisive importance to the Christian be-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

liever. Canon Driver is most emphatic in the statement that the same canon of historical criticism which "authorizes the assumption of tradition in the Old Testament forbids it in the New," and that "the facts of our Lord's life on which the fundamental truths of Christianity depend cannot be anything else than strictly historical." But the New Testament, and even the three gospels alone, will give us the present Old Testament with our Lord's indorsement of it as Scripture. That will be enough for the plain Christian. He will conclude that he cannot do better than to use his Old Testament, as Christ used it, and that he need not hesitate to do so.

The substantial identity, I am prepared to say, practically absolute identity, of the present Hebrew Old Testament as Christ knew it is one of the clearest outstanding facts in the critical controversy. The debate, for the most part, concerns the period between Ezra, 450 B. C., to Moses, 1491 B. C., a little over a thousand years, whose contemporaneous memorials have perished in the ruthless wars of the captivities, and in the destruction of the temple by the Roman soldiers. But it is equally clear that long before the birth of Christ the present books of the Old Testament were regarded as Scriptures and inspired; were read regularly in the synagogues; were classified as "Laws, Prophets and Psalms," bound up in rolls and jealously guarded, and were studied with a veneration bordering upon superstition. The evidence is ample, massive and overwhelming. Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem the learned Jewish rabbis established a colony and organized a famous school at Jamnia, which con-

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

tinued in existence for sixty years; and here, soon after the year 70, the present number and names of the books of the Old Testament were formally and officially promulgated. The list names twenty-four books, and includes every book in our present collection; and it includes only these. The difference between our list of thirty-nine books and the Hebrew list, which contains only twenty-four, is accounted for by the fact that in the Hebrew list I and II Samuel appear as one book, I and II Kings as one book, I and II Chronicles as one book, Ezra and Nehemiah as one book, and the twelve minor prophets as one book. The difference is purely one of numerical notation; the actual contents are identical.

Josephus, writing sixty years after Christ's death, about the year 90, gives the number and the classes of the Old Testament books, and speaks of them as long recognized and inspired. The passage has often been quoted, and is found in his tract against Apion, the eighth chapter of the first book. The number is spoken of as twenty-two, to make it correspond with the number of the Hebrew alphabet, and this was done by combining Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah. That the Old Testament of Josephus was identical with our own is evident from an examination of his history of the Jews, which draws upon all these books as authoritative sources of historical information. Even Jonah is embodied in the story. The force of the testimony of Josephus will appear when it is remembered that he was born in the year 37, only seven years after the death of Christ, and that his life covers the lives of the apostles Paul and John.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### TESTIMONY OF LEARNED JEWS.

We can go back fifty years beyond Josephus. Philo, a learned Jew, writing during our Lord's life, and immediately after, quotes from nearly every one of our present books, and accords them inspired authority. He quotes from the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the minor prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ezra and Chronicles. We can go back 200 years beyond Philo. He lived and taught at Alexandria. His philosophy was a mixture of Old Testament theology and Greek metaphysics. Alexandria had long been the home of many Jews, who gathered there after the dispersion occasioned by the first destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and made the city of their adoption a famous center of Jewish learning and religion. The Jewish colony had at an early day become Greek in speech, and the general neglect of Hebrew had made a Greek translation of the Old Testament necessary. This was begun 280 B. C., and finished about 150 B. C.; accepted as authoritative at least 200 years before Philo. Not one of our present books is missing in the Septuagint, though several others were inserted and added, which were under the name of Apocrypha, and are accepted as canonical and inspired by the Roman Catholic Church, but are rejected by Protestants and Jews. Many of us can remember these books as printed and bound up in our older Bibles, though occupying a separate section.

Consider what these facts mean. Add 280 B. C., when the Greek translation was begun, to 1897, and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

we have 2,177. During that long period the Old Testament has been what it is now. It certainly is a modest claim that these books in the Old Testament must have been known, and in general circulation, one or two hundred years before 280 B. C., which brings us to the time of Ezra. In fact, we learn from the Proverbs of Jesus the son of Sirach, that in the days of his grandfather, 200 years before Christ, the division of the Old Testament into "the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms" was already known, and in familiar use; and the use which the author himself makes of these books proves that the first and second parts of this division had precisely the same contents which they have now. The verdict of sober scholarship upon this point, now under consideration, and in which Kuenen, Corvill and Cheyne agree, may be stated in the measured words of Professor Sanday: "The canon of the law was practically complete at the time of the promulgation of the Pentateuch by Ezra and Nehemiah, in the year 444 B. C., and that of the prophets in the course of the third century before Christ. As to the closing of the third group, there is perhaps more room for difference of opinion. A common view is that the recognition of these books as Scripture would be no later than 100 B. C. All the books are quoted as authoritative in recorded sayings from Hillel onwards." And Hillel died four years before the Christian era—the year in which our Lord was born. This makes it incontrovertibly clear that the Scripture to which Christ appealed is our own Old Testament. That nail should be clinched.

The concession of Professor Sanday is all the more

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

impressive because he concedes the documentary structure of the Pentateuch, the post exilian date of its middle books, locates Deuteronomy in the age of Josiah, places many of the Psalms in the Maccabean time, and maintains the late dates of Ruth and Daniel. But he cannot resist the historical evidence that a hundred years before Christ the Old Testament, as we now have it, was universally regarded as inspired Scripture. And when it is remembered how jealously the Jews, 200 years before Christ, guarded their sacred writings, and what superstitious reverence they paid them, what recondite meanings Philo found in names and numbers, we must be permitted to believe; and we cannot resist the positive conviction that those early students were better equipped to pass judgment upon questions of authorship and date than we are. Their emphatic and unanimous verdict is at least entitled to respect, even if they were not infallible. Between Ezra and David are only 600 years, and between Ezra and Moses are only about a thousand years. Between us and David are three thousand years, between us and Moses are thirty-four hundred years, and the period is broken for us by the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. But in the midst of that tumult stands the Old Testament, in substantially the same form in which we now have it, read in all the synagogues then as it is now, spoken of as Scripture, regarded as inspired, accepted and quoted by Christ as authoritative.

I am not aware that any scholar, with competent learning, however critical his attitude, would undertake seriously to call this statement in question.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Ewald, Strack, Stanley, Buhl, Delitzsch, Briggs, Robertson, Smith, Reuss and Samuel Davidson concede it. Kuenen and Wellhausen do not challenge it. Even Vernes, who claims that no writing of the Old Testament is of earlier date than Ezra, would not deny it. It is implied upon every page of the New Testament, and the evidence is clear, ample and decisive that from the very first the Christian Church accepted in its entirety the Old Testament as it was read and honored in the synagogues and by the nation.

The public life of our Lord was one strenuous, unbroken conflict with the Scribes and Pharisees, but He accepted the same Scriptures with themselves as a revelation from God. Paul broke with the synagogue in its theology, but for the ancient oracles he retained his undiminished and unqualified reverence. No criticism can shake that outstanding fact. The temple fell. The holy city crumbled into dust. The priesthood came to an end. Sacrifice ceased. One thing was neither burned nor buried. The Old Testament, as we have it, survived the shock of Roman arms, and with Christ it maintained its imperial ascendancy, gaining a new and universal constituency. For the notion advanced by some, that between the first century before Christ and the first century after Christ the Hebrew text was deliberately and seriously corrupted, is utterly without foundation; and the clear testimony of Josephus, who lived in the latter century, falls like a trip hammer upon those who hint it.

The only plausible qualification which can be made is that in the time of Christ there was some uncertainty concerning certain books which belong to what

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is called the third canon of Scripture. Thus Robertson Smith declares that the canon of law was complete 450 B. C.; the canon of the prophets 168 B. C., and that in the time of Christ, Psalms, Proverbs and Job were accepted as inspired Scriptures. That would leave out Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Daniel and Chronicles. Even these, he declares, were in existence and widely read; only it is claimed that these were not decisively regarded as Scripture until the end of the first century of our era. And here again the explicit testimony of Josephus falls like a trip hammer upon the theory. But even granting it, it is plain that the bulk of our Old Testament was in Christ's hands, and regarded by Him as Scripture. In our Oxford Bible the entire Old Testament covers 585 pages, and these disputed books cover only 89 pages; and their elimination would not alter a single feature in the history down to the time of Ezra. The evidence for our present Old Testament, as indorsed by Jesus Christ, is simply amazing, overwhelming, unanswerable. That settles the controversy for the believer in Christ.

---

### EVOLUTION AN UNPROVED THEORY.

In evolution, as an orderly development and advance, every intelligent man believes; and in that sense the doctrine is as old in literature as the first chapter of Genesis. But evolution, as a process of uninterrupted differentiation of being, under natural laws, and from inherent forces, as an unproved theory, with all the evidence squarely against it. So long as that is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

true, I, for one, am not going to let evolution reconstruct my Bible for me.

I claim that while in the realm of science evolution is an unproved theory, in the realms of literature and history it is demonstrably false. It is not true that the earliest literature of a nation is the crudest and its latest the best. It is not true that the line is one steady improvement. This is not true of Greece, or Rome, or Germany, or France, or England, or the United States. Homer never had a competitor. Shakespeare and Milton have not yet been eclipsed. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are still unrivaled. Madison and Jefferson were not pigmies compared to our present statesmen. Washington is still without a peer. We are not more skillful builders than the men who reared the pyramids, nor are we greater architects than the men who designed and superintended the cathedrals. We have not eclipsed the old masters in painting, sculpture and music. Civilizations do not necessarily grow better as they grow older. Turkey, India and China prove the very reverse. They have been rapidly going down. A book on "Degeneracy" a few years ago attracted wide attention. The picture was overdrawn. But the fact is that it requires the strenuous and continuous exertions of all good men to prevent things from becoming hopelessly bad. The machines are everywhere and always against righteousness and improvement. Progress is not due to them, but to the men who break away from them. There is one force in literature and in history of which evolution takes no account, and which it cannot explain. It is personality—strong, self-poised, determined personality. Again and again a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

man appears who challenges the world to combat, and he wins. It may be Paul; it may be Athanasius; it may be Luther; it may be Jesus Christ. Such men are prophets of God and they inaugurate new epochs. They shatter prisons and set men free. They arrest the growing degeneracy and usher in the better days. They are not the product of blind and inherent evolutionary forces. One, at least, has defied every attempt at classification. He stands alone, unapproached and unapproachable—the Son of Mary, the Carpenter of Nazareth, the Prophet of Galilee. Nothing in Greece, or Rome, or Judea explains Him. He was and remains the absolute antithesis of His time and of all times. Evolution goes to pieces when it touches Him. God is manifest when He appears. And what is true of Christ is true of every great leader who has appeared in history. Personality dominates in literature, in art, in history, in war and in peace. Carlyle may have gone too far in his hero worship, in his unstinted praise of great and energetic men. There is moral force, for good or evil, in the people, too; and we neglect that at our peril. Still it remains true that personality is the decisive force in history. And personality is the absolute antithesis of evolution. Unproved in science, demonstrably false in literature, art and history, the theory of evolution cannot be accepted as a canon of criticism. Certainly not at its demand shall I cease to believe and preach that God created man in His own likeness and image; that man fell by voluntary transgression, and that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, died to save man, and rose again from the sepulcher.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### HARNACK AND LITERARY CRITICISM.

Events are moving rapidly (April 4, 1897). While our American preachers and editors are celebrating the triumphs of literary criticism, and busying themselves with getting out a new Bible, the bugle from Berlin is sounding the call for a retreat all along the line. Nothing more noteworthy has appeared, in a hundred years, than Professor Harnack's first volume of his "Chronology of Old Christian Literature," fresh from the Leipzig press. No one will venture to question the author's scholarship. He is in the prime of life, and the bright particular star of the University of Berlin. He is the idol of Germany. No voice is more commanding in the leading seats of learning of England and America. In minuteness and breadth of historical learning he has no living equal. He is perfectly at home in the entire Christian literature of the first three centuries. He is fearless and independent. His orthodoxy has been fiercely assailed, even in Germany. He follows Ritschl in insisting that metaphysics must be eliminated from theology. But he also protests against manipulating the facts of history in the interest of a preconceived theory. It is in this last domain that his last book inaugurates a new departure.

Not the least remarkable part of the book is the preface. In it, Harnack sketches the present state of New Testament criticism, and announces the general conclusions to which his studies have led him. He declares that the attempt to sketch the origin and development of Christianity, by assuming that the New

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Testament books were "a tissue of deceptions and frauds," and late in appearance, has utterly broken down. The school of Baur is dead. Tradition has been vindicated as true and trustworthy. Interest in literary criticism is waning, and historical studies are displacing it; "the problems of the future lie in the domain of history, not of literary criticism," simply because tradition is right in its estimate of the literature. The significance of this verdict appears when it is remembered that the assumptions of the Wellhausen school, in the treatment of the Old Testament, are identical with the assumptions of Baur, which Harnack emphatically discredits and repudiates. Significant is the confession of a Dutch theologian, to whom Harnack refers without naming him, that he had been "compelled to believe in the supernatural origin" of Christianity. Harnack will not stand alone. He will carry the younger scholars with him, and the Old Testament critics will follow. That has been the order for two hundred years. In five years the retreat now begun may become a stampede.

In the body of the work the most remarkable thing is the discussion of the chronology of the life of Paul. It has come to be generally accepted that six years intervened between the death of Christ and the martyrdom of Stephen; and Paul's conversion has been located in the year 36. Holtzmann and Blass had placed it four or five years earlier. Harnack sifts the evidence bearing upon the date when Festus became governor of Cesarea—the crucial chronological point—and decides emphatically, with Eusebius and Tacitus, that this took place in 55 or 56. Paul had,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

at that time, been a prisoner for two years; so that his arrest in Jerusalem falls in 53 or 54. Combining now the data furnished in Acts and in Galatians, it appears that twenty-four years must be allowed between Paul's conversion and his arrest in 53 or 54. This locates his conversion in the year 29 or 30—the year of the crucifixion. And as a result, every one of the Pauline epistles is crowded back from four to six years: Thessalonians to 48; Galatians and Corinthians to 52; Romans to 53; Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon and Philippians to 56-58; the Pastoral epistles to 59-64, in which last year the apostle suffered martyrdom.

The most startling fact in this criticism is the date of Paul's conversion. It had been assumed that the events recorded in the first nine chapters of Acts covered a period of six years. According to Harnack, the time must be measured by six or nine months! The death of Christ and Paul's conversion are separated by less than a year! What a picture this gives us of the ferment of that time! No wonder the Dutch theologian was compelled to believe in a "supernatural origin" of Christianity! Harnack propounds no theory. He makes no note or comment. But he plants himself squarely upon these early data, which, so far as I know, he has been the first to suggest. And we are surely getting very near Christ, when the man who wrote Galatians and Romans was converted in the year when Jesus was crucified! For one, I am waiting to hear what European scholarship will have to say in reply. Harnack has done a bold thing; but as I have read his pages, I have not been able to see where he is vulnerable; and the man who challenges his

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

verdict on a matter of history had better do a good deal of thinking before he writes.

This book has stirred me to the depths. It seems to me that it marks the beginning of the end.

---

### WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

I take it for granted that those who listen to me are Christians, or want to be. I need not say that you ought to be. We are all sinners. We need to have a clear conception of Christ's life, death and resurrection, and that His sacrifice shall avail for the pardon of our sins, and that belief in and service of Him shall give us a celestial and eternal inheritance. The question which marks a history, the turning point of all, young or old, men, women and children; the question which goes deeper than any other is: What must I do to be saved? I want to give the Bible answer to that. We do not need speculation, or fancy, or theory. Your theories are as good as mine, and mine are as good as yours, and neither are good for anything. Your thoughts are not my thoughts, and mine are not yours. What you think I do not know; what I think you do not know.

Paul says: "The things of God knoweth not any one." I go a step further. We have got what Jesus Christ thought, said, did. We have Him, the incarnate Son of God. We have Him to answer the deep things of God. To the great question we want the Bible answer, the ancient answer, which is found

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

when we turn to the sixteenth chapter of Acts, thirtieth and thirty-first verses, when Paul and Silas are being brought out of the jail, and the jailer tremblingly asks: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" In many things Christian people may disagree, in questions of theology; church government—on a great variety of matters. It was so in the apostolic times; there were quarrels in the Church of Corinth; but they said—the answer leaped to their lips instantly, and from that day to this, during the more than 1800 years, it has been the same: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Upon a rough examination of the New Testament we find that the word "believe" occurs fifteen times, "believe in Christ" eleven times, and "upon Christ" thirty-two times. The high water mark of intellect, heart and will we call faith. We are first summoned to believe in Christ, to have confidence in His integrity, because if He did not deceive Himself He would not deceive us; to have the deep conviction that He says no more than He means, and that He means what He says. I wish that you knew the gospels by heart, from the first chapter of Matthew to the last verse of John. The gold of Ophir, the pearls of the sea, and the jewels of the mines are not to be compared to the sayings of Jesus. Shadows may lie upon the heart, I know. There are hard things in the Bible. But there are hard things in nature, in life. I see things every day that puzzle me more than the things I see in the Bible. Life is a serious thing. Life, as a serious thing, brings its hard problems. You and I do not know what to do or say sometimes in the face

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of them. But Christ knows. Believe Him. I am content to intrust the destinies of man to Him whose hands were pierced and from whose side flowed the blood that was shed to save man. Believe Christ. Believe in Christ—that's coming closer. We are called upon not only to believe Christ, but to believe in Christ. The preposition "in" implies movement, going to Christ, and stopping when it gets to Christ.

Faith is a personal relation to Jesus Christ, not membership in a church, not subscribing to a creed, not subscribing to a certain doctrine. It is coming to Christ and believing in Him. Believing in Christ is to believe in the one Man in whom dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. The miracle of the resurrection and the moral perfection of Christ prove Him to be the Son of God. Christ says: "I and the Father are one." If you have seen Christ you have seen God. Do you believe in Christ? Then you must rest in Him. You can't rest on anything else. There are two alternatives in regard to the judgment we pass upon Christ. Either He was a deceiver, the most blasphemous deceiver that ever lived, or He was the eternal Son of God. Criticism hereafter must choose between two things—either Christ was the most wickedly blasphemous man that ever lived, unworthy of homage from any one of us, or He was the Son of God. We are summoned to believe upon Christ. The preposition "upon" is not one of movement, but one of adhesion.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### THE LAMP OF LIFE.

We are seeking for an answer to this question: What is the Bible? And the first answer is that it is a book. It is the only book to which no other name is given, and when you say "the Bible" you simply say "a book." But it is one book among many; it is the book *par excellence*. It is the crown and the consummation of the world's literature; there is nothing to be compared with it. It stands head and shoulders above everything else. It is a unique book in its composition. Most books, and the best books, are written by single authors. I have generally noted that the more authors there are in a book the poorer it is. I don't take much stock in literature made by combination. The books which have had the largest influence in the world are those on which men wrought a great many years. Butler's "Analogy," for instance, was the result of thirty years of elaboration. The Bible extends not merely over a single generation, but over centuries—2,000 years, part of it. The hands of men wrote it; the hands of men compiled it; the hands of men translated it; the hands of men transmitted it. It is a human book all the way through, in language and in thought, and in form, and in substance, every fiber of it. Please make a note of that. It is divine, too, in every fiber of it. You cannot pick it to pieces and say: "This belongs to man and that to God." It all belongs to man. It is a human product with a divine soul.

The Bible deals with facts and with nothing else; deals with realities and with nothing else—realities of

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

time and eternity, realities of God and the soul. It is intensely real literature because it is intensely personal. It does not tell you anything about the stars or the sea; nothing about theology; it does not teach anything about things, but it teaches a great deal about persons. It is reality aflame. If there ever was a book full of facts, and only facts, it is the Bible.

The Bible is a book which has commanded from the first a peculiar veneration. Whether you have this or not does not make much difference. Men have believed that it was an inspired book, that it is an infallible authority upon the great theme with which it deals. Over and over again, during these three or four thousand years, this claim on behalf of the Bible has been disputed and assailed; but in spite of all that the book has held on its way. There never was a keener critic than Ewald during the present (nineteenth) century, and yet in a conversation he had with one of our American scholars he placed his hand upon a little Greek Testament that he always carried with him, and, speaking in the German tongue, said: "My friend, this book contains all the wisdom of the world."

The Bible has proved itself to be the mightiest of all moral agencies for the advancement of the world. Men who through it know their rights, and dare to maintain them, aflame with the passion for righteousness, become leaders of their day and generation. It is thought that rules the world. The pen and the tongue are mightier than the sword. Never were there such mighty men as the prophets and the apostles. Wherever this book has gone it has found a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

welcome, it has wrought its beneficent ministry. It is the only book that finds a welcome everywhere. It is the only book that has been translated into all the languages known to the world. It was the first book—do you note that—the first book ever printed. The first that came from the printing press in Europe was the Bible. No book has been multiplied as this has been. It is the only book in all the history of the world's literature that has had formed on its behalf a voluntary society for its free distribution; and wherever it has gone it has proved itself to be a tree of life, the eating of whose fruit has brought a benediction.

These things are just as plain as the stars to-night, just as plain as the sun at noon-day; the Bible is a book; it deals with reality; it has commanded a singular veneration; it has been the mightiest of all moral agencies in the advance of the world. This is extraordinary whether you believe its miracles or not; this is the extraordinary and the inevitable conclusion that there must be some extraordinary reason for it. Water never rises higher than its level; the cause must be adequate to the effect. And, therefore, these men, whose words have come like fire into the world, and burned their way through the heart of great evils, have a right to speak for themselves, and to be heard in their own behalf. None of these writers claim any originality. They don't claim the merit of being discoverers; in fact, they do the very reverse—they disclaim all originality and all discovery. They call themselves prophets; that is a term of humility. It was not prediction that constituted the peculiar qual-

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

ity of the prophets of the Old Testament. The word prophet simply means one who speaks for another, one who does not say anything on his own behalf; one who takes his message from another. They spoke as the prophets of God. They were men who saw. When you look into the heavens at night you do not create the stars. These men simply had open eyes, and God lifted the veil from time and eternity. A qualification must be made; they did not pretend to speak of all that God knows. There is a great deal of knowledge outside of the Bible, a great deal of truth, and a great deal of sacred history. It does not undertake to tell us everything that God has done in the past, or will do in the future—only a very small fraction of it. These men spoke for God; they see what He has revealed to them, and what they teach has to do with the important question of your salvation and mine. That is the whole of it. Precept and promise, biography and history—all centered on this point. And, therefore, it is that the Bible is fragmentary literature, if you expect to find a complete chronology. But it does not claim to be anything of the kind. If you expect to find here a finished system of astronomy, it may be said that the Bible was not written for that purpose; if you expect to find a thoroughly articulate theological system, it was not written for that purpose; none even as concerning ethics, or moral conduct, in an elaborate form. But you will find a complete and an exhaustive statement in the Bible of what God has done, and is doing, and will do to save men from their sins.

There are two questions that this book always deals

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in: First, What has God done to save me? and second, What must I do to be saved? What is the answer? What has God done to save me? This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord. And so you come to the Bible.

---

### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Who is God? Taking it for granted that we are theists, that we believe in the separate, independent, conscious personal existence of a living God, and in one living God, I assume His distinct, eternal, sovereign personality, and I do it for the simple reason that I plant myself unreservedly and leave no question whatever upon the statements of the Bible. There is nothing in all the Scriptures, from the first verse to the last, upon which such constant emphasis is laid as the eternal reality and independence of the personal being, God. He is described as a thinking, a feeling, a willing, a speaking, a fulfilling, an acting being. Every form of emotion is affirmed to exist in Him—pity, sorrow, surprise, anger, regret, love. He is represented as the searcher and beholder and the ruler of all things. He is declared to be absolute and eternal, independent of everything else. The whole universe hangs from His hand by a slender and invisible thread. Our life is written in Him; His life is not written in us. He is in all things by His creative and sovereign activity; but in His personal being He is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

absolute, independent, self-contained. The whole universe has taken nothing from His eternal and independent personality, and the whole universe, material and spiritual, can add absolutely nothing to it. This is no speculation. This lies in the heart of the Scriptures. "In the beginning God"—that is the way it reads, and every sentence which follows vibrates with that sublime affirmation. All the world is the work of His creative mind, and is upheld by it.

This truth is carried into that answer which the Lord gave to the woman of Samaria: "*God is a Spirit.*" There are four words there. Jesus did not use the four, however, but two. The verb is in italic; it does not belong there; and the last noun, "Spirit," in the original, is without the article "a." So that it stands "God—Spirit." But the word spirit sometimes means breath, sometimes life, sometimes other things. The form here is that God in His essential being is life—life from core to circumference. There is no more masterly summary of what this declaration that God is a spirit means than Psalm cxxxix. He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. None can resist Him. It is the simplest definition and answer to our question; but it touches only the metaphysical qualities of His being.

We come to a richer answer, which touches the question more deeply, when we consider what and how much the Scriptures have to say about the wisdom of God. The works of the Lord are marvelous, not because the sum of them is so vast, but because in wisdom He has made them all. He never does a foolish thing. There are no blunders and mistakes and misfits. He is patient. His patience is simply His wis-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

dom. Associated with this idea of the divine wisdom is the absolute, unqualified truthfulness of God. He cannot lie; He cannot deceive. He is transparent in everything that He says and in everything that He does. So far as He has revealed Himself it is not difficult to understand Him. He says what He means and He means what He says. He is never guilty of treachery, the vice which receives the severest condemnation, both in the Old and New Testament. The Bible finds the root of this veracity, this truthfulness, in God's eternal and absolute moral purity. He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. That is the reason He speaks true; that is the reason He acts true. The fiber of truth runs into the inmost recesses of His moral nature. He is nothing but truth. He is eternally consistent with Himself, so that the name given to Him in the Old Testament is Jehovah. "I am that I am, and never change. What I was I am now; what I am now I will be forever." Eternally consistent with Himself; it is the equivalent of holiness. In the Scriptures this declaration is preached with incessant constancy and emphasis—the immaculate personal holiness of God. That is the glory before which seraphim fall on their faces. It is that which constitutes the energy and the active force of what we call His justice. He cannot overlook wrong-doing. He must punish the rebellious and the wicked. That necessity is fixed upon Him by the moral perfection of His nature. He is the consuming fire, and the stubble and the chaff must go to ashes. He hates sin, and He hates the man who sins. You cannot separate them. It is folly to talk about hating sin and loving

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the sinner. You may love him so far as the possibilities of his deliverance are concerned, but you cannot punish the sin which a man does without laying the strokes on the sinner. And yet while God hates sin, He does not hate the sinner in the sense that He does not want to deliver him from that which is his curse and ruin. He still loves him with infinite compassion. There never were sweeter words than "Our Father," and there are times when I hardly dare to say them. But if Jesus Christ dwell in your heart by faith, the fellowship will become so close that the immaculate holiness of God will be your ultimate possession. That is what redeeming grace means.

---

### WHAT IS MAN?

There are three methods which are open to us in the attempt to answer the question, What is Man? or What am I? First, is the method of observation; second, the method of self-inspection, and third, the method of revelation. We may look out, we may look in, and we may look up. We may use our eyes, we may proceed to examine our own souls, and we may listen to what God has to say. Let us begin with the simplest method and step by step proceed to those things which are most important and far reaching. Let us use our eyes. We shall conclude, as is most evident, that man is the most highly developed animal in the order of nature. He shares with the brute creation instincts and passions; his body is built upon the same model as theirs; it is subject to the same laws

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of growth, decay and death; it is nourished by the same elements and substances, and breathes the same air. He is, as said, simply the highest order of animal tenanting the planet.

And yet there are three things which distinguish him even as an animal. First, he stands and walks erect; he creeps when he is an infant, and stoops when he is old. In the second place, what strangely differentiates man from all other animals—a patent and an impressive fact, by the way—is his nakedness at birth. He comes into the world without any provision whatever for protection from exposure to the extremes of heat and cold. The seal has its fur, the ox its hide, the bird its feathers; but every man wants garments to protect him. In the third place, and this is the most remarkable thing in the differentiation, man is the only animal that uses fire. So he is a cook as well as a tailor. Reptiles, birds and beasts fly from fire as from their bitterest enemy; man alone grasps it in his hands, and holds it as the most valuable of his servants. He has used it from the dawn of civilization. One can almost mark the steps of his progress by the larger use he has made of this element. It is seen strikingly in our manifold industries.

There are certain minor and minuter characteristics which give to man a place peculiarly his own. He is the only animal that has a hand. The monkey has not a hand; it is really a foot in its structure, and in the purposes for which it is used—leaping and running. You cannot use your hands in that way. If you think you can, just try it to-morrow, putting them in your shoes and walking across the bridge. But

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

they were never made for the purpose of locomotion. Another characteristic which gives to man a peculiar place as an animal is this: He laughs. Alone of all the animal tribes, he possesses the muscles which contract into a smile; and it is the power of laughter which gives to the face its infinite mobility of expression. The cat will hump its back and hiss; the dog will show its teeth and snarl; the horse will prick up its ears and kick; but it is the face in man which is the index of his emotions, and it is only upon his face that the sunshine ripples; it is only from his lips that there falls the ringing laughter. And yet, when all has been said, it still remains true, as the result of observation merely, that man is only a highly endowed animal. He is born, he comes to manhood's estate; then the infirmities of age creep upon him. By and by the breath leaves his body, and you bury him out of sight.

Let us next turn our eyes inward. Let us pursue for a little while the method of self-inspection. It is a marvelous power which we possess that we can be both subject and object at once, speaking and listening. The same being, and capable of interrogating ourselves, and in the very act of asking questions secure an answer to them. Our point of departure is to be found in those qualities by which the speech of man is distinguished from that rude communication which animals have with each other of their own kind. Properly speaking, however, the animals have no such thing as language. They have only a few emotional cries—of alarm, of welcome, of pain, of pleasure, of hostility, of friendship. The most salient characteristic of man's speech is that it has a living center from

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which it proceeds, and to which it ever returns. That center is the third of the five vowels—I. It never dropped from the stars, it never leaped from the depths of the ocean, it is not heard in the roll of the thunder, it is not articulated by the shock of the earthquake, it never fell from the throat of songsters in the sky. You say it a hundred times in a day. It is the most wonderful thing that you utter—that personal pronoun I. It is the one thing that holds itself steadfast and immovable amid all changes, physical, mental and moral. When I say "I think," I know that I am thinking, not some one else. It is I who make the choice. I am, therefore, self-conscious and free. I am self-centered as well as self-conscious. I have the power of personal preference. The brute displays no moral sense. It does vicious things sometimes, and is killed. It is not, however, held to moral responsibility for anything ill it does. Man moves on an entirely different plane. He feels that he is under obligation to bring the corresponding animal passions and instincts which he sees in the brute creation under the sway of reason: To put them in leash; to force the bridle into their teeth and hold fast to the reins at any cost; to subdue them by the power of the conscience within him. It is his business to do it. People talk about living according to nature. Yes, let the flower live according to its nature; let the beasts of the forest live according to their nature, and let man live according to his. The lusts of the flesh war against the soul. The highest and best must not be trodden under foot by that which is low, but all evil must be brought into subjection.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

When man comes to investigate himself he discovers that the truest definition of What is Man? is that he is a personal, rational being, carrying the law of his life within himself as imposed by the reason; self-conscious, self-directing, self-judged. Self-inspection will carry us no further than this. We come to something of even greater importance when we hear what the Scriptures declare concerning man at the creation. He was made in the image and in the likeness of God, and the record tells also how this was done. The breath of life was breathed into his nostrils and he became a living soul. In his essential constitution he is spirit. The body is only a bandage. From our origin and constitution, then, it follows that we must live as personal beings. Our fellowships and friendships must be personal fellowships and friendships. A life of prayer, a life of loving intercourse with God, a life of obedience to Him—that, my friends, makes the sweetest life that a man can enter into.

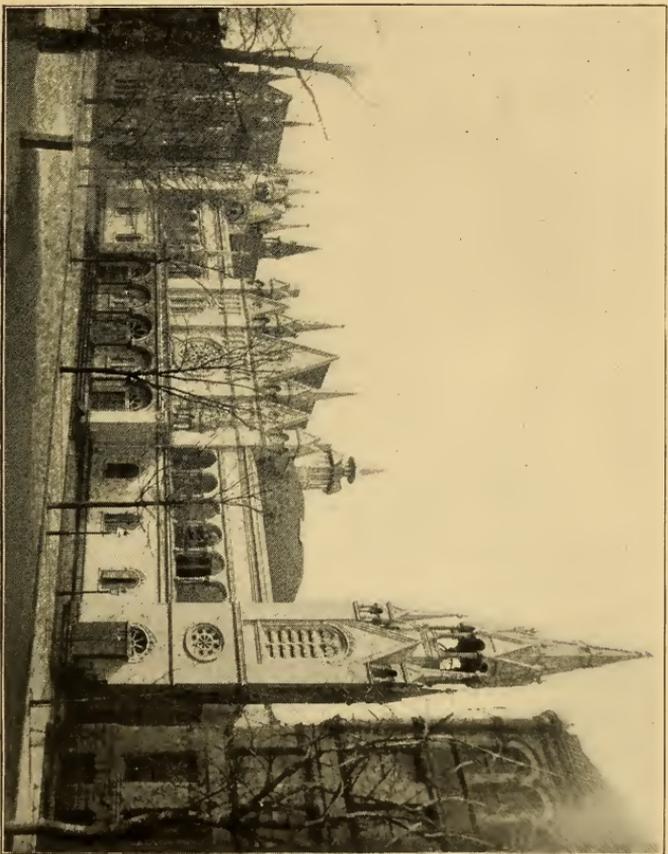
The instinct for immortality, which is another peculiarity of man, is in every human breast. You find it in the lowest and in the highest. All literatures are full of it. Life immortal! It is not a gift bestowed upon me and not upon others; it is not a blessing which God has secured for us, but it is a problem which He has solved, and it is a question which He, once for all, has answered. Let us be striving for the riches that can never perish; let us be ambitious to gain the crown that shall never fade.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

No one can answer the question "Who is Jesus Christ?" except Jesus Christ Himself. That Jesus Christ has done. But men have not been content to take Him at His own estimate, and have subjected His testimony to criticism. And the moment a suspicious or critical attitude is assumed to Jesus Christ He becomes a psychological riddle and a historical enigma. Nor is this surprsing. Without sympathy, men cannot be understood. Love need not be blind. But suspicion always distorts the judgment. Beside, no man reveals all that is in him, and the best that is in him, to one whom he has reason to distrust, and whose confidence he has not won. The knock of distrust upon the door of the heart brings no response. The door remains locked and bolted. The man who does not believe in Jesus Christ makes it impossible to form a consistent and satisfactory estimate of Him. And hence I shall completely ignore the answers which have been given to the question by those who have assumed a critical attitude to Jesus Christ, or to those to whom we are indebted for such knowledge of Him as we have. For it is one and the same whether we discredit Him or the writers of the Gospels and the Epistles. For if the record is suspicious and untrustworthy, the lineaments of Jesus Christ become blurred, uncertain, and fade away.

I shall, therefore, assume that Jesus Christ acted and spoke as He is represented to have acted and spoken. And to that I shall confine myself. I shall ignore the interminable controversies which have been



EXTERIOR CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

waged around His person, over which councils have wrangled and whose results have been embodied in the great ecumenical creeds. These creeds are, in the main, confession of ignorance. They tell us what Jesus Christ is not. They are batteries pouring hot shot into heresies. But they leave us just where they begin, to form an estimate of Him by what He has said about Himself, and by what He has shown Himself to be in action. He has coined His own name; and that name is the Son of Man. Uniformly does Christ speak of Himself in this way, even when He speaks of His coming in glory, at the end of the world, for universal judgment. He is not a son of man, but the Son of Man. But the uniqueness and fullness of His humanity leaves it humanity still; for man is man, at the bottom and at the top. So Jesus Christ is man, a man, the man. He is human in every fiber of His Being, from center to circumference. He is human, sleeping and waking, speaking and thinking, meditating and praying. There are no depths in Him which are not human; there are no heights in Him which are not human. He is human in the manger; He is human on the throne. There is no divided life in Him. It is natural, spontaneous, even consistent throughout. Whatever truth there may be in the theological statement that two natures were united in His personality, that there were in Him two centers of consciousness and two wills, it is certain that the duality never came into concrete expression. As we interpret Him by the record, He was one, not two, in consciousness and in volition. The union was more intimate than that of soul and body. It was so pro-

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

found and intimate that it defies analysis. It leaves Him human, a true man, in the whole scope of His conscious and active life. He was born in helplessness. He grew in stature and wisdom and favor with God and man. He was a student of the holy oracles. He was tempted and He conquered by faith and prayer. He needed sleep. He wept. He dreaded death when it faced Him, and he braced himself to endure it. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of Man, a true, conscious, personal man.

But this man makes claims which from any other lips would be instantly repudiated and resented as the grossest blasphemy. They were so repudiated and resented by those who condemned and crucified Him. And the more highly we regard Him as a good man the more are we compelled to accept His estimate of Himself, without qualification. It must stand, to the crossing of a "t" and the dotting of an "i." Nor is it difficult to determine what these claims were, claims made deliberately and repeatedly by Him, claims which the apostles emphasized and which the church for more than eighteen centuries has honored in her prayers and praises. I will not refer to His miracles, nor to the way in which He speaks of God as His Father, nor to His claim that He was entitled to interpret the law. For a prophet might be invested with such authority. But He claimed and exercised the right to forgive sin, and He commanded His disciples to preach forgiveness and eternal life in His name. He declared that to Him belonged the exclusive right of final judgment. All that are in the graves, He tells us, shall hear His voice, and in response shall present themselves at His

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

tribunal. He has commanded us to pray in His name, declaring that whatever honors in worship were rendered to the Father were due also to Him. Baptism visibly seals His ownership of us, which He shares with the Father and the Holy Ghost. In the Holy Supper we commemorate His atoning death, and look forward to His coming in glory. The Holy Spirit He declares to be His gift; and the vocation of the Spirit He affirms to be the disclosure and explanation of His redemptive work. Twice, once in the fierce debate and once in the quiet of the upper chamber, while He was praying, He affirmed His conscious pre-existence. Abraham had seen His day. The Scriptures testified to Him. Before the foundation of the world He shared the Father's glory. He claimed equality with God the Father, and when His hearers were so angered that they threatened to kill Him for His blasphemy, His answer was only a more incisive and unqualified re-affirmation. In this review I have not touched the Epistles through which the same note rings.

The Gospels uniformly represent the man Jesus Christ as conscious God, coming down from heaven to die for the salvation of men. The precise moment when this consciousness of Godhead emerged and became fixed is not stated. Some have located it at the Baptism; others have traced it to His first visit to the Temple when He was twelve years old. The silence of the record compels a reverent silence on our part. It is certain that during His ministry this consciousness and conviction were clear and continuous, without hindrance or addition to His human life and action. The picture of Jesus Christ, in the New Testa-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ment, is that of a man who came to know that He was the Eternal Son of God, who had voluntarily renounced eternal divine independence for a life of human independence, suffering and death.

There have been needless debates upon the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ. By some they are sharply separated; by others they are mixed or fused. Upon this point the New Testament is silent. It contents itself with affirming that the man Jesus Christ was with God, and God, from everlasting. He could not have been more truly God had He never become man. And He could not have been more truly man had He never been God. Man He was, and is, and remains forever, in every fiber of His being. God He was, and is, and remains forever, in every fiber of His being. No phrase covers the unique fact. You may call Him God and Man, God-Man, God in Man—and not all these names will fit the unique unity of His life. God and Man, God in Man, suggests two separate conscious centers not found in Christ. God-man savors of a mixture of which there is no trace. All phrases are true; all are inadequate. For we face a truly human personality, with one body, one soul, one consciousness and one will, in which human personality there is the consciousness of essential and eternal deity. He was the man who knew Himself to be God.

I know of but one passage in the New Testament which throws any light upon this miracle and mystery of history. I mean what Paul says in *Philippians ii. : 5-11*. According to this statement Christ existed in the form of God, and was conscious of equality with God. He was God. But He emptied Himself, surren-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

dered the form of God for the form of a servant, and this He did by becoming man. The form of a thing cannot be assumed without assuming the nature of that thing. Christ could not take the form of a servant without becoming really man. But a thing may assume another form without surrender of its nature, provided that form is suited to the nature. Christ, as the Eternal Son of God, could become man without surrender of His divine nature, provided the form of a human life was suited to the nature of God. And that is plainly assumed in the Biblical teaching that man bears the image of God, and that God can dwell in the human soul. And if this is not clear, the simple fact remains that Jesus Christ is declared to be the King who voluntarily surrendered the form of God, in which He eternally existed, and exchanged it for the form of a servant by becoming man. Before His birth Christ was God in the form of God. On earth Christ was God in the form of man. In heaven, and eternally, Christ is God in the form of man, and man in the form of God. A Saviour who is at once God and man is what the soul craves. As man, Christ links Himself to us, tempted in all points as we are, entering into all our sorrows and sins. As God, Christ links us to Himself, able to save us to the uttermost, sharers in His eternal glory.

---

### WHY DID CHRIST DIE?

The answer to the question, "Why did Christ die?" will depend upon the reply which is given to the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" If Christ was only a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

man, though the greatest and best of men, His death can have only a human meaning. It cannot outrank that of a patriot who dies for his country, or that of a martyr who surrenders his life in the cause of truth. And upon such an estimate of Him, His death was inevitable. Had He escaped violence, old age would have enfeebled His powers, and He could not have escaped the grave. His death would have been a tragedy, an unfortunate and undeserved calamity; but in it He could only be regarded as sharing the fate which falls upon many, who fall at the very beginning of their career.

The question assumes an entirely different aspect when the truth of the incarnation is granted. And this truth I assume. Jesus Christ was the Word become flesh. He was the Eternal Son of God before He was born. He was the Eternal Son of God during the entire period of His life on earth. He remains forever the Eternal Son of God in His exalted and glorified humanity. Of course, this implies the mystery of the trinity; and the trinity of God is ingrained in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is God in the form of man; God in every fiber of His being, man in every fiber of His being; as completely God as if He were not a man, and as completely man as if He were not God. We cannot divide Him. He is always divine and He is always human. The truly human experiences were also divine experiences. The truly human acts were also divine acts. The personality was human from center to circumference, and it was divine from center to circumference. The one soul was human to the core, and it was divine to the core. It follows

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

from this, that whatever is affirmed of Jesus Christ is as true of His deity as it is of His humanity. The infirmities and pains of the body touched and pierced His divine nature. The sufferings and death were those of the Eternal Son of God. He was buffeted and bruised; He rose from the sepulcher and ascended into the heavens. And this gives to His death a unique and startling meaning.

For it could not have been inevitable. He could die, but He needed not to die. His life was in His own hands, as ours is not. So He declared that no man could take it, and that He had power to lay it down and power to resume it. Not all the armies of earth, not all the devils in hell, could have dragged Him to the cross. He died because He had come to die, because He had made up His mind to die. And if death was the eternal and voluntary choice of Jesus Christ, to which He marched with deliberate and eager steps, then we must call it either suicide or sacrifice. It is only necessary to state the alternatives to make it plain that the death of Jesus Christ was a divine sacrifice. Such the New Testament always represents it to have been.

But why did Christ sacrifice Himself upon the altar of death? Sacrifice for its own sake has nothing to commend it. We do not praise the spendthrift. We do not regard foolhardiness or recklessness as courage. Wise men do not burn up their money. Good men do not throw their lives away. The word sacrifice is a religious term. It defines a sacred act. It means the destruction or surrender of one thing for another regarded as more desirable. The death of Jesus Christ

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

was a divine sacrifice. It must, therefore, have had an adequate purpose. That purpose the New Testament declares to have been our salvation from sin and our eternal redemption. That we might not perish He died and rose again. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

This crowds another question to the front. It is this: "Why was it necessary for the Eternal Son of God to die that we might be saved?" The fact that this is the result which His death secured is a fact beyond all question for every one who believes the New Testament. But why was such a death necessary? One answer is, that in the flesh of Christ God condemned sin—that is, destroyed its power. And to this is added the statement that the strength of sin is the law of God, and the law of God is simply the expression of His eternal justice. In death Christ grappled with sin; in grappling with sin He encountered the law of God, of which sin is the violation; and in encountering the law of God, Christ undertook to vindicate and satisfy the eternal righteousness of God—that eternal righteousness which was and remains His personal attribute as much as the Father's. It was the lawgiver who died for the transgressor. This removes all appearance of antagonism or conflict between Christ and the Father, in the atonement. It was not an angry God whom Christ appeased, and the fires of whose wrath were quenched in blood. Whatever anger or wrath there is in God is also in Jesus Christ. So that when we speak of the death of Christ as demanded by the law of God, and by the righteousness of God, which that law embodies or enforces, we must remember

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

that this demand is not laid upon Christ from without, but proceeds from within Himself. It is the righteousness of God in Him; it is the law of God in Him which makes His death necessary to our salvation. So much is plain, demanded by the teaching of the New Testament. Whether we can probe the mystery any deeper admits of serious doubt.

And yet our question is not fully answered unless we add one thing more. If the necessity of the death of Christ was such as has been indicated, we must join in what the Scriptures declare and thrust into the foreground, that the love which moved the Eternal Son of God to suffer and die for our salvation passes understanding and is unspeakable. Love can do no more than to die for its enemies. Every doubt is silenced by such a sacrifice. Fears vanish under such a revelation of the heart of our God. If that does not make us penitent, nothing will. If that does not make us hate sin, nothing will. If that does not make us patient, nothing will. If that does not give us a song, nothing will. Let us rejoice with trembling.

---

### WHAT DOES THE NEW BIRTH MEAN?

The man turns about, but he turns about because God has created him anew. This radical change has been spoken of as the imparting of a new nature, or the implanting of a new principle of life, or the creation of a new taste. The only certain fact is that a definite creative energy is exerted in and upon the soul, in virtue of which it may be said to be born again. This

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is clear when we consider that the change is represented as a birth, as a new creation, and as a resurrection from death to sin.

Turning to the New Testament we find that the new birth is the inscrutable sovereign act of God in the soul. It is inscrutable; we cannot understand its method—as mysterious as the action of the air, whose movement we hear and feel, but whose origin we cannot trace, and whose limits we cannot define. And it is the sovereign act of God, for they who receive Christ are said to be born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. It is John alone, of the New Testament writers, who speaks of this radical moral change in the soul as a birth; though the word is found once, in a modified form, in the writings of Peter. Paul speaks of it as a new creation, or as a resurrection from moral death, thus clearly and forcibly emphasizing the supernatural character of the change. John clings to the word birth, but he represents it as a birth from above, and speaks of those who are the subjects of it as “born of God.” So that regeneration is as really a miracle as creation or resurrection; that is to say, its casual energy is the personal action of God in the soul.

But the inscrutable act of God is a purely spiritual act. The Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration. We are born of the Spirit. The act, therefore, must not be confounded with an act of mere power. The word spirit means breath. The Holy Spirit is the living breath of God, and the new birth is the result produced by God’s breath upon and into the soul of man. The power by which God makes a star is

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

not the power by which He regenerates us. The change is a spiritual change, and the act is a spiritual act. It follows from this that regeneration is not the creation of a new being, nor the implanting or imparting of a new faculty. Regeneration does not create a new soul any more than it creates a new body. Neither is altered in essential constitution. The change is radically and exclusively spiritual; its sphere is in the convictions, the affections, the elective preferences and purposes of the will.

Men are born again or begotten again, through the word of God, that incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He operates in and through the reason, the conscience, the moral affection, the will. He takes away our blindness and hardness of heart and makes an end of our darkness. The Spirit does more than teach; He so teaches as to convict and persuade; He so convicts and persuades as to create us anew. Illumination and conviction and persuasion are not all there is in regeneration; but there is no regeneration without them—that is to say, the spiritual act of God is, throughout, a rational act. It is mysterious and miraculous, but it is neither mechanical nor magical. God achieves it by means of truth, not by physical power; by His spiritual action in and upon the rational and moral nature of man in and upon the soul as a thinking, feeling, willing subject. Man, therefore, is conscious and active in regeneration. Not in the sense that he co-operates with God in producing the radical change, but in the sense that reason,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

conscience, affection and will are in conscious and active movement during the entire process from beginning to end. It is God who, through His living word, regenerates us, but that truth cannot gain entrance and do its transforming work unless we listen and consent, and in listening and consenting the soul is active.

But the truth which God uses in regeneration is not an abstract proposition. It is concrete and specific. It is the truth which is embodied in law and gospel, in precept and promise. Here we learn most from Paul, who reminds us that we are created anew in Christ Jesus, and are risen with Christ, quickened together with Him. The work of the Holy Spirit is not independent of Christ. His chief and highest mission is to reveal Christ to our minds and hearts, to make clear to us the dignity of His person and the meaning of His advent, death and resurrection. Such as receive Jesus Christ receive that truth of God, through which they are born again. This makes the path of our duty plain. The philosophy of regeneration may escape us. Any attempt to make it intelligible to ourselves may only result in greater bewilderment and confusion. But if the new birth be a birth in Christ, if the new creation be a creation in Christ, the one thing for us to do is to keep in close touch with Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God become man, our Teacher, Redeemer and King. At this point the mystery clears. We know what it is, by personal and confiding fellowship with wiser and better men and women, to be transformed into their ways of thinking and acting; and sometimes the change is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

so radical that it may be called a new birth. We say—and many can say it—“Since I met that man, that woman, a great change has come over my life. I hardly know myself; I wonder, sometimes, whether I am the same man, so thoroughly have I been changed in my thoughts and purposes.” We are made, or unmade, by those to whom we give our hearts. And they who open their minds and hearts to Jesus Christ, as the wisest and the best among the sons of men, as the Son of Man in whom the fullness of the redeeming godhead dwelleth bodily, cannot fail to be the subjects of a regenerating agency whose fruit is eternal life. That energy is personalized in Him; it flows out from Him, and we need but touch Him to be conscious of the healing power. There is no virtue in the touch, the virtue is only in Him; but without the touch the virtue which is in Him does not become ours. A slender wire overhead and a connecting lever swinging in a socket, and with a grooved wheel at the upper end, are pieces of inert machinery. There is no power in them. But when from the central power house the subtle and invisible electric current shoots through them and down into the wheels, the heavy mass above the wheels begins to move. Wire and lever are only the conductors of the energy, but as conductors they are indispensable. And faith saves, because faith connects us with Christ, who is the power of God unto salvation. It is the conductor of salvation. We are exhorted to lay hold upon eternal life, and that life is in Jesus Christ. That eternal life becomes ours when we lay hold upon Jesus Christ; in believing on Him and surrendering ourselves to Him

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

we are born again. Let us keep in touch with Jesus Christ. Let us touch not merely the hem of His garment; let us touch His pierced palms and leave our hands in them; let us come closer still until thought answers to thought, and until our heart pulses throb in unison, until His holy will sweetly subdues and shapes our own; until He dwells in us by His spirit and we dwell in Him by faith and surrender, and the mysterious and mighty new birth will be a concrete fact in our personal experience. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!

---

### JUDGMENT OF SELF.

In our judgment upon ourselves we are to follow the rule of severity; in our judgment upon others we are to follow the rule of forbearance. We are to be stern and uncompromising with ourselves; we are to be cautious and charitable with others. Nor is there anything arbitrary in this difference of temper. Reason and righteousness will permit no other course. For the fact is simply this: that every man may and ought to understand himself, while he understands no other man, and no other man understands him. It follows from this that self-judgment is the only thing possible for any one of us. Our ignorance of others debars us from passing judgment upon others, and debars others from passing judgment upon us. God is the sole judge of all, because He knows the secrets of all hearts, and therefore can pass righteous judgment, the judgment which every individual conscience

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

must approve. To his own master every man stands or falls. There is an awful solemnity in this moral isolation from which we cannot escape. We cannot share our personal responsibility with others. We must carry the whole of it. Nor should we desire the least release. The moment we do that we surrender the crown God meant us to wear. We must be kings in reality, not merely in name. And we are sovereigns only when we have the courage of our own convictions, and follow them. We are never weary of preaching the duty of individual political convictions as indispensable to the permanence of republican institutions; the absolute integrity of individual citizenship. The kingdom of God and of His righteousness rests upon the same corner stone. Infallible moral judgment is possible only to God, Who knows me, and to myself, who may be taught of God. For when it comes to knowledge, there is only one thing I can know with absolute certainty and by immediate consciousness: and that is myself. I can know my thoughts, my motives, my purposes, my weakness, my sin. My soul can know no other soul as my soul can know itself. And that being the case, I owe it to myself to be severe. From my self-judgment there can be no appeal. Whether social judgment brings me shame or joy will depend upon its agreement with self-judgment. If my heart condemns me, every approving word will be a barbed and poisoned arrow. If my heart justifies me, the scorn of a world will not make me cringe. With Paul and Silas I may sing in the inner prison; with Stephen my face may shine as an angel's though I be doomed to death.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

No one can judge me except myself. And myself I must judge. I know whether I wear a mask or not; I know whether I am honest or a hypocrite; and that knowledge must and will determine the only judgment which can be valid for me. From myself I cannot hide. With myself I must always be. No solitude can destroy that close and eternal companionship. And, therefore, I should be severe with myself. Such severity in self-judgment is the first step in salvation. I must acknowledge my sin. I must bow to the law which condemns me. I must make its sentence my own. I must will what the law wills, both when it commands purity in the inward parts and when it condemns me. For not until I do that will the law step aside and leave me face to face with Christ, who alone can save me. And as soon as I do that, the law no longer blocks my way, but steps aside, that Christ may deal with me. Forbearance is out of place when we deal with ourselves. That is self-deception. The one thing we can do, and must do, is to confess our sin, that God in His righteousness, and through Christ, may forgive and cleanse us.

The moral severity which should determine self-judgment cannot be our rule in our judgment of others. Here forbearance must be the rule. We must attribute no goodness to ourselves of which we are not certain. We must attribute no wickedness to others of which we are not certain. We must esteem others as better than we know ourselves to be, simply because they may be, in spite of appearances. For appearances are deceptive. "What?" you say, "am I to assume that the criminal may be a better man

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

than myself, or as good a man as myself?" Why not? Appearances are against him, and the civil law must judge by appearances. But suppose you go behind appearances. Jesus says that hatred is murder. If there were no hatred there would be no murder. If there were no covetousness there would be no stealing. Have you never hated? Have you never coveted? An old-time London preacher used to say whenever he saw a criminal led to the scaffold: "There I go but for the grace of God." He meant it, and said it with choking tears of pity and shame. How much do we know of the worst of men? What do we know of their ancestral inheritance, of their poisoned blood, of their degrading and brutalizing surroundings? Thirty years have passed since I read this sentence: "He is the best man who makes the best fight." I have never forgotten it. And often I think that in the slums there is harder fighting than in the palaces. I think that if Christ should part the sheep and the goats, this day, in our city, we would all be amazed, ashamed, if not indignant. Amazed and ashamed we certainly would be, though not one of us could be indignant, for His judgment would be righteous judgment. Do I say this to excuse vice? Do I say it in hostile criticism of our courts? Far from it. They must judge by such evidence as they can secure. But no civil procedure can go down far enough. God may save harlots and murderers where society cannot. We reap as we sow; but mixed with the tares there may be wheat, but we cannot separate them. And I am bound to think of my fellow men as well as I can, to deal with them in the spirit of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

forbearance, that the good which is in them may not be wholly checked. I must not cloak any sin, nor excuse any sinner; but for even the worst I must remember that Christ died for him. Myself I know, and with myself I must be severe; others I do not know as I know myself, and, therefore, I must treat others with generous forbearance.

This is not our natural temper. We are disposed to treat others harshly and ourselves leniently. Did not our Lord say something about a man whose debt of ten thousand talents was fully canceled, who went out and had another man arrested and thrust into prison who owed him a hundred pence? He was lenient with himself, merciless with his fellow man. Was that right? How many of us stop with "Forgive us our debts," without adding from the heart, "as we also have forgiven our debtors?" The verb is in the perfect tense. We are supposed already to have forgiven those who have wronged us when we pray to have our own sins forgiven. Let us dare to do the right thing; to exercise forbearance in our treatment of others, and to exercise severity in our treatment of ourselves. For when we confess our sins with the sorrow of a guilty repentance, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ blots out all our transgressions; and when we deal in gentle forbearance with our fellow men, we prove ourselves to be the children of Him who is good to all, and who would have all men to be saved.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### CHRIST DWELLING IN THE HEART.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye may be rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians iii:17-19.

A sentence like this cannot be understood by severely exact and scientific analysis. There is too much passion in it. The clauses are piled upon each other without much regard to logical order or rhetorical completeness. The utterance is explosive, as is the case in all impassioned prayer. And this prayer is one, not many. Its great burden is that the Ephesian Christians may be made strong, mature in character and fruitful in service, through the indwelling of Christ in their hearts. Christ dwells in the heart by faith; He dwells in the heart which trusts in Him. To have Christ dwelling in the heart is the same as to be filled with all the fullness of God, because in Christ the fullness of the godhead dwelleth bodily. And these two things, again, Christ dwelling in the heart, and being filled with all the fullness of God, are the same as knowing the love of Christ, comprehending its length and breadth, and depth and height. By so much as we are rooted and grounded, by faith, in that amazing and unspeakable love, we are filled with all the fullness of God, we have Christ dwelling in us, we are made strong in Christian character and service. This is our one great task, to make real to ourselves

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the love of Christ for us, the root and foundation of our steadfastness. He is the vine, we are the branches.

The idea of an indwelling God, or an indwelling Christ, or an indwelling Spirit, is confusing to many. It savors of mysticism. I have often wished that the phrase "mystical union" had never been coined. God is united to us by grace in Jesus Christ, by personal affection, seeking and securing our salvation. We are united to God and to Christ by faith, by the trust which God's love in Christ kindles; which faith becomes active in love, and expresses itself in glad and grateful obedience. You may call this mystery and mysticism if you choose, but it is not one whit more mysterious and mystical than the way in which mother and child act and react upon each other. They, too, live in each other, by love and by faith, and where the faith is living and fervent the child comes to be filled with all the mother's fullness. We observe every day how strong souls shape weak souls, by the self-sacrificing love which dwells in the strong, and by the fearless surrender which dwells in the weak. In love the soul gives itself, and in faith or trust the soul gives itself. The love, which is sacrifice, gives itself to others, belongs to the highest grades of life; it is the passion and prerogative of the noblest men and women. The faith or trust by which the soul gives itself to the shaping guidance of another lies at the heart of all growth in wisdom and goodness. All must be learners, though all may not be teachers; and no one needs to be so diligent and earnest a learner as the teacher. All must be saved, though not all may have the equipment of saviors; and no one needs sal-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

vation so much as he who undertakes to save others. One must be bullet-proof to save others from death. It comes to this at last—God and my soul; God the great and only teacher; all of us pupils in His school. One is our master, and all of us on the benches. God must save us by His grace; in Him and in Christ it is love which constitutes the bond of union.

We are saved by surrendering ourselves to that grace; with us it is faith which constitutes the bond of union, a faith which His love awakens and justifies. So that it comes to this: to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, to comprehend its dimensions, its length, breadth, depth and height, is the one secret of Christian peace and power. In the language of another, from whom we should not have expected it, the fiery Jude: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." God's love for you! Make that your refuge and banqueting hall! Only remember that this love of God is not easy-going indulgence. It is sword, hammer and consuming fire. It is a refiner's furnace. The will of God which makes His love effective is our sanctification, our salvation from sin, our establishment in lowliness. If we estimate aright this love of God in Christ, its passionate intensity to make us pure will awe us while it makes us sing and shout in the certainty of victory. We shall rejoice with trembling.

From whatever angle this love of Christ is regarded, it is unspeakable. It is unspeakable in its length. It had no beginning; it knows no break; it has no end. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. It is unspeakable in its breadth. It includes

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

each and all. It is like a benediction upon every soul. It is unspeakable in its depth. It saves to the uttermost. And it is unspeakable in its height. It makes us joint heirs with Christ, kings and priests with God forever.

The great epistle to the Ephesians contains Paul's doctrine of the Christian Church. She has a divine calling. Her one task is to make known the manifold wisdom of God, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of His grace, to teach men the unspeakable love of Christ. No other organization is equipped for such a service. And by the church nothing else is taught. By the Word, by the sacraments, by preaching, prayer and praise, the love of God in Christ is the ever-recurring and inexhaustible theme. This is the banner under which we march. No wonder, then, that we are reminded that we shall know the love of Christ, but if we comprehend it "with all the saints," if we join ourselves to those who make that love their watchword and support. Many are the prophets whose siren voices allure us. It is well that there should be one voice which speaks for God and of Him, for Him and of Him only, telling us of His majesty, His might and His mercy. Not one of us can afford to lose that message of warning and of promise. Many are the schools in which instruction is given for the proper mastery of ourselves, and of the great world in which we are called to act our part. It is well that there should be one school, and one great text-book, giving instruction in matters which concern the character of God and our eternal relations to Him. Such a school is the Christian Church. Such a text-book is the Bible.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Neglect of the Christian assembly brings irretrievable loss. For knowledge, for the most part, is a social product. Corporation is the condition of its exactness and of its progress. Students correct and stimulate each other. Astronomers, chemists, physicians, lawyers, economists work together. They form themselves into guilds or associations, exchanging views by personal interviews or by correspondence. Such a guild or association is the Christian Church, in the multitude of whose counselors there is wisdom.

We make too much of the discordant utterances in Christendom. They could easily be matched in any congress of scientists, or philosophers, or politicians. We make too little of the fundamental Christian arguments. All differences vanish when the love of God in Christ commands attention. The Cross subdues us all—Greek, Roman, Protestant. Here we all meet and confirm each other in the ancient faith. Isolation is weakness. Fellowship is strength. United we stand, divided we fall. It is not the church which saves. But the church is the communion of saints. It is not church membership which makes one a Christian. It is faith in Christ, personal trust in Him and surrender to Him which make one a Christian. But church membership openly confesses and registers that faith in Christ. It is an awful mockery where that faith is absent. But when that faith is present, honesty demands its confession, and in the very act of confession the faith is deepened and strengthened. For what we believe in our hearts we should declare with our lips. And membership in the church does more than commit us personally and publicly to Christ.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

It introduces us into the great brotherhood of Christian disciples, and this brotherhood is a means of grace. It helps us to stand where, otherwise, we would stumble and fall.

It was not an empty form this morning (Communion Sunday, February 5, 1900) when we all rose to our feet welcoming the new recruits into our ranks, so many of them from our own homes. We are glad to enroll your names in this family of Christ. The love of Christ brought you here. In that love may you be rooted and grounded, growing in your knowledge of its length, and breadth, and depth, and height, that you may be strong in Christian character and fruitful in Christian service. We are none of us here because we are perfect. We are here because Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, and because we have answered His love by giving Him our hearts. We are here because we want to be perfect, and because we can become perfect only in and through Christ.

I can but believe that many others are seriously impressed. Almost you are persuaded. You can think of no reason why you should not make a public profession of your faith in Christ as your personal Saviour. Let your heart have its way. Do not, I entreat you, delay. Christ says to you: "Come to Me; Give Me thy heart." Let your response be:

Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O, Lamb of God, I come!

That is the faith which makes eternal life your

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

own. Some of you, I fear, have delayed many years. I wonder that the fire still burns in your heart. It stirs you even as I speak. Christ has not withdrawn from you, and you have not rejected Him. That you dare not do. That you would not think of doing. No; every one of you wants Him on your bed of death. Come to Him now!

---

### LAST MINISTERIAL ANNIVERSARY.

*Sunday, February 25, 1900.*

Forty-three years have nearly passed since Jesus Christ laid His hand upon my heart and gave me His peace. Nearly thirty-five years have gone since I assumed the duties of the Christian ministry. Nearly half of that time has been spent in the service of this church, for this day completes seventeen years of my present pastorate. These years have been years of searching and sifting. They have been years of mental stress and strain. But at the end of forty-three years of Christian discipleship, after thirty-five years of ministerial activity, after seventeen years of pastoral service among you, I can say, with Paul, and I am glad that I can say it, "I know whom I have believed."

After all these years, my faith in the Holy Scriptures as the divinely authenticated record of God's redeeming action remains undisturbed. I have not been ignorant of, nor have I been indifferent to, the critical debate of these years. I have listened to all that friend and foe have had to say, and I have not been consciously or intentionally unfair. Cautious

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

I have been, and, for accurate knowledge, caution is imperative. I am free to say that the assumptions and the methods of the critics have not appealed to my confidence. There is so much that is fanciful and artificial in their procedure that I cannot regard them as safe guides. And in all the sharpness of the debate, one fact has remained fixed, namely: that Jesus Christ and Paul used exactly the same Old Testament which I read. For them it was already old and authoritative. Tradition is not infallible. But a uniform tradition carries more weight in it than a literary guess. I cannot believe that Deuteronomy is a pious forgery of a late age; I cannot believe that the Pentateuch is a collection of legends and of manufactured history to give sanction to late priestly legislation; I cannot believe that the Psalter contains few, if any, of David's hymns. I can understand that the critical and literary judgment of Christ's day may not have been infallible in all details, but I cannot believe that He and His contemporaries were the victims of wholesale fraud and deception. Certainly, so far as the New Testament is concerned, the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the record is beyond successful impeachment. Zahn's great work, just from the press, makes that clear. And that indirectly guarantees the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the older record. In both of them we may trace the story of what God has done for the salvation of fallen men.

Let me hasten to add, that the Scriptures impress me most profoundly when I withdraw from all critical questions, when I let them speak to my waiting heart in their own way. There is in them a moral

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

earnestness which makes me tremble. There is in them an emphasis of righteousness which fills me with awe. There is in them a passion for holiness which makes me cry out in agony. There is in them a fearless honesty and completeness of confession of moral weakness and wickedness which compels my assent. I am what they picture me. I ought to be what they summon me to be. And there is in them so clear a revelation of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, that my heart responds to it with an unutterable eagerness. They shine in their own light. They speak in their own tongue. When I deal with them in this simple, straightforward way, I am sure that they are able to make me wise unto salvation, that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The letter still killeth, whether it be the letter of scholastic theology or the letter of minute criticism. In both directions you can make dissection end in death. The Spirit maketh alive, and the quickening spirit is what we want; the Spirit who makes the face of Christ so luminous that we see only Him, and all things in Him. It was a true note which Moody struck when he said that all the theology and religion he wanted was in Christ's own words: "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." In that simple and sweet message the Holy Ghost speaks and works; and the more closely we adhere to the majesty of the gospel the better will it be for us, and for all. This doctrine of the Holy Ghost, leading us into all truth, and by it convincing the world, has come to mean, for me, that Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Salvation, and that wherever Christ is preached God

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is at work saving men. Our sole anxiety should be to make Christ known. That is our whole duty. We do not need to act as His advocates. The Holy Spirit will take care of that. And when we make Christ known, we must rest in the assurance that the Holy Spirit is owning and enforcing our message. Men are not argued into religion. But Christ wins them. We are in danger of forgetting that. An iron logic leaves me hard and cold as steel. But when you tell me who Jesus is, and what He has done for you and for me, my heart dissolves in thankfulness and tears. In that message the Holy Spirit works. And that is always the message which monopolizes our speech when the Holy Spirit has His way. We pray for the baptism of the Spirit. It may be a selfish and ambitious prayer. Simon asked for that, and Peter denounced him. He wanted the gift for personal gain. And we may be as selfish as he. The gift is bestowed where mind and heart are captive to Jesus Christ. Let us continue to tell the story of His love, and never grow weary of it! For to be able to say, with Paul: "I know whom I have believed," though we be ignorant of all else, is better than to have all other knowledge and not be able to say this. For this is the faith that overcometh the world.

---

### THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

We must guard against the idea that the spiritual body is composed of the same material particles which constitute the animal or earthly body. The resur-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

rection of the body does not mean the coming forth of that body which is laid away in the grave. That goes to dust and ashes. The body of your earthly possessions is a constantly vanishing organism. Not one of its particles, so far as we know, holds the secret of permanence. The body is always in the pangs of birth and in the throes of death. It has changed a score, a hundred, times before the head is pillowed in the casket. The body of childhood has long since vanished; why should we imagine that the present material particles are any more sacred and indispensable? God is not so poor, and we are not so poor that He must take this threadbare and wornout garment, patch it up and scour it that we may wear it hereafter and forever. No; the white robes of heaven are not made up of the rags of earth. So we are taught in the New Testament. The present body is likened to a seed. It is not quickened except it die. But God giveth it a resurrection body—a body in the growing blade of green, which leaves the husk to be dissipated. There is a sloughing off and a putting on. Paul conceives of a quickening process, going in the very act and experience of death, in virtue of which the mortal body ceases to have any further meaning or use. It has been cast off for ever.

This would seem to involve the further inference that death and resurrection are not so far apart, in point of time, as we have been apt to think. In a grain of wheat death is not one thing and resurrection another. The two processes are inseparable. In dying, the seed rises into its nobler form. May we affirm this of our own death? There is an increasing disposition

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

to do this, to make death and resurrection simultaneous. As soon as the rags of earth fall off, the royal purple wraps us round. There is much to be said in support of the idea, that in the New Testament the resurrection is represented as a rare process, culminating in Christ's advent; but that the individual resurrection is at the instant of death. The fifth chapter of Second Corinthians seems incapable of any other explanation; for the statement is very emphatic that when our present tabernacle collapses in death, we have a house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here the resurrection is pictured as following immediately upon death, so that the soul is not left unclothed and naked. There are many passages, however, where the resurrection is located at the end of the world, as preceding the universal and final judgment. This has always been, and still remains, a perplexity. We must assume that both representations were intended to be combined. There is the same twofold description of the second coming of Christ, and of the final judgment. Some passages make the coming of Christ an event in the future; others make it present and continuous. It is both. He is always coming. Some passages locate the judgment in the future; other passages make the judgment present and continuous, while other passages make it follow immediately upon the death of the individual. The final judgment, like the coming of Christ, is a process, present and continuous, not an isolated, a spectacular, distant, future, event. So we may say of the resurrection, that it is a process, completed at the end of the world, as soon as death has

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

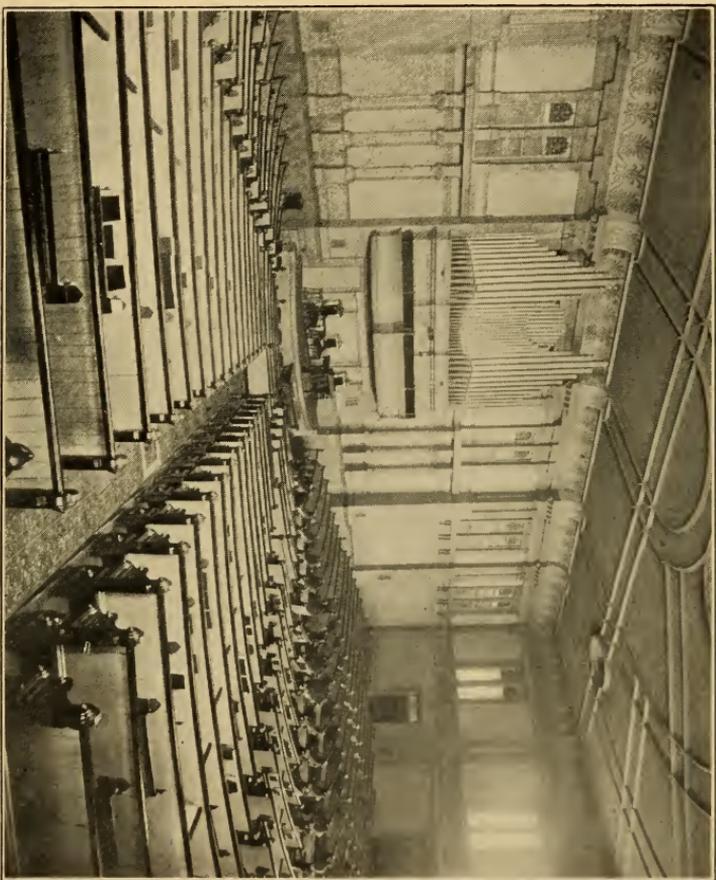
claimed its last victim, but that it takes place for each individual upon the very bed of death.

We may well speak with bated breath here. I have hesitated many years; but it grows upon me more and more, that death is only the negative side of a process of which the resurrection is the positive side. Death is the prelude of resurrection. What a solemn and glorious thing it is to die, if upon our death-bed God robes us! Only let us hold fast to one thing—the resurrection of the body is a peculiar and distinctive fact. It must not be identified with the immortality of the soul. Each Easter season brings to the surface the notion that the two are equivalent. They are not. They are distinct, and they are also inseparable. There is a subtle contempt for a material body in a good deal of modern thought, just as sin is reduced to the passion of animalism. I do not sympathize with this tendency. The human body is God's noblest material work; and its eternal rescue is the moral significance of the doctrine of the resurrection. This scepticism as to the body, and its permanent place in man's conscious personality, affects, also, the interpretation of our Lord's resurrection. Those who maintain that the resurrection of the body practically means no more than that the soul is immortal, also say that Christ's resurrection simply means that His disciples became convinced that He was still alive. I confess that I find it difficult to treat such a statement seriously. It needs no elaborate refutation. It was His body which they had in mind when they declared that He had risen. Every Pharisee would have laughed at them, if they had simply meant that His soul had

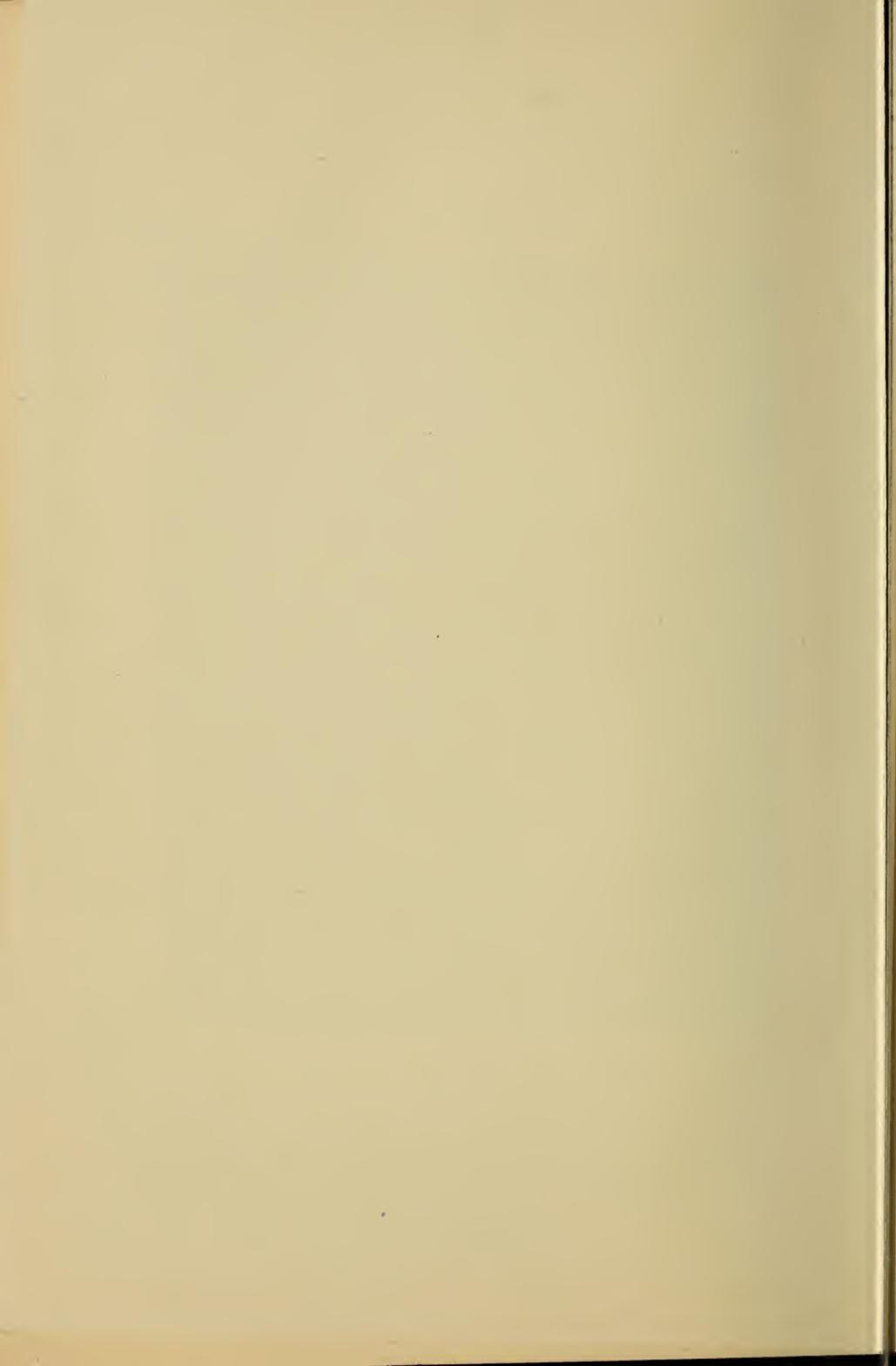
## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

not been destroyed. No one called that in question. But the affirmative of His resurrection startled and confounded them. There was the empty grave; what had become of the body? To the amazed and doubting disciples Jesus showed His hands and His feet. He partook of honey and broiled fish. He was not a ghost. He had flesh and bones. It was a real body in which He appeared, and in which He could reveal the crucifixion marks when He chose to do so. On the other hand, it was not the same body. He did not return to His former work. He did not go back to the temple. He did not lodge again at Bethany. They knew Him not when He walked by their side. They did not even recognize His voice. Through the barred doors He came to them. He was the same, yet not the same. Even Mary was no longer allowed to clasp and kiss His feet. Here again, as in Paul's chapter on the resurrection, are the two sides of the great miracle and mystery.

The grave was empty. The body was gone. He had resumed it, leaving only the grave clothes and the napkin, carefully folded away, as if in recognition of the tenderness with which loving hands had ministered to His lifeless body, and yet, in resuming it, somehow, the old body had faded away and had been resolved into another body, incorruptible and immortal. I have sometimes wondered whether the incorruptible body is so plastic to thought and intention that the soul can at will reproduce the physical image of any period. Can Christ show me His hands and feet? It may be so. And it may be that herein lies the possibility and the certainty of future recognition of those



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH INTERIOR.



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

whom we have known on earth. The earthly face may be made to flash upon us from within and behind the eternal radiance! But however that may be, it was Christ's mortal and buried body which was touched and transfigured by the miracle of the resurrection. Not a pinch of dust remained behind to be gathered up by superstitious hands. His cross, the napkin that bound His brow—these are preserved as supposed relics—but no one has presumed to claim a bone of His body. It vanished forever, beyond all possible hope of recovery. In an instant, that came to His mortal flesh what comes to our mortal bodies after centuries of gradual waste and dispersion. The grave held Him long enough to prove that He had really died. And then He rose, His mortal flesh vanishing, but quickened into the body of His eternal glory! That robs death forever of its sting, and the grave of its victory. For the risen Lord is with us, and in us, when we come to die; ready to invest us with the royal purple, when the moth-eaten and worn-out garment drops from our shoulders!

---

### THE INCARNATE CHRIST.

It is said that the most powerful microscope fails to reveal any difference in the structure of the cells from which, respectively, are developed an oak, a fish, an eagle, an elephant, a human being. It is impossible to label living things when they begin to be. We must wait until they have grown into their distinctive forms. The man who does not know the difference between a robin and a thrush cannot distinguish the eggs from

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which they have been hatched. Only he can label the eggs who, at some time, has seen their shells break, liberating their imprisoned occupants. Living things are known to us, not in their beginnings, but in their development and issue. Self-revelation is the prerogative and law of all life. It holds its own secret, and reveals it in its own way, and in its own time. We do not study the egg to understand the eagle, nor the acorn to understand the oak; but we invest the egg with what we know of the eagle, and the acorn with what we know of the oak.

\* \* \* \* \*

Atheism cannot explain the world. Without God there is no such thing as construing the universe in terms of thought. Without the world we could have no knowledge of God. It is the world outside of us and inside of us, the realm of matter and of mind, which compels us to say God; and without it we would not even be able to say it. So that, in the universe, we have a true incarnation of the thought, and will, and life of God. And if by creation God has made a habitation for Himself, shall we say that the portals of human birth are closed against Him? Must He be barred from making a human body and soul the human seat and throne of His personal life? I know the final mystery is here. Mystery—when does it begin, and where does it end? All is mystery. You cannot explain a blade of grass without explaining the universe. Its very life is an unfathomable and unfathomed abyss.

You cannot dissect its covering; you can tear its

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

fibers to pieces, but you cannot sew or weave them together again. Into its form and color the heat of the sun has entered, so that the blade of grass lives and moves and has its being in the energies of the planetary system. The lightning sleeps in it as in a bed of down. And our planetary system lives and moves and has its being in the boundless universe. The universe is reproduced in a grass blade. The earth alone could not have made it. The Sun, and Sirius, Orion and the Pleiades live in it. Mystery is everywhere. The supernatural is the life of all that we call natural. It is because of this fact that intellectually I am not staggered by the statement that the Babe of Bethlehem was and continues to be God Incarnate. If God has put something of Himself into a blade of grass, why may He not have put His conscious personal life into an infant human body and soul? Why not? "But," you will say to me, "do you mean to say that the Babe who lay in Mary's arms, the Boy who went to the school and played in the streets of Nazareth, knew Himself to be God?" No; I do not mean that. For of Christ it was true, what is true of every one of us, that He was more than He for many a year knew Himself to be. Unconscious genius sleeps in the cradle. It gives no sign, and itself lives in ignorance of what lies wrapped up in hand and brain. But the greatness is astir, and breaks into expression slowly in some, suddenly in others. So did Christ grow in stature, in wisdom, in grace, until first to Himself, and then to others, it became clear that in Him the Eternal Word had become flesh; that His glory was the glory of the only

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

begotten of the Father. And now that we have made this amazing discovery, we affirm of the helpless Babe that He is God Incarnate, and with the wise men bow the knee and worship Him. It is our Christian testimony that God in the person of His Son has become Incarnate for us sinners, and for our salvation. The man Christ Jesus was the Word made Flesh. That Word was in the beginning, and was God. All things were made by Him. In Him was life, and apart from Him there is no life. Creator, Upholder, Ruler of the universe was He, and continues to be. This general fact involves some very important and practical conclusions. I confine myself to three. It gives us a definite theory of the universe; it enunciates the true philosophy of history, and it reveals the ground of human redemption.

It gives us the Christian theory of the universe. There is no Christless universe. We trace all things to God. But we must also trace all things to Jesus Christ. For Christ is God revealed, God Incarnate, the only God we know. Without Him, nothing was made that is made. His relation to the universe is not secondary and casual. It is creative and continuous. The universe came into being by Him who cradled in Mary's arms, and who died upon the cross. He was before the universe came into being. It was He whose Spirit brooded over the primeval darkness. It was He who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." It was He who made man in His own image. He did not make His first appearance in the universe when He was born beneath the Syrian stars. He made the Syrian stars, and it was His own lamp that led the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

wise men to His manger. At the heart of the universe, and upon its central throne, is Jesus Christ. The universe is what He made it. Upon every part of it He has stamped the seal of His power and wisdom, His own image and superscription. It is the first and oldest of all the gospels. It is the primal incarnation of His thought and will. Nothing in it is known aright until His name is read. Some one has said that astronomy is "petrified mathematics, and that Jesus Christ is the mathematician." The sciences reveal His glory, for the materials of science are His creation. They are His petrified thoughts. The stars are His, the sea is His, the mountains are His. They are His because He made them; and they are His that they may serve Him in making Him known. All things proclaim God.

Let us make the statement concrete—all things speak of Jesus Christ. That invests all things with a peculiar and solemn charm. I do not need a cross of gold set with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, covering my heart, to remind me of the tree upon which Christ tasted and conquered death for me. That cross gleams for me in the depths of the seas, in the mines of the earth, in the starry spaces. Everywhere I find life grappling with death, life sepulchered in death, life overcoming death by suffering. The Man of Sorrows meets me not only in Bethany and in Gethsemane; I see His face in a universe whose pillars are cemented and made strong in pain and tears. You tell me that Christ's face was marred. But does not nature, "red in tooth and claw with ravine," point me to the same story in "scarp'd cliff

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and quarried stone"? And when Tennyson asks, "Are God and nature, then, at strife?" I answer, "No; creation grows because Christ grows in it." The whole universe is His Gethsemane; the whole universe is His Calvary; the whole universe is His Olivet. He speaks in its pain, in its suffering, in its death, in its eternal struggle for deliverance from bondage. It is Christ who speaks to me in sunrise and sunset, in tempest and rainbow, in lightning and earthquake, in heat and cold, in ice and snow and hail. The strength of the universe is His strength; the order of the universe is His immutable wisdom; the suffering of the universe is His suffering; the beauty of the universe is the beauty of His possession and bestowment. Why did He speak so much in parables? Why did He use a grain of wheat to illustrate His death? How could He do otherwise? The things upon which He based His parables were the things which He had made, and into which He had put His thoughts, and He only brought out what He had put in. Therefore, the dying grain, when it burst, disclosed His cross.

That treasury of truth He did not exhaust in His recorded teaching. He opened the door for us to a boundless knowledge. Whenever we discover a new truth, whether in astronomy, or chemistry, or electricity, or liquefied air, or biology, we discover another eternal thought of Christ. All science is Christian theology at heart. There is no conflict between science and religion. The more science, the more religion. The more religion, the more science. Every man who adds to useful knowledge is a theologian, and preaches the gospel of Christ. It is Christ's world we live in,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and from foundation to cope-stone and pinnacle it is vocal with praise. Why should there be so much suspicion between the men who study the face of Nature and the men who study the face of Jesus Christ, when the hands of Jesus Christ fashioned what we call Nature? It is pathetic to read the dying confession of St. George Mivart, who ached to be loyal to his church, but could not play false with himself: "I have no more leaning to atheism or agnosticism than I ever had, but the inscrutable, incomprehensible energy pervading the universe (as it seems to me) disclosed by science, differs profoundly, as I read Nature, from the God worshipped by Christians." Such a confession should be impossible, and it is your business and mine to make it impossible. We must not put asunder what God has joined together, and the mind of Christ is as really in Nature as it is in the New Testament. Let us learn from each other, and help each other, in wreathing the laurels for the brow of Him who is both Lord of Nature and of Grace.

The Incarnation supplies us with the Christian philosophy of history. There is no Christless history. In Bethlehem, the King made His visible appearance, but He was King from everlasting. The Hebrew word "Jehovah" is translated by Kurios in the Greek, by Dominus in the Latin, by Herr in the German, and by Lord in the English, and He who was made Flesh is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Christ is none other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the God of the Covenant, the Lord revealed in the grace of redemption. He made man in His own image, and not for one moment has He abandoned the work of

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

His hand. He was the hope of our first parents in their exile from Eden. He called Abraham from the land of Ur. He sent Moses to deliver Israel from bondage. He dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire. He sent the manna from heaven. It was His rod which made the waters to gush from the flinty rock. He nerved the arm of Joshua. He called David from the sheepfolds. He inspired psalmists and prophets. They all saw His day, and that made them glad. In all the upheavals of those forty centuries, His pierced hands held the reins. It was one universal preparation for His advent in the Flesh. That ancient history was not a Christless history, not even when Babylon was defiant, and Assyria ruled with a rod of iron, and Sodom was buried beneath the fiery hail. There are no Christless centuries, there are no Christless nations. And He rules in all history still, and will unto the end. We speak of God in history, of an increasing purpose running through the ages widening the thoughts of men with the process of the sun. Let us put it into concrete form. Let us say that all history is the work of Jesus Christ. And so the historian, the poet, the philosopher, the statesman, the patriot, philanthropist, is a theologian, a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Carlyle and Tennyson, Mozart and Raphael, are apostles. The decay of nations is a solemn warning of Jesus Christ. The prosperity of nations is a blessing of Jesus Christ. That gives us faith for the future, the certainty that Christian civilization will subdue and hold the round globe. For the generations of men are Christ's, as are the stars. He made them and they march under His captaincy.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

The Incarnation constitutes the basis of the Christian doctrine of redemption. There is no Christless universe. There is no Christless history. And there is no Christless redemption. On that point I need not linger. The name of Jesus Christ is "the only name given under heaven whereby man must be saved." That stands fast, insoluble as the mystery may seem to be. But it may help us to understand why a sinless man can suffer and die for the sinful; and must so suffer and die, when we remember that we all were created by Him, and that in Him we all live and move. I presume you have asked the question a hundred times, "How can any one be my representative and substitute? How can any one bear the penalty of my sin and save me? Must not the law of God deal with me, and with me only?" And I must grant you right in your argument. Sin, guilt and penalty are not transferable. The law forbids such transfer. Representation and substitution there cannot be unless we can find a natural and righteous ground for them. Fictitious and arbitrary arrangements cannot be tolerated in the government of God. But remember, now, that they for whom Christ acts as representative and for whom He dies as substitute, are they who have been created by Him, and could neither act nor be were it not for Him. He is responsible for our being—He alone; and if we had no being, we could not sin.

We may say that Christ is responsible to the Father for the existence of a race which lies under the penalty of eternal death because of its sin. It is, therefore, with Christ that God must deal, as well as with each

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

individual sinner ; and He must deal with each individual sinner in Christ, to whom every sinner owes his being. God, and God alone, is responsible for my existence ; though I, and I alone, am responsible for my sin, because He has made me free. His eternal justice, therefore, binds Him to do two things—to hold me to strict account for the sin which is mine, and mine alone, and to hold Himself to strict account for creating me. I cannot bring Him to bar. The universe cannot do that. But unless He brings Himself to bar, He dishonors Himself. He must make me bear the full weight of my burden, and He must bear the full weight of His burden. My burden is my sin ; His burden is my soul, with all my sins upon it. He is responsible for my being, and, therefore, He is under obligation to do His utmost to prevent my ruin and to save me. The grace which saves is free and undeserved ; but it is as necessary and eternal as the justice of God. He might fling me away into the outer darkness, without one thought or act of compassion ; but in that outer darkness I should charge Him with the most cruel injustice. For I am the work of His hands, and He must bear me to remain true ; and in bearing me He must bear my sins.

Jesus Christ, therefore, as God manifest in the flesh, only steps into His own place when He steps into my place, because I have no place except such as I hold by His will ; nor does He vacate His place when He gives me mine. It is His still. No covenant agreement is needed. The eternal fitness of things makes Him the only responsible representative, the only possible substitute, the only Sacrifice and Saviour. The

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

relations between Him and us are more vital than the relations between a mother and her unborn babe. We live only in Him. His place is the place which covers each several place of all earth's millions. If disease strikes us, it must strike Him, for we are rooted in Him. If death claims us, it must claim Him, because we are rooted in Him. He alone, as the responsible author of our being, can render satisfaction, and bring in an everlasting redemption. No other mediation can be accepted, and His mediation must be accepted. You see, there is no arbitrary transfer here. It is all as it must be. It cannot be otherwise.

The sinless one bears the burden of the world's sin, the innocent one suffers the stripes due to the guilty, simply because the sinless and innocent one is He to whom the sinful and the guilty owe their being, in whom their very existence is rooted. It was long before this truth dawned upon me, and even now my grasp upon it is often weak. It is so amazing. But it is the very heart of what the New Testament has to say about Jesus Christ. It lies upon gospel and epistle as the Milky Way upon the vault of blue. He is no other than the Light and the Life of all men, by whom all men were created, in whose image and for whom all men were fashioned. He must stand and fall with the race which He has called into existence. And when He undertakes to save us He must endure all that falls upon us, for He and we cannot be torn asunder. His sufferings and death are penal; they can be nothing else. His sufferings and death are substitutionary; they can be nothing else. His sufferings and death exhaust all penalty; it must be

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

so. His sufferings and death endured, must release us from the condemnation of the law; so that I must fall from grace and cut myself loose from Christ to be lost.

Do I, then, preach universal salvation? No; I do not, and cannot. For as Dr. Williams said: "Worlds seen and unseen cannot save a man, nor damn a man, without his own consent." There is a divine universalism, the universalism of Christ and of Paul, the universalism of grace. You may think, if you choose, of this world as apart from Christ, and then it is a hopelessly lost world. But there is no such world. Christ is in the world, and the world is in Christ; and that makes it a redeemed world. You may think, if you choose, of souls apart from Christ; and then souls are in the grasp of eternal death. But there are no such souls. All souls are in Christ, and from His hands, and that makes them heirs of salvation. But it is not enough that you be in Christ; Christ must also be in you. You can sell your birthright, secured to you so freely, and at so great a cost, by rejecting Him, by refusing to let Him live in you. You may trample on the body and blood of your Lord; and you must do it, if you lose your soul. And so I say again, that you must fall from grace if you become the victim of eternal death. You are a redeemed soul now, an heir of holiness and glory; what is needed is your own consent. And that free consent of yours is the one thing which Christ cannot force.

There is no Christless salvation. There never has been. Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. There has never been an economy with-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

out atonement, because there has never been any moral government without Christ. The Cross on which Christ died to save men, the Cross of Calvary, is a revelation in space and time of the eternal atonement. It was not merely prefigured by the Old Testament sacrifices. As soon as man began to sin, the Eternal Christ began to suffer. As soon as men began to die, Christ began to feel the pain of death's dart. The sufferings and death, simply materialized, became objective and historical, in Gethsemane and on Calvary; but in principle they were eternal. Nor have they ceased now. Christ still suffers when we sin. We crucify Him afresh. Christ still weeps when our sorrows crush us. Christ still dies when we die. Only the eternal secret is out at last. If we will only lay hold upon Him by faith, if we will only let Him have His way with us, He will so suffer and die in us and with us, that sin shall be destroyed, sorrow shall be sanctified to us, and death shall become for us the open gate into the eternal heavens!

---

### WAYSIDE NOTES ON BIBLE CRITICISM.\*

Proper names are not particularly interesting reading. No one turns to the genealogical tables in conducting family prayers. They seem to be utterly useless except for purposes of discipline in pronunciation. But they are coming to play a large part in historical

\* From an address delivered as a "Concio ad Clerum" before the Yale Divinity Students, at New Haven, Conn., Sunday evening, May 16, 1897.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

criticism. There are a great many such names in the Priestcode, and they are very ugly obstructions in the path of those who drag the legislation down to a late date. They can be compared with the numerous contract tablets which have come to light in Northern Babylonia, and these tablets, dating from the middle of the second millennium B. C., contain names similarly derived and compounded. And they are found nowhere else, and in no other period. The personal names of the Priestcode fit into the Mosaic period, and they fit in no other. This has been elaborately set forth by Nestle in 1876, and by Hommel in 1896. All the reply which Wellhausen made to Nestle's archaeological proofs was to admit the facts, and then to assert roundly that the personal names, as well as the general history, in the Priestcode, "had been deliberately manufactured after an earlier pattern!" What shall be said of such criticism? It ought to have the whole dictionary hurled at its head for its insolence. But, as Hommel well says, "Truth must in the end prevail. The monuments speak with no faltering tongue, and already I see signs of the approach of a new era in which men will be able to brush aside the cobweb theories of the so-called higher critics of the Pentateuch, and, leaving such old-fashioned errors behind them, attain to a clearer perception of the real facts. The gales of spring are already beginning to sweep across the fields that have so long been ice-bound." Archæology seems likely to rout the critics, "horse, foot and dragoon."

The two or more Isaiahs may yet be recognized as one; and, for myself, I have little confidence in the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

literary dissection which gives us seven or eight authors of this great prophetic book, and so much confidence in the witness of tradition, that I do not propose to muddle the heads of my people with abortive attempts to reconstruct that part of the Old Testament. I do not need a critic to tell me that David did not write all the Psalms. All I need to do is to read the Old Testament hymnal, and I find that more than half of them are either anonymous, or from other hands. It is a man of straw which is riddled, when we are told, somewhat pompously, that the inscriptions are not part of the text, added by a later hand, and therefore not inspired and finally authoritative. But they are very old, and the only external testimony which we have. It may be that the compilers made mistakes here and there; but when Ewald tells me that only thirteen Psalms are from David, and when Cheyne throws David out altogether, I am content to endure the scorn of these scholars, and take my stand with tradition as more likely to be correct than they. At all events, the substantial vindication of tradition in the department of New Testament literature, as boldly bulletined by Harnack, may well call for a little more modesty and reverence in dealing with the Old Testament. Harnack's concession seems to me the Gettysburg of the critical campaign, to be followed in time by Appomattox.

Another very significant fact is the unqualified repudiation of a preconceived philosophy of history, in determining the authorship and date of professedly historical documents. This is the pivotal assumption, both of Baur and Wellhausen. These gentlemen knew

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

exactly how history must have made itself. Both are disciples of Hegel, and accepted his theory of historical evolution as authoritative. History advances, in their view, with the precision of a syllogism. It is simply a logical evolution. It marches to the triple command: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis! and the circular spiral movement is never interrupted. Things must begin in a certain way, and develop in a certain way, and mature in a certain way. If things do not begin and develop and mature in the Hegelian way—why, so much the worse for the facts, and for those who recorded them. So Baur calls out “Thesis”—and out comes Peter; then he cries “Antithesis,” and out comes Paul; and then he shouts “Synthesis,” and out comes the New Testament literature—the product of conflicting tendencies harmonized by a later age. But Harnack’s hammer leaves not a vestige of this brilliant procedure. He roundly declares that such a method is irrational and vicious, because no man can tell how history must shape itself, nor at what period, and in how many years revolutionary changes are brought about. He calls the Hegelian school down from the clouds, and reminds them that the study of history is very prosaic business. He refers to the tremendous changes wrought between 1517-1530, or between 1517-1567, which, according to the Hegelian evolution, ought to have taken five or six hundred years. He vindicates the productive period of the first forty years, after the death of Christ, as sufficient to account for primitive Christianity. And Harnack is undoubtedly right. For the one thing which the Hegelian theory of history does not take into account

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is—*personality*. It breaks to pieces upon Luther, and Paul, and Christ. Given these personalities, and the rapid changes are intelligible. It is the man who is the real miracle. It is the great man who turns the world upside down.

Wellhausen is no greater and no less a sinner than Baur. He, too, starts with the Hegelian notion of historical evolution. History is simply a logical process. The history as given in the Old Testament cannot be true, simply because it contradicts the scientific principles of historical development; and under that assumption, the dates of the several documents are dragged down six hundred and a thousand years. The chronological boundaries must be broken through to make the theory work, exactly as Baur did with the New Testament. And if, as Harnack says, forty years are sufficient to account for primitive Christianity, provided you have Christ and Paul, why may not the forty years of the wilderness life be sufficient for the shaping of the Old Testament religion, upon which the prophets themselves were dependent, provided you have Moses as leader? The drift is toward that conclusion. Harnack simply knocks out the underpinning of the entire structure of revolutionary criticism. For that criticism, in the hands of Wellhausen, reproduces the methods of Baur, which Harnack says have been discredited and abandoned. In Kuenen's language, "our dearly-bought scientific method" compels us to discredit Moses, and Paul, and Jesus Christ, and forces us to regard the Old Testament history as a "web of deceptions and falsehoods." Harnack says, in substance: "So much the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

worse for your dearly-bought scientific method. You have paid too much for it. The facts must stand. Your method is not scientific because it ignores the facts; and it is not radical, because it does not go to the roots of the problem. Throw it away, and use your common sense, which will lead you back to tradition."

I say, in conclusion, that we may as well conclude that the time has hardly yet come to surrender either Paul or Moses at the boisterous demands of the higher critics. And if any of you have bought your tickets, or are seriously thinking of buying them, to join the widely advertised and highly recommended excursion engineered by Kuenen and Wellhausen, who have simply patched up and painted the old and dilapidated rolling stock of Baur and Company, I advise you to change your mind, and exchange your coupons while there is time and then get aboard the old weather-beaten train, where Moses is on the lookout and Paul grasps the lever. For just now a new voice has been heard in tones of earnest warning. Roadmaster Harnack has come along, with his hammer and lamp, with his keen eye and quick ear, and as he strikes the wheels of the critical train, he sends up word that every one of them is cracked, unfit for the contemplated journey, and doomed to an early and disastrous breakdown. If you are in, get out, and don't lose any time about it! If you are out, don't get in! And Master Harnack says that the old train is sound and safe!

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### CHRIST TRIUMPHANT.

The following fragment is from a sermon preached to his people by Dr. Behrends on Sunday morning, February 23, 1890. It is introduced here to show the earnest spirit in which he prosecuted his work as a minister of Jesus Christ.

TEXT.—Jesus answered and said, This will come not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world : Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—John xiv, 30-32.

The death of Christ was a judgment upon the Roman world, the world of the Jew, and it overthrew the ideas of the world with it. What was the world of that day? What was its piety? Caiaphas was a representative of that. What was its civil order? Nero was a type of that. There is your religion and politics. All the civil rule turned into irresponsible tyranny, and by these two men, the entire and combined authority of the Roman court, Jesus Christ was put to death. You say it was cruel? Yes. But it was legally done. It was legally sanctioned by the court of Sanhedrin, on the ground of blasphemy; by the court of Pilate, on the ground of treason, and the same thing may be traced in the persecutions of the Christian disciples that followed Christ. I think we misunderstand the temper of the Roman Empire as we read of those terrible sufferings which the early Christians endured. It may be that with Nero it was simply

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the innate love of cruelty. That bloodthirsty wild beast in human form delighted in lighting his gardens with the bodies of men and women covered with pitch, and set on fire. Trajan writes to Pliny: "Don't persecute the Christian, but execute the Roman law." Marcus Aurelius was one of the best men who ever sat in the chair of Rome, but he was indifferent to the sufferings of the Christians of his time, because the Roman law recognized no religion except as in some way it was associated with a distinct, independent national life. Religion was political. No religion was lawful which was not the religion of a distinct nation. The Jew was tolerated. The Christian was an anarchist, I mean politically. Just as you cry, "Down with anarchy!" so the Roman said: "Down with the Christian! He is insisting upon setting up a religion of his own. Is every man to set up a god for himself and shall every man have the right to say how God shall be worshipped? Why, society will all go to pieces." That was the Roman speech. Christianity was an illegal religion, and the emperors were right when they said: "No matter upon whom the law falls, no matter upon how many people it falls, if we are to preserve the integrity of our political government we must execute the law, and execute it faithfully."

Now, you know there is no better way of bringing a bad law into disrepute and preparing the way for its overthrow than rigidly to enforce it. When any law on your statute book begins to smite good men in great numbers, that moment a seed is rooted in the minds and hearts of men which keeps on growing until the revolt comes and the law has to go, no matter

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

what its sanctity or its antiquity may be. There is something in goodness. It has in it a higher power than any law you can make on your statute book. By and by men will say that the law is to the injury of society. That is just the way it worked in those days. Those days are so far off that they do not seem real to us. But the same principles worked in human minds then that work now. You have only got to imagine that you lived then, and imagine what your thoughts would have been, and you have got exactly the thoughts that those people had fifteen hundred years ago. When we read about the conversion of Constantine, we think it was a miracle. It was a wonderful revolt, but nothing else was to have been expected. This bad law had worked itself out until the people rose in their might and protested against it. It may be that the devil is perfectly willing that the better elements of society shall be crushed out and finally utterly eliminated, but men are not so far gone in wickedness yet that they will permit it. There is a good deal of depravity in this world, but I tell you, after all, man is not a devil, and the fear of the spirit of God is what works in human minds and hearts and consciences. And so Constantine, who was a very sagacious man and who saw exactly what the condition of things was, said: "We cannot afford to keep on administering and executing this old law," and, therefore, by one stroke of his pen he swept it from the statute books. That was forgiving this world. That was casting out the prince of this world, who ceased then and there. The blood of the martyrs had become the seed of the church, and out of that seed

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

had grown a host which it was impossible for the sword of Rome to destroy, and so, from sheer necessity, when Constantine became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire, he granted toleration to the Christian religion.

Now, that result, secured by the martyrs, was begun with the death of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ was a mighty and almighty appeal to the human conscience. Men must have said: "The civilization by which you put a man to death, and such a man as He, under process of law, is a mockery of justice and of humanity." Thus the devil may have thought he had played a pretty sharp game, but, after all, he succeeded only in undermining his own authority, for in the reaction that speedily followed the remaining temper of the civilization of the world of that day was seen to be diabolic. Men sprang away from it as in horror. Such a thing as that, friends, and I have said it here before, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, in Jerusalem, by the united legal authority of Jew and Roman, could not take place anywhere on the face of the earth to-day. It certainly could not take place in those nations whose civilization plants them in the van of human progress. You could not think of such a thing taking place in Great Britain, Germany, France, or in the United States, or anywhere. The temper of the masses is against it. There has been a revolution of human thought and of public opinion. There are a great many things to-day that are very bad and that need uprooting, but, for myself, I will not close my eyes to the fact that the forces in our modern civilization are very different from the forces

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

that ruled in the world 1,800 years ago. What has done it? The death of Christ. It was the judgment of the world that is dead, and by it the prince of the world was cast out, and Jesus Christ took his place. This is only negative. The death of Jesus Christ was a power of expulsion. I want you to look for a moment or two at the positive side of it. It was a power of attraction, and it is to-day the most marvelous power of attraction of which we know. It drew all men unto Him. It fixed attention upon what He saw, upon what He had said, upon what He had done, and light and criticism has never been thrown upon any single human character, in all the history of the world, so fiercely and so incessantly as it has been upon the Carpenter of Galilee, the Prophet of Nazareth, for these 1,800 years.

It is too late in the day for any man to deny or doubt that in all the long procession of great souls, Jesus Christ is the greatest, the foremost figure in all human history. His teaching and examples have been prolific of good wherever they have been spoken of and known. Everybody believes them. Every theory of self-deception or of insane enthusiasm has broken down under its own weight. There are men to-day who will have nothing to do with the church, who believe that all ministers are false at heart and scoundrels—men who take His Bible, yours and mine, and tear it into tatters, but who are hushed into awe when they are brought face to face with Jesus Christ. That was not true an hundred years ago, but it is true to-day. I have sometimes thought that these very men, whose blasphemies so pain us, worship the Son of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

God in their hearts, after all. When they come face to face with Him, there comes a divine silence, which quiets their thoughts and prevents their lips from saying anything, except of homage to His excellence. What is there in the life of Christ that you can find fault with? What is there in the Sermon on the Mount and in His other teachings that any of you dissent from? If we only live as Christ lived, wouldn't this world be a heaven? Just think what Christ stands for in the gospels. Take His teachings, take His spirit. Do they not commend themselves to everybody? The influence of that life of His, transfigured by His death and resurrection, is not confined to the circle of those who make a profession of it. That influence radiates far and near. It has saturated public opinion. It rides in a royal chariot, through all the heights of modern literature. Our whole moral life is transfused and transfigured by the spirit of the Son of God, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. These things have become common phrases of our modern speech. He first voiced them in clear, trumpet tones, and He was the first to illustrate them in His personal life.

I say, the attractive influence of Jesus Christ to-day is wider than the influence which he exerts upon those whose names are upon the rolls of the church, and I have sometimes felt that one thing which the Christian Church ought to do is to widen its lines until it takes in all whom the spirit of Christ practically reaches. Christianity to-day is a bigger thing than the Christian Church. It is vastly larger than any system of doctrine, and larger than all systems of doctrine. I

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

believe there are scores of men who have never been baptized who are just as really the disciples of Christ as any whose names are inscribed on the church rolls, and my heart leaps for joy when I recognize how the influence of Jesus Christ is more and more pervading society, the unconverted portion of it, as we call it, but which is really more thoroughly saturated with the spirit of Christ than many of us suppose. I want to see the lines of the church sweep as widely as the lines of the influence of Jesus Christ. I do not think it is to our credit that there are twice as many women church members as there are men. There is something wrong. Doctrinal and experimental tests have been made which are unscriptural, and are unwarranted, and the level sense of our men has said: "We won't submit to them." There is but one test. Jesus Christ is the door to the sheepfold. I want to see these barriers down and I believe that the time is coming. I am going to do my level best here, or anywhere else, to say these things right out. Let them fall into your hearts. Let them quicken your tongue, that you may communicate them to your children, until we shall come to the time when this whole world shall ring with the acclamations of the Carpenter of Galilee, the Prophet of Nazareth. Let the whole earth ring with the glory of God, as the waters cover the face of the deep.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### GOD'S LOVE FIRST.

This was the last sermon preached by Dr. Behrends, immediately preceding his address in Carnegie Hall, Sunday morning, April 29, 1900.

TEXT.—We love Him because He first loved us.—John iv, 19.

History furnishes no parallel to the deep and earnest affection which Jesus Christ kindles in the hearts of His disciples. There have been many great and brave men who have won for themselves an admiration bordering on adoration; whose names have sunk deep down into the grateful memories of nations; whose praises continue to be sung in ode and oration; whose deeds are honored in shaft and tablet; such men as Nelson and the Duke of Wellington among the English; such men as Washington and Lincoln and Grant among ourselves. And yet, greatly as we revere and honor such men, we revere and honor them as leaders of an army whose rank and file command our grateful respect. Not single handed did Nelson battle and break the navies of Spain and of France. Not single handed did the Iron Duke crush Napoleon at Waterloo. Not single handed did Washington secure the political independence of the American colonies. Not single handed did Sherman march to the sea, cutting the Confederacy in two and proving its hopeless collapse. Not single handed did Sheridan clear the Shenandoah Valley, nor Grant march on to Richmond and Appomattox. The army is greater than its commanders. The people are greater than their most illustrious leaders. Here appears the solitariness of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Jesus Christ. He is greater than the army which He commands; greater than the flock which He leads. He creates the constituency of which He is the head. With His own blood He has bought the church, which is His body and over which He rules. Single handed he grappled with and overthrew the powers of sin, death and hell, which held us in helpless captivity. Single handed He wrenched the gate of our prison house, smiting the chains of our captivity, securing for us an everlasting redemption. We are not saved because we are brave; we are brave because we are saved. And because of this, He kindles in the hearts of men a devotion which is unique and which He claims as His just due. Strange and startling is the paradox when He tells us that we must hate our kindred, and our own lives, if we would be His disciples. The meaning is perfectly clear. Nothing may come between Him and us. Our one duty is to follow Him, even if that lead us into orphanage, and homelessness, and exile, and death. Thousands have been equal to the alternative, and have not complained. Whether we regard the intensity of the devotion, or the numbers who have been mastered by its high enthusiasm, or the permanence of the great and mighty affection—the love which Jesus Christ has kindled, and still kindles, has no second.

Its intensity is unique. It sinks deeper down, it rises to loftier heights, it has a more fiery touch and a more flaming ardor than any other passion which can move the soul. It has done more than make men willing to die for Him. Men have died for their kindred, for their friends, for fatherland and humanity. Every

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

great and good cause has had its martyrs. But the martyrs of the Christian faith have faced and endured death with a peculiar exultation. The devotion which Christ commands is like a shoreless and fathomless sea, like the air and sky above and around us—limitless in all directions. There are no reservations in it. The best men have their weaknesses and faults. They cannot command our unqualified admiration and attachment. We maintain our independence in our loyalty. We cannot follow them everywhere. We know the faults of those whom we love, and hence there is no love without its pain. And the noblest causes have their limitations, unable to exhaust the enthusiasm of which the soul is capable. But the devotion which Christ kindles in human hearts is a devotion which wakes no shame, and which gives free rein to a boundless enthusiasm.

This love, remarkable for its intensity, is equally unique because of the numbers whom it has stirred with its high and ardent devotion. We have ceased to count them. They are a multitude which no man can number, and they belong to every tribe and tongue, to every age and clime.

The heroes of one people are not the heroes of other nations. Their countrymen perpetuate their memory, but the applause becomes more and more faint beyond the national boundaries. Only in England and her colonies do you find the columns of Nelson. Only in Holland are you reminded of William of Orange. Only in France is Napoleon ascendant. Only in Germany does Frederick the Great kindle pride. Only in Russia does Peter the Great stir the popular heart.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Only in the American Republic do Washington, and Lincoln, and Grant provoke the ardor of patriotic devotion. But Christ lays His pierced palms upon all the nations, and everywhere there is the same instant and intense response.

Not only are national boundaries overleaped, but the fiercest national prejudices and hatreds are broken down. It remains and must continue to be the miracle of history that a Jew, branded as a criminal by the Roman law, and dying a death of shame, repudiated by His own countrymen, has commanded a personal devotion which has counted death for Him a crown of glory. The fact remains, explain it as you please. The world never had any love for the Jew. It has always despised him, and ostracized him. We do not love him now. Yet it is a Jew at whose feet we bow, and under whose banner we march. In Christ, and in His cross, we glory. At that point the fiercest prejudices have given way; and it is simple truth that by the cross the middle wall of partition has been broken down, and the treaty of peace has been signed and sealed in the blood of our atonement.

National boundaries have been overleaped; the fiercest prejudices have been broken down, by the love which Christ kindles in the hearts of men. And it has effaced the deeper and darker shades of race distinctions. For such distinctions there are still, deepening in their grooves, and showing no signs of disappearance. The European, the Asiatic or Mongolian, and the African are like so many closed circles, touching each other at single points, but remaining distinct and separate. They tolerate each other; but they do

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

not assimilate. We shut the gates against the Mongolian, and our wisest statesmen are perplexed with the African problem within our borders. That problem has but one safe solution: the black man must become an intelligent Christian. The Mongolian problem must be solved in the same way: China must be converted to Jesus Christ. Then, and not till then, can you open wide the gateway of the Pacific and let Asia come in. No treaties can bring in the age of universal brotherhood. But the love which Christ kindles is drawing men to each other by drawing them to His cross, and holding them there.

Nor does it stop here. It has broken down, and is breaking down, the spirit of caste and class. It is the only passion which has fused the race. It subjugates alike the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the cultured. We gravitate into classes—social, literary, political, ecclesiastical. Jesus Christ masters us all; and the unity for which so many pray, and about which so many talk, is the most certain of all facts, if we will only look down deep enough—as real and mighty as the uniform throb of the sea beneath the wildest commotion, as real and mighty as the swing of the tides flooding every bay and inlet of the coast.

Once more. This devotion, so intense and universal, has proved to be remarkable for its permanence and persistence. It has staying power. Nothing wears it out. Two thousand years have not diminished its ardor. Time is the fiercest of sieves, winnowing the grain from the chaff. Time is the fire of God, the crucible of history, by which all things are tried.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Time is the day of judgment on earth, whose silent lips pronounce the final sentence. Thrones crumble before its whisper, and the dungeons become the seats of power. The emperor withers under its curse, the martyr is vested with the scepter and purple. Time changes our verdicts and moderates our enthusiasm, even for our national heroes. But there is no lessening of the devotion which Jesus Christ inspires. They loved Him, who saw Him and heard Him, and who were with Him on the mount. We love Him, too, we who have not seen Him. They loved Him and died for Him. We love Him, and we, too, would die for Him. (Armenia's soil is red with the blood of those who in our day would not deny Him.) They worshipped Him in cave and catacomb, and we worship Him in freer temples, but with equal ardor. Each Lord's Day wakes our praises and prayers anew, making for us a perpetual Easter.

This love for Christ is the mightiest of all motives to holy living, and to unselfish service. It builds us up into Christ's likeness. It makes us ready and eager to further His cause and kingdom, at home and abroad, until a redeemed world worships at His feet.

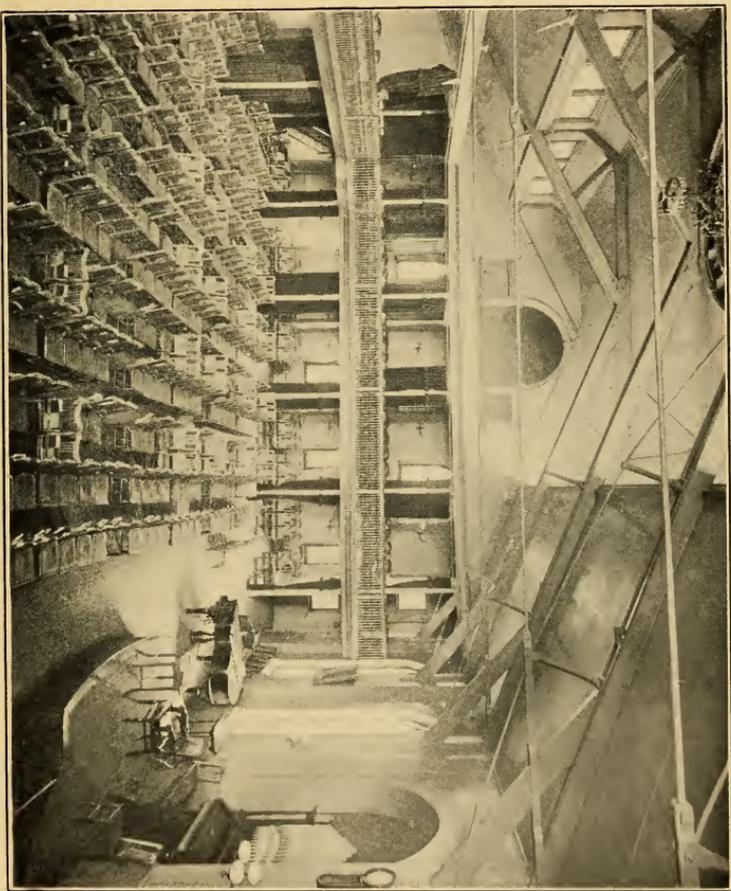
But how comes it that such a love is here? What is the secret of its intensity, of its universality, of its persistence? "Ex nihilo nihil fit." Such a devotion is not uncaused. Your will and mine has not generated it. The will of the race did not give it birth. It is not of us, because it has conquered us. It is but man's answer to the speech of God. We love Him because He first loved us. Herein is love, here is its fountain head, here is its tremendous urgency, here

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is its unquenchable ardor, here is its unfathomable depth and ceaseless flow—not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. When flint and steel strike, the spark of fire is born. When Christ's love for men smites the heart, the flame of love is kindled. And this love of God in Christ passes understanding, in the intensity of its ardor, in the universality of its scope, in the permanence and persistence of its life.

Its intensity is measured by the fact that God sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. To die voluntarily for those who hate us, and whom we have good reason for hating, is the supreme evidence of love. Christ died for us, while we were yet enemies. And He died not from necessity, but by deliberate choice and self-surrender; not under a sudden impulse, but under the pressure of an eternal purpose and decree, in which He had a conscious part. His descent into the manger was His acceptance of the cross. And He died as a propitiatory offering for our sins. His death is not a tragedy over which we weep; His death is not a heroism which we applaud; His death is the moral dynamite which has cleared the path to our eternal salvation. I hint at no theory of the atonement; perhaps the created reason will never be able to sound the awful mystery; but this much stands sure—Christ died that we might live. And if that be true, how can we help loving Him?

Never was love so intense, and never was love so universal, as God's love for men in Christ. No soul is untouched by it. It arches every cradle, it broods over every grave. Does some one say, "The death of Christ



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL BIBLE SCHOOL.



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

is a propitiation for our sins," for the sins of the elect, for the sins of those who believe, eternally foreknown and predestinated to the adoption of grace? I will let John answer him: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." That is explicit enough, and this universalism penetrates and dominates the entire Scriptures. It is upon this universal love of God for all men that election builds, and without which election would be cruelly incarnate. Christ died for all men; and all men will be judged by Him whose palms were pierced, and whose heart was broken, when He bore their sins in His own body on the tree. This is the great thought throbbing at the heart of modern Christian thought, which theology has done so much to obscure. For you and for me, it is a matter of life and death that we emphasize it—God is no respecter of persons.

And this love of God for men is as permanent and persistent as it is intense and universal. Time does not bound it. The grave does not bury it. It had no beginning and it has no end. Some have inferred from this the salvation of all, or an endless probation. But in these inferences the old fatalism reappears, and man is regarded as not really free. God's patience is supposed at last to wear out man's obstinacy. That leaves only the semblance of freedom. Scripture affirms with equal explicitness the infinite love of God for all men, the universal scope of the redeeming purpose and the absolute personal responsibility of man, the plenary power of the human will. God creates no soul to

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

damn it; God passes no soul by; God has no pleasure in the death of any, but they who will not hear and heed have only a fearful looking for of judgment. There is grace for all who will; there is no promise for the impenitent and obstinate, and an endless probation will find no hospitable welcome with any one who appreciates the awful urgency of the Scriptural warning that now is the day of salvation. But God changes not in His eternal love, even for such as perish in their sins. Their perdition fills even His heart with a real and eternal sadness. For if Christ wept over the impending ruin of Jerusalem, much more must the tears of God fall upon those who bury themselves in the grave of an eternal death.

There was a time when I could not make real to myself such expressions of Scripture as attributed pity, regret, sorrow and the like to God. I had been taught to regard such phrases as anthropomorphic and anthropopathic, formidable five and six footed words, suggesting that we attribute our infirmities to God. For years I was held in the grip of a doctrine of divine immutability, according to which the blessedness of God contained no element of real pain. An essay of Damer's set me free. The Scripture statements are true. God would be less than man were there no laughter and no tears in His love. He rejoices over the penitent sinner. He is sad when men hate wisdom and love death. His tears fall upon the sepulcher of eternal night. I do not envy the man who does not carry a burdened heart, and I crave a God to whom sin is sin, to whom sorrow is sorrow, to whom death is death; who never can cease to remember, and must

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

always recall, with anguish of heart, those whom His infinite mercy could not reach and who tore themselves away from His redeeming grasp.

Here, in God's care for men, is the secret of purity, the source of power, the seal of success. All the resources of heaven and of eternity are pledged to him who wills to be saved. And because of this love, the banner under which we march must and will wave over every citadel of wickedness and cruelty, at home and abroad. This gives us courage in every good cause. Righteousness must triumph, in city and state and nation and the world. It will have its Gethsemanes and Calvarys, but it will also have its Easter and Olivet. The meek shall inherit the earth; not the idle and indifferent and unresisting, but the meek, the patient in tribulation, those who watch and wait, hope and pray, work and endure. Armenian massacres cannot alter the issue. Japanese inconstancy cannot check the advance. Chinese exclusiveness and somnolency cannot bar the gospel out. The night is far spent; the day is at hand. For after earthquake and tempest, after trumpets and vials of wrath, shall come, descending out of heaven to earth, the fair city of God, the New Jerusalem, with gates of pearl and streets of gold, whose light shall be the Lamb of God, who died for the sins of men!

I am a conservative in Eschatology. If I were not, I should not say what I am about to say. With the New Testament in my hands, I cannot believe that all men will be saved. With the New Testament in my hands, I cannot believe in the annihilation of the wicked. With the New Testament in my hands, I

*THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

cannot believe in probation after death. So much as to what I cannot believe. Positively, I believe that the soul is immortal, that holiness constitutes blessedness, and that Jesus Christ died for all whom He will judge. And now, with orthodoxy unchallenged and beyond criticism, I wish to add, without a particle of reservation, that Eschatology has nothing whatever to do with the New Testament theory of missions. The fathers made foreign missions an appendage to their Eschatology. They were wrong in doing it, and we certainly ought not to perpetuate their errors. We need not repudiate either their Eschatology or their missionary enthusiasm; but, for one, I do smite the logical link by which they united the two. I take Jesus Christ to mean just what He says, no more and no less, when He commands me to disciple all nations. The eternal destinies of men He has not placed in our keeping. Judgment is His unique, awful, unshared prerogative. In it we have no part. The keys of death and hades hang upon His girdle, and woe to the hands that dare touch them! I can trust Him.

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There’s a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

“For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man’s mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.”

I am glad that the Crucified is the Judge. I am

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

glad that He has not imposed upon me this intolerable burden ; that He does not punish others for my neglect, and that He simply bids me preach His gospel to every creature. The question for us to settle is not whether there is a probation after death for such as in this life do not hear the gospel, but whether the present mortal life is not our only period of probation in which we can preach that gospel to the heathen. The question is not whether the heathen can be saved without the gospel, but whether we can be saved if we do not preach the gospel to the heathen, as Christ has commanded us to do. The woe is upon us. We certainly deserve to be beaten with many stripes if, knowing our Lord's will, we refuse to obey it.

The eternal destinies of men are not in our keeping. The pierced palms of Jesus Christ hold them. But upon us He lays the duty to preach the gospel to every creature, and so to preach it as to secure its acceptance. We are beginning to see that our campaign is bounded by the earth and by the mortal life of men. The dead are beyond our ministry. The unborn are not within our reach. The living, the living, we must save! We are beginning to see that the New Jerusalem, builded of God in the heavens, is to be located in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America, in Australia, and in all the islands of the sea! God will see to the building of the eternal empire; we must build its ample vestibule in a regenerated earth!

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

### THE EFFECT ON THE CHURCHES OF SUPPORTING FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Address delivered by Dr. Behrends before the Ecumenical Conference, in Carnegie Hall, New York, Tuesday, May 1, 1900.

It is idle, at this late day, to challenge the propriety or the wisdom of foreign missions, in any of their departments—evangelistic, educational, medical, philanthropic. We have put our hands to the plow and there can be no turning back. When the American flag shook out its starry folds at Santiago and Manila, the question of sovereign and responsible occupancy was settled. Retreat and compromise have become impossible. The die has been cast. The white man's burden is upon us. For where the flag flies there the nation rallies. And wherever the cross of Christ has been planted, there the Christian host must rally for its support and defense. Retreat and compromise have forever become impossible. Universal conquest, or abject surrender, are the only alternatives.

The disciplining of the nations is a task of overwhelming magnitude. It will change the face of human history. But it is also profoundly affecting the religious life of our churches at home, and it will affect that life more and more profoundly with each succeeding decade. There is in this movement a dynamic energy, which will produce, which is producing, slowly, silently, steadily, unconsciously, and in spite of us, the most radical ecclesiastical and theological revolutions. Upon three of these, the most important, in my judgment, I propose briefly and hurriedly to touch.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

History is the logic of God. And foreign missions, as a part of that logic, are opening the eyes of our churches as to what constitutes their divine calling. Compassion for the perishing heathen is giving way to the passion for universal conquest, and the passion for universal conquest has been born of the infinite, impartial love of Christ for the world, mastering our souls. The travail of His soul is becoming our travail. What are we bent upon doing? To save men. But what does that mean? It may mean to get men into heaven, and it may mean to get heaven into men. It means both. The ultimate aim is to get men into heaven; the immediate aim is to get heaven into men. The latter may be said to be our specific task. We are awakening to the fact that it is our business to save mortal men and women from sin, and to establish them in the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ. Our sole task is the historical triumph of the gospel in all lands.

I pass to a second great change which is coming over our religious life at home. So great a task, from which no church, and no disciple, can be excused, makes co-operation an immediate and imperative necessity. We are in direst straits. The fathers prayed for open doors. They are open. We have been praying for men. The men are here, clamoring to be sent. We cannot send them because our treasuries are empty. What is the trouble? I will tell you. The logic of God, in the history and present condition of foreign missions, is hammering us into co-operation. Comity is rapidly becoming an obsolete idea. That, perhaps, may have been sufficient, so long as conti-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

nents and islands were isolated. But the isolation is rapidly disappearing. Steam and electricity are demolishing all Chinese walls. The world is becoming every man's parish. History is laughing our comities and compromises out of court. What right have you and I to limit our respective fields by geographical or ethnological lines? All souls are mine, all souls are yours, as truly as they are Christ's. You owe a debt to every one of them. All lands are mine, all lands are yours, as truly as they are the Lord's. You are debtor to every one of them. The round globe, every square foot of it, is my parish, and it is yours, by Christ's commission. I have no right to bar you out; you have no right to bar me out. Comity! I like not the word. It is veneered selfishness. It is disguised haughtiness. I like the word comity as little as I do the word toleration. I tolerate you and you tolerate me? I want not toleration. I claim my free-born citizenship, as a son of God, in every province of the great republic of Jesus Christ! We may as well face the problem. Comity is a snare and a delusion. You cannot enforce it. It will collapse under pressure. It has collapsed a thousand times; and collapse is all that comity is good for; for it is wrong in principle and it is unworkable in practice. Comity means civility, courtesy, politeness. It is the code of behavior between rivals. Are we rivals, or God's co-laborers? Comity is a covert denial of partnership; and we are partners in the service of Christ. Do not misunderstand me. I am not an iconoclast. I would not break up any existing ecclesiastical or missionary organization. But in this matter,

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

at least, I am a Christian evolutionist. Our methods are antiquated and inadequate. There must be a new alignment of Christian forces for the impending Armageddon; for Armageddon is coming! The times call for multitudes in the valley of decision. Fusion is what we need; federation is what we must have; co-operation must become our flaming watchword! Nor shall we ever have co-operation abroad until we have it at home. I am only stating the problem. I venture upon no solution, though the solution is the simplest. But, in any case, our creeds and politics must not stand in the way of the massing of our Christian forces for the redemption of the world.

Thank God, the hedges are not so thick and high as they were fifty years ago. Twenty-five years ago it took me fourteen months to nerve myself for the leap which carried me over the high and thorny Baptist hedge into the Congregational ranks; to-day one short step would carry me back into the dear old camp, without any abridgment of my present convictions. The Baptists, at least, have not been marking time, and they may outrun us all yet, if we do not wake up soon. Thank God, the hedges are being clipped a little closer and lower every year! But what I want is to have God's ploughshare go through them all, tearing them up by the roots, and consigning them to the fire for which alone they are fit! It can be done. It ought to be done. It has been done. There was once one Church of Christ in Jerusalem. Three thousand united with it in a single day. Whether they all repeated the same creed, whether they were all immersed, whether they were all confirmed I do not

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

know and I do not care. They all did repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. There was once one Church of Christ in metropolitan Corinth, and one Church of Christ in cosmopolitan Rome. They had widest liberty, without schism. I want to see one Church of Christ in New York and one Church of Christ in London, one Church of Christ in the United States, one Church of Christ in the British Empire, one Church of Christ in Japan and in China, one Church of Christ in all the world! I shall not live to see it, but it is coming. For Jesus Christ is breaking down the middle walls of partition, and He is making a conquest of us all!

Co-operation is coming. It is in the air. When it does come it will be free and spontaneous. We are nearer to each other than were the fathers, and our children will keep up the converging march. Fusion, federation, co-operation—it is coming. And when it does come it will come as a resistless flood, and then, look out for the tramp of the great host and the flaming feet of the invincible Captain! That will usher in the millennial day! That will bring the fulfillment of the Apocalyptic vision!

And now for a third suggestion. The logic of God, as articulated in foreign missions, crowding us to co-operation at home and abroad, is also compelling us to submit our theological convictions to a fierce and fiery sifting. We know too much. Omniscience is our foible. We know a lot of things that are not so. We talk learnedly and long about fate, and foreknowledge, and free will, and the like, and not a man in this conference knows anything about these things.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Knowledge has puffed us up. We must become as little children. We must sit at the feet of Jesus. I believe in creeds. I wage no war against them. I never signed one. I never expect to. But I will sign any creed, and I will do it blindfolded, if you will let me sign all the rest. I believe in polities. I can indorse any one of them, if you will let me indorse all the rest. I am an ecumenical theologian and an ecumenical ecclesiastic. When I sign all the creeds, and indorse all the polities, that in which they agree is the residuum of my positive convictions. As to the things in which they do not agree, I simply treat them as wood, hay and stubble.

I have tried the experiment. I have studied every one of the creeds, Greek, Latin, Protestant. I have dumped them all into the hopper and then set the mill a-going. There were things in every one of them that could not be ground into meal—wood, hay, stubble, sticks, stones, chaff. They were scattered to the winds; but the dear old gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ came out pure, sweet and wholesome. It is in every one of them, and it is the only thing in any one of them that is worth preserving and worth fighting for. Let us make a bonfire of our theological systems. Add to the pile all our ecclesiastical millinery and machinery and cap the whole with the higher criticism of the last one hundred years. Now, strike your match! See, the flame mounts from base to summit! Don't call out the fire department. Let it burn! Only the wood, hay and stubble will go up in smoke, and settle down in ashes. The gold, silver and precious stones will not be scarred. The residuum

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

will be a gospel which we can preach to every creature. It will not be an ethical system, a code of morals without energy in it. It will not be an ecclesiastical machine. It will not be a critical theory, it will be the old, eternal, unchangeable message of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, dying for us sinners and for our salvation, risen from the dead. The Calvinism left in that residuum will not hurt the most sensitive, sensible Methodist. It will only be infallible omniscience rooted in universal grace, and in universal atonement. And the fiery heat pervading that residuum will thaw out the iciest Presbyterian, making him shout in spite of himself. In Wales, at least, they have nominally solved that problem, for there I found the Presbyterians calling themselves Calvinistic Methodists! Our missionaries are ahead of us. They have thought their way through into a simpler theology than have we. They have ceased to tithe mint, anise, and cummin. They have learned that China and Japan will never utter the shibboleths of our schools. They take the old Bible, just as it is, and with the beating, bleeding heart of Christ encased within it, as in a casket of silver, they are flinging it into the ranks of the pagan millions! That simplicity must master us. Nor is it difficult to say what that ultimate simplicity must be. It will be the primitive simplicity. There can be no other. The gospel is older than Wesley, older than Calvin, older than Luther, older than Augustine, older than Paul, older than Moses, older than Abraham. It is as old as God. The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. We must come back to the New Testament,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

which reveals the secret of the ages. Religion must centralize in personal trust in, and devotion to, the Personal Christ. He is our Master; He alone. We must stop deifying our creeds. We must stop deifying our rituals and polities. I am not pleading for anarchy. Discipline and order must be. I am not pleading for bare meeting houses and a bald form of worship. Let us have the gospel tent, and the stately cathedral. The sanctuary has beauty, as well as strength. I am not pleading for doctrinal indifference. I am no lover of jellyfish theology. Intellectual flabbiness is a disgrace. But reduce your theology; you must do it; you can afford to throw away a good deal of it; only let what remains be clear, positive, virile and aggressive!

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me,” wrote Paul to Timothy. It is worth repeating. Guard the sacred deposit. Stick to the gospels and the epistles. Build upon the foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. The Scriptures testify of Him, they culminate in Him, they are fulfilled in Him. Salvation is the Divine Saviour. We never tire saying these things. But we persist in applying other tests as conditions of fellowship and co-operation. We call them subordinate, but we make them primary. I say it kindly, but I mean it; I say it, though I fear that you will not heed it; it is usurpation of authority, on the part of anybody, to separate in any way, and upon any pretext, whom God hath made one in Jesus Christ! Back to Christ! We all say that. And then, as soon as we get out of Carnegie

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Hall, we put our faith in the keeping of the Augsburg Confession, or the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Westminster Confession, or the Twenty-five Articles, or the Synod of Dort. We feel that we must follow Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Roger Williams, or John Robinson. We coddle our creeds and canons, even when they are moth-eaten. In the name of Christ, and for the sake of a perishing world, let us put them away in glass cases, and store them upon the shelves of a theological museum, and then let us go out and preach Christ and Him crucified! Dare you do it?

Can we have this solid agreement in doctrinal conviction and this universal co-operation in service? We ought to have it, and therefore we can have it, if we only will, and we shall have it as soon as we really want it. Foreign missions will compel us to have it. I wonder what we would all say and do if Jesus Christ were to appear, in visible form, upon this platform? We should all be on our knees! My lips would be dumb. What a hush would fall upon this assembly! How we all would hang upon His lips! Would we not do what He might bid us do? But is He not here? Then is co-operation possible. But we still have many masters. We follow the Lord afar off. We specialize, where He does not. We impose tests, when He does not. There seems to be no way out of the meshes of the miserable net which we have woven for our feet; and so we stumble where we might and ought to run. We creep where we should fly. But the meshes are of our own making; and what our hands have woven our hands can tear apart. In God's name let us do it! We have kissed our chains

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

long enough. Let us smite them and discard them forever! We are here, of many creeds. For ten days we have been one. That which has made us one for ten days can make us one henceforth and can make Christendom one! Let the love of Christ constrain us! And when all who hear His name shall have eyes and ears, hands, feet, and lips, bodies and souls, for Him, and for Him alone, then shall be true what we sometimes sing :

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;  
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;  
We are not divided; all one body we;  
One in hope and doctrine; one in charity.  
Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus going on before!

## PART III.

---

### HALF HOURS WITH JESUS.

A fine example of compactness in pulpit style, of theological stateliness, and of lucid instructive power, was the series of "Short Talks to Young People," also entitled "Half Hours with Jesus," which Dr. Behrends began on Sunday evening, December 4, 1898. For all the purposes of this book, it has been deemed advisable to reproduce these "Short Talks." They were delivered to large congregations, and subsequently found their way to at least one hundred thousand homes through the press.

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY AS A TEACHER.

[December 4, 1898.]

The words of a good man carry authority with them. For goodness gives clearness of mental and moral vision; and the most important things which we need to know are the things which have to do with character and life. Good men are our best teachers, because the pure in heart see God. If a good man is also a great man, the greatness adds much to his authority. In such a case he becomes an oracle upon the matters of which he speaks. Great men who are

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

not good are not safe leaders. They may be very dangerous guides. But goodness prevents a great man from misleading, or deceiving, those who come to him for instruction. Moreover, when a man is both great and good, he will not assume an authority to which he is not entitled. Greatness makes a good man unassuming and modest. He will not pretend to know when he is ignorant. He will not demand a confidence to which he knows he is not entitled. He will not claim an obedience to which he has no right. Great men, when they are good, are careful not to exceed the limits of their just authority, and that makes their authority respected.

Jesus Christ was a good man. No one denies that. Jesus Christ was a great man. No one denies that. Jesus Christ was the best man who ever lived. Everybody grants that. Jesus Christ was the greatest man who ever lived. He has won the love of millions and the grateful admiration of the world. Everybody admits that, unbelievers as well as believers. Jesus Christ embodies goodness and greatness in their highest form. And, therefore, we cannot suppose that He claimed any authority to which He was not entitled. He could not pretend to be what He was not. That would destroy His goodness and mar His greatness. A good man may hide his greatness; but he will not put on the airs of a king when he is only an ordinary subject. Now, Jesus Christ makes the most amazing claims concerning His place and authority. He called Himself the Son of God. He declared that He came from heaven, that from all eternity he was consciously in existence. He affirmed His equality with the

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Father. He claimed authority and power to forgive sin, to raise the dead, to judge all men. He called upon all men to follow Him and be His disciples. He commanded that His gospel be preached to every living creature. He declared that He was entitled to Divine worship, and told men to pray to Him, to be baptized in His name, and to remember His death for their salvation. If a great good man is entitled to confidence, how much more eagerly ought we to listen to a great good man who, by His own repeated and frequent declarations, is God in the form of man. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. She did not talk; she only listened. That is the thing for every one of us to do. Let us hear, that we may learn and live! Let His doctrine be our doctrine. Let His faith be our faith. Let His patience be our patience. What He says let us believe and say. And when He is silent, let our lips be reverently sealed.

As we read the gospels, four things are clearly seen to distinguish the works of Jesus as a teacher.

The first is that He frequently challenges the teachings of the scribes. It was their business to interpret the law. But they had burdened it with their traditions. They had destroyed its simplicity and its spirituality. They bound heavy burdens upon the shoulders of men. They tithed mint, anise and cummin; they forgot mercy and judgment. They made religion formal and burdensome. The Sermon on the Mount shows us how Jesus met these men. Every paragraph is a trip hammer blow upon some false doctrine or false practice. "I say unto you," is the ever recurring challenge. Christ stood alone against

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the doctors of His day. He was a theological reformer, a merciless iconoclast. He tore into shreds the doctrine which was preached in the synagogues. No wonder they hated Him and slandered Him and persecuted Him and killed Him. He called them hypocrites, blind leaders of the blind, wolves in sheep's clothing, bolting and barring the gates of the Kingdom of God, whited sepulchres, a generation of vipers. Of course they raged, gnashed their teeth and crucified Him.

But, in the second place, while Jesus challenged the authority of the scribes, He kept in close and continued touch with the law and the prophets. In the Sermon on the Mount He was careful to state that He had not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them; that is, to rescue and make plain their real meaning. And He was careful to add that not one jot or tittle of this Divine message could ever perish or pass away, that not one of its least commandments could be set aside. He tore off the bandages from the face and form of truth. He left not one mark upon its fair body. He did not lay His little finger upon its lips. He quoted Moses and David, and Isaiah. Their hands He clasped. Alone He stood against the scribes; but all the prophets were on His side and against them. He was a theological reformer, but He was at the same time a theological recoverer. He went back to the great originals. The streams had been polluted; He led men back to the fountains. Truth had been put into chains and thrust into a dungeon; He tore the bars asunder and smote the manacles by the word of His power. The work which

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Elijah and Isaiah and Paul and Luther and Calvin and Wesley did within comparatively narrow spheres, Jesus did with a hundredfold more intensity and comprehensiveness. He broke the path for them all, and they have succeeded in proportion as they have followed in His steps. Thus Jesus was at once the most radical and the most conservative of teachers. His teaching was new to His time, but it was from everlasting. And that gave it omnipotent power.

A third impressive feature in the teaching of Jesus, giving to it peculiar authority, is the habitual tone of profound personal conviction. There was a ring in His speech which men missed in their most learned and eloquent teachers. They could not keep their eyes away from Him. They hung upon His lips. Nor did He confuse them by the ornaments of diction, or the intricacy of His logic. The common people heard him gladly. His illustrations were the simplest, drawn from the fields and the market and the ordinary occupations of men. He did not speculate. He indulged in no fancies. He had something to say and He said it. He did not say it all, but He said what was needful. There was ever in Him a reserve of utterance which told upon what He did say. And what He did say he said with a burning earnestness, with flashing eye often, and outstretched hand, an earnestness which was spontaneous and which cannot be simulated.

We know when a man means what he says, when he speaks with the authority of profound personal conviction. The whole body, to every nerve fiber and to finger tips, becomes an animated gesture. Tone, look, gesture, all tell the story. There is no ranting,

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

nothing is forced. All is natural, quiet, intense, under perfect control, even when the sentences rush like rivers of fire. Thus did our Lord speak, and His hearers said: "Never man spake like this man." The secret was a simple one. He spake what He knew; He testified of what He had seen. He saw the darkness of human ignorance. He knew the deadly curse of sin, the depths of men's hearts were naked to His eye. He knew the infinite mercy of God, the boundlessness of the divine compassion. He read the secrets of the eternal future. Other teachers quoted from the rabbis; He never did. He read His own soul. He read the hearts of His hearers. He read the mind of God, and then He opened His lips. No wonder men listened and gave thanks.

One more thing remains to be said. Jesus taught, not only with the authority of profound personal conviction, but with the authority derived from the certainty that His message was the message of the Eternal God. His message was His own, and yet it was not His own. It had been given to Him by the Father. With that eternal authority, He made every word of His own thrill; so that when He spake it was God who spoke. This is as amazing as it is assuring and comforting. For it is a blessed thing that in Jesus Christ God speaks by human lips and in a human tongue. Such speech is invested with primary and perennial authority. Men do well to listen, angels do well to listen, when God Incarnate in the flesh of man opens His mouth. Mary sat at His feet. She did well. Let us take our station there, and listen as did she!

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT.

[December 11, 1898.]

One fact stands out, clear and convincing, in the present critical debate concerning the authorship, date and manner of composition, and authority, of the books of the Old Testament. It is that the Canon had been fixed long before the time of Christ. The Old Testament of the synagogue was the Old Testament of the Christian Church. It passed unchanged from one to the other. It is undisputed, and it is indisputable, that for at least two thousand years no book, no chapter, no verse, has been added to, or taken from, the sacred Scriptures of the Jews. Scholars are endeavoring to trace their earlier history up to the time of Moses and Abraham, two thousand years or more, and even beyond that to the first appearance of man. It has proved to be a task of amazing magnitude, and if we date the critical movement to Astruc, 145 years have been devoted to it; if to Spinoza, 228 years. It would seem as if the literary problem ought to have been solved by this time. So far is it from having been solved, that all competent scholars are agreed that the problem grows in intricacy as it is studied. Astruc found two documents in the Pentateuch; ten times that number are not enough, as a working basis, for the modern critic. He has a first and a second Elohist; then a Jahvist, and then a Redactor, combining and revising the work of his three predecessors. He has a first and a second Deuteronomist; and then another Redactor, combining and revising the work of his six predecessors. Then he comes to the Priestcode, and

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

here he is lost in a labyrinth of conjectures. The legislation bears traces of the highest antiquity, while its present form is located a thousand years after Moses. It is claimed to be a statutory evolution, covering a period of at least fifteen hundred years. We codify our laws by dropping out statutes which have become obsolete or have been repealed. The Priestcode is supposed to combine the laws of fifty successive generations, without reference to their chronological order. The simple statement of the problem is enough to make clear the tremendous difficulty of the undertaking, and an increasing number of students is coming to regard the problem as hopelessly insoluble.

But, meanwhile, the Old Testament, as it lies in our hands, has held its present place at least two thousand years; and from the gospels we can learn what Jesus Christ had to say about it, and how he used it. The problems of literary criticism need not disturb us. Conjecture rules this entire field. There are only two questions which are of practical importance. These concern the truth of the history and the authority of the doctrine; and against neither has criticism been able to make a successful assault. The doctrine has held its ground by its own weight. It is its own evidence. The history has held its ground by its simplicity and interior consistency; while the proposed reconstructions have thrown the material into inextricable confusion, have left everything hanging in air and made the whole story unintelligible. So that the history, like the doctrine, shines in its own light.

Jesus Christ was a man of one book, as He was

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

a man of one idea. He came to seek and to save the lost, and to give His life a ransom for many. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets, to make clear and complete their divine teaching. His educational advantages were limited. Nazareth was poorly equipped in schools, and Christ grew up in a carpenter's home. There were famous schools in Jerusalem, but the poverty of His condition placed them beyond His reach. He could read, and He could write; but books were few in the Galilean village. The synagogue was His great mental opportunity, where He became familiar with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. From them He frequently quoted, to them He frequently appealed; and, so far as the record shows, He never quoted from, nor appealed to, any other book. Paul was sent to the school of Gamaliel, the most famous teacher of his day; and his epistles bear the traces of his Rabbinical teaching. Nothing of the kind can be discovered in our Lord's sayings. At Athens, Paul quoted a line from an obscure Greek poet; and while this line may have been caught up by Paul as a popular current phrase, his residence at Tarsus and his standing as a free-born Roman citizen make it more than probable that he had some acquaintance with Greek and Roman literature. The discourses of Christ are wholly wanting in the most shadowy suggestions of any such knowledge. They do reveal a close and comprehensive knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament. In the fragments which the gospels contain, there are quotations from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, First Samuel, First Kings, Second Chronicles,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Proverbs, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Zachariah and Malachi. The Levitical law he referred to as Mosaic legislation. The patriarchs were spoken of as historical personages. The wilderness life, with its miraculous supply of manna and of water, was assumed to have been real. The Psalter is spoken of as containing hymns from David's pen. That Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by the fiery hail, that Jonah preached in Nineveh, that the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon in his royal court, that Naaman was healed of his leprosy by Elisha, Jesus assumed to be well-established facts. Not a syllable ever escaped His lips suggesting that any part of the record was legendary or mythical, much less that it was a prophetic parable, whose only value was its moral. Jesus used the record as if it were true; believing it Himself, and expecting everybody else to believe it.

The acquaintance of Jesus with the Old Testament appears also in the structure of His sentences and in their contents. There are many unique features. The thoughts of Christ were His own; they were not borrowed. The speech of Christ was His own; it was not based upon current models. But fibered upon this originality, in thought and speech, was the Old Testament way of looking at things and speaking of them. Jesus may be said to have absorbed the Old Testament, and so the Old Testament coloring appears constantly in His phrases and sentences. This was not the result of careful verbal memorizing, but of a complete mastery of the Old Testament as an organic unity. He knew it by heart, and from the heart and at the heart.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

As unreservedly as Jesus accepted the truth of the Old Testament narrative did He recognize and affirm the divine authority of the Old Testament doctrine. He did not revise or repeal the Ten Commandments. He found them buried beneath a mass of Pharisaic traditions. Upon these he poured His angry scorn, and rescued for the Decalogue its ancient and spiritual meaning. The prophets were honored as preaching a divine message and as doing a divine work; a message and a work, not for their day only, but for every day and for all men.

Much is said, at present, of revelation as a gradual unfolding of the mind and will of God. The Bible is spoken of as a literary evolution or growth. No one perceived this more clearly, or stated it more plainly, than Jesus Christ. While He claimed divine authority for the Old Testament, He affirmed also its incompleteness. Of some things He declared that Moses permitted them because of the hardness of heart of those with whom He had to deal. Of other things He declared that they were incomplete as moral precepts, and then He announced the broader rule under which they must be made to fall. This is notably the case in making love our duty to enemies as well as to friends. Of His own hearers, Jesus said that they had seen and heard what prophets had longed to see and hear. They looked upon, and listened to, a greater than Solomon or Jonah. John the Baptist was the greatest of all the prophetic line, and yet the humblest Christian disciple was far in advance of him. Even of himself he said that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit there would be a great and continuous advance

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

in the knowledge of divine things. Thus to the divine authority of the Old Testament he added the continuity and the progressiveness of the divine revelation.

But this continuity and progressiveness of revelation were not left hanging in the air. The development had its law and goal. It was a bold and startling thing for our Lord to say, but He said it again and again—that the entire Old Testament, from cover to cover, pointed to Him, and was fulfilled in Him. “These Scriptures,” he exclaimed, “testify of Me!” Not in occasional and isolated passages, but in the whole sweep and movement of their narrative and doctrine. The day which Abraham saw was His day. The king of whom David spoke was none other than Himself. No man could understand and believe Moses without believing in Himself. And of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, He said that its burden and aim would be to make Himself understood. Thus He planted Himself at the very center and heart of divine revelation. The Old Testament finds its goal in Him. The New Testament finds its source in Him. Both find in Him their law and meaning. And, therefore, it remains forever true that as we come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ only through the written word, this knowledge passes into a personal experience, which in turn conducts us into a deeper and sweeter knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. His face shines from every page, and gives them their unfading beauty and their celestial charm!

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE GUIDANCE OF  
THE CHURCH BY HIMSELF.

[December 18, 1898.]

In considering the guidance which Jesus promised and pledged to His disciples, the first thing to be emphasized is that He spoke of it as an extraordinary and supernatural leadership. The influence of good and great men does not end with death. Fathers and mothers live in their children, and their children's children. Good and evil moral influences are perpetuated through generations and centuries. The great poets and philosophers, the great architects and artists, the great statesmen and military captains, the great philanthropists and theologians become mightier as time passes. In many instances these men were despised and persecuted, imprisoned and put to death by their own generation—as were Socrates, and Paul, and Bunyan—while we crown them with unfading laurels. Death has often secured a wider and more reverent hearing. But the influence has been impersonal in form. The thoughts and the deeds of these men have been preserved; by means of them the memory has retained their ideals and achievements, molding conviction and conduct for many centuries. The actors themselves exercise no conscious personal control. They do not break through the screen of death.

Jesus has shared with other great and good men this power of impersonal influence by the perpetuation in memory, through literary records, of what He did and said. The Gospels are the simplest and the shortest of books, and yet these brief and artless pamphlets

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

have exerted a more powerful and extended influence than all other books combined. Granting all this, it still remains true that this does not cover what Jesus had to say about His leadership through succeeding generations to the end of time, and it does not explain the secret of the conquering advance of Christianity. For, to say no more, there are two supernatural facts which the literary records have carved deep into the tablets of Christian confession and conviction—the incarnation and the resurrection. Eliminate these two, and the New Testament, grounded in the Gospel story, sinks to the level of the “Arabian Nights” tales. In the recognition of Jesus as God manifest in the flesh and in His resurrection from the dead the Gospel has always found the heart of its message. Its power is in these supernatural facts. And with these is joined a third supernatural fact, the personal leadership of Jesus, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost should come upon them; and in the miracle of Pentecost the church received its perennial anointing. Such is the plain record. It was not unexpected. Peter regarded it as the fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus Himself, in His farewell discourses, had much to say about another Comforter, whom He would send, whose presence should never be withdrawn, who would carry on and complete what He, in mortal flesh, had begun. The form of leadership was to change, but the reality was to remain. It was to be supernatural and personal, as His own had been. And, though changed in form, it was to remain His own. He promised to be with His disciples, by the

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Holy Spirit, to the end of the world. Leadership was not surrendered. Just as He had come to do the Father's work, so the Spirit was to do His work. Just as the Father spoke and wrought in Him, and by Him, so He would speak and work in and by the Holy Spirit. The leadership was to be supernatural and personal. And so it is represented in the historical sketch which the Book of Acts supplies, and in the epistles. Jesus was not withdrawn from personal leadership; but by His Spirit on earth, and by His intercession in the heavens, He is conducting the great moral campaign of a world's sanctification and redemption.

The supernatural personal guidance of Jesus covers four things. It is a supernatural personal guidance into the knowledge of the way of salvation. To Him belongs the leadership in Christian thought. He did not cease to instruct His disciples when He took His departure from them. He continued to teach them by the Holy Spirit; and this teaching was specifically confined to the recalling and the understanding of what on earth He had said and done. And, as if to show that this intellectual guidance was not to be confined to such as had enjoyed His personal acquaintance, Saul of Tarsus was invested with apostolic authority. He does not reproduce the discourses and the miracles of Christ, with which he was not personally conversant; but he confined himself to the three outstanding historical facts, the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Resurrection. History cannot be written on the day when it is made. Some time must elapse before the facts are seen in their true perspective. But its main outlines must be given

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

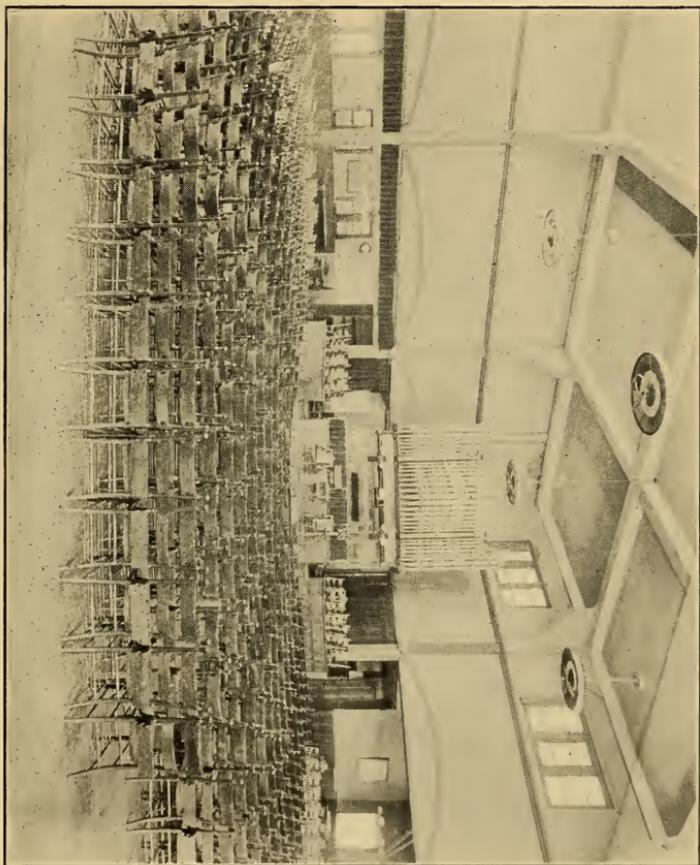
while the facts are still fresh in the memory. The gospels and the epistles conform to this double demand. They are not stenographic reports of what Jesus said and did, written down at the time of their utterance and occurrence. Time enough was permitted to pass to allow what had been said and done to reveal its real and permanent meaning. And yet the work of recording was done within thirty years after Christ's death, while the sayings and the deeds were fresh in remembrance. This gives to the gospels and the epistles their unique authority as Christian literature, composed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit under conditions which make their trustworthiness and authority impregnable. To these historical and doctrinal sources we must ever appeal as the final and infallible court of Christian arbitration. Still, we must not forget that the supernatural personal guidance of Jesus in the knowledge of the way of salvation was not limited to the age of the apostles. It was never withdrawn; it is not absent now; it never will be wanting. The gift of the Holy Spirit, and in it the personal guidance of Jesus, is a perpetual gift. He is still the great teacher, and guides His church into all truth. Creeds and councils are not infallible; nevertheless, in creeds and councils the Holy Ghost speaks. There is a certain definite Christian confession which has commanded universal acceptance. There is a historic and immutable doctrine, the general outlines of which have become increasingly clear. There is an incessant winnowing process in which the chaff is separated from the wheat. The incidental, the speculative, the scholastic elements drop away and are discarded; the real and the substantial

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

hold their ground because Jesus, by His Spirit, is guiding His church into the truth.

The guidance of Jesus is a supernatural personal guidance into holy character and life. The process of sanctification is described as our looking into His face until we are transfigured into His likeness. He is more than our example and pattern. He is the power of God unto salvation. Faith in Him means fellowship with Him, and surrender to Him. We dwell in Him, and He dwells in us. We dwell in Him by faith; He dwells in us by the Holy Spirit. There is a vital, personal intercommunication and exchange. As He was made sin for us, so we became the righteousness of God to Him. The process is not mechanical and mercantile; it falls under the law of vital organic union. We are the branches, He is the supporting and nourishing vine. He imparts to us His own spirit of life. It is a supernatural, personal relation, from the very beginning, and without interruption. When you open the faucet the water rushes out under pressure from the unseen reservoir. So, when faith opens the heart, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus flows in for cleansing and healing, finding its way into every hidden nook and corner. This is the great task of faith, to keep the channels open, that Jesus Christ may keep them full.

Finally, the guidance of Jesus is a supernatural personal guidance in the service which He has commanded us to render. That service is nothing less than the conversion of the world to Him, by the preaching of His gospel. It is an audacious and arduous task. Sceptics laugh at it. The church itself, in large measure, is doubtful and indifferent. Its ulti-



BETHESDA BRANCH INTERIOR.



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

mate success, however, is assured, because Christ Himself carries the responsibilities and the resources of leadership. Already, in the closing years of our century, we are witnessing political changes and national upheavals, which remind us of the eras of Constantine and of Luther. We are on the brink of another great world movement, in which the barriers of centuries are giving way. The guns of our navy have opened the Philippine Islands to the gospel. These islands are the outposts of the Asiatic continent. With them in our possession and under our flag, China must break its shell and give free entrance to Christianity. Crowded on the north by Russia, on the south by England and on the east by Japan and the United States, the field must soon be swept by Christian forces. An invisible but invincible Captain heads the advancing columns, who, whether friendly or hostile to each other, are obeying His marching orders. And what is true abroad is true at home; Jesus Christ is leading His church to victory.

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT GOD.

[January 1, 1899.]

In our theological seminaries the classification of the divine attributes is a very important section of systematic divinity. An attribute is that which we attribute to a thing or person; it is our mental notion of that thing or person. Our conceptions of God are various, and the mind naturally seeks to formulate them under the idea of unity, and to arrange them in a definite

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and satisfactory order. These attempts have been very numerous, and the rival advocates have been very strenuous and earnest; but the debate has not been very fruitful of practical results. An exact and exhaustive science of God has not been reached and it cannot be reached. The Infinite and the Eternal cannot be reduced to a logical diagram. We cannot break through our constitutional limitations. We cannot grasp the stars; our arms are too short. We cannot lift the ocean from its bed; our hands are too small. We cannot define God; we are too poor in thought and too impotent in speech. We must be content with such partial and practical knowledge as comes to us in observation, experience and revelation. We may know something of God by the patient study of the work of His hands. We may enlarge our knowledge from the lessons of personal experience and of history, which constitute a divine discipline. And we may rectify and complete our knowledge from the careful study of the Scriptures, and from the teaching of Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. He who knows Jesus Christ knows God, and he only does.

If we will only follow this simple clue, coming to the knowledge of the Father through the Son, the result cannot fail to be enriching and gratifying. No single utterance of Jesus, not all others combined, gives us so practical and pleasing a knowledge of God as His word to Philip: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He speaks not merely as the representative of the Father. He speaks with more than prophetic authority; neither Moses nor Isaiah would

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

have ventured to say that. He justifies the amazing statement by grounding it upon a vital mutual inherence of the Father and Himself: "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." The inherence is mutual and unlimited, so that when He speaks, God speaks; when He acts, God acts; when He suffers, God suffers; when He dies, God dies. What He is God is. This makes it certain that God is a conscious personal being; not unconscious, distributed, impersonal force, or a "power that makes for righteousness." This makes it certain that moral qualities are the same in God as they are in man. They can be, and they have been, accurately photographed in a human life. There is anger in God which smites the hypocrite, and scourges those who convert the house of prayer into a den of thieves; there is compassion in God, which finds vent in tears and groans; there is forgiveness with and in God, which does not shrink from the Magdalen's touch, which does not crush one whom the synagogue had condemned to death, which does not turn away from the dying thief. When we dare to make our knowledge of Jesus the measure and standard of our knowledge of God, because He is God of very God, God in the form of man, we plant our feet upon the rock which cannot be shaken.

There are other things, however, which Jesus had to say about God which must be taken into account for the completion of our knowledge. If we confined attention to this only, that what Jesus is, God is, we might infer that God had bodily parts, that His presence was local, that hunger, thirst and weariness pertained to His essential and eternal life. So some have

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

maintained. But the correction is supplied by a second great utterance of Jesus in His conversation at Jacob's well with the woman of Samaria—"God is Spirit." The statement is unconditional and absolute. The article is wanting. God is not a spirit, but Spirit; nothing else. He has no local habitation. The eye cannot see Him. The ear cannot hear Him. The hands cannot feel Him. He has no bodily parts. He has no material organism. Matter does not cling to Him, does not limit Him. So whatever limitations or sufferings apply to Jesus as possessing and acting through a material body must not be applied to the essential being of God. The reminder that God is Spirit forbids that. The eternal God does not hunger, does not thirst, does not sleep, is not weary, is not locally confined. Matter does not cleave to Him; it is the product of His creative energy. He breaks the bread, but does not eat it. He smites the rock, but does not drink of the stream; He giveth sleep, but does not slumber. The spiritual qualities in the life of Jesus are the qualities by which the eternal being of God is to be interpreted and measured. As pure Spirit He is personal and self-conscious. He thinks, He feels, He wills. As pure Spirit He is self-originating and self-sufficient: He is omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, absolute. As pure Spirit His presence is illocal; He is omnipresent. As pure Spirit He is immanent in the universe; and as pure Spirit He is transcendent in His immanence; omnipresent, but not imprisoned and confined. A simple thing is to say, "God is Spirit;" but the phrase holds vast treasures in the knowledge of God.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Jesus had more to say. That definition of God which describes Him as pure Spirit carries in it the danger that we may lose ourselves in speculative contemplation. It thrusts us into an open, boundless sea, where we may speedily lose ourselves. We sail away until all shore lines disappear, and until the waters become so deep that we can find no grip for our anchors. The infinite and the eternal paralyze us. The very vastness of our thought makes it empty. We cannot lay hold upon it. The glory blinds us. But Jesus comes to our rescue. By a third simple utterance He teaches us how to crystallize and make practical our knowledge of God as pure Spirit. He does this by telling us that God is "Father." That is something we can understand, and the most undisciplined thought can grasp it. That is something we can understand when we sink into mental despair in the attempt to grasp God in His eternity, in His absoluteness, in His omnipotence, in His omnipresence, in His immanence and in His transcendence. Head and heart find rest in the thought of God as Father. And when we analyze the idea of fatherhood we find that it implies absolute authority, authority grounded in infinite wisdom, wisdom displayed in universal impartiality and immutable justice, justice directed by love. As Father, God can be indifferent to none. As Father, God can neglect none. As Father, God can be cruel to none. As Father, God can be no respecter of persons. There must be love in justice, and justice in love. There must be long-suffering in severity, and severity in long-suffering. As Father, the obedience which God demands must be reasonable. His law must be holy

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

and good. His commandments cannot be grievous. As Father, the discipline to which God subjects us, even in its bitterst severity, must be salutary and saving. It is our good He seeks. There must be sweetness in the cup of gall. There must be healing in the divine surgery. It cannot be otherwise if God be Father. But the Fatherhood cannot make itself effective unless in you, and in me, and in us all, it provoke the spirit of filial confidence and affection. It may be high noon outside, and midnight in a chamber where all the windows are closely shuttered. We must fling the casements back and let the light come in! Then shall God the Father be our Sun and our Shield!

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE SOUL OF MAN.

[January 8, 1899.]

There is no ignorance more general, there is no carelessness more painful and surprising, there is no neglect more widespread than the ignorance, the carelessness and the neglect which concerns the human soul. Greek and Roman culture placed the coronet upon the body. It trained athletes and soldiers, and to gain five consecutive prizes in the Olympian games assured universal and immortal fame. The man who could jump fifty-five feet outranked philosophers, statesmen and saints. The laurel wreath was the halo of perfection. No wonder that the pleasures of sense absorbed attention. To eat, to drink and to be merry was all that men cared for. Gluttony, drunkenness and the grossest sensuality were the attendants at every feast. Men and women sat down to eat with

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

deliberate intention to make beasts of themselves. There was no thought of the soul. Even the hour of death was used for dramatic effect; and men invited their friends to a banquet, at the close of which they would cut their veins and bleed to death, while the company quietly looked on. And then they would build great mausoleums over their ashes. The soul was ignored and neglected; the body was pampered and adored. The idea of immortality was openly flouted. Cicero pleaded for it on the ground of sentiment; the more practical Cæsar, speaking officially in the senate, denied it. The ancient scepticism survives. Men are not sure, even now, whether they are more than animated matter, and whether they have any higher destiny than the cattle whose flesh they eat. We are told that habits are "muscular emotions," and that the training of the body should be the primary aim of education. We have sloughed off some of the coarser habits of our ancestry. We are more refined. But the change is mainly in appearance. The old idolatry of the body holds its ground. Thousands live as if they had no souls; they certainly do not live as if they believed it. They are utterly and habitually indifferent to all high and holy claims. The days and the nights, including the Sundays of the year, are given up to material interests and enjoyments. For the slightest bodily ailment the physician is summoned. Whatever will add to bodily grace and vigor is assiduously employed. Physical tortures are endured for the sake of a more pleasing appearance. Every part of the body has its specialists, whose services are eagerly sought. But the poor soul is left to silence and starvation. There is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

nothing more important for men to know than that they are immortal souls; there is nothing to which they are more indifferent.

The men among whom Jesus lived were carried away by the same blind infatuation. They robed themselves in purple and fine linen. They fared sumptuously every day. It was only bodily defilement which was offensive to them. They had their splendidly appointed baths and washed their hands many times a day, but to the cleansing of their souls they gave no heed. Even the religious teachers were whited sepulchers, who made broad their phylacteries and prayed in the public squares to attract attention, meanwhile devouring widows' houses; so rotten many of them, in their moral life, that they slunk away in shame from the woman whose death they demanded, when Jesus quietly said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Not a hand stirred. In the theology of that age there was a doctrine of the soul, and of its immortality, and yet the fashionable party was that of the Sadducees, who were pronounced materialists and who retained their standing in the synagogue. The courts of the temple were systematically profaned by petty merchants and money changers, and when Jesus drove them out, the guardians of the temple sharply challenged His right to interference. Such things were not only permitted; they were done by official sanction. Of course, the people made short work of their religious duties, and there was no heart in their piety. It was a moral wilderness in which John the Baptist lifted up his voice, amazing the multitudes by his strange preaching. He believed in the soul,

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

living in a cave, rough clad, eating locusts and wild honey. Men looked and listened and went away, saying, "He hath a devil." And when Jesus summoned men to be indifferent to food and raiment and chief seats at the feasts and emphasized the infinite dignity of the soul, His hearers said the same thing. It was foolishness in their eyes; it was rank insanity. The young man of whom it is said that Jesus loved him, favorably impressed by his appearance and evident sincerity, turned sorrowfully away when he was asked to strip himself of his wealth and follow Christ empty handed. He had great possessions, and much as he wanted eternal life he was not prepared to pay the price demanded. Even the disciples were astonished when Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The astonishment reveals the low estimate into which the soul had fallen. It has been said that the ministry of Christ was a constant "proclamation of the doctrine of the soul," its reality, its dignity, its responsibility, its immortality. It underlies all His teachings. The soul alone, in His view, had essential and eternal worth; compared with it, the whole material universe was but a brilliant and brittle soap bubble. And that message is needed now.

But Jesus had a second thing to say about the soul. He said that the soul of man was sick, sick unto death; that it was lost, and hotly pursued by beasts of prey; that it was self-exiled from the Father's house, living among swine, clothed in rags, eating husks. It was a sad picture. He said this of all men. He made no exceptions. Was the picture overdrawn? Did

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Jesus knew what He was talking about? Is the soul of man blind? Is it smitten with fatal leprosy? So He said, but men did not believe Him; and they do not believe Him now. But Jesus spake true. It is true of you, and it is true of me. None doeth good; no, not one. There is no difference. All are under sin. Every mouth is stopped; and the whole world is guilty before God. So Jesus declared. So Paul taught. It is the orthodox thing to say; but there are pulpits where this is treated as an exaggeration. At heart, everybody is declared to be good. Sin is represented as a misfortune, a temporary barnacle, an unfortunate accident. We need not worry ourselves about it; it will drop out in time. If we believe what Jesus said, we cannot lull ourselves to sleep in this fancied security. We are among the breakers; we are on the brink of Niagara; we are in the very heart of the sucking whirlpool. We are in danger of eternal death. The poison is in the very fountains. And when men and women deal with themselves in fierce and fearless earnestness they soon discover that Jesus is right. We are lost; we are blind; we are sick unto death; we are guilty and condemned before God. Then comes the fierce struggle, as it did with Paul; and it ends in despair. We are beyond human help.

But that is not the end. Jesus had a third thing to say about the soul of man. God loves it. It bears His image. He cannot tear us out of His heart. He cannot abandon us. He sends His own Son to seek and to save us. Into the world's hospital of death He comes, this Great Physician, and His touch restores to life. There are no hopeless cases, if they will only

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

call upon Him and upon Him alone. Nicodemus was amazed when Jesus told him that every soul must be born from above. Moral improvement will not answer. The ax must be laid at the root of the tree. The soul is morally dead, and resurrection alone can avail for moral rescue. But this grace, which bringeth salvation to every man, has appeared. It is free to all who repent and believe. From it none are excluded, though it is not, and cannot be, forced upon any soul without its free and full consent. The acceptable year of the Lord has come. Liberty is proclaimed to the captives. There is bread enough and to spare in the Father's house; and the doors are wide open to every prodigal who comes to himself. Oh, for the grace that will make men see! Oh, for the grace that will make men hear! Oh, for the grace that will make men say, "I will arise and go to My Father!" Oh, for the broken heart and the swift feet to the Ark of Mercy! Oh, for the simple faith which grasps Christ in the freeness and the fulness of His redeeming mercy and might! Come; and come now! And then, never leave Him for a moment!

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE DEVIL.

[January 15, 1899.]

Whether there are any moral intelligences in the universe of God superior, equal or inferior to man, and what their numbers or missions are, is a question either of pure speculation or of pure revelation. Speculation speaks without authority upon such a theme.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Science, certainly, provides us with no means of discovery, and its oracles are dumb. Some have argued, from the comparative insignificance of our planet, and from the vastness of the material universe, that it is absurd to suppose that the earth alone is habitable and inhabited. But there is no logic in the argument from bulk. It has been said in reply that what we know of the constitution of suns and stars makes it absolutely certain that their vegetation, their animal and rational tenantry must be very different from our own and from ourselves. The time may come when a journey from the Matterhorn to the moon will be more than a clever rhetorical suggestion, but it is certain that if such a trip is ever undertaken we shall have to take plenty of air with us and provide ourselves with fire-proof bodies inside and out. There may be magnificent hotels and restaurants in the sun, but we could neither sleep in the one nor eat in the other.

Revelation does answer the question, and answers it affirmatively. There is a doctrine of angels in the Bible; frequently set forth in the Old Testament, wrought into its historical narratives, its prophetic writings and its devotional literature. That doctrine does not, perhaps, figure so prominently in the New Testament, and it is not elaborated; but the Gospels and the Epistles weave it into story, interpretation and prophecy. Angels celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ; angels minister to Him in the desert; angels strengthen Him in the garden of agony, and guard His empty sepulcher; angels attend Him at His final advent. There are hosts of them and they are ranked in hierarchies, awaiting the word of command. Whether

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

these angels are superior or inferior to the redeemed is not so clearly stated. They are spoken of as ministering spirits, whose mission it is to watch over the heirs of salvation. They are the guardians of little children. They are servants in the household, of which the grace of Christ makes us kings and priests. They are filled with an incessant, eager, holy curiosity to look into and understand the mystery of human redemption. They break out into joy over every repenting sinner. And among these angelic hosts there is one who by pre-eminence is called in the Old Testament the Angel of Jehovah, appearing to Abraham, and to Moses, and to Joshua, whom most interpreters identify with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God, appearing in a temporary and vanishing angelic form.

The Biblical doctrine of angels divides them into good angels and evil angels. There are lying spirits who enter into men to deceive and torment them. No information is given as to their numbers. The implication is that they are an insignificant company compared to those who have maintained their loyalty. Among them appears one who is called the devil, Satan, the dragon, the great and bitter adversary of God. He appears upon the scene in the Garden of Eden, and the bottomless pit closes upon him. For whether the story of man's fall be regarded as historical or pictorial, it is perfectly clear that the entrance of sin is described as due to a superhuman or extra-human evil agency. It was the devil who tempted Adam and Eve, whether he assumed the form of a snake or not, whether the first sin was the eating

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of an apple or not. And this doctrine of a personal devil runs through the entire Biblical literature, and is everywhere assumed as a stern and awful fact.

Many have treated this doctrine of a personal devil with scant courtesy. They have made it the butt of cheap ridicule. They have been content to laugh at it. When in more serious mood they have declared that the devil is a personification of evil influences, not a conscious personal being. He is the creation of sacred rhetoric. Now, it is not a matter, perhaps, of very great practical importance what our ideas upon this subject may be. It certainly is not necessary for a man who wants to be saved to believe in a personal devil. All he needs to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and have as little to do with the devil as possible. It is infinitely better to doubt and to deny his existence than it is to cultivate his acquaintance for the sake of knowing something about him. But when it comes to maintaining the serious integrity of the Holy Scriptures and the final authority of their plain teaching, the matter cannot be so lightly treated. It has a very important bearing upon what the older divines call the "perspicuity of the Scriptures," their adaptability and crystalline clearness for the unlearned and uncritical reader. The Bible is not a book for scholars; it is the book for the common people; and its plain surface meaning must be held to be decisive. The poetry itself must be perfectly transparent. The picture must proclaim itself to be a picture. And judged by this rule, the doctrine of a personal devil must stand. It refuses to vanish into an airy, poetic fancy, the precipitate of popular superstition. It is even more serious to deny

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the personal existence of evil spirits, and of the devil as their head, in view of Christ's attitude to this doctrine. He certainly believed that there was a devil. The force of this fact can be evaded only in one of two ways. We must either say that He knew better, or we must say that He did not know better. To say that He knew better, but accommodated Himself to the superstitious level of His hearers, is to charge Him with deliberate dishonesty and deception. Some have preferred to say that Jesus did not know any better, and that His beliefs were shaped by His educational environment. But this reduces Him to purely human proportions and denies to Him even that spiritual insight which the incarnation must be presumed to have given to Him. And if the Man Christ Jesus was also the Eternal Son of God, what He had to say about the devil must remain unchallenged and authoritative for every believer.

Here comes in the importance of the story of our Lord's Temptation. This record, like the record of the Fall in Genesis, has been regarded as pictorial, mythical or legendary. But in any interpretation of it, it is clear that an outward personal agency of evil was brought to bear upon Him. The Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was not battling with His own thoughts, though the sphere of conflict may have been wholly spiritual, without any visible bodily presence and without flight through the air to pinnacle of temple and mountain top. There was thrust and parry. Two swords crossed and one was broken at the hilt. It was a dialogue, not a monologue. One might as well deny the real existence

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of Jesus Christ as to deny that there is a personal devil, if the story of the Temptation has any meaning.

It must be noted, also, that Jesus always speaks of Satan as the great adversary with whom He is locked in a grapple unto death. It was Satan whom He saw fall, as lightning from heaven, suddenly and forever overthrown by Himself. It is the devil who takes away the word which is sown. It is the devil who sows the tares. He is the prince of this world. The hour of his arrest Jesus speaks of as not only the hour of wicked men, but of the power of darkness. Invisible agencies of evil reinforced the hatred of men and the treachery of Judas. It was Satan who was sifting Peter while Christ repelled the adversary by His intercession. In the miracles of healing performed by Christ, some were treated as the victims of demoniacal possession. Devils had entered into them, and He drove them out. And in His descriptions of the final judgment He speaks of the everlasting fire "prepared for the devil and his angels." The evidence is ample and unanswerable; Jesus recognized and affirmed the existence of evil spirits, and of the devil as a personal being.

Who is he? Not very much can be said in reply to that question. His relation to the entrance of sin into human life and history implies that he was already existent when man was created. But he has no independent, eternal existence. God made the devil, but He did not make him devil. He kept not his first estate, in which apostasy he was joined by other angels, who, with him, are reserved for the judgment of eternal darkness. He is mighty, but he is not almighty,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and he trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. His fiery darts are quenched, his stoutest spears are broken, when they strike the shield of faith. He has great knowledge, but he is not omniscient. He is shrewd, but he is a fool. He is not wise. He is blind. He is caught in the nets which he weaves and spreads for others. His rage is terrible, but he compasses his own destruction. He has the speed of lightning, but he is not omnipresent. He has a large retinue, many evil spirits obedient to his bidding, but he is vastly outnumbered by the angelic hosts who muster at the call of the Son of God. One terrible word tells the whole story of what he is. He is a liar. He is the father of lies. He was a liar from the beginning. The truth is not in him. He lies to God. He lies to himself. He lies to those who listen to him. Hypocrites are his spiritual offspring. That makes him weak. That hurries him to defeat and destruction. Crowding others into eternal ruin, he falls into the bottomless pit himself.

Falsehood is the unpardonable sin. But he who confesses his sins and repents of them with a godly sorrow, believing with all the heart on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be eternally saved!

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS OWN DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

[January 22, 1899.]

Some have been disposed, following the principles of natural evolution, to regard the death of Jesus Christ as something for which He was not at first pre-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

pared, the possibility of which came to Him as a painful surprise, and to which He finally submitted in sullen and reckless defiance, certain that His martyrdom would prove to be His coronation. And if we regard Jesus as only a man, though the wisest and best of men, there is no other possible interpretation as to how His mind must have come to regard the death of shame inevitable. Men do not undertake great reforms under the conviction of certain death. Their enthusiasm makes them oblivious of danger. They feel sure that men will listen to their appeals. When they are repudiated and persecuted for righteousness sake they are amazed and keenly disappointed. And only when they have been crowded to the wall do they fight without regard to personal consequences. So some have read and written the life of Jesus Christ. But in doing it they have been compelled to throw the historical materials into hopeless confusion. No life of Christ can be written without free use of the gospels. And if Christ began His ministry as a young and ardent enthusiast, encouraged at first by His great popularity, encountering to His surprise the fierce opposition of the religious leaders, provoking their enmity by His untamed and unbridled zeal, until he defied them to do their worst, accepting His defeat with stern and bitter composure, charging His disciples to vindicate Him before the world, the gospels are wholly unreliable. They are not written on any such plan. Such a sketch cannot be drawn from them without wholesale mutilation. They say the very reverse of all this. And so it comes to this, that a refusal to recognize Christ as more and other than

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

human not only discredits what He frequently and deliberately said of Himself, but robs the gospels of their historical value. The process which eliminates the Eternal Son of God from their pages eliminates also the Son of Mary.

Assuming, then, as we must, that Jesus has been accurately reported and pictured, we must maintain that death did not come to Him as a bitter surprise. This appears in all His utterances and prayers. In the conversion of Nicodemus, when the opposition had not yet developed, the cross appeared in full view to His mind. He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Only when lifted up could He draw all men unto Him. To secure the fruit of His ministry, He must die as a grain of wheat dies. When Moses and Elias hold converse with Him, the theme is not His miracles, not His doctrine, but the impending death at Jerusalem. That death was not only the hour of human rage and of Satanic fury, but the hour for which He had come into the world; an hour from which He shrank in His human weakness, but toward which His feet rushed with eager swiftness. It was a cup of gall, which He prayed might be withheld if it were possible, but which He was eager to drink in obedience to the Father's will. It is an old tradition that in Joseph's workshop the boy Jesus amused Himself by sawing wood into the shape of crosses, His very play mastered by the unsuspected final tragedy of His life. Thus Overbeck pictures Him in art, and elsewhere the young lad appears in such a posture, that Joseph and Mary, mute in painful astonishment, see His shadow on the wall of the work-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

shop in the form of a cross. Thus art has caught the thought that to die was the one great thing which Jesus came to do. It was not an incident in His mission; it was the very heart of it. It was not a surprise to Him; it was the baptism for which He girded Himself at the very beginning. Some have discovered in His answer to His mother, when she found Him with the doctors in the Temple, an indication that already at that time His young mind anticipated the death prepared for Him; an anticipation which the temptation in the wilderness brought into sharp outline. However that may be, it is certain that with this anticipation He began His ministry, and continued it to the very end. His popularity never for a moment deceived Him; He knew that the cheers would give way to the curses, and the palms to the scourgings. And when Peter attempted to dissuade Him from meekly submitting to such treatment, He treated the protest as a Satanic suggestion, bidding him afterward to put up the sword which he had drawn in His defense. Jesus, then, spoke of His death as the great act of His life on earth, making it through the institution of the holy supper, the outstanding fact of His earthly mission.

Such being the case, it must be presumed that He understood what made His death necessary, and what results are secured by it. Upon these two points He has spoken with clearness. He proved from Moses and the prophets that He ought thus to have suffered. His death was the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, and prophecy is the disclosure of the eternal purpose of God, the articulate expression of His infinite wisdom and goodness. Prophecy deals pre-eminently with re-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

demption, and so Jesus, by making His death morally inevitable in the divine forecast, makes it fundamentally necessary to our salvation. Not less clearly and more frequently did Jesus speak of what His death would secure for us. He speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the defense of the flock. He declares that He came to give His life a ransom for many, to secure their release from the captivity of Satan and from the bondage of sin. And He touches the matter more closely still when He speaks of His body as broken for us and His blood as shed for the remission of sins; thus making His death an atoning sacrifice and the cross the altar of the world's redemption. Once more He connects His departure from the earth with the coming of the Holy Spirit, without whom men cannot be regenerated, sanctified and glorified. Jesus must die, that the Holy Spirit may secure the needed leverage for saving men. In all this there is no metaphysics, elaborating a speculative theory of the atonement, but in these sayings Jesus gives us four things of great importance: He died to secure our forgiveness; He died to release us from bondage to sin; He died to protect us from our foes; He died to secure for us the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Never, however, did Jesus separate the fact of His resurrection from the fact of His death. He showed, from Moses and the prophets, that Christ ought thus to suffer, that He might enter into His glory, and His glory was the seeking and the saving of the lost. As Jonah was delivered from death, so would He be delivered. He would rise on the third day. His vision

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

was not bound by cross and sepulcher. Beyond them lay the Easter glory, and its radiance made luminous the thorny path of suffering and of shame. His death rang down the curtain upon the world's despair. His resurrection brought life and immortality to light. And so, for us, there is no defilement of sin which Christ cannot take away, there is no temptation over which He cannot give us the victory, there is no suffering which He cannot change into a song, and the dart of death has lost its poisonous sting because Jesus died and rose again! It has been the frequent attempt of speculative theology to indicate the specific results secured by the incarnation, by the holy obedience, by the teaching, by the sufferings and death, and by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the earthly priesthood of our Lord and Saviour covers all these. They constitute, together, the seamless garment of our eternal salvation. The several strands are so closely and firmly woven together that they are inseparable. And this earthly priesthood, in life, and death, and resurrection, is carried forward in the heavenly intercession and dominion. From His mediatorial throne in the heavens, and through the agency of His Spirit, the Third Person in the adorable Trinity, or Triune God, He makes effective in penitent believers the great redeeming act which began with the birth at Bethlehem and that ended with the ascension on Olivet!

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY AS KING.

[January 29, 1899.]

Etymologically, the word "king" means a man of noble birth. The fundamental idea is that of superiority or pre-eminence. The king is the superior man in birth and blood, in stature and physical energy, in military genius and political sagacity. The old kings were giants, who ruled by force, as are still the chiefs of savage tribes, and who founded their states by conquest. With the advance of civilization, making mastery more and more a matter of intellectual superiority and alertness of will, stature and physical energy have retreated into the background, and some of the most powerful rulers have been men of mean and insignificant bodily appearance. Now and then, though not often, high moral character has been united with great intellectual and executive qualities of leadership, and where this has been the case history has starred their names, even though they never wore a crown. Such men were David and Marcus Aurelius and Charlemagne and George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, who, crowned or uncrowned, made illustrious the place which they filled.

Men love leadership. They hate a boss, but they love a master. Be the form of government what it may, despotic, aristocratic or democratic, leadership is indispensable. The sifting process brings the captains to the front. And when the right man appears, in whom firmness and gentleness, energy and wisdom, independence and unselfishness, are united, the people

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

are eager to rally to his support, and to invest him with the largest powers. They will follow the man whom they can trust and who sees his way clear to the very goal. Leadership appeals to loyalty and secures it.

Jesus Christ is the greatest of all leaders. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. The government is upon His shoulders. Upon His head are many crowns. He bids us call no man "master," but He makes an exception of Himself. His authority endures. His words abide. Upon all He lays His sovereign command and bids them follow Him. The claim is amazing and audacious, but it has won an ever increasing and enthusiastic response. Into poverty and exile, into dungeons and furnaces of fire, men and women have marched with eager steps and radiant faces, because Jesus led the way. And, for one, I believe that the fiber of martyrdom is as firm in the church to-day as it was when Peter was crucified and Paul beheaded.

Jesus is King. He is the ideal King. He is King by appointment of the Father; He is King by essential and eternal dignity; he is King by the majesty and might of conquest; He is King by universal acclamation.

Jesus Christ is King by the appointment of the Father. The Old Testament doctrine of kingship is that it is one of the reserved gifts of God. Saul comes to it by divine election and prophetic anointing. Saul proves unworthy of the trust and David is summoned by divine authority. In him, too, the royal office becomes hereditary by the special appointment of God.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Kingship is not a natural right, but a divine vocation. Entering into this Old Testament doctrine of kingship, Jesus constantly speaks of His royal authority, in whatever way exercised—in issuing commands, or dispensing pardon, or healing the sick, or feeding the hungry, or raising the dead, or judging the nations—as a delegated authority. He held it by a divine commission. He speaks only as the Father bids Him, and of some things He confessed His ignorance. He does only what the Father commands Him to do. Obedience to the Father's will is His meat and drink. His sole endeavor is to finish the work which the Father had given Him to do. His right of final judgment is a delegated right. Even after the ascension, when He affirms His universal lordship, He speaks of it as the power or authority which had been given to Him. In all these utterances it is Jesus Christ in the indivisible, unique totality of His personality who speaks. He speaks as the incarnate Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh, as the visible representative and embodiment of God on earth. As such He occupied a subordinate place and discharged a definite temporal mission, just as we do. As born in time and growing up to man's estate, dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification, He maintained a position of relative inferiority to the Father, and this relative inferiority He freely recognized by tracing His kingly authority to the appointment of His Father.

But Jesus declares Himself king also by essential and eternal dignity; so that the apparent economic inferiority to the Father vanishes in His essential and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

eternal equality with the Father. The visible and temporal kingship is grounded in eternal royalty. It is as lawful heir that He receives His appointment. The Father gives Him what is His by inalienable inheritance. No man, He declares, knows the Father save the Son, and the Son knows the Father because from all eternity the Son shared in the glory of the Father. One saying condenses it all. "I and the Father are one." Here, again, it is Jesus Christ in the indivisible, unique totality of His personality who speaks; but the utterance proceeds from the eternal depths of His conscious life upon which the temporal form was fibered. He who for all eternity existed, and who never ceased to exist, in the form of God, added to that the form of man. He became incarnate. The incarnation made Him subordinate in authority to the Father, but as He did not in becoming incarnate cease to exist in the form of God, the equality with the Father was not surrendered or lost in the voluntary subordination. The incarnation is the luminous conscious center where subordination and equality coalesce. As the Eternal Word became Man, Jesus was King by a derived authority, by appointment of the Father; but as the Eternal Word He was King by inherent and eternal right, by sharing in the undivided and invisible essence and glory of the Father. We have seen that in what Jesus says about His authority as a teacher, the divine and the human elements of His personality blend. We have seen that in what Jesus says about His death and resurrection the same elements blend. And now we see that in what Jesus says about His authority as a King there is the same

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

mysterious blending of conscious Godhead and conscious manhood. The strands refuse to be parted. The crown upon His human brow, the scepter in His human hands, are a crown and a scepter which the Father gave Him; but they are the crown and scepter which from everlasting were His conscious possession.

Jesus Christ claims royal authority by right of conquest. There can be no real kingship without conquest. It need not be the conquest of the sword, driving and terrorizing unarmed and weak men into submission; but it must be the conquest of recognized superiority. Conquest follows upon superiority, as the thunder peal follows the lightning bolt. Be it intellectual, or industrial, or commercial, or artistic, or political superiority—it wins its way and conquers. And Jesus Christ is King by a conquest wider and more varied than that won by any other historical figure. He is King in the realm of intellect, at whose feet the loftiest and the lowliest have sat with equal eagerness and joy. There was a time when literature sneered at Christ. That day has passed, and culture at last speaks with profound respect when the name of Jesus is mentioned. His sayings are quoted with a reverence granted to no other teacher, and they have been infinitely more fruitful of good than all the philosophy and the poetry of classic antiquity. He is King in the realm of moral character. From whatever side He is approached He appears as the embodiment of perfection. There is no one-sidedness in Him. There is in Him an admirable balance of contrasted virtues, a marvelous blending of graces and gifts, a most wonderful serenity of temper and poise of spirit.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Upon every field of moral conflict, however hot the contest and fierce the onslaught and shrewd the strategy, He appears, when the smoke has cleared away, absolute master. He is King by virtue of the absolute unselfishness of His devotion. He gave His life for sinners. He prayed for His murderers. He laid down the principle that mastery comes by service, that he who would be greatest should live among men as the least, and Himself was the noblest illustration of what seems a paradox. And He is King by the greatness of His achievements. He mustered no armed hosts. He fought no great battles. He founded no empire. And yet He was the greatest of captains and swept single handed the mightiest of battlefields. For He grappled with sin and triumphed by the holiness of His life. He grappled with death and triumphed in His resurrection. He grappled with Satan and the powers of darkness and delivered the captives from their fierce tormentors. Of them all He made an end forever in His flesh, and thereby gave life and liberty to a world buried in darkness, despair and death. It was an unseen, unregistered battle. There was no flare of trumpets. There was no waving of banners. There was no flash of steel. There was no roar of cannon. Not a sound smote the air. But when the dawn of that first Easter sent its reddening glow over the land it heralded a victory for which forty centuries had been gathering their forces, and by which the eternal future had been rendered gloriously secure.

The year of jubilee has come ;  
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home !

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

It remains only to be said that Jesus Christ, who is King by appointment of the Father, by essential and eternal dignity, and by the majesty and might of moral conquest, is also King by spontaneous and universal acclamation. In one of his hymns Isaac Watts speaks of the grace which saves as "sweetly forcing" its subjects. The compulsion is the compulsion of love. It is strong and steady, and yet so gentle withal as to produce no conscious irritation. It waits until it can carry the will with it. It is wonderful, this blending of absolute sovereignty in God and of absolute freedom in man. The sovereignty is so absolute that God is said to create the new heart in us; and the freedom is so absolute that God summons us to make our own hearts new. There is the same blending of apparent contradictions in the kingship of Jesus Christ. No despot ever wielded such power. The will of Christ is the only law of His empire. He imposes it, He interprets it, He administers and enforces it. He says "Come," and He says "Go," and that ends it. It is the incarnation of sheer absolutism. And yet it is a rulership than which none can be more representative and democratic. Angels and devils, saints and sinners bow the knee to Him. They crown Him by universal consent and approval. The one absolute will provokes not so much as a whisper of protest in any quarter. The secret is a simple one. That absolute will crystallizes absolute righteousness; and absolute righteousness, while it commands with absolute authority, secures the free approval of all moral beings. No black pebbles are cast into the urn when absolute right is the issue. Then, too, He who is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

King is also He who died to save us and all. We are safe in His hands. The world is safe in His hands. The pierced palms grasp the scepter of universal dominion, and that wakes the universal and unending song.

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

[February 5, 1899.]

It is customary to speak of two advents, the first and the second coming of our Lord; His first advent in the flesh for our salvation, and His second advent in glory for judgment of the quick and the dead. The period between these two advents is regarded as a period of preparation, of watching and waiting for the return of the absent King. But the anxious watchers are to be industrious workers; and they watch to best advantage who work most diligently. We are to wait, not only for the Lord, but upon Him. We are to toil in His vineyard. We are to preach His gospel to every creature. We are to disciple the nations, and in obeying that command we have the assurance of His personal leadership. His withdrawal from the world was only apparent. He departed as to the flesh; He remained, and ever remains, in the power of His Spirit. The day of Pentecost was as real an advent as the day of His birth, and as the hour of His coming to judgment will be. So that we should speak of three advents: the advent in the flesh for our salvation, the advent in the Spirit for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and the advent in glory for

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

judgment of the quick and the dead. And the days in which we are living are the days of the second advent, whose great task is the evangelization of the world, the conversion of the nations.

If we want to make our view cover the entire period of human history, reaching its goal in the kingdom of God, we may regard the pre-Christian centuries as a preparation for the kingdom, the incarnation as the inauguration of the kingdom, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit as the extension and the consolidation of the kingdom, and the advent in glory as its graduation into eternal security and blessedness. Fourfold in form, it is one and indivisible in spirit and life. It is the rule of God in the hearts of men. It is the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over human souls.

What is the nature of this kingdom? What is the principle, what is the power, of this sovereignty? What is the aim of the rule of God on earth, and what is the power by which that rule is made effective? Jesus Himself has answered these questions, and never more clearly than when He least seemed to be a king. Standing at the bar of Pilate, the amazed Roman judge asked Him: "Art thou a king, then?" Calmly came back the answer: "I am. That is the meaning of my birth. It is not a sudden ambition which has seized Me. I was born to rule. But My kingdom is not of this world. It does not mean a palace and a throne and great armies. It is not with Cæsar that I have any controversy. I came to make an end of falsehood. I am a witness unto the truth; and all who are children of the truth hear Me and follow Me." So, then, the kingdom of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

God is the reign of truth. And in His conversation with Nicodemus Jesus pointed out the agency by which the truth was to obtain the sovereignty. The citizens of the kingdom are they who are born from above, born of the Holy Spirit. This completes the answer. The kingdom of God is the supremacy of truth, secured by the Spirit of promise and power. The Sermon on the Mount elaborates that answer and the parables illustrate it. Whose is the kingdom of heaven? It belongs to the poor in spirit, to such as mourn, to the meek, to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, to the peacemakers, to such as are persecuted for righteousness' sake. These are the salt of the earth; these are the light of the world. He sums it all up in the saying that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees if we would enter into the kingdom of heaven; and then He proceeds to outline the incisiveness and the spirituality of the law of God. We are to share in the moral perfection of God Himself. The kingdom is the righteousness of the Eternal, and which only the Eternal can impart. The parables confirm and illustrate the answer. We need only consider two of them, the parables of the sower and of the prodigal son. The first teaches us that the kingdom of God comes by the sowing of the truth in the hearts of men, and its fruitage in their lives. The second teaches us that citizenship in the kingdom is the free and undeserved gift of God to those who have squandered their substance, and who in godly penitence make appeal to His mercy. The answer is the same; the kingdom of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

God is the sovereignty of truth in the hearts and lives of men, secured by supernatural divine agency. The whole matter is admirably summed up by Paul when he tells us that the kingdom of God is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is the reign of "righteousness," a word which means more than justice, which is the equivalent of "salvation," weaving together truth and mercy; so that purity is aflame with the passion of love, and love is intent upon absolute purity. Such a reign of righteousness produces peace and girdles the earth with joy. And that is not the product of a natural evolution, but of supernatural grace; it is the work of the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of God, then, is the sovereignty of the righteousness, which is God's free gift to men by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

This makes clear a second thing, the method of administration. It is rational, for the incorruptible seed is the Word of God. And this Word of God is also the sword of the Spirit. It is the truth that slays, demolishing every citadel of lies; and it is the truth that saves. Lies plunge men into darkness and crowd them to ruin; truth is candlestick and star and sun, lighting up our steps to safety and glory. Truth is what men need more than aught else; definite doctrine; a simple but rational theology. The method of the Divine Kingdom is spiritual. It lays hold upon that in human nature which is eternal, which has neither beginning nor end, which speaks with infallible and universal authority. It makes its appeal to the enlightened conscience and makes duty the greatest word in our rational speech. And because the method

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of the kingdom is rational and spiritual, it is intensely and exclusively personal. There are no twin births in the kingdom of God. Each soul has its solitary inauguration and discipline. Repentance is personal. Faith is personal. Obedience is personal. Forgiveness is personal. Regeneration is personal. Sanctification is personal. Every man does his own sinning, and the guilt of his sin is wholly and only his. Every man must do his own repenting, confessing, believing, obeying. All these things God works in us. He is the originating cause of everything else. But the things which God works in we must individually work out. We can stimulate each other to penitence and faith and good works; and what we can do for each other God is to do much more abundantly. But amid all this exterior and interior moral pressure there is a point where the individual will stands in the majesty of solitary personal action. I speak to a point, not of a moment. The idea of time is of no great significance. You may not recall the day or the hour of your repentance and surrender to Christ. It may have been identical with your first conscious thought and your first moral decision, neither of which any of us can now locate. But when you did make your first moral choice it was you who made it. And if it was the soul's choice of Christ, it was you who made it, though you made it only because God was in you, urging and constraining you to it. There is no fatalism in this, because fatalism is compulsion from without, and without any regard to personal choice. In the kingdom of God we have to do with spiritual and interior energies, working along the lines of persuasion and of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

personal consent; and whatever results in voluntary personal action cannot have been produced by compulsion. The will of God does not tear down and crush the will of man; the will of God, which is always for salvation, broods over the will of man and wakes the dormant or dead will of man into normal life and action. And when the will of man wakes it sees with its own eyes and acts by his own personal energy. I am not trying to harmonize divine sovereignty and human freedom. That has never been done. I do not believe that it can be done. I believe each to be absolute in its own sphere. God could not be more sovereign if man were not free. Man could not be more free if there were no God. What I have in mind is simply this, that the moral life in every one of us is self-moved, even though it be God-moved. It is always intensely and exclusively personal. The gate into the kingdom is straight. It is just wide enough for all of us to pass through in single file. When we come to this gate, as when we come to the gate of death, hands must unclasp. In the sweet but awful solitude of personal penitence and faith do we receive our pardon and adoption.

Commensurate with this radical method of administration are the results secured by the kingdom of God. No change can be more radical than one which is rational, spiritual and personal. Such work does not need to be done over again. Once begun, the leaven, lodged at the very center, leavens all the meal. The radical change is revolutionary. It creates a new man. It brings all things into subjection. It thrusts out all that is foreign to it. It assimilates all that it

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

appropriates. Rational, spiritual, personal regeneration is the method of the kingdom of God. That makes the soul saintly. And a saintly soul will make a saintly body, with saintly eyes, and ears, and lips, and hands, and feet. Saintly souls will create a saintly literature, a saintly art, a saintly industry, a saintly commerce, a saintly politics. And in this way, by the energy of personal sainthood, the whole world will become saintly, until "holiness to the Lord" is engraved on the bells of the horses. In our time this sovereign thought of the kingdom of God has been seized to emphasize the fact that Christianity is the religion of social regeneration, and some urge us to substitute external appliances and helps for the personal agencies thus far relied upon. The cry is for "institutional" churches and sociological methods; less doctrine, more handshaking; less pulpit, more kindergartens and kitchens. But this is not only to reverse the natural order; it is seriously to misread the method of moral life. That is first of all, and always rational, spiritual, personal. It has its initiative within, not without. When you have said that man is a personal, moral being, you have said it all. You add nothing when you say that man is also social, for the social is simply the mutual interaction of the personal centers, and what the social product shall be depends wholly upon what the interacting personal centers are. Make them all good and your society will be good. Make them part good and part bad, and your society will be a state of moral conflict. Make them all bad, and your society will be utterly corrupt. Of course we want a good environment, but to secure it we must have the

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

good deeply lodged in the personal beings who constitute society and who control social environment. This was the method of Jesus; to make the tree good, in the certainty that the fruit would be good. You may tie your figs to bramble bushes, but they will not stay there long. We cannot, as well wishers of our fellow men, lay it too seriously to heart that reformations are real and permanent only by the regeneration of individuals. The broad, deep base of the ideal social structure must be laid in profound personal conviction and in corresponding intensely personal moral action. When righteousness is thus firmly lodged by the grace of God in the very center of personal life, its expanding energy will sweep over a thousand radiating lines into and through the entire sphere of action. This will brush away all laws and customs which hinder and oppose and will create new ones to take their place. Time only is needed to change the face of the world; the energy is in each soul which by the Holy Ghost has been led to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

For the King is the Kingdom; and Jesus is the King. He is the Light of the world, the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. He called His personal disciples by name, has been doing it ever since, and will do so as long as there are men and women to be discipled. He has not two methods, one for the individual and another for the race. He has but one method, the individual and personal, and by that he subdues the world. He conquers one soul at a time, and so conquers all. Let us follow His steps.

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT CHILDREN.

[February 12, 1899.]

More important and impressive than anything that Jesus is recorded to have said to little children, or about them, is the fact that He chose to come into the world in the helplessness of babyhood. For with Him birth was elective. He might have burst upon the world as a flaming angel or as a full grown man, in an independence and superiority sharply accentuated. Instead, he elected, in the very manner of His advent, to emphasize His fellowship and equality with us. And in doing this He chose to do it on the lowest level of humanity. He fixed His eyes upon Bethlehem, not upon Rome. Not a palace, but a stable, gave Him welcome and sheltered Him. The incarnation was the eternal coronation of womanhood and motherhood. It has made every cradle a sanctuary, and has imparted an imperishable charm to childhood. Christianity, centering as it does in Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God, become flesh, has made it forever impossible to make womanhood the badge of subjection and childhood the victim of indifference and cruelty. It has made every one of us eternally debtor to both. The world needed that object lesson, and it is needed now. For with all the splendor of the ancient civilization two things disfigured it and made it brutal at heart; the universal contempt for woman and the low estimate of childhood. Woman was a slave. Infanticide was no crime, and the exposure of new born children, flung away to die, was a frequent practice which passed unrebuked. Satanic fury could go no further in destroy-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ing the very foundation of domestic life. And then, when it was most needed, in motherhood and childhood, Jesus Christ entered into human life for its regeneration and redemption. No longer can these be subjects for coarse or flippant speech with the serious and the thoughtful. They are the burning bush in the world's wilderness, aflame with the glory of the Incarnate Son of God. Every man should see in the face of every woman the face of his sister and mother; and every woman should see in her own face, reflected from the mirror, the face of her who, in her virginity, gave birth to the world's Redeemer. That will give to every woman the grace of a quiet, queenly dignity; that will foster in every man a fine and welcome courtesy; and the combination of the two will make the home a heaven on earth. And the child, entering such a home, will bring with it the charm and beauty of the Son of Mary. There are some for whom the incarnation is only a doctrine of scholastic divinity, inconceivable and absurd; and, for the most part, we connect it with the atonement, as its indispensable condition, to make it effective for our eternal salvation. But it bottoms all life. It is the corner stone of the domestic and social structure. In its tribute to womanhood it cuts the root of all sensuality; and in its tribute to childhood it crowns humanity at birth.

The profound appreciation and intense affection so frequently displayed by Jesus for childhood strike their roots in His personal choice of birth as the gate of entrance into human life for its eternal redemption, and in His personal experience of all the normal phases of child life. The omniscience which belonged to the

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Eternal Son of God assumed the form of personal experience in the incarnation. He knew Himself as a little child, and so understood childhood in immediate and exhaustive experience. And for the same reason His love for children had in it a strength and depth of tenderness which differentiated it radically from any sentimental attraction. He loved because He valued. It was not their innocence which appealed to Him. It was not merely their docility and frankness which won His heart. It was their immortal worth which laid its mighty spell upon His spirit. No offenses, in His judgment, were graver than the offenses against childhood. To be drowned in the sea, with a millstone hung around the neck, was declared to be an adequate punishment for such as despised and distorted a little child. They were not without guardians and avengers. In heaven, Jesus declared, their angels always beheld the face of the Father. These had immediate access into His presence, always welcome, always eager to report any wrong done to a little child. It is not a sentimental doctrine of guardian angels which is taught in that saying. The words take a much wider sweep. The Father Himself is the special guardian, and the angels are simply His emissaries, His informants and the executives of His will. Of course, all this is pictorial, for God needs no reporters. But, looking through the picture, we learn that the world of childhood lies very near the heart of God. In that love Jesus shared. To despise a child was to despise Him, and to receive a child was to receive Him. If Christ ever clasped your hand he clasped it when you were born, and the baby hand is always between

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

your palm and His. No wonder, then, that Jesus was angry when His disciples thrust themselves between Him and the little children. No wonder, then, that He smiled upon them when they waved their bits of palm and shouted their hosannas, even in the temple courts, when their elders fell into silence. In them He discovered the perfection of praise.

The child is father to the man. There is an uninterrupted physical growth from infancy to maturity. The body is stamped at birth. And the soul is stamped at birth. Moral life has its unbroken continuity. We are not born angels and then lapse into sin. All are sinners and none can locate the emergence into consciousness of guilt. Somehow it is born in and with us. In some way it is part of our moral inheritance. The fact is clear though the philosophy of it escapes us. If the man needs forgiveness, it is because the child needs it. If the man needs the grace of adoption, it is because the child needs it. Whatever, in the range of Christ's redeeming action, past, present or future, the most abandoned sinner needs for his salvation, that, and all of it, the youngest child needs. If, then, we believe, as we most assuredly do, that all who die in infancy are saved eternally, we do not, and cannot, believe in infant salvation apart from atonement and regeneration. Children are not saved because they are sinless. Children are saved because Jesus loved them and died to save them. This is our great contention, and our supreme comfort, that redeeming grace awaits the new born babe, shields it, encompasses it, works within it, and upon it, and can be defeated only when the soul tears itself away. I charge

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

you, fathers and mothers, to lay it to heart, that childhood lies wrapped up in the eternal covenant of redemption. Not even sin has so firm a hold upon the child as the grace of Jesus Christ. The child is His, by purchase as well as by creation, by the sovereign claim of redemption as well as by proprietary possession. Thus our doctrine of infant salvation is not a limitation of the atonement, its restriction to adults, but its extension as God's eternal and universal method of moral discipline. Under the cradle is the pierced palm, and that palm is under every cradle!

Of great and permanent significance is that other word of Jesus concerning children, in which their usefulness is set forth. I do not mean those repeated sayings, in which Jesus, as a rebuke to pride and hypocrisy, makes a little child the text of his exhortation. I mean that oft quoted sentence, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." We repeat the sweet words over the tiny caskets. They are full of comfort. But the comfort of them is not the tone to which they were keyed. It was the hour of His approaching passion, when His face wore an unusual sternness, and when even Peter urged Him to be cautious. It was then that certain mothers brought their children to Him and the disciples forced them back. They meant well, but unwittingly they sought to separate Him from His natural allies. There was indignation in His rebuke as He uttered that great word, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of God is not heaven; it is the rule of God on earth. To found the kingdom was the mission of Jesus. To make that kingdom universal and permanent is our one task under His leadership.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

And childhood is the hope of that kingdom. From its ranks Jesus recruits His army of conquest. It is an old and oft repeated story, the story of a scarred and crippled veteran who watched a great military procession. First came the heroes of the past, in faded and ill-fitting uniforms, with banners begrimed with smoke and hanging in shreds from the poles; at sight of which the veteran wept as he said, "We have been brave!" Next came the warriors of the present, with firm and confident tread, with serious and strong faces, covered with bright new badges and medals; at sight of which the veteran's eyes flashed as he said: "Thank God, we are brave!" Last came the boys and young men, with eager and dancing step, with fresh and flaming banners; at sight of which the veteran flung high his cap as he shouted: "Thank God, we will be brave and the dear fatherland is safe!" A nation's future is in the patriotism of its children. To them belongs the guardianship of the flag. Children are the hope of the church and of the world. Theirs is the kingdom. That is a bugle call of service to the boys and the girls. Christ wants them in His army, and He wants them before anybody else can get at them. There is where they belong. They are out of place anywhere else. Gather them in, gather the children in! Gather them in your homes, in the Sunday schools of the great cities, in all the lands and among all the peoples! If Jesus could lay His hand upon them when they were so young and so little that He had to take them from the arms of their mothers, you and I may well be eager to win them for Him. The world of childhood lies against His

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

heart; the world of childhood meets the breath of His lips; the world of childhood lies under His benediction: "Oh, gather them in, gather the children in!"

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

[February 19, 1899.]

John, the beloved disciple, whose mother, Salome, appears to have been the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, tells us where and under what circumstances Christ performed His first miracle. It was in Cana of Galilee, the birthplace and home of Nathaniel, a little hill town about four miles northeast of Nazareth, on the way to Tiberias. The occasion was a wedding in which Mary, the mother of Jesus, seems to have had more than the interest of an ordinary guest, and to which Jesus and His disciples had been invited. The statement is, that "Jesus was called" to the marriage. He was one of the formally invited guests. His disciples were not so called, but appearing with Him, and with His permission, they were made welcome for His sake. There must have been more than ordinary intimacy between the bride's parents and the mother of Jesus, because we find Mary, who always appears as of a retiring disposition, concerned about the comfort of the guests. In her perplexity she turned to her Son, and she evidently understood Him better than some critics have done, who have read His reply as a sharp repulse. There was something in His tone that reassured her; so that she turned to the servants

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and whispered: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." And the water was turned into wine.

The incident evidently made a very profound impression upon John. For, after describing the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and His return to Galilee, by way of Samaria, the evangelist says that Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, adding, "where he made the water wine." Nor does John leave us in doubt as to how the miracle impressed him. He speaks of it as manifesting the glory of Christ, as a breaking forth of His eternal and beneficent dignity. The miracle revealed and illustrated His mission. He came to be helpful to men, to change the water of life into wine. But we should not overlook the gracious way in which this was done. He came to the rescue of His mother and saved her from what would have been a very painful experience to her sensitive spirit. He came to the rescue of the guests, who praised the host not only for the abundance of the wine, but for its quality as the best wine of the feast. And in doing all this, He placed a wreath upon the brow of the bride which has made marriage forever sacred. In the marriage service of the Protestant Episcopal Church the contracting parties and the witnesses are reminded that matrimony is an honorable estate, "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, which holy estate Christ indorsed and beautified with His presence and first miracle that He wrought in Cana of Galilee." Jesus did more than ratify marriage; He adorned and beautified it by His presence and miracle. There is no record that during His subsequent ministry He was ever present again at a wedding. But to work His

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

first miracle at a marriage feast, to which He brought His disciples, invests wedlock with a solemn and sacred pre-eminence. Groom and bride must have remembered it as long as they lived. The presence of the chief magistrate with his cabinet officers would grace any wedding party. They would outrank all other guests. But their glory pales before the luster of Him who lent the charm of His presence and the favor of His indorsement to the marriage in Cana of Galilee. It was a humble home, and they were but a humble pair who exchanged their vows and plighted their troth that day. Their names have not been preserved; their history is unknown. That gives to the presence of Jesus all the greater meaning and warrants us in the conviction that His act was intended to have universal significance. It consecrates and makes Christian every altar of wedlock. He joins the hands, He gives the ring, He seals the bond with His benediction. We see Him not, but He is there; the most radiant of all the guests, the most eager of all who offer their congratulations. Alas, for such as do not call Him to the marriage. They miss the most gracious presence, they fail of the richest dowry. More precious than silver and jewels is the gift which He confers. It will make the humblest home a paradise. Happy, thrice happy are they who call Him to the marriage; for if they call Him He will come, and He will come as He did to Cana in Galilee, to change the water into wine and to manifest His glory.

In what our Lord said about marriage He emphasized first of all its sanctity. One need only read attentively what He regarded the Seventh Command-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ment as forbidding, to discover that He looked upon wedlock as fibered upon the purest love. Lust, Jesus declared, is adultery. It is hateful and wicked after marriage, in marriage and before marriage. Between it and the love which constitutes true wedlock there is eternal and uncompromising warfare. Where love rules lust cannot come; and where lust rules love cannot enter. The doctrine is radical and revolutionary. It cuts the root of all sensuality and crowns marriage with the white flame of holy affection. And because marriage is sacred the bond is indissoluble. Both parties leave their kindred and become one flesh, so that any separation of whatever nature is mutilation, as if one living body should be cut in two. This Jesus said was the Divine intention from the beginning and forever remains the law; for what God joins together no man may put asunder.

It is at this point that Jesus introduces His doctrine of divorce, in which He revises the Mosaic law, and runs counter to the universal custom of His time. Even His disciples were amazed at His teaching, and frankly said to Him that, under His interpretation of what marriage meant, the unmarried state was the best. His doctrine, as reported by Luke, in the eighteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter of His gospel, amounts to this: "Once married, married for life." And upon that statement of the case, the Roman Catholic Church has always refused to sanction marriage between parties one of whom has been divorced. Marriage, that church maintains, can be dissolved only by death. No divorce is recognized as valid. There may be dissolution by special dispensation of the

*THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

Pope; but this, it must be remembered, is regarded as the exercise of authority truly and properly divine. As the order of nature, both in the State and the church, the marriage tie cannot be loosed; it must hold until death parts. And Rome cannot be gainsaid, so long as we read only Luke. When, however, we turn to the first and earlier gospel, we discover that Jesus said more than Luke reports Him to have said. Turning to the tenth verse of the nineteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, we find that Jesus added an important qualification. He recognized adultery as good and sufficient ground for absolute divorce, with the right of marriage by the innocent party; but He recognized no other ground for divorce. Through adultery the guilty party commits moral suicide, and that moral death cuts the marriage bond. Even here it is not asserted that divorce must follow upon adultery. The way is open for that, though other considerations may come in to make it unwise and even cruel. Divorce is one of the reserved rights of the innocent party in such a case, a right to be cautiously exercised. The surgery may be necessary and obligatory; but even then it will be surgery, leaving a wound which can never be healed. So, too, is remarriage by the innocent party treated as permissible, but it is not recommended. The undertone of the original law makes itself heard in one solitary exception: "Once married, married for life." The great dramatist reminds us that it is better to

"Bear the ills we have  
Than to fly to others that we know not of."

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

It certainly would seem to be the dictate of wisdom, where marriage has proved to be so dishonoring and dishonorable an estate that divorce offers the only release that another marriage calls for the greatest deliberation and caution. When it comes to such divorces as are freely given in many States upon the slightest pretext, often by mutual consent, and by perjured testimony, they are without Christian sanction, and should be frowned upon by all who place any value upon a pure home life. The doctrine of Jesus seemed a harsh one to His own disciples, and it is so regarded now. Then, as now, marriages were entered into hastily, and the haste was encouraged by the ease with which the divorce could be secured. Make divorce difficult, and marriage will gain in dignity. Make divorce well nigh impossible, let it come under the universal social ban, and marriage will cease to be hasty and ill-considered. When marriage is regarded as a covenant, and not as a secular or civil compact, the creature of fickle and changing legislation, as a covenant in which two become one, to live a common life and share a common fortune, we shall hear less of unhappy homes. The time to avert such a disaster is the time before the solemn vows are exchanged. After that it should be "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part; according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

There is one other saying of Jesus about marriage which commands attention. It bears upon the relation of marriage to the celestial and eternal life. Of that life He plainly says that marriage forms

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

no part, but that the redeemed shall be as the angels of God. Marriage is the holy ordinance of God upon earth; it is not perpetuated in heaven. That does not mean, however, that the holy affections which organize the home, and which are cultivated in it, are to be exterminated, or to suffer eclipse. There is an eternal element in all that is transient; and when the husk vanishes or decays, the life is not extinguished. It takes on a nobler form, as does the oak which has its birth in the death of the acorn. Marriage is the cradle of the finest, sweetest, holiest affection. It is a school of gentlest culture and of gracious forbearance. The years do not strip it of its charms. Poverty, sickness, age—these do not loose the silken bonds. And death cannot bury the holy friendship thus born and nurtured. They will outgrow their earthly form and imperfection, but all that was true and good and noble in them will blossom into brighter beauty in the realms where they neither marry nor are given in marriage. It does not mean oblivion. They who have shared a common life on earth, mutually helpful and gladdening—husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters—cannot help entering into a deeper and larger and sweeter celestial fellowship, though the earthly relationship be not continued or resumed. We shall know each other. We shall love each other. If in the hour of holy wedlock we have laid deep and strong the foundations of mutual affection, confidence and fellowship, storm and tempest will not shake the house which we build upon them, and when death parts the hands, hearts will still be one, and hearts will remain one forever! In many a garret

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

you will find an empty cradle. It is no longer needed. It was once the center of all that was sweet and tender. One by one the children were rocked in it. But the boys and girls are men and women now. The cradle is discarded, but its former occupants remain, the strength and beauty of a larger home. Marriage is the cradle of holiest love. We shall outgrow it and leave it behind, but the affections which were rocked in it shall be our strength and beauty forever!

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT NATURE.

[February 26, 1899.]

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the hill country of Judea. The greater part of His life, however, was spent in Northern Galilee. Nazareth was the city of His childhood and youth and early manhood; the city, too, where Mary and Joseph had their residence before He was born. The preaching of John the Baptist brought Jesus down to the Jordan on the borders of Judea, and after a brief sojourn in the neighborhood He returned to Galilee, making Capernaum, a sea town on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, the headquarters of his early ministry. Nazareth was a hill town situated inland about twenty-five miles southwest from Capernaum, nearly midway between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, twenty miles from the former and thirty miles from the latter. Mount Tabor, with an elevation of over two thousand feet above the sea level, was only five miles from Nazareth eastward on the road to Tiberias,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

an easy and much frequented walk. From its summit, crowned with a Roman fort, there was an extended view. The Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee could easily be seen. Toward the south, Mount Gilboa was outlined against the sky, and on the west rose the ridge of Carmel, nearly twenty-three hundred feet above the sea level. Sixty miles away toward the north could be seen the mountains of Lebanon, continued westward and southward in the ranges of Hermon and Bashan, varying in elevation from six to ten thousand feet above the sea level, snow crowned and snow mantled the whole year round. From the summit of Tabor, too, the great plain of Esdraelon stretched westward, gorgeous in summer with its carpet of flowers. Such was the natural scenery in which Jesus grew up. The country was the residence of a busy, energetic population. Cities and towns were numerous and prosperous. The waters of the inland lake abounded in fish; and the fisherman's craft, then as now, produced a race of men inured to hardness; observant, alert, brave, energetic, independent. Toward them Jesus seems naturally to have been drawn, though Himself growing up in a carpenter's home. He called His first disciples from their nets while He was walking by the sea. The phrase occurs repeatedly, as if between Jesus and the sea there was some subtle attraction. He could sleep upon its bosom when the waves threatened to engulf the boat, and when the oarsmen had given up the unequal contest. At their cry He arose, and when the waters heard His voice they settled into calm. At another time He came to His endangered disciples walking upon the wild

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

waters as if they had been a pavement of granite. From a boat He preached to a multitude who lined the shore. Even after His resurrection we find Him again walking by the sea, as He had so often done, directing the movement of His disciples and conversing with them. This love for the sea seems to have been associated with an equally strong love for the mountains. Frequently He withdrew to a mountain to spend the night in prayer. In the neighborhood of Capernaum there is a hill which is known as the Mount of Beatitudes, and upon one of the slopes of snowy Hermon it is supposed that Jesus was transfigured.

It is in such incidental strokes of description that we discover the knowledge and love of Jesus for natural scenery. It appears as wrought into the fiber of His personal habits, and it colors all His discourses. He speaks, as it were, in the dialect of Nature. The wolves He had seen prowling for their prey; the serpents and vipers, noiseless in movement, vicious in temper. With the habits of foxes and birds He was acquainted. The doves and the sparrows attracted His attention. For Him the lilies outranked in beauty the splendor of royal courts. The grass and the trees, the sprouting grain and the waving harvest arrested His eyes. The vines, bleeding from their early and severe pruning, green in their first sprouting, bending low with their heavy white and purple burden, seem to have been the objects of special favorite observation from which He drew many important and impressive lessons. The sheep He loved, and knew the shepherd's way with them, and love for them. He had studied the sky, with its glories of sunrise and sunset.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

He was observant of wind and lightning, of heavy rains and rushing floods. He never discoursed upon these things. There are no studied and elaborate descriptions of them, as is the habit of novelists and poets. The fine and delicate threads are woven into the heavier gold of His teaching. That is always solemn and searching, but the dash of beauty is in and through it all. And so we are told that it was His habit to teach by parable, by appeal to visible things with which all were familiar. And this use of Nature by way of illustrating and enforcing His teaching was so simple and natural as to imply a deep seated and ardent love for what earth and sea and air contained.

The fact that Jesus taught by parables reveals an attitude and estimate of Nature entitled to serious attention. The attraction which Nature had for Him was not limited to the beauty in which it was robed. It lay in the discernment that its forms and processes conveyed lessons of the utmost importance. If the floods sweep away the house which is built upon the sand, so must they come to shame and ruin who know the truth but do not obey it. If God cares for sparrows and flowers, He will surely not neglect men. If the heralds of a coming storm can be read in the sky, there must be a rational order in all that takes place. If the branches of the vine are made more fruitful by severe pruning, so are souls made richer by the discipline of suffering. If the good seed is scorched by the heat when it falls upon stony ground, and is choked when it is crowded and overshadowed by thorns, so does the word of truth result in no permanent benefit where it is superficially retained, or where

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

it is blanketed by the cares of the world. It must fall into an honest and good heart, where it is received, understood and retained. If a little leaven can leaven a great mass of meal, so can a fixed and ultimate choice change the whole character and life; and one holy life can save the world. If a mustard seed can grow into a tree, so can an insignificant beginning ultimate in universal conquest. If a grain of wheat must die before it has its resurrection in abundant fruitage, so must Christ die before He can enter into His glory. The undertone is always the same; Nature is a divine and authoritative teacher. Professor Drummond was right in his main idea, when he wrote his book, so much praised and so severely criticised, on "Natural Law in the Spiritual World."

The order of Nature and of Spirit is one. The only difference between the two is one of method. The order of Nature operates under the law of necessity; the order of Spirit operates under the law of personal freedom. Aside from that fundamental difference, the realm of Nature is a symbol of the realm of Spirit. There is not only law or order in both, but spiritual and eternal truth is suggested and shadowed forth in the processes and results of Nature. From the very beginning, and by eternal design, as Paul declares, the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made. The revelation is not complete, but it is true and reliable, as far as it goes; and it goes very far. The heavens declare the glory of God. Day unto day uttereth speech; night unto night showeth knowledge. Upon this view of Nature

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Jesus took His stand and made its beauty luminous in the garment of truth, so that to find

“Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones and good in everything,”

is not the quaint conceit of the great dramatist, but the rational estimate and use of the great world in which we live. Jesus did that and opened for us a wide door into fields which microscope and telescope are continually extending, and of which books give us only a broken outline.

One other fact in the attitude of Jesus toward Nature remains to be spoken of. It is his conscious superiority to and mastery over Nature. He obeys its laws and adjusts Himself to its order; but He also transcends that order without destroying it. He walks upon the waters, when Peter sinks. He makes the winds and the sea obey Him. He feeds thousands with a few loaves and fishes. He heals the sick and restores the dead to life. And He does all this without giving the slightest shock to the natural order. In all His miracles He displays the knowledge and power of a master. The complete and sovereign mastery which Jesus displays in what we call His miracles has its lower forms in plants and animals and men. There is in a living seed a mastery over the elements of Nature which no mechanical appliances and no chemical combinations have been able to reproduce. It is a unique mastery, converting soil and air and sunshine into vegetable fiber, into grasses, flowers, fruits and mighty forests, a mastery which gives to yielding grass blade and tiny stalk an energy which

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

counteracts and conquers the tremendous force of gravity. And yet the miracle creates no disturbance in the order of Nature. To animals belongs a still higher mastery; and the highest mastery belongs to man. But whether the mastery move within narrow or extended lines, it produces no jar in the universal order. And if we interpret the miracles of Jesus by the sovereign mastery which He claims and which is ascribed to Him, they will cease to disturb us. He, by whom all things were made, and in whom they find their support, has power to open the graves and summon the dead to come forth, without damage to the order of the universe. Miracle is the sign and evidence of mastery. In his later years it was the conceit of Ernest Renan, who reduced the life of Jesus to a French romance, substituting rhapsody for sober scholarship, ruthlessly eliminating the supernatural from the record, that the processes of evolution would ultimate in the birth of a supreme genius, mastering every secret of Nature; whose practical omniscience would invest Him with omnipotence; and who would check the advance of death, calling out of their graves at the same time all who had fallen into the deep and dark abyss. For such a master the soul cries out. And we believe that He has appeared in the person of the Incarnate Son of God, in Jesus Christ our Lord, whom heaven and earth obey; who laid His pierced palms upon the massive gates of death, wrenching them from their ancient supports and flooding with celestial radiance the sepulchers of earth. Lover of Nature is He; interpreter of Nature is He; and master of Nature is He, crowning it with the glory of His redemption.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT GOD'S CARE OF HIS CREATURES.

[March 5, 1899.]

What Jesus had to say about God's care of His creatures may be summed up under three general heads. That care He declared to be personal, particular and paternal. God's providential care of His creatures, animate and inanimate, Jesus declared to be the care of personal superintendence and direction. It is God who feeds the birds of the air. It is God who clothes the lilies of the field. It is God who sends sunshine and rain. God's personal activity is always thrust to the front. Government by law is recognized, but government by law is not represented as eliminating or making needless God's personal and continuous superintendence and action. Few words have been more loosely used than this word law. It has come to be invested with a sort of independent energy, as if things once set going would keep on forever. Thus the deist conceived of the universe of matter and of mind as a vast, complicated machine, with wheels perfectly fitted, and with energy stored away, and then left to run its course until the energy had been used up, or the wheels had worn away. The deist attributes creation to God; but he denies rulership to Him. In fact, he regards rulership as militating against the Creator's perfection. It would seem, however, that a mechanism so constructed that its maker is powerless to use and control it is a doubtful tribute to His greatness.

The conception of the universe as an organism,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

however, is seriously discredited by science. Only in a very loose way can it be said that the universe is an organism, as is a plant, or a tree, or the human body. Life divides the universe into two great sections; between which, so far, no link has been discovered. And in the section where life is the common attribute, the emergence in man of self-consciousness and self-direction, of reason and will, makes another division into the non-personal and the personal; between which, so far, no link has been discovered. A universe so constituted cannot be called an organism in any clear and proper use of the word. Nor will the word evolution help us much. The evolution of a plant is one thing; the evolution of a planet is another thing; the evolution of personal character is still another thing. They are not identical, either in the shaping energy or in the processes of unfolding. Matter, life and personality are three distinct grades or spheres, which cannot be traced to a common material source. They are interlaced, and form a unity; but the unity is metaphysical or transcendental.

Some find the more adequate conception in what is called "Monism," the presence and operation of a single energy in every department of the universe, man included; though some exclude man from its operation, conceding to him, and to him only, a true independence of personal life. All other things have only a seeming reality. Their true and only reality is the energy of God's personal will. Law is defined as a method of God's action; so that every grain of sand, every drop of rain, every flake of snow, every crystal of ice, every ray of light, every grass blade, leaf and

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

flower, is the product of God's creative energy. All this God does in an orderly way, and the discovery of this order gives us the knowledge of what we call the laws of Nature. These are simply the way in which He works. Only in the will of man is there a real center of created personal action. God works and man works; nothing else does. This is the doctrine of Lotze, but it is much older. Jonathan Edwards defined preservation as continuous creation. This may easily run into pantheism, which identifies God and the universe, but the monist earnestly repudiates the charge of pantheism. I think he goes too far when he says that the only action of Nature is the action of God and of man; but in his doctrine that without the personal action of God stars do not swing, and suns do not shine, and rains do not fall, and harvests do not ripen, he is in full agreement with Jesus Christ, who interpreted God's care of His creatures as the care of personal superintendence and support.

This personal care of God for His creatures Jesus declared to be particular. Two sparrows in His day were sold for an assarium, a copper coin, variously estimated as equivalent to one or one and a half cents of our money. Yet not one such sparrow ran its short life, Jesus said, without God's knowledge and notice. On each sparrow's birth and death God keeps a record; and while they live God provides the needed food. Nothing is finer and more exquisite than the garments in which the flowers of the field are robed. The colors are wrought into the texture. The weaving and the beautifying are simultaneous and inseparable processes. The spindles and the pencils are out

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of sight and from out of the common soil springs the graceful stalk, with the crown of beauty tipping it. Thousands of them are trodden under foot of beasts and men. Yet upon each of them Jesus said God lavishes His personal care. He clothes the lilies of the field. It is a still more amazing statement which Jesus makes when He says that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered"—the perfect participle, literally "have all been numbered," so that not one of them can drop out unnoticed. That is something which no mother has ever tried to do, label every hair on the baby's head with its appropriate number, so as to keep track of its history. But that is what Jesus represents God as doing. It is not merely an act of omniscience which He affirms. He does not content Himself with saying that God knows how many are the hairs of your head. He says that the hairs have been numbered, so that one cannot be mistaken for another, so that the record of each is kept with scrupulous exactness. The statement suggests a minuteness in the divine care which is at once amazing and inspiring. The imagination is baffled, but the heart is made glad. Great and small do not figure in the divine enrollment. Nothing is overlooked. The infinite and the infinitesimal equally command the divine attention. In fact, science has been unable as yet to penetrate into the secret chambers where the process of world building began, and where it is constantly carried on. A grain of sand, a drop of water, a living cell has a long history behind it. They do not represent the initial materials. These escape our grasp and vision, so small and tenuous are they. And upon such things God lavishes His wis-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

dom and might. Mountain ranges may be broken in outline; coast lines may be irregular and shifting; clouds are proverbial for their fantastic changes; the shape of the planet in its elevations and depressions defies picturing; but when you come to examine the tiny particles the most absolute uniformity and regularity are disclosed. Not upon the broad shoulders of a giant, as in the Greek fable, but upon these tiny particles, God lays the burden of the planet and of the universe, and by the unbroken rhythm of their movement He secures that universal order which is the music of the spheres. Nothing is beyond the range of God's personal care. It is a very sweet assurance. We are so apt to think of God as our refuge in the great crises of life only, so that we have coined the proverb, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," as if God came to our rescue only when our resources have been exhausted. But His saving grace is always near, and His sheltering wings always cover us. His providence is in the little things which fret us, things so insignificant that we blush when they are hinted at in the presence of a stranger; and it is in the endurance of these petty annoyances and trials that God would have us lay hold upon Him.

The sweetest thing remains to be said. It is the radiant crown upon the brow of the doctrine of Jesus concerning God's care of His creatures. He declares that this care is not only personal and particular, but that it is also paternal. When He speaks of sunshine and rain He says, "Your Father sends the rain and makes the sun to shine." When he speaks of the falling sparrow, He says: "Your Father knows and notices it."

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

When He points to the birds and the flowers, He says, "Your Father feeds them and clothes them." It is a Father's care which God exercises. Note, however, that this paternal quality in God's care of His creatures is specific, not general. Jesus says, "Your Father," not "Their Father." God is not Father to birds and lilies, to clouds and stars. He is Father only to human souls. The house is not the home. The home is constituted by parents and children. For them the house with all its appointments and in all its management exists. The universe is spoken of by Jesus as the house of God consisting of many mansions; and in this house there is a household over which He presides as Father. Sons and daughters are we by the free grace of an undeserved adoption in Jesus Christ, for whose good all things work together by an eternal and blessed predestination. That man is the final cause of creation has often been labeled as the height of absurdity—so insignificant is he. But there is no logic in the argument from bulk. One infant soul outweighs all the stars.

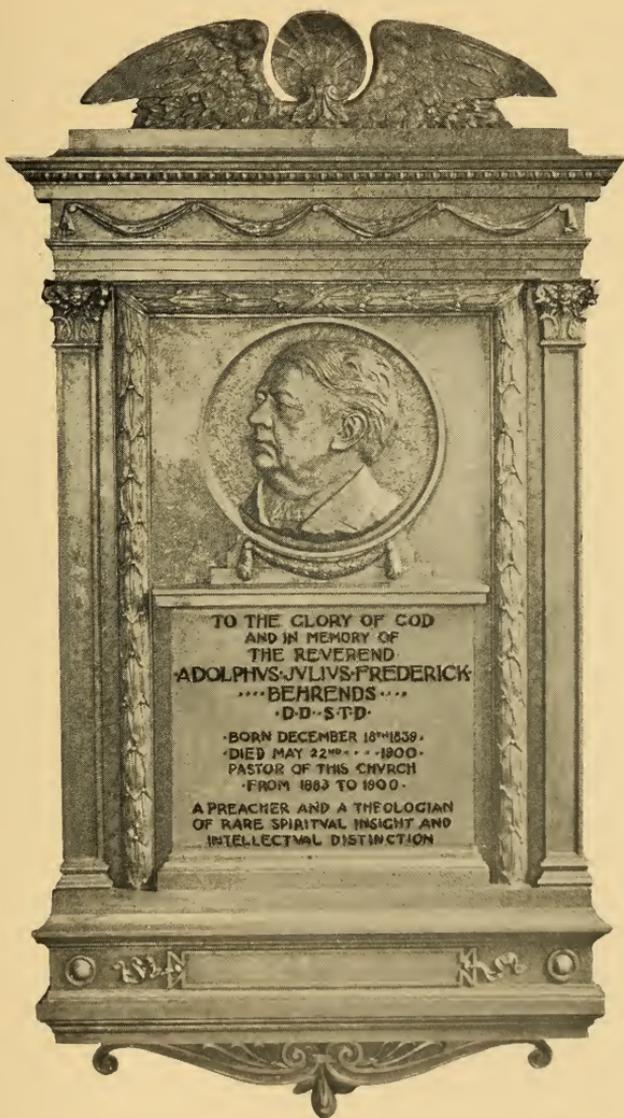
The first question in the Heidelberg Catechism is this: "What is thy only comfort in life and in death?" And the answer is as sweet as it is simple, "That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, who, with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation."

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT PRAYER.

[March 12, 1899.]

The importance which Jesus attached to prayer appears in the prominence given to it in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Sixteen verses are devoted to its exposition in this discourse. Two of the parables, the parable of the Unjust Judge and the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, deal exclusively with prayer. Even more impressive is the fact that His own life and ministry move in an atmosphere of frequent, protracted, earnest, agonizing prayer. The people were astonished at His teaching, because His words were weighted with an unusual authority and grace. The disciples, who witnessed His private life, listened in awe when they heard Him pray, and asked Him to impart the secret to them. And when He tore Himself away from them, He went into solitude, not to sleep, but to spend the night in prayer. He prayed at His baptism; and, as He prayed, the heavens opened. He prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration; and, as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling. He prayed at the grave of Lazarus, and Death released his captive. He prayed in the Garden of Agony, and so mighty was the spiritual wrestle that the bloody perspiration beaded His brow. He prayed in the upper chamber, where He had eaten the Passover for the last time, and had instituted the Holy Supper, and that prayer still hushes us into a holy silence, and fills us with a strange, deep peace. The seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel is the Holy



TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN MEMORY OF  
THE REVEREND  
ADOLPHUS-JULIUS-FREDERICK  
....BEHREND'S....  
D.D. S.T.D.

BORN DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> 1838.  
DIED MAY 22<sup>ND</sup> ... 1900.  
PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH  
FROM 1883 TO 1900.

A PREACHER AND A THEOLOGIAN  
OF RARE SPIRITUAL INSIGHT AND  
INTELLECTUAL DISTINCTION

TABLET TO THE MEMORY OF DR. BEHREND'S  
IN CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of Holies, where the veil between earth and heaven is held wide apart. It gives us a glimpse of the eternal and ever availing intercession of our Lord. And He prayed on the cross, for others and for Himself.

Two things never appear in the prayers of Jesus, though in the prayer which He taught His disciples, as indicating the spirit and the scope of their petitions, they have a place. In the first place, Jesus never prayed for the forgiveness of sins. Confession of wrong and penitence are wholly wanting. There is no hint of such things even in the great prayer which preceded His arrest and crucifixion. The omission is of startling significance. It can only mean that the consciousness of personal sin was something of which He was absolutely ignorant, so that not even impending death could awaken it. He prayed as a sinless and holy soul prays; and this makes it clear that prayer is more than a means of grace, helpful to sinful men and women, but needless in a state of moral perfection. Jesus did not pray less, but more than His disciples. Nor did He cease to pray when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He declared that He would continue to pray, and that His prayers would be answered. Whatever of mystery there may be connected with this heavenly intercession, the simple fact remains that He is represented as our Advocate before the Father, pleading on our behalf and praying for us. This makes it clear that prayer is more than a means of grace for the sinful and erring. It is the eternal ordinance of heaven and of earth. We shall never cease to pray.

The second thing which is absent in the prayers

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

of Jesus is the petition for such things as the body needs. He refused to turn the stones into bread, though He knew that the power was not wanting in Him. Nor did He ever pray for bread. He has taught us to pray for our daily bread—a very modest petition. But even that modest petition He never once made His own. He lived as did the birds of the air, who sow not, neither reap, nor gather into barns. All His prayers move in the higher realm of thanksgiving, adoration, equipment for spiritual service, communion and intercession. The explanation of this cannot be found in His knowledge that whatever was needed was at His command; for when fierce hunger pressed Him in the desert He refused to work a miracle. He would take only what the Father was pleased to give Him, and in the Father's way. The only explanation is that faith in Him was so absolute and perfect, and His absorption in His mission so complete, that the only meat and drink about which He concerned Himself was the doing of His Father's will. We follow Him afar off, but we, too, may take comfort in the assurance that God knows what we need, and that if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us. And if we have food and raiment let us be gratefully content.

I presume it will always impress us strangely that Jesus prayed; for prayer is a recognition and confession of dependence. Jesus Christ was and remains very God. And while it is true that the eternal life of God is a plural life, so that in the indivisible essence there is an eternal intercommunion of Father, Son

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

and Holy Ghost, this communion cannot properly be regarded as prayer. God cannot pray to God. Did Christ, then, pray simply as man, the consciousness of Godhood being for the time in eclipse? That is a violent supposition, which destroys the unity of His personal consciousness. We can only say, and we must say, that He was the Incarnate Son of God. God in the form of man, and that in consenting to come into the flesh He voluntarily assumed a place of independence upon the absolute Godhead, and so came under the law of prayer. He not only could pray; He must pray; because while He retained His conscious Godhood, he retained it in form of our common human nature, which is dependent. That conscious dependence He shared, and that made prayer His vital breath and native air, as it is ours. In the same way must we construe the heavenly intercession. Jesus Christ now prays for us, not as God, nor as glorified man, but as the Incarnate Son of God, God in the form of exalted and glorified man. As such He still shares in our dependence, and that brings Him, even in heaven, under the law of prayer. So that the intercession is not figurative and rhetorical, but real and effective.

Prayer strikes its roots deep in the moral economy of God. It is not the duty and the privilege of some; it is the duty and the privilege of all. It is not the necessity of the few; it is the necessity of all. The attitude of prayer is the normal attitude of a dependent and conscious creation, including its visible and anointed King, who in His conscious dependence is also conscious of His eternal Godhead. Nor can prayer ever

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

cease. It must be the eternal speech of the consciously dependent creature to the Creator and Father, to which He is eternally responsive. There will come a time when confession for sin will drop out of our speech. But thanksgiving, adoration, equipment for spiritual service, communion and intercession, will continue to be the normal speech of the eternal heavens. And when we pray our Father will answer.

If now, we have not exaggerated the importance and the dignity of prayer as the eternal form of communion between the conscious created spirit and its Creator and Father, ever widening in its scope, ever deepening in its tenderness and sweet intimacy, we cannot address ourselves too early and earnestly to the mastery of the celestial speech. In this, as in everything else, there must be a beginning, and we should begin right. We walk before we run, and we creep before we walk. We spell before we read, and we must learn our alphabet before we spell. The alphabet opens the door into the wide fields of literature, science and art. There is an alphabet of prayer, and its mastery is of prime importance. Prayer is not any and every kind of address to God. It has its distinctive features, and these are sketched with great clearness in the utterances of our Lord. These are not grouped in formal order, but they are found imbedded and ingrained in the discourses of Jesus. Their full treatment would require a volume, and the merest hints must here suffice.

Jesus always assumes that prayer is the natural speech of the soul. It is more than a duty, more than

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

a privilege; it is a fundamental and universal necessity. Without it the soul is dumb. Man seeks God and God seeks man; therein lies the eternal necessity of prayer. Must not my lips speak to their Maker? Must not my ear listen to Him who formed it? And He that made the ear, shall not He hear? He who made my lips, shall He not speak? Dr. McCosh summed it all up in two short sentences as sweet as they are simple, when, speaking of prayer, he said: "I pray, God hears; God speaks, I listen." That tells the whole story.

Natural speech is always simple and direct. Hence Jesus warns us against needless repetitions, against much speaking, against pomposity of manner and language. That is always offensive, and defeats its end, even between man and man. Sincere speech is always simple. It studies short, plain sentences. It does not deal in superlatives. It discards artifice and ornament. And that is the only speech to which God gives an attentive ear. Any other is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy God hates. In the second place, natural speech is earnest as well as sincere. All sincerity vibrates with earnestness. For sincerity, as Whately tells us, not only means "reality of conviction," which may be false, but "unbiased conviction," an impartial conviction, uninfluenced by wishes or passions. Such a conviction has grip. The whole soul enters into it. And such earnestness, in the third place, inspires persistence. It is not easily discouraged. It presses its suit. It will not be denied. Hence our Lord's parable of the Unjust Judge, who yielded to the importunity of the widow. She knew that her cause was just, and she

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

was determined to have justice. Hence, too, the present tense in those sayings of Jesus: "Ask and it shall be given you; for every one that asketh receiveth." The asking is continuous, repeated until the request is granted. Prayer is natural, earnest, frequent, untiring speech.

When we turn our attention to the suppliant himself, certain things are emphasized as indispensable to prayer. He who prays is absolutely dependent upon Him to whom he prays. That should make him modest in his petitions, and habitually grateful. He who prays is ignorant, does not know what is best for him; and that should make him humble and submissive, exalting God's will above his own, and doing this gladly. He who prays is a sinner, and that should make him penitent. Yet he who prays is also by the grace of adoption in Jesus Christ a child of God and an heir of glory, and that should make him bold, asking great things, and expecting them. Prayer is grateful, modest, humble, penitent, bold speech. In prayer, too, we are reminded that we occupy a common place with our fellow men. The plural number must not drop out of our speech. If we are selfish, God is not. He is no respecter of persons. He does not share our jealousies and hatreds, and they are offensive to Him. He will not forgive us, if we do not from the heart forgive our enemies. Therefore we must pray for them, too, and so intercession for all men must enter into our speech with God. Prayer summons us to an exalted state of mind. It involves gratitude, sincerity, earnestness, persistence, humility, submission, penitence, boldness, comprehensive charity.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

The character of Him to whom we must pray must also be taken into account. It is His favor we seek, not the applause of men. Hence we must pray, not to be seen or heard of others, standing apart and attracting attention, but speaking to our God in secret. He is infinitely exalted, and therefore our speech should be profoundly reverent. There should be frankness without flippancy and offensive familiarity. Our place is at the foot of God's throne. He is infinite in wisdom, power, goodness and grace. That commands and justifies the most absolute confidence in Him and surrender to His sovereign will. Summing it all up, prayer involves gratitude, sincerity, earnestness, persistence, humility, submission, penitence, boldness, comprehensive charity, secrecy, faith.

There is, too, a natural and necessary order in the things for which we pray. Nothing is excluded. We may and we ought to carry everything to God in prayer. All our cares we may and we ought to cast upon Him. But all things are not of equal importance. The life is more than meat and the body than raiment. Bread we need, but we do not live by bread alone. The immortal soul should command our chief attention. We should be infinitely more anxious to be saved from sin than from poverty, sickness, suffering and death. Righteousness is our supreme need and the supreme need of the world. Therefore our Lord summons us to pray that the Kingdom of God may come, and that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. For the answer to that prayer includes every other blessing.

It is a common complaint that many earnest pray-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

ers are unanswered. It is pertinent to ask whether the natural and necessary conditions have entered into such prayers. He who scatters his seed upon the ocean has no right to complain that he does not reap a harvest. There is such a thing as a law of prayer. The conditions must be complied with; and these conditions, as we have seen, are not arbitrary, but grow out of the necessities of the case. In true prayer, man must understand himself, and man must understand his God. He must ask for what is really needed, with comprehensive charity for all men, and with absolute confidence in God. Prayer does not lend itself to a selfish and self-seeking soul. It is the highest speech of which the soul is capable. In it the heart unburdens itself. In it we rush for shelter under the divine wings. In it the perfect will of God broods over our own, quieting our restlessness and impatience, imparting to us the peace in which He dwells. If we pray thus, the answer will come before our lips have ended their appeal. God hears; God speaks; let us listen!

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT RELIGION.

[March 19, 1899.]

The word religion has been variously defined. Some have made it a form of philosophy, a purely intellectual way of looking at things and estimating their value. Others have reduced it to the sense of absolute dependence, having its sole and proper sphere in the feelings. A third class identifies it with morality or moral action, and limits it to right conduct.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

Every one of these definitions must be rejected, for the simple reason that religion is neither exclusively intellectual nor exclusively emotional nor exclusively practical. It claims and exercises sovereignty over the whole man. It shapes the convictions, directs the emotions and controls the will. Our definition, therefore, must state with clearness what it is in religion which assumes control in the sphere of thought, feeling and action. Here, again, the etymology of the word does not help us. Some trace it to a word which means "to bind back," but leaving us in doubt as to what it is to which we are bound. Others trace it to a word which means "to read again, to ponder," and so make it equivalent to serious reflection. There is common agreement that among the Romans and the Greeks the word religion meant "religious worship or usage," the faithful observance of certain rites and ceremonies in which the gods were honored. In the New Testament the word is found only three times, once in Acts and twice in the Epistle of James. So far as we know Jesus never used it. Paul, in his defense before Agrippa, declared that he had lived before his conversion as a Pharisee, after the strictest sect of his religion, using the word in its ordinary sense of religious worship or usage, the usage which the ceremonial law prescribed. James contrasts a vain religion with a pure and undefiled. He who does not bridle his tongue may seem to be religious, but is not. True religion does more. It keeps a man unspotted from the world. It urges to and results in moral purity. And it includes visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, compassionate treatment of

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

the helpless and the sorrowing. But the crowning statement of James is that this is religion before God and the Father; that is, in the judgment of Him who as God is holy and supreme, and as Father loves all who belong to His household. Because He is God we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. And because He is Father we must visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. True religion, therefore, according to James, is not determined by usage, but by what God is, by His supreme and holy Fatherhood. It is a life which in all its spheres is shaped by profound and habitual reverence for what God is and demands.

As thus interpreted, while Jesus never seems to have used the word religion, and perhaps intentionally avoided it because in common usage a false conception was associated with it, He had much to say about it. Religion, as reverence, profound, absorbing, habitual, for what God is and requires, is the equivalent of Faith; and upon Faith Jesus laid the imperial emphasis. Without Faith it is impossible to please God. Sacrifices, alms, prayers are worthless and offensive without it. It is the publican who stands afar off, confesses his unworthiness and appeals to the mercy of God, who goes to His house pardoned and adopted. It is the sinner who repents, over whom there is joy in heaven and in the heart of God. No temple is needed to give dignity to worship. The Father seeks only such as worship Him in spirit and in truth.

There are three strands in this mystic cord of religion binding the soul to God, and God alone. It is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

clear, in the first place, that Jesus regarded religion as a personal relation. It is not an affair of the community or of the church. That was the pagan idea; religion consisted in the observance of certain usages prescribed by the priesthood. Personal reverence had nothing to do with it. The Pharisees identified religion with obedience to the traditions of the elders. Jesus denounced them as whited sepulchers, full of hypocrisy, shutting and bolting the doors into the Kingdom of Heaven, tithing mint, anise and cummin, but making void the commandment of God. The vehement protest of Jesus was not needed. Paul renewed the battle in every community where he preached the gospel, and his most venomous antagonists were professedly Christian disciples. The pagan idea crowded the personal element in religion to the wall. A cold, formal ceremonialism swept through the Greek, the Roman and the African Church. Religion became obedience to regulations, enacted and enforced by the priesthood. Luther in Germany, Calvin and Zwingle in Switzerland, Wesley in England, reaffirmed the doctrine of Paul and of Jesus. Justification by faith became the watchword of the new era, a theological phrase for religion as exclusively personal reverence for God, confidence in Him, obedience to Him. And even now in Protestant lands and churches the pagan idea of religion finds advocates. The great school of Ritzschl makes the Christian community the organ of saving grace. It denies personal communion with God. It makes the individual dependent upon the church. Incorporation into it is adoption. Against such a debasement of the personal element in

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

religion we must continue to protest. Its root is personal devotion to God. That creates the church, that makes its sacraments means of grace, that gives to Christian customs and institutions their beauty and strength. They are all the fruits of faith; and as such they minister to faith—that is, to personal reverence for God—confidence in Him and obedience to Him. No altar, no priesthood, no ancient and venerable rites, mediate between our souls and God. We have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand; and, therefore, the place of secret prayer is the holiest sanctuary.

It is equally clear that Jesus regarded religion as intensely spiritual, as working from within. It is the hidden leaven, it is the buried but living mustard seed, it is not outward reformation but inward regeneration. It is a birth from above, making all things new by the mastery which God secures in the fontal depths of our being. All spiritual acts are and must be personal acts. But all personal acts are not spiritual. They may be carnal. Only such personal acts are spiritual which find their origin, continuance, law and end in the domain of spiritual life. And spiritual life is uniformly declared to be by our Lord and by Paul a derived and imparted life. The natural man, the soul closed against divine influences, is carnal; such a soul cannot understand the things of God, as the eye cannot see when the lids are closed upon it. The eye sees only when it receives the light. And the soul sees only when it receives and lives in the light which God is. The point in all this is that just as in prayer man speaks to a listening and answering God, so in true

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

religion, what man renders to God, whether in worship, or conduct, or service, is rendered to Him solely in view of what He is and has revealed Himself to be. Religion lives, moves and has its being in the supernatural and the eternal. It is walking with God. We are personal beings. But we are not self-centered beings. God alone is self-centered. In Him alone are the sources of wisdom, power, blessedness and glory. We bear His likeness. We are capable of fellowship with Him. But in fellowship there is mutual giving and receiving. There must be two to constitute a fellowship, and in fellowship both must be active. No account of religion, therefore, can be correct which does not recognize the divine element in it, and give to that the original and supreme place. The spirit in man is that which is deepest or highest in him; it makes no difference which superlative is used. It is that which is central in him, the point at which God enters into fellowship with him; and only as God is freely and gladly received at this center of our being does true religion come to its birth. Hence Jesus sums up our whole duty in two words: "Follow Me."

I cannot follow Christ unless I have absolute confidence in Him. And I cannot follow Him unless I keep Him constantly in sight. Religion is a personal following; it is a spiritual following, and it is also a rational following. Jesus tells me that I must worship God in spirit and in truth. The rational element cannot be eliminated from true religion. It is not mysticism; it is not ecstasy; it is not vague sentiment. Eternal life roots itself in the knowledge of God which Jesus Christ imparts. Our con-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

victions have a good deal to do with our religion. Our reverence for God will depend upon what we believe Him to be. Our penitence will depend upon what we regard sin to be. And so through the whole range of what we call religion; it will be shaped and colored by our theology. For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. I am not speaking of a man's fancies or speculations. I am speaking of his convictions. If he has no theological convictions he can have no religion. And his religion will derive its vigor from his theological convictions. For theology is simply the doctrine of God, and in a true knowledge of God religion grounds itself. There may be call for a simpler theology, for a theology stripped of scholastic refinements. But the simplest theology will be massive. To affirm the existence of God as eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, merciful and holy; to recognize the majesty and sacredness of His law; to confess the mystery of the incarnation, and that He who became incarnate redeemed us through sacrifice and suffering; to believe that He who died rose again, ascended on high and intercedes for us; to accept His authority as binding, and plan for the world's conversion to His Gospel; to affirm duty and immortality—these elementary convictions constitute a very large outline of knowledge, and he who has a firm grasp upon them is a good deal of a theologian. Nor can such convictions be regarded as speculative and unfruitful in practical results. They are full of life and power, urging to high endeavor, provoking patience, courage and hopefulness. They who believe in such a God, and wait upon Him, renew their strength as the

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

eagles. They run, and are not weary; they walk, and do not faint. The floods do not overwhelm them; furnaces of fire do not harm them. They glory in tribulation and they triumph in death. Their religion is their constant joy, because it is rooted in truth. They know whom they have believed. They have built their house upon the rock, and it cannot fall. They know upon whose palms their names have been graven, and from the gentle clasp of those hands none can tear them. It is all condensed in the opening clauses of the Apostles' Creed; a massive, daring, fruitful and inspiring theology: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." That doctrine of God was all the early Christian Church meant by theology. We have made the word to cover many things that have no right to be sheltered under it, until with many it has become a synonym for metaphysical hairsplittings and unprofitable discussions, but theology is properly the doctrine of God, and only that; the summing up in clear thought, the grasping in firm convictions, the maintenance in full assurance of what God has revealed Himself to be, in the works of His hands and in the Christ of His anointing. We shall have the religion of Jesus when we have the theology of Jesus. When we think of God as Jesus did we shall worship God as Jesus did, in spirit and in truth. And we shall obey the voice which was heard at the baptism and upon the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE SABBATH.

[March 26, 1899.]

The most superficial reading of the gospels makes it plain that from the very beginning of His public ministry Jesus encountered the bitter hostility of the religious teachers. Scribes and Pharisees sneered at Him, slandered Him, denounced Him, and finally compassed His death. The common people heard Him gladly, to be in their turn cursed as ignorant of the law. We look in vain for any theological divergence as an explanation of this bitter and implacable hostility. Both parties accepted the divine authority of the Old Testament as a revelation of saving truth. But between Jesus and His opponents there was a radical difference as to the real nature of piety. He insisted that it was personal and spiritual, manifesting itself in supreme love for God and fraternal love for all men. Religion with Him meant practical recognition of the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. Ceremonial observances and regulations were treated as secondary matters. In this contention, Jesus was not entirely without sympathizers and supporters, even among the Scribes and Pharisees. But for the greater part the religious teachers made religion to consist in the observance of prescribed rites. It is impossible to exaggerate the extreme to which this tendency has been carried, and how burdensome its exactions had become. The world has never known a religious formalism so rigid and absolute as that of the Pharisees. Of its regulations, Edersheim says: "They provided for every possible and impossible case,

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

entered into every detail of private, family and public life, and with iron logic, unbending rigor and most minute analysis, pursued and dominated man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable." These "traditions of the elders" were invested with a higher authority than the Scriptures, and to disregard them was declared to be "worse than idolatry, uncleanness, or the shedding of blood." They enjoined the most minute, painful, punctilious observance of every external legal ordinance. They left the inner man untouched. What he was to believe and feel was of no great consequence. He might hold and champion any views, as long as he adhered in practice to the traditional ordinances. Here, as Edersheim says, "we mark the fundamental difference between the teaching of Jesus and Rabbinism. The difference was one of fundamental principle, and not merely of development, form or detail. One developed the law in its outward direction, as ordinances and commandments; the other in its inward application, as life and liberty. Rabbinism occupied one pole. The teaching of Jesus occupied the other pole. Thus as between the two, there is a total divergence of fundamental principle, so that comparison between them is not possible. There is absolute contrariety." It is needless to prove that in this fierce conflict with the advocates of traditional religion, Jesus recovered the true religion of the Old Testament. Moses and the prophets were His allies. The Scribes had made void the law by their traditions. "Under a load of outward ordinances and observances its spirit had been crushed. The religion as well as the hope of the Old Testament had become exter-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

nalized." Jesus recovered them both, by laying the ax at the root of the tree, and making piety a matter of the heart, intensely personal and spiritual, bearing fruit in love, love to God and love to man. One sentence embodies the sovereign principle, to which he subjected every dispute: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Hence, to eat with unwashed hands was no sin. The purification prescribed by the elders possessed no binding authority. There was no religion in their observance. The things by which men are defiled come out of their hearts. To us this is commonplace. It belongs to the alphabet of common sense. But when Jesus announced it the doctrine was more revolutionary than Luther's maintenance that men are justified by faith and by faith only. In both cases the priestly party clearly perceived that their authority was seriously and permanently menaced. There could be no compromise upon such an issue; unconditional surrender, by the one or the other, was the only way out.

The general controversy, at a very early day, assumed a special form. It reached its acute stage in the dispute as to how the Sabbath should be kept, and by what general principle its observance should be regulated. How the dispute first began it is impossible definitely to determine. We do know that in the second year of the public ministry of Jesus it broke out in Galilee and in Judea. In Galilee Capernaum was the storm center. Passing through its adjoining cornfield, in the time of harvest, on a Sabbath, the disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears; and, rubbing them between their hands, they ate the winnowed grain. This

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

made them guilty of a double sin; the sin of reaping and the sin of threshing on the Sabbath. On a subsequent Sabbath, and in the synagogue, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand, who was present. That filled the Pharisees with fierce anger and united them in the determination to get rid of Him. In Judea Jerusalem was the storm center. Jesus performed a notable miracle upon a poor cripple, whose infirmity was of thirty-eight years' standing, and who seems to have been as friendless as he was helpless. Jesus bade him rise, take up his bed and walk. It was the Sabbath, and the man's obedience created a public scandal, against which the Jews protested. The controversy which followed became so heated that Jesus withdrew Himself from Jerusalem for a time; and when He did return it was resumed with such angry bitterness on the part of the Jews that they took up stones to cast at Him. He slipped away from them, only soon after to restore sight to a man who had been blind from birth, performing that miracle of mercy also on the Sabbath, a fact to which the Pharisees confidently appealed as proving that Jesus was a deceiver and blasphemer. We learn from the record, therefore, that the immediate occasion of the deadly hostility of the Pharisee against Jesus was His attitude on the question of Sabbath observance.

Edersheim, in his "Life and Times of Jesus," gives a long chapter on the ordinances and law of the Sabbath as laid down in the Misnah and in the Jerusalem Talmud. It is mournful reading. Its puerilities exceed belief. In no less than twenty-four chapters matters are seriously discussed which one would scarcely imagine a

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

sane intellect would seriously entertain. Through 64½ folio columns in the Jerusalem and 156 double pages of folio in the Babylon Talmud does the enumeration and discussion of possible cases drag on. And yet in all these wearisome details there is not a single trace of anything spiritual, not a word even to suggest higher thoughts of God's holy day and its observance. The trivialities are not worth reproducing. Jesus did not deign to take any notice of them. He broke them all down by defending His disciples for what they had done and by working miracles forbidden by the traditional regulations. He claimed that the Sabbath was not violated by eating when one was hungry, thus sweeping away at one stroke all the dietary regulations of the rabbis. He declared that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day and to save life. He gathered up the whole matter in two pithy sentences: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," and "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The argument is very simple and very radical. The weekly day of rest and worship is demanded by the highest good of man, and inasmuch as Jesus is the Son of Man the best interpreter of what man is and what man needs, His use of the Sabbath is that which corresponds to the divine intention.

It is plain, from this statement of the case, that Jesus recognized the binding authority of the fourth commandment. He did not work upon the Sabbath. Luke tells us that when Jesus visited Nazareth for the first time after His baptism He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, "as His custom was." That had been His habit and He adhered to it. The Sab-

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

bath always found Him in the synagogue. He was a regular church-goer, empty as the services were. He did not draw men away from them, nor did He absent Himself. There is no record of His ever having offered any sacrifices in the temple, nor of His encouraging others to do so; but the synagogue He frequented with careful regularity. We can imagine how sorely He must have been tried by many a service, especially during those years in Nazareth when He was debarred from speaking. But the divine authority of the Sabbath was all the time freely recognized and heartily respected, not only as a day of rest, but as a day of worship. He remembered it, to keep it holy.

It is equally clear that He regardeth the self-constituted guardians of the Sabbath as its greatest foes. They made it an intolerable burden to the people. They made it a gloomy prison, not the radiant, roomy palace of the King; just as they had converted the house of prayer into a den of thieves. The abuses were not attacked in detail. They grew out of a common root and that root Jesus tore up with ruthless yet loving hands. He made the Sabbath a day of life and liberty. It was, in His view, God's day with man and man's day with God, the day of the Father with His children, when all ceremonial regulations were an impertinence. It was made for man, not man for it. As made for man its observance is a high and sacred duty, its maintenance a serious and solemn obligation. To part with it, to neglect it, to abridge or deny its use to others, is to suffer in one's inheritance. It is the badge of man's freedom, of his divine sonship.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

But he was not made for it, and therefore no hard and fast regulations can be laid down for its observance. Jesus leveled the whole elaborate Rabbinical structure and he reared nothing in its place. He left every man free to determine for himself the method of Sabbath observance.

This was certainly audacious. It might seem as if so radical a method could result only in the abandonment of the old Sabbath observance, as if the day must go down with the traditional ceremonial observance. And that is what actually happened. Christianity could not appropriate the Jewish Sabbath, not even the day of the week. The new wine could not be kept in the old bottles. We cannot trace the change which substituted the first day of the week for the seventh. It was natural that the day on which Jesus rose from the dead should become a memorial day. But it was inevitable that a day out of which all life and joy had been crushed by puerile and offensive legislation should surrender its scepter of authority to another day in which the freedom of Christ should come to the throne. And in this matter, too, the liberty which Jesus advocated comes to its rights. For, so long as one day in seven is kept as a day of rest and worship, the divine authority of the Sabbath is recognized and honored.

And, finally, the words of Jesus, in which, as the Son of Man, he claims lordship also of the Sabbath, provide us with the law of its observance. Our liberty is not license. The day of rest is not ours to use as we please. Christ alone is Lord of the Sabbath. It is, therefore, our day of rest in His service. We

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

may use it, we ought to use it, as He used it. We, too, are summoned to consecrate its hours to the worship of God and to the doing of good, as did He. It is a simple rule, which will not and cannot secure rigid uniformity in the observance. No one can formulate the law for another. It may even be that what is obligatory on me may be forbidden to you. In such matters we cannot judge each other. But to keep the day holy, to subordinate self to God and to our fellow men, is the special duty of all on this day, as it is the supreme law of all life. And so, some time, the present distinctions of days shall vanish in the eternal Sabbath of the heavens, when all worship will be work, and all work will be worship.

---

### WHAT JESUS HAD TO SAY ABOUT HEAVEN.

[April 9, 1899.]

Nothing is more certain than that it is appointed unto all men once to die. But it is also true that not one of us is ever quite ready to die. Upon the very brink of the grave we exhaust all available resources to prolong our own life or the life of those whom we love. Last month, upon two successive days, I officiated at the funeral services of two persons, both of whom had rounded out a full ninety years; and in both cases the long deferred bereavement provoked keen regret. There was no fear of death; but neither was there any eagerness, nor any welcome, for its advent. Not one of us wants to die. We may sometimes say so, in moments of deep despondency, but the reaction is sure to come. We hold on as long as we

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

can. We do not voluntarily relax our grip upon life. We say of such as take their own life that they must have been of unbalanced mind, thereby voicing our conviction that it is unnatural for man to make an end of his stay on earth. Nor is this the infirmity of weak men and women. Paul, broken by his many labors, bent by his many burdens, suffering the horrors of Roman imprisonment, was in a strait betwixt two, whether to depart and so to be with Christ, or to remain on earth; and he could not bring himself to indicate his preference. Jesus Christ came to give His life a ransom for many. Death was His voluntary, deliberate election. And yet, when He entered its dark shadow, He prayed once and again that the cup might pass from Him. This drawing back from death is not the soul's infirmity. It is its earnest and impassioned protest. It is its emphatic affirmation that it was made to live—and to live forever.

The Biblical record of man's creation is in completest harmony with this constitutional and universal conviction. The record tells us that man was made of the dust of the ground. He is part of nature, is under all the laws of nature, including the law of death. Adam's body was mortal like our own. But the record also adds that in the Garden of Eden there was a tree of life, the eating of whose fruit was a preventative of death. This is pictorial, it is true, and is not to be interpreted literally. It is poetry; not prose. But stripped of its pictorial or poetic form, the statement declares that while man was made of the dust of the ground, a part of nature, and under all the laws of nature, including death, nature itself contained some

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

provision by which death could be prevented, even as now, by skillful medical treatment and by vigilant nursing, the sick are often snatched from the jaws of death, and their lives prolonged for many years. No man is competent to say that nature does not contain such a provision; and the Biblical statement that it did contain such a provision from the very first meets the conviction in every one of us that we ought not to die, that death is an evil for such a being as man. What it is, and whence it is, we do not know. The record more than hints that its discovery is beyond our successful search. The gates have closed upon the tree of life, and the revolving sword of flame guards the entrance. But Genesis and the soul of man agree perfectly in this, that death is a disturbing element in the life of an immortal spirit.

There was a time when materialism was the reigning philosophy. The soul was declared to be the secretion of the brain, as bile is of the liver, and that a man is only what he eats. Of course death was the end of his career. Then came the period of agnosticism, when men declined to formulate their belief, maintaining that the evidence was confusing and contradictory. We may be immortal, but we do not know; and prudence dictates that we live as if we were immortal. But the soul craves certainty, not mere possibility. And so, for a decade and more, we have had a succession of books grappling with the argument that the personal immortality of the human soul is demanded by the logic of evolution; that nature itself is an empire of anarchy from center to rim, unless self-conscious mind be immortal. There is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

much in the argument that is fascinating. But, after all, the logic is circular. It ends where it begins. It finds what it seeks. It assumes what it proves. The soul of man makes the stars echo its own thought. And that is as it should be. For the soul of man has as much right to be heard on its own behalf as have the shining stars and the sounding seas. He is, and must be, his own interpreter. You search in vain for the sense of moral obligation, except in your own breast; but it is there, and you impose its authority upon all the spaces and all the ages. You search in vain for what you call sin, except in your own life; but it is there, and you cannot call it innocent or good. You search in vain for any evidence of personal immortality, except in your own soul; but it is there; the endless outlook, which remains even when its authority is silenced. It is not merely that we should prefer to live forever. We can make no other rational choice. We are shut up to that, without alternative. How can stars, and seas, and mountains, and birds, give me any information upon such a matter, when the idea of personal immortality has never laid its mighty and mystic spell upon them? No; I will commune with my own soul. I need no elaborate logic to prove that I am immortal. I know it by what I am, so that my present conscious existence becomes irrational and absurd if the grave is to swallow me up. I cannot think, I cannot live, in any other way than as one whom the chains of death cannot bind. It is an immediate vision, an intuitive conviction, not a logical conclusion. I do not reach it by argument, but by self-knowledge.

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

But when I come to ask what the endless life after death will be, I am in a region where little light comes to me. I have but this, as a general conviction, that the law of the future for the conscious soul must be the continuation of the law of the present. Personal immortality implies immutability of law. I shall reap only what I sow. Death cannot produce a radical change in the condition of a soul upon which death cannot lay its hands. The soul's life unfolds under its own law. What it was on earth, what it was at death, it remains when soul and body are parted. The ways part, not at death, but where the will chooses the right, or elects the wrong. Let us not forget that, that our eternal destiny trembles in the scales whenever the right confronts us and compels us to choose. Now is the day of salvation!

All this is involved in what Jesus had to say about the life to come. He assumes that there is no change in the soul, that it retains its present powers and activities, and that it continues under the normal law of the present earthly life. Death is the end of one period and the beginning of another, leaving the soul itself untouched in its essential life. Death has no sacramental saving power. To shed the body is not to get rid of sin. The clearest and fullest utterance of our Lord on this matter is contained in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Both retain their personal and conscious identity. In both memory is active, though only one speaks. They remember their life on earth. They recognize each other. And the moral law under which they continue to exist differs in no essential feature from the one under which they lived

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

on earth. Each simply reaped the harvest of his own sowing. Assuming, as we must, the personal immortality of the human soul, we must assume that memory continues to discharge its mysterious office, for good or for evil, that the feelings retain their place and power, that conscience exercises its judicial authority, that mutual recognition may and must be taken for granted, and that in eternity, as in time, holiness is the law of blessedness.

To these things the soul of man bears witness. Beyond that, all human oracles are dumb or speak with no recognized authority. In ancient and in modern times, men have given full wing to their fancy. They have given elaborate descriptions of the Elysian fields, of the banquets and amusements of the gods, of Hades and the gloomier Tartarus, closed by massive iron gates. Egyptian theology fairly reveled in this species of speculation, for in Egypt, the tomb, more than the temple, was the center of religious worship; and the Book of the Dead, describing the soul's journey and experience after death, was the great theological manual. The Old Testament preserves a most remarkable and impressive silence, though the conviction of an uninterrupted life pulses in every psalm, breathes in every prayer, and speaks in every prophetic utterance. Christian literature has made its daring excursions into this region. Dante and Milton, and lesser lights, have dragged the unseen world into view. But when you have sifted it all, there is absolutely nothing left upon which one can fix with certainty. Genius knows no more than does the new born babe, and no traveler has ever returned to tell us

## *THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES*

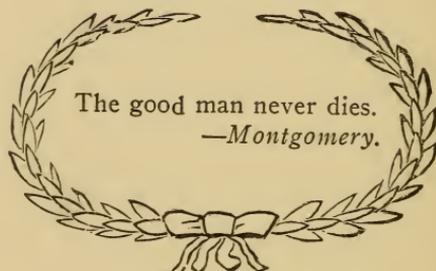
what he saw. I have long since ceased to read books on the future life, though there are enough of them to make up a great library, simply because no one knows anything about it, and upon so august and solemn a theme I will listen only to the voice of an authoritative teacher.

Jesus Christ is such a teacher. Of course, if He was only a man, even the best and greatest among men, His words carry no more authority than those of Dante and Milton. But if He was and is the Incarnate Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, who came from heaven and went back to heaven. Infallible Master in the knowledge of the world to come, His words, however few, give us secure footing. Some things He clearly teaches. He teaches an eternal separation of the righteous and the wicked. Annihilation and universal salvation, He cannot be made to teach. He teaches a universal resurrection to judgment, administered by Himself, and in a few rapid strokes He sketches for us the heavenly life.

He has not much to say about heaven; but what He does say is enough. I shall not enlarge upon it, because I am convinced that it is sweeter for every one of us to fill up the outlines of his sketch. The fourteenth chapter of John is that sketch, to which may be added that wonderful word to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Heaven is the Father's house of many mansions, which Christ is busy preparing for its occupants; and as soon as the designated chamber is ready, He comes Himself for the inmate and guest. We are not to be left naked; we are to be clothed upon with our house which is

## THE CHRIST OF NINETEEN CENTURIES

from heaven. We are not to be left unsheltered; the Father's roof is to cover us. We are not to be left wandering in solitude; we are to be with Him, and where He is, and we are to behold His glory. He will know each one of us, and call us by name; and we shall know Him. Of course we shall know each other, as He welcomes us each by name, and we shall renew the pure and holy friendships of our mortal life, as soldiers, returned from the wars, recount the experiences of the camp, the weary march and the field of battle. It cannot be otherwise. Heaven will be home; more than that I do not care to know.



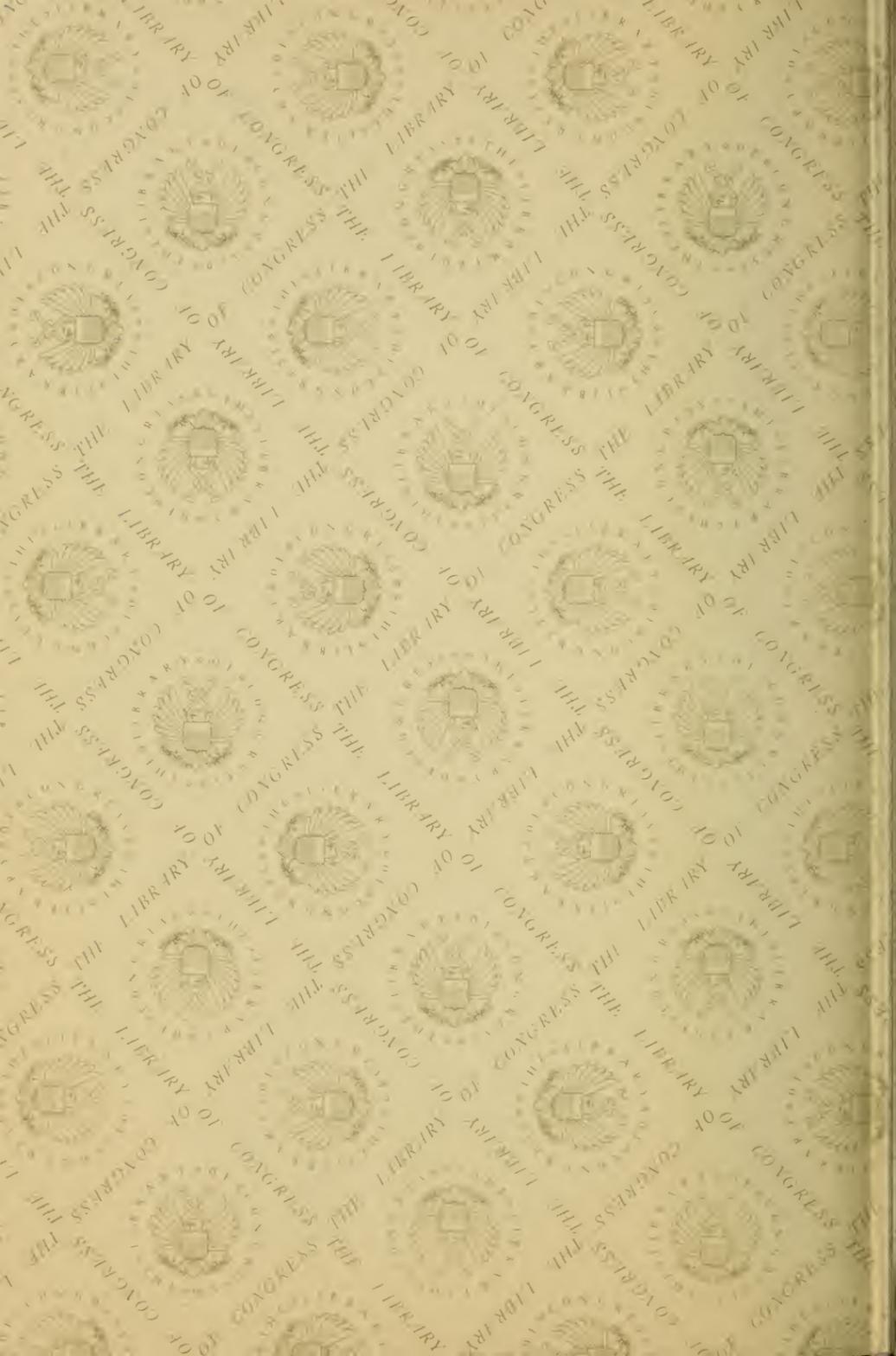


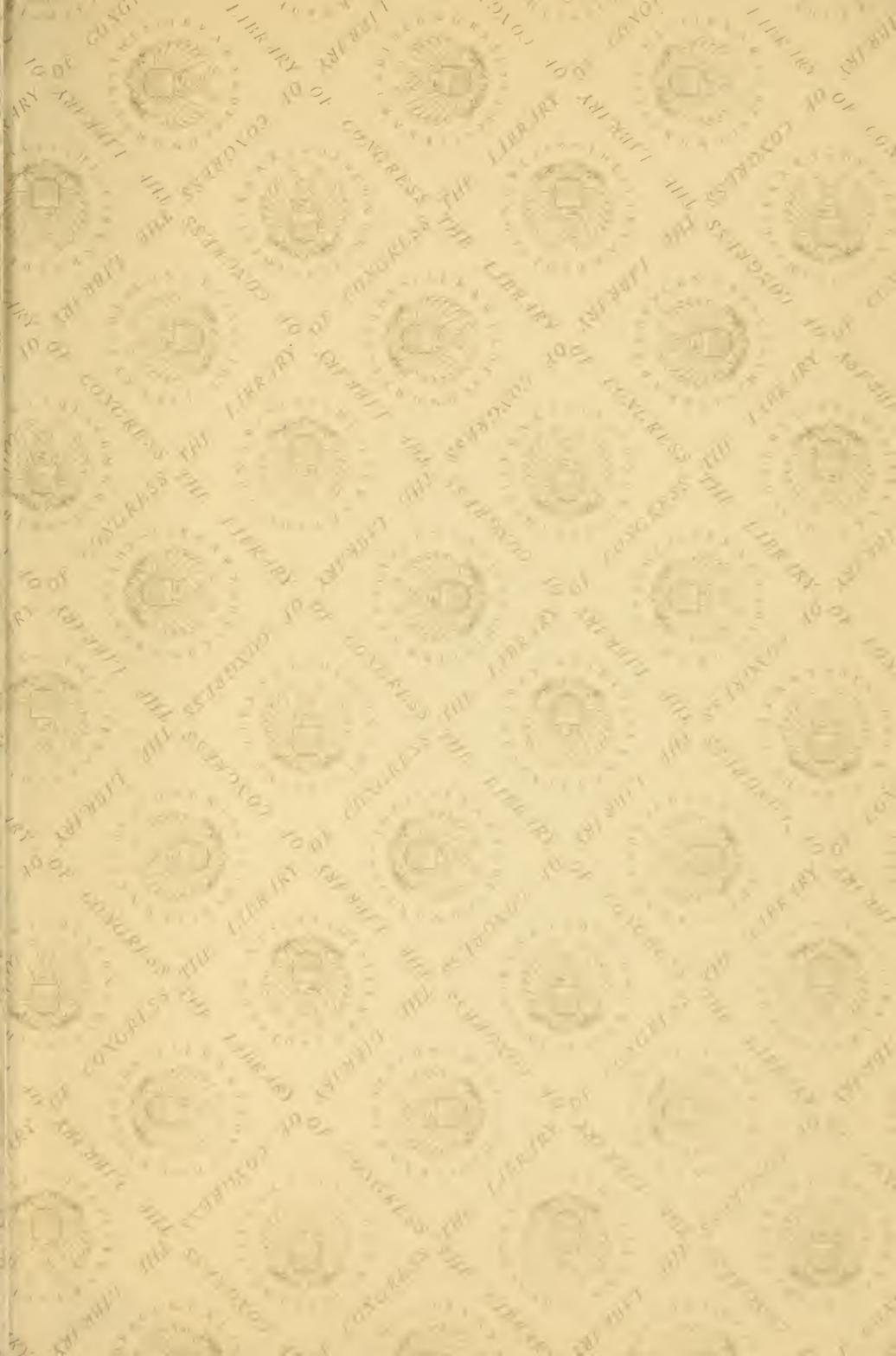




JUN 15 1904







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 566 701 9