

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

CHAPTER I.

It is my purpose, God so willing and enabling, to briefly take up some of the more modern forms of error, seeking to point out from the Word of God (avoiding abstruse theological terms, so far as possible) the special way in which these systems deny the truth which the Holy Spirit has revealed for our acceptance, as to the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, be it remembered, all fundamental error is aimed at the truth of His person and work, and is intended by its Satanic author to deter anxious souls from trusting alone in our blessed Savior for their present and final salvation. By detracting from His dignity as the "Word made flesh" they impugn the perfection of His atonement. Where there are differences of opinion that do not reflect on these great themes we may well bear with one another; but the voice of God speaks with no uncertain sound as to our responsibility where the truth as to Christ is assailed. *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine [or teaching] of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine [teaching] of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If*

there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [teaching], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 9-11) The force of the original is even stronger, for it is really, “Neither greet him; for he that greeteth him,” etc. By “the teaching” of Christ we are to understand both what He Himself taught while “in the days of His flesh,” and what the Holy Spirit later revealed concerning Him.

It is necessary therefore, before examining errors, that we should be clear as to what is really involved in the teaching, or doctrine, of Christ.

According to the Scripture, Christ Jesus is God from all eternity, the ever-living, uncreated Word (John 1:1), whose glorious title is the Son, the Creator of the world and all things, who upholds all that exists (John 1:3,10; Col. 1:13-17; Heb. 1:1-3); and because He underwent no change in all the past ages, He is of necessity “the Eternal Son” (John 1:2). “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,*” (John 3:16). He did not become the Son after He was given. He was ever that.

He became Man, the divine glory tabernacling in human flesh, God and man united in one wondrous Person—a mystery beyond our understanding, but revealed to faith by the Spirit

through the Word (I Tim. 3:16; John 1:14). As such He is Son of God in a new sense, as begotten in the Virgin's womb (Ps. 2). It was of this that the Father said, "*Thou are My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.*" He who had ever been God the Son was henceforth the Son of God as man born into the world without a human father. "*That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,*" (Luke 1:35). As man He was possessed of a spirit and soul and body. Otherwise, He would only have had the appearance of a man; but He became truly "the Man Christ Jesus," being made in all things like unto His brethren (Heb. 2:17). But He was both God and Man in one Person, and He so abides for all eternity. Being truly man, He grew in grace and in wisdom as He increased in stature; yet He was ever the Eternal Wisdom, "*the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,*" (John 1:14). That there is great mystery here, utterly beyond human comprehension, we readily confess, but faith believes what God has revealed, although reason may not be able to clearly define it.

His humanity is and ever was, from the incarnation, holy and unspotted. Sin was ever to Him abhorrent. He knew no sin, either inward or outward. Yet in infinite grace he was made sin for us on the cross, when God's judgment fell on Him

that we might be delivered from the coming wrath (Lk. 1:35; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He has been raised from the dead in the same prepared body in which he died, and now, as Man, sits in that very body, glorified, on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, God over all blessed forevermore (Heb. 2:9; 13:20; John 20:27; Acts 1:9; Heb 1:3; Rom. 9:5).

He is coming again, unchanged and unchangeable forevermore, to be revealed as the Judge of the living and dead (Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16; John 5:26-29; 1 Peter 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:1).

This is the Christ who saves. Any other is an Antichrist, and he who proclaims another is anti-christian.

In the light of these truths we shall endeavor, therefore, to examine some of these popular systems.

“‘What think ye of Christ?’ is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.”

CHAPTER II.

The answer given in the "Millennial Dawn" System or Russellism

The great controversy of the fourth century was concerning the acceptance or denial of the Eternal Sonship of Christ. Is He God the Son, eternal and uncreated? Or is He *a* son of God, generated before the worlds and begotten as man in time? Athanasius, that stalwart champion of the truth, stood firmly for the former, and Arius, the gifted and brilliant reasoner, contended for the latter. "How can a son be as old as his father?" he derisively asked and carried thousands with him, who admired his genius and had forgotten that, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." It seemed at one time that the truth was about to be lost, but in the end it triumphed, as truth always does, and today Christians still confess Christ as the eternal, uncreated Son, God over all, forever blessed; while Arianism is espoused only by heretical teachers, and endorsed by evil sects, composed of persons who have never realized the hopelessness of man's estate by nature and the grace that led the Eternal to become Man to meet the need in a way worthy of God and consistent with His righteousness.

Unfortunately, so many abstruse questions arose out of this controversy that for the next two centuries the Church was torn by metaphysical discussions of matters concerning the true nature of the incarnation, which separated even orthodox believers into warring groups, thus giving the Arians increased confidence and greater prestige, as those who should have presented a solid front to the enemy were quarreling with one another about definitions and attempted explanations of an inscrutable mystery. Some maintained that it was lowering the truth as to Christ to assert He became actually a man in all things, and contended that in Him the Logos (the Eternal Word) took the place that the human spirit does in man. This was called Apollinarianism because its chief advocate was a staunch Trinitarian named Apollinaris. Others insisted that the divine and human natures in Christ were fused into one. These were called Monophysites. Still others insisted that the two natures were so distinct, that one could act apart from the other, and were known as Nestorians. There were many other views, all alike tending to occupy believers with questions instead of with Christ Himself. But when the smoke of battle cleared away, the great outstanding truth that the Church has ever since confessed was more clearly seen than ever. In

Christ we have the one Mediator between God and man who is both Divine and human—very God of very god, yet man in all perfection. This abides the faith of the “orthodox,” that is, of those who “think straight” in accordance with Holy Scripture.

However, Arianism has never died out, but has appeared again and again in various forms throughout the centuries. In our own days there are different systems that maintain these erroneous views, such as some forms of Unitarianism and, generally speaking, all liberal theological groups that do not utterly deny the pre-existence of Jesus.

Among these Arian sects the most notorious is that of the Russellites, known as the “International Bible Students' Association.” Their doctrines are fully set forth in a set of seven books formerly called “Millennial Dawn,” but which have been so often exposed that a new edition was put forth some time since, innocently entitled “Studies in the Scriptures.” Sold at an astonishingly low price these unholy volumes are purchased by many unsuspecting Christians who are led to believe they embody truths taught in the Word of God, whereas in reality they contain deadliest error.

Briefly, the teaching of the Russellites as to

Christ is as follows: He was created by God before the worlds, but is not the Eternal Son. He was in His pre-existent state the highest spirit-being in the universe. When born on earth He ceased to be a spirit and was wholly and solely a man, though born by divine generation. He laid down His human life at the cross. His body was never resurrected but probably “dissolved away into gases.” His soul alone was raised. By virtue of His great self-abnegation He has now been promoted to the divine plane, and is now *a* God, but not *the* God.

“Pastor” Russell taught that Jesus, when on earth, was not in any sense divine, but that redemption demanded He should be only a man. He blasphemously declared, “It was not only necessary that the man Christ Jesus should die; it was just as necessary that that He should never live again, should remain dead for all Eternity.” Think of the awfulness of words like these when weighed in the light of the statements of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 15.

To state these horrible errors is to refute them. If authorities and explanations are required however, the reader is referred to *How Russellism Subverts the Faith*, by R. J. Reid and *Millennial Dawnism*, by A. J. Pollock.

This is indeed a “sect of perdition,” and its

teaching is rightly labeled “damnable heresy.”
“From such turn away.”

CHAPTER III.

The Answer of "Christian Science"

In the earliest days of Christianity, the truth of God was opposed by a system of Satanic deception known generically as Gnosticism, though divided into several warring cults.

Gnosticism was an effort to combine oriental philosophy with the doctrine of Christ. Against this evil combination parts of Colossians and John's first epistle were largely directed, and to this Paul evidently refers when he warns Timothy against "oppositions of science, falsely so-called."

The Gnostics were not all alike in their teachings. They had many sects, and differed widely in their view of Christ. According to some, the body of Jesus was not corporeal—not material—but simply an appearance, a phantasm. Christ was a divine emanation who came into the world and appeared to men as a Man, but never actually united Himself to flesh and blood. According to others Jesus was the natural son of Mary and Joseph: Christ was the divine enlightening Spirit who took possession of Him at His baptism and left Him at the cross. In one of the Gnostic Gospels—a perverted copy of Matthew—the Lord is represented as crying on the cross, "My

Power, My Power, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Christ, they declared, was deathless; Jesus only could die. They did not confess that Jesus is the Christ, and that Christ had come in the flesh. Therefore, they were anti-christian. This is what John warned the elect lady against in his second epistle. He was not warning against real Christians with imperfect views, unintelligent as to the divine mystery of the incarnation, but against enemies of the truth who taught what was utterly subversive of Christianity.

Gnosticism, as such, ceased long ago to be a power in the professing church, but the leaven is still working.

Eddyism is one of the modern Gnostic systems, identical in philosophy and equally blasphemous. It is no exaggeration to say that it denies every truth of Scripture; yet in such a way as seemingly to confess them all. Mrs. Eddy, now gone to face the *personal* God she denied on earth, was an unequalled juggler with words.

According to her, Jesus was a man like any other, but an adept Christian Science practitioner (who, however, never collected fees for His treatments) who was born in ignorance and gradually attained the knowledge that enabled Him to "demonstrate" science. Christ is pure spirit, altogether distinct from the man Jesus, though

dwelling in and controlling Him. To the eye of sense, Jesus died; but Christ could not die, and so actually, Jesus Himself did not die either, but when His materialistic disciples thought Him dead, He was alive within the tomb, “putting the seal of Eternity on time.”

This system really combines within itself both leading forms of Gnosticism. It denies the reality of matter, on the one hand, while acknowledging that Jesus was Mary's son, on the other.

But, according to Mrs. Eddy, His blood had no atoning value. She wrote, “the material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing in His veins.” And this, in the face of His own words, “*For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*” (Matt. 26:28)

Eddyism makes nothing of the blood of Jesus and denies that Christ had blood to shed! Yet the Holy Spirit speaks of “the precious blood of Christ,” and tells us that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

Nor is “Christian Science” alone in advocating and reviving Gnostic blasphemies. The so-called “New Thought” and the “Unity” teaching hold and propagate the same errors.

They all agree that Jesus and Christ are to be

distinguished and that the blood of Jesus possessed no atoning value. He did not save vicariously, but He was “the Way-shower,” not “the Way” at all, save by example!

Other errors abound, but enough have been specified to warn every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ against this unholy and blasphemous system.

The best book on the whole subject, in the writer's judgment, is Dr. I. M. Halderman's *Christian Science in the Light of Holy Scripture*.

A brief pamphlet that exposes the teaching clearly is “A Few Words on Christian Science,” by S. Ridout.

CHAPTER IV.

The Answer Given by the Seventh-day Adventists

To many people Seventh-day Adventism is simply a strange Jewish-Christian sect, composed of well-meaning, earnest people struggling under the law; failing to distinguished between the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the legal covenant; under the yoke of bondage as to meats and drinks, and particularly laying stress upon the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath memorial of the Mosaic age. But their real teachings are far more serious and erroneous than even this brief synopsis would suggest; in fact, so far astray are they as to the great fundamental truths of Christianity, that were it not for the fact that their numbers are constantly augmented by earnest people who have been brought up in the various Christian denominations and who are seeking fuller light, it is questionable whether the doctrines they preach could ever be the means of converting any soul. Mrs. Ellen G. White, their great prophetess, whose writings are put on a par with the Bible itself, was a neurotic, visionary woman, who gave forth her dreams as the veritable Word of God. She professed to receive a special revelation in regard

to what is called "The Sanctuary Theory." This, in brief, involves the amazing conception that our blessed Lord did not enter the Holiest upon His ascension to heaven, but was in the Holy Place until 1844, when, for the first time, He passed within the veil into the Holiest of all. She taught that Christ's death on the cross did not suffice to put away sin, but that by virtue of His death all who profess faith in Him have their sins transferred to the heavenly sanctuary, and that Christ is now in the sanctuary examining the books of record. Those who have proven unfaithful will have their names blotted out of the books and will eventually be annihilated, while those who have been faithful to all the light given them will be saved eternally on the new earth, and at Christ's return, their sins will be transferred to the Devil, who is pictured as the great scapegoat of the Day of Atonement, who bears these sins away into a land not inhabited. Thus he will be under the curse of them for one thousand years, dating from the rapture of the faithful to heaven, and lasting until the bringing in of the new heavens and the new earth. A weird conception truly! And not only weird but blasphemous, for little as Mrs. White and her followers seemed to realize it, it is a complete denial of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. What place is there for the doctrine

of His vicarious atonement, if Satan is at least to bear the sins of believers?

The position of Mrs. White and her followers as to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is equally unscriptural, and positively blasphemous. In years gone by, they taught unequivocally that our Lord was not eternally one with God, but in later years they seem to have accepted His eternal Sonship, though books like Uriah Smith's *Daniel* and *Revelation* are still in circulation, teaching the very opposite. But this by no means entitles them to be considered sound as to the Person of Christ, for they teach the most revolting things as to His humanity. Mrs. White, writing in *The Desire of the Ages*, says: "For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power and moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity." "Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. . . but our Savior took humanity with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation." She teaches the same thing in her early writings.

That her followers have never repudiated this, but have even added to it, is evident, for in a recent number of "The Signs of the Times" dated March 1927, L. A. Wilcox writes as follows: "In His

veins was the incubus of a tainted heredity, like a caged lion, ever seeking to break forth and destroy. . . Temptation attacked Him, where by heredity He was weakest—attacked Him in unexpected times and ways. . . in spite of bad blood and inherited meanness. . . He conquered.” In the issue for December, 1928, the same writer says: “Jesus took humanity, with all its liabilities, with all its dreadful risks of yielding to temptation.”

Many similar quotations might be given from Seventh-day Adventist writings. They all unite in proving that these misguided people have no conception whatever of the true nature of our blessed Lord's humanity. What meaning can the angel's words to Mary, “That the Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,” have to people who talk of His sin-tainted humanity? Scripture is perfectly plain: He was ever the sinless One. By the Holy Spirit's direct action His humanity was preserved from every taint of inherited sin. His temptation was not to see if He would fall, but was intended to prove that He would not, that He was the unblemished Lamb of God who, because He had never been under the yoke of sin in any sense, could redeem those who were under that yoke and set them free.

It is not only the Seventh-day Adventists who hold the blasphemous views intimated here, but

there are not wanting many Protestant preachers and teachers today who hold the same revolting conception of Christ's humanity. How little do such men realize their own desperate condition, when they can suppose that a sinful being like themselves could save them from the ruin that sin has wrought!

CHAPTER V.

The Answer Given by the Latter-day Saints, or Mormons

Of all the crude and vulgar errors as to Christ, that of the Mormons, or as they generally style themselves, the Latter-day Saints, is perhaps the worst. To what extent the laity recognize the real teaching of their leaders, I cannot say. Generally, when I have shown a Mormon what Brigham Young or some other leader had said or written on this theme, they professed utter ignorance of such doctrines and insisted that I misunderstand their “prophets.” But anyone who will take the trouble to investigate can readily see for himself the truthfulness of what is here insisted on, however it may be perverted or even flatly denied by zealous “missionaries” or their deluded followers.

The evil sect founded by Joseph Smith is divided into two main branches, with lesser divisions in some parts. These two are generally known among the “initiated” as the Brighamites and Josephites. The former are, by far, the more numerous, and embrace those who accepted the authority of Brigham Young, who seems to be the father of most of the blasphemous tenets of this

branch. The latter are the followers of the son the of the “prophet,” a second Joseph Smith, and are relatively free from the vilest errors of the Brighamites, but believe in salvation by baptism, the inspiration of Joseph Smith the prophet, the utter rejection by God of Christendom, and hope only in the Re-organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because of their refusal of the abominable practice of polygamy they are generally looked upon more favorably than the Utah Mormons; but both systems completely deny many foundational truths of Scripture.

In fact, the Josephites are, in some respects, more difficult to deal with than the Brighamites, because they refuse to listen to any ordinary version of the Scriptures, basing their teaching on what they call the “Inspired Translation of the New Testament,” supposed to have been divinely given to the prophet Joseph. This perversion of the Word of God is so utterly unbelievable that it is repudiated by all who know anything of the original Greek as a clumsy forgery.

It is with the Christology of the main branch we have now to do, however; so I shall not attempt further to point out the unholy teachings of the lesser sect, only warning any meeting them to beware of their smooth, plausible statements as the elders of both branches of Latter-day Saints

are past-masters in the art of using speech to conceal thought.

Brigham Young taught that Christ was the natural son of Mary and Adam, after the latter had been exalted to become the God of this world—to use his own awful language, “Our God and Father, the only God and Father with whom we have to do.” Parley Pratt says of him, “Our Father Adam shall sit (in the millennium) enthroned as the Ancient of Days,” and then Christ Jesus is his son and heir.

Those arch-heretics teach that Christ (may he forgive the words) was a polygamist, wedded at Cana of Galilee to Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and later to Mary Magdalene. They further hold that He was simply a superior man who, by His devotion and faithfulness in His generation, was exalted to Deity and is now a God, second in glory to Adam. They believe in a vast number of gods, all of whom were once men. A favorite saying is, “As man is, God once was. As God is, all men may yet become.”

Christ's death is said to have made atonement for Adam's sin, though Adam's sin is in itself considered a voluntary humiliation for our sake. “Adam sinned that men might be,” is one of their proverbs.

Since Christ's death has balanced the sin of

Adam, all men are now free to save themselves by repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of an elder's hands, and complete submission to the authorities of the Mormon church, a tyrannical hierarchy that has only been outdone by that of Rome.

Needless to say, love for Christ is unknown among those fully given up to this doctrine of demons. It throttles all spiritual discernment and makes its dupes sensual and materialistic to the last degree.

When the Mormon elder offers the declaration of faith which they circulate so widely among the "Gentiles" (as all but Mormons are called), it is well to remember that this statement was prepared for proselytizing purposes, and is not a full account of the doctrines of this weird sect. To find these, it is necessary to read *The Book of Mormon*, *The Doctrines and Covenants*, *The Book of Abraham*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*. Extracts, however, are available in tract form which show the true nature of this system and prove its anti-christian character, "From such, turn away!"

APPENDIX

Other sects and cults there are, too numerous to mention, but their peculiar attitude toward the Person of the Lord and His redemptive work betrays their Satanic origin. However, in the forgoing pages nearly every heresy as to Christ that has vexed the Church is indicated. It does not seem necessary to go into all their varied ramifications as linked with different modern systems of error. Enough has been put forth, I trust, to guard the minds of honest seekers after light from what would only pervert the gospel and rob Christ of His glory.