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Holiness Writers

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

By

I. C. Mathis

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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By

I. C. Mathis, Evangelist

Author of
"If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?"

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DEDICATORY

To her who was willing to go down into the valley of the shadow that I might have life; whose love has been unchanging; whose prayers for me have been unceasing, I dedicate this booklet — to my MOTHER.

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INTRODUCTION

The world has never had a greater appreciation for Jesus Christ than today. During recent years books giving an account of the life of Jesus have been among the "best sellers." The public at large seems to have a renewed interest in this great character. There seems to be a desire to know the Jesus who lived among men over nineteen hundred years ago, whose heart throbbed with compassion for the multitude as sheep without a shepherd, whose chief concern seemed to be the lifting of the fallen and relieving of the oppressed, and whose teachings and life have meant so much to the world. On the other hand there seems to be a growing disgust on the part of the public for the Jesus around whom the church has heaped numerous traditions and whose real beauty and power have been hidden under a mass of man made doctrines and customs. There is still the call from the hearts of sincere inquirers, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." They call for The Unchanging Christ. The Christ who still has a feeling of compassion for the needy. The Christ whose chief concern is still the salvation of men and the relieving of the oppressed. The Christ who is today "this dark world's light." The Christ who can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. Such a Christ is presented in this book.

This is a day when the failure of human institutions and the insecurity of what has been considered firm investments is very apparent. The individual who has trusted these finds himself adrift and is casting about for a more secure foundation. But towering high above the failing human institutions and crumbling foundations is The Unchanging Christ. It is the duty and privilege of the church to guide these discouraged souls to Christ who is the secure, eternal Rock of Ages. This is the object of this book. If one will carefully read these pages he will have his appreciation for The Unchanging Christ increased; he will get a greater vision of what he may find in this Christ as Savior and Guide; and he will be drawn to a greater dependence upon Him as the true security of his life.

Rev. I. C. Mathis, the writer of this book, is a student of the Word. He has been a successful pastor and evangelist. In his ministry he has so magnified this Christ that many hearts have been drawn to Him and others have been inspired to a closer walk with Him.

We recommend this booklet to the reading public. May you ever find in this unchanging Christ all that your soul needs, may your appreciation of Him and His relationship to your heart be increased by the reading of this book, and may you truly realize Him to be "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

D. SHELBY CORLETT

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THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

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CHAPTER I WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" Matt. 22:42.

It will not be disputed that some nineteen hundred years ago, when Augustus Caesar was emperor of Rome and Herod was Governor of Judea, a remarkable person appeared whose life and teachings were altogether different from the great teachers and philosophers of His day. I say it will not be disputed, for His name and history are easily traced throughout all times down to the present — traced not only by friendly but unfriendly historians as well. Even profane history establishes the history of Christ as certainly as it does that of Caesar, Plato, Cicero, Pliny or any other great character. Foolish indeed would be the man that would deny the advent and actual existence of Christ. His life has been written in hundreds of languages. It is in all libraries. Probably there are over fifty times as many biographies of Jesus as of any other great world character.

"And now for nineteen hundred years the world has been sitting as a jury on the case of Jesus Christ. Consciously or unconsciously, every soul who lives, or has lived, has brought the lowly Nazarene before his judgment seat, and either fairly or unfairly, tried the Christ before his tribunal. The verdict has always been and will always be according to the spirit of the judge." I want us to come today with open minds and devout hearts and study the words of the Master Himself when He asked the Pharisees who had gathered around Him the question, "What think ye of Christ?" Much depends upon the answer we give to this question.

FIRST: WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST, THE MAN?

It is always a satisfaction to me to know that Jesus Christ was a man. He walked, breathed, talked, ate, drank, slept, grew Weary, felt pain, died; He was a man. He loved as a man. He loved His disciples. "He loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." His great love for His Disciples is shown by the fact that just before He left them, "In His valedictory address in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel, He spread a plaster for every sore and gave a medicine for every disease, so that until the end of time no disciple of His should ever lack just what he should need of comfort and help." As a man He knows our frailties, our weaknesses, our temptations, and He is able to strengthen and help us in all the difficult and vexing problems of life. Thank God!

Then His love for His mother was characteristic of a true man. How He loved her! When He was hanging on a cross between two thieves, He looked upon her and saw her mother heart writhing in agony, and He said to John the beloved, "She is your mother;" and to her, "He is your son." And we are told in the Bible that, "From that hour John took her to his home."

But Jesus Christ was not only man, but the most remarkable man of whom human history has made any record. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Newton, Columbus, Washington, Lincoln, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson and all other great men of every age sink into insignificance when compared to Jesus Christ. He is the greatest reformer, evangelist, preacher, teacher, physician and philosopher the world has ever seen.

Notice the peerless intellect of Jesus. He answered with perfect wisdom the most puzzling questions propounded to Him. You remember that the Pharisees and Church lawyers laid a plan to trap Him. The plot was well laid. They had studied it out to every detail. They came to Him and said, "Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or no?" Now they feel sure they have Him. He will have to say "yes" or "no". If He says "yes" He is the enemy of Judea and of the Jews; if He says "no" He is the enemy of Caesar; that will be treason, and Caesar will put Him to death for this great crime. But Jesus says "show me a penny." The coin is placed in His hand and He asks, "Whose image and superscription is this?" The answer is "Caesar's." Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." And there has never been a wiser, shrewder answer in all history.

Then when I see the effects of His life and work in the world I see that he is indeed the peerless one of mankind. He was a despised and rejected member of a despised and rejected race. He gathered around Him a hand full of, for the most part, ignorant followers, who had neither money, learning, social prestige, nor political influence, and yet at His command these and subsequent followers of His have spread His name and teachings until today the followers of Christ are numbered by the millions.

Let us notice what some of the greatest thinkers of all times have said about Jesus. Thomas McIntyre Cooley, eminent jurist and lecturer on constitutional law of the nineteenth century said: "I regard Jesus of Nazareth as having done more to advance civilization, and to influence beneficially the history of the world, than any other historical character." Fichte, the atheist said: "Christ did more than all philosophers in bringing heavenly morality into the hearts and homes of men. Until the end of time all the sensible will bow before this Jesus of Nazareth, and all will humbly acknowledge the exceeding glory of this great phenomenon. His followers are nations and generations."

We could multiply these citations but will call your attention to only a few more. Let us notice two of the greatest men of letters of the nineteenth century, or perhaps of any other century, Goethe and Carlyle. Goethe said of Christ: "That Holy One, the model of humanity." Carlyle said of Him: "His life was a perfect poem." And toward the close of his book on "Heroes and Hero Worship," after going up and down the ages to find the greatest characters whom he describes as the heroes of the world, he solemnly says: "The greatest of all heroes shall be nameless here; let sacred silence meditate that sacred matter."

Then a brilliant American, Benjamin Franklin, said: "As to Jesus of Nazareth I think His system of morals, as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see."

Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France said: "Everything in Christ astounds me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whosoever else in the world there is

no possible term of comparison; He is truly a being by Himself." Surely we can all join with these in saying: "He is the perfect flower of humanity."

The millions of earth have not all come forward to the mourners' bench and been converted, but they do all unite in saying that Jesus Christ was the most outstanding character that the world has ever seen. He is the greatest man that ever trod the black dirt of this planet.

II

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST, THE DIVINE SON OF GOD?

In Matt. 16:13-17 we read that "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, some say thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus Christ was man but He was more than man. He is the God-man. Modernism and infidelity have ransacked the world for evidence to try and prove that Jesus was not divine, that He was not the Son of God. Everywhere they have searched for evidence against the divinity of this divine emancipator of a fallen race. But in spite of it all, Jesus Christ stands out today as the most unique and dynamic character in the world's history. Yes, He was more than man, He is the God-man.

There are six great outstanding and I believe unanswerable arguments for the divinity of Christ. 1. His Divine conception. 2. The Divine life He lived. 3. The Divine words He uttered. 4. The Divine works He wrought. 5. His resurrection from the dead. 6. His influence upon all subsequent history.

Edward W. Bok, Editor of the Ladies Home Journal, made the following statement in regard to Jesus Christ in the September, 1894 issue of that magazine: "There are myriads of people on this earth who believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ; people of the finest minds and the greatest learning. It is not a mark of intelligence to question Divine things. No one who studies the life of Christ can fail to believe that in Him the world had a being unlike any other man, and His own teaching, His own words, His own life are the best proofs of His Divinity."

Napoleon, astounded at the prevailing interest of humanity in Jesus Christ exclaimed: "Caesar is dead and forgotten, Romulus is dead and forgotten, Alexander is dead and forgotten, I shall soon be dead and forgotten, but this man Jesus, the longer He is dead, the more will people hear of Him, and the more will people follow Him. I know man. I have marshaled man on many a battle field, but Jesus Christ is more than man."

We have many witnesses to the Divinity of Christ if we had time to bring them all up. We could begin with prophecy and hear it speak hundreds of years before He was born. Even the place of His birth was designated by prophecy. One of the old prophets in his writings named the very birth-place of Christ in the following words: "And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor who shall rule my people, Israel."

Then we not only have the testimony of singing angels, but even the devils testified that He was the Son of God. And I am glad that today across this great country of ours, from the rough rocky coasts of New England to the sunny shores of California, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf there are multiplied thousands that would be glad to take this platform and testify to the fact that they know He is Divine.

Josephus, the Hebrew Historian, in arranging the events which marked the ten years procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, says: "Now there was about this time, Jesus a wise man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the Divine prophets had foretold these and thousands of other wonderful things concerning Him."

When men attack the Divinity of Christ, they attack the very foundation stone of Christianity. Unless Jesus was the supernatural, Divine Son of God, then the Bible is a myth and not to be trusted, Christianity a farce, and its followers fools; yea, "We are of all men most miserable." But why consider for a moment even, this dark, dismal, and hopeless picture, for we have a Divine Christ who is alive forevermore! Praise His name!

If you see Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus, or seeking food from the barren fig tree, or sleeping in the ship, praying on the mountain; or preaching to the people, you will perhaps only see Him as a great man. But if you will see Him as he raises the dead, or as He distributes the five loaves and two fishes to feed the five thousand, or walking upon the waves, or healing the halt and the blind, you will see the work of the mighty God. Well might the admiring apostle say, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Behold Him in the garden, agonizing, until His sweat became as it were, great drops of blood! Hear Him crying, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done!" Look yonder to Calvary! See Him bearing His own cross to the place of execution! There while the rabble about the cross hiss and mock His dying groans, He receives the curse of the law in His own body and dies in our stead. The veil of the Temple was rent in twain; the earth quaked, the rocks rent. The graves of many were opened and the sun refused to shine. But in that dark hour a voice was heard saying, "It is finished." The soldier pierced His side and a flood of Divine efficacy gushed forth, flowing back to the first transgression, and forward to the end of time, meeting the need of every guilty son and daughter of Adam's race.

But His body was taken from the cross and laid in the sepulcher; the stone at its mouth was sealed; a guard of soldiers was placed about the tomb, for His enemies remembered that He had said He would "Rise again." The disciples were scattered. The powers of darkness seemed to enjoy a short triumph. But on the third morning as the day began to dawn, "The angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." The keepers became as dead men; the pale monarch of the tomb could no longer hold his victim; the Lord of Glory burst asunder the bands of death and

came forth a mighty conqueror over death, hell and the grave. He showed Himself to His disciples; He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that He was seen of above five thousand brethren at one time. After forty days He led them out to Bethany; and as He lifted up His hands to bless them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven where He sits today at the right hand of the Father on the throne making intercession for all His children. Thank God, we have a Divine Christ!

III WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST, THE SAVIOR?

He is the world's only Saviour. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour." The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," said Jesus. Peter said, "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Why did He leave a holy heaven for a sinful world; the songs of angels for the temptations of devils; the throne of glory for a cross of agony? It was to be a Saviour for a lost world. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." There is no other substitute for salvation. Jesus Christ alone can save. Efforts have been made to substitute other agencies, but all have failed. There are those who would set at naught the chief corner stone of our salvation. They would substitute principles and examples, science and philosophy, mental learning and human culture, but all these fail to save man from sin. These will embellish the outward life but they leave the soul untouched and unsaved.

"The statesman may assume that human government is the balm of Gilead for the world's woes, yet all history demonstrates that this theory is wrong. It may restrain and protect but it will not transform the heart. Laws may dictate and control but they will not save from sin." "One form of government may be better than another form, but all are inadequate to purge the heart of man from the power and pollution of sin."

"The educator may claim a universal system of education as the remedy for vice and sin. He may set self culture as the chief glory of man. But what about the golden age of Greece? What about the intellectual culture of India? Has not education been tested as far as salvation is concerned? Vice has often existed in the midst of communities where the highest honor was paid to intellectual culture. Knowledge may admit us to the secrets of nature, enable us to make the rocks, the plants and planets our companions, but this knowledge will not regenerate the heart. Did wisdom save Solomon from vice? Did culture save Byron from immorality? Did philosophy save Bacon from bribery? Did poetry save Poe from intemperance? Were the Athenians free from vice? Culture attained such heights in Athens that the great scholars of the world flocked thither, yet the Athenians were corrupt at heart, as history will prove and needed a Saviour to save them from sin.

The benefactor may lay claim to philanthropy as the efficient remedy for vice. And we are sure that well directed charity will help to improve the general condition of humanity, but it will not save from sin.

But though all else fail, thank God, there is salvation in Jesus Christ. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. "He came to save from sin, from its power, its guilt, its pollution, and its penalty." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse from all unrighteousness." Praise God! In Jesus there is a remedy for our sins.

"What think ye of Christ?" Suppose we could call up John the Baptist and Say, "What think ye of Christ?" We would hear him say, "I saw and bare record that this is the son of God." John, beloved apostle, what thinkest thou of Christ? We hear him say, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Paul what thinkest thou of Christ? And we hear this old hero apostle say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." John Wesley what thinkest thou of Christ? And from his dying bed he answers, "I, the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me." Toplady, what thinkest thou of Christ? And he sings the answer back to us,

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

Charles Wesley, what thinkest thou of Christ? The sweet singer of Methodism answers,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find."

Then let us all join in with Perronet and sing,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all."

What is Christ to you today, my friend? Is He your personal Saviour? If not will you at this moment yield yourself unto Him, trusting in the merit of His shed blood to wash away your sins? May God's richest blessing be upon you. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen."

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

By

I. C. Mathis, Evangelist

CHAPTER II THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Heb. 13:8

We live in a world of change. And because of this fact, this verse has a peculiar interest attached to it. Here we read of one who never changes. We know that nature changes; we never see the same clouds twice; the sky is always different. We live in a beautiful world. There are mountains of eternal snow and deserts of eternal sand. The earth is covered with a carpet of verdant green embroidered with beautiful flowers. The sky is sun-kissed and starlit. God has painted the plumage of the birds and tinted the golden sunsets of the west. He has given the music to the babbling brook and the roar to the waves of the ocean. The flowers of the field are His priests, lifting up their heads, with their sweet fragrance, like incense to the skies. Beautiful as the world is, however, it is ever changing.

Nations also are changing. Call the roll of history for a moment: Egypt, supposed to have seen the morning generation of man, where art thou? And echo answers, — Where? Assyria, once a world power, where art thou? And the echo comes back from the dim centuries, — where? Greece, thou great home of the intellect, where art thou? And the whisper of time bears the echo, — where?

Today China is divided and torn, while the world war has changed many national boundary lines. Look at a map of Europe twenty years old; you can see nations marked upon it that were world powers, where are they today?

Science changes. One day the scientists teach one thing, the next, something else. A scientific textbook ten years old is scarcely worth reading today. Yet there are thousands of men who pin their faith to an ever-changing science and reject an unchanging Christ.

Biologists say our bodies change every seven years, and some of us, when we look into the mirror, wish that the change was more apparent. But somehow the change does not seem to go that far.

Yes, it is true that we live in a world of change. Our bodies, friends, families all change; nations rise and fall; nature changes as the years go by. How comforting it is then, to read in the midst of all these changes, "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and today, and forever." Yesterday denotes eternity past; today designates the present; forever points to eternity future. In these three states Christ is declared to be the same.

I

CHRIST IS UNCHANGING IN HIS ATTRIBUTES

He is ever the same in His attributes. He is unchanging in His omnipresence, His omniscience, and His omnipotence. These are necessary attributes. He can no more dispense with them than He

can with His being. They are His "Yesterday, and today, and forever." He is infinitely and unchangeably holy. No one attribute of Christ will ever change!

II

CHRIST IS UNCHANGING IN HIS CHARACTER

His character is as clear as crystal and as bright as the morning sun. You remember Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him." Call to mind the name of any great man of history. In nine cases out of ten you will find that there is something wrong with his character, disposition or judgment. But no one ever convicted Jesus of fault or sin. He never had to repent of anything He did, nor apologize for anything He said His character has stood the test of nineteen hundred years and, today, there is not one way in which it could be changed for the better. And, no man has ever been able to change it for the worse. Where are the men who have tried to tear down the character of Jesus Christ?

Where is Voltaire, the scoffing French infidel? Voltaire said the name of Christ would be extinct within one hundred years. But is it so? Where is Tom Paine, who wrote *THE AGE OF REASON*? Where is Robert Ingersoll? These men shone largely because of their friction with Christ and truth. You look up to the heavens on a starry night, and you see a meteor dart across the heavens and disappear. What made that meteor shine? Not its inherent light, for it has none. But its friction with the atmosphere of the earth caused it to shine. It shines because it is rushing toward destruction. These men shine largely because of their friction with Christ and the truth, and that friction means their own destruction. "Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

And so it has been with every man who has ever attacked the Son of God. He had all of other men's virtues and none of their vices. He is the one matchless character of all time. He has been called, "The holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Thank God, the character of Jesus Christ is unchanging and durable. He is through perpetual ages invariably the same. He is not affected by the changes of time or the revolutions of the kingdoms of this world. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last. When the sun has burned herself into a cinder and wanders off through limitless space, lost to our universe, Jesus Christ will be the same. When all the earthly kingdoms have toppled from their thrones, He will still be the unchanging Christ. When the stars slip from their silvery sockets and shine no more, His character will still be unchanged and as bright as the morning sun.

III

CHRIST IS UNCHANGING IN HIS POWER

At one time it seemed that Caesar had all power. But his power was limited. At one time it seemed that Alexander the great had all power. An almost irresistible army moved unquestioning at his bidding. But his power also, was limited. But Jesus Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

On a number of different occasions during the earthly life of our Lord we see this power manifested. On a certain occasion when there was a hungry multitude around Him, Jesus asked, "Is there any food here?" And His disciples answered and said, "A lad with a few loaves and fishes, but what is that among so many?" In their hands it WAS as nothing, but in HIS hands it proved to be everything. He said, "Bring them hither to me. And He commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass, and took the five loaves, and two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake it and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."

You will recall, also, the time He went to the grave of Lazarus, who had been dead four days. Jesus ordered the stone taken away and cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" It has been suggested that it was well that Jesus designated Lazarus, for if He had just called, "Come forth!" perhaps all the dead would have responded to His call. Notwithstanding Lazarus had been dead four days and his body was beginning to decay, life surges and throbs through his being and he walks forth.

On one occasion when Christ was tired from the toils of the day, preaching, teaching and healing the people, He gave orders to His disciples to embark and pass over on the other side of the sea of Galilee. He retired to the hinder part of the ship and is soon fast asleep. And we are told that storms arise more quickly on the sea of Galilee than almost any place else on earth. Soon the heavens grow dark. The lurid lightning begins to flash; the thunders crash, and the storm is upon them. It looks like the boat will surely go down. Those fishermen — disciples who had been sailing that little sea all their lives, and though familiar with the freaks of the weather, accustomed to the dangers of the deep, lost their courage and almost their faith, and rushing to the stern of the ship where Christ was asleep they cried, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus arose and stood in the little storm-tossed vessel, looked up to the warring elements, and says, "Peace, be still." And the winds and the waves fell silent at His feet.

Then we see Him speaking to the man with a withered hand and the afflicted one is able to stretch forth his hand, "And it was restored whole, like as the other." He unstops the deaf ear and heals the blind eye. He "Went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." Yes, diseased nature bowed to Him; unclean leprosy fled from Him, and when He spake even the dead came back to life. He proved by His many miraculous works, that the statement, "All Power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," was true.

"But," someone says, "That is the power He had yesterday, when He walked upon earth; the question is, has He the same power today?" Yes, thank God! In this He is "The same yesterday, and today, and forever." He can save, sanctify and heal today as He did when He walked by the shores of Galilee. Praise God! I am not afraid to trust my soul to such a wonderful Saviour! With His wonderful power He will keep me "Till rivers roll their waters at my feet." And then, thank God, He will bear me safely over the river of death. With the apostle Paul "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

IV CHRIST IS UNCHANGING IN HIS LOVE.

Christ is the eternal one. He is from everlasting to everlasting. His love is eternal. None can fathom the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height," of the love of Christ. But as we turn to the cross we see His great love for us manifested. Spiked to the cruel instrument of torture and death, with a hissing, jeering, rabble insulting His dying groans, He pours out His life blood for our redemption. The grandest revelation of love is by action. And when I see the Christ dying on the cross for me I get a revelation of His great love.

But even better than this, I am glad that the love of Christ can be known as an experience of transforming power. We can have this love, "Shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." This love can transform a poor sinner and make him "a new creature." The things that he once loved he will then hate, and the things that he once hated he will then love.

Now, in this connection the words of my text are of great encouragement to me. Since He is, "The same yesterday, and today, and forever," I know that He is unchanging in His love for me. He will love me always even unto the end. How this thought captivates my heart and thrills my soul! Human love may fail, but His love will never fail!

I have read a very touching story of George Matheson. He was studying for the ministry in Scotland. Suddenly his eyesight began to fail him. He went to one specialist after another, each of whom told him that within six months he would become totally blind. He was engaged to be married to a young lady in the community in which he lived. He went to her and told her his story, and on account of his approaching blindness, offered to release her from the engagement. She accepted the release and married his dearest friend. He was invited to the ceremony, and he went. With fast dimming eyes he watched the girl he loved married to the man he had called his friend.

He went home from the wedding a broken man. He sat down in his little room and began to think. What was there to live for? Love gone, hope gone, and eyesight rapidly going. Then as he lifted his heart toward heaven he realized that Christ was still with him. Dropping on his knees, he said, "Oh Christ, thy love will never let me go." And it never did. For fifty years his soul was anchored in that love. He was known the world over as the blind preacher of Scotland. Praise the name of our risen Lord! He is one that never forsakes us. His love is unchanging.

"O, Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

"His love never knows any change,
Praise His wonderful name;
He is always the same
His love never knows any change."

V CHRIST IS UNCHANGING IN HIS PROMISES

Christ has said that heaven and earth may pass away, but that His word shall not pass away. All His promises, both to the good and the evil, will be fulfilled with showers of blessings or in storms of wrath. But I especially want to notice His promises to His own.

To those who have left all to follow Him He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." When the battles of life surge about us, or the storms of temptation and doubt swoop down upon our frail bark, here is a promise that will anchor our souls. This promise was made to His disciples one day in the long ago, but it is as unchanging as the Christ Himself. He has promised not to let the devil tempt us above that which we are able to bear. I am glad that there is one that can limit the temptations of the evil one. Praise God! This promise cheers me when the tempter comes and sorely tests my soul. I know that there is one who will not let him tempt me above that which I am able to bear.

Then He has promised to come for me some day, that where He is there I may be also. Thank God, this promise will be fulfilled. He is coming back again! He has gone to prepare a mansion for me and He said, "If I go I will come again." He went away and He is coming again.

It is said that an ancestor of Lord Salisbury once went into a little Welsh fishing village, and there passed for a poor and struggling artist. The people in the village never questioned his story. After he had won their confidence, he fell in love with the daughter of one of the fisher-folk, and whispered his tale of love into her ear. She, believing him to be a poor artist, listened to his declaration of love and accepted him. The pair were married, and shortly afterwards the husband suggested that they go and visit some works of art at a country place in Northamptonshire. She, thinking he had some friends who had invited him to come and visit their art gallery, consented. When they arrived at the little village and got out of the train, the ex-fisher-girl was amazed to see a beautiful carriage awaiting them. The young husband seemed cool and collected, but the poor girl had never ridden in anything like that before. Her husband helped her into the carriage and sat beside her as it was driven up a country lane into the drive of a magnificent English estate. The carriage stopped in front of an old English castle. The young man calmly helped his fisher-girl wife out of the carriage and as she stood looking around in awe and astonishment, the door of the castle opened, and a white-haired, liveried servant appeared, bearing in his hands a cushion, and on it some keys. With great dignity he walked down the steps to where the poor little Welsh girl stood. Kneeling at her feet he held up the cushion and said, "My lady, the keys of the Castle." Then it dawned upon her that her husband was a lord, and that she was a lady.

One day the lowly Nazarene came and whispered His love into my heart. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," He said. His love captivated my heart, and I loved Him because He first loved me. Now I belong to Him, and I have learned that He is the heir of an almighty kingdom. He has promised me that one day He will bring me to His Father's mansion, and I shall sit with Him at His

banqueting table. There I shall share in the splendor of His coronation. Thank the Lord, this promise will never fail. I am so glad today that we have an unchanging Christ.

"Jesus, O how sweet the name,
Jesus, every day the same."

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

By

I. C. Mathis, Evangelist

CHAPTER III THE ALL SUFFICIENT CHRIST

Text: "Christ is all and in all." Colossians 3:11.

The great problem of the ages has been, how to regulate the world and lift it to the highest plane of being. In the effort to solve this problem and meet the needs of humanity, various systems of ethical teachings have been promulgated from time to time. These systems, in their failure to accomplish their ends, have been succeeded and often supplanted by others, which have again failed in their turn. Thus humanity has been waiting for a system, a person or a power that will enable them to rise to the plane of highest being and inward happiness.

There have been a number of great teachers who purposed to bring us to this desired haven. Socrates taught psychology, or the philosophy of the human mind. His motto was, "Know thyself." Aristotle taught ethics and metaphysics, as the art of living and happiness. Confucius taught morals, while Mohammed taught war, sensuality, and compulsory subjugation to himself and God. But Paul says, "we preach Christ." Not science or philosophy, not mere ethics, but Christ. But, that comprehends everything.

Christianity is nothing without Christ. It is Christ. Other systems are independent of their founders; that is, they are just as potent without the name of their founder as with it. The method and teaching of Socrates or Plato would be worth just as much if the names of those men and their personal history had been entirely forgotten by the world. Very little of them is known at best. But Christianity is nothing without Christ. "Christ is all, and in all." He is sufficient for our every need.

I

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE CIVILIZATION OF THE NATIONS

Nations rise in civilization and in the arts and sciences in proportion as they rise in their conceptions of God. No nation ever rises above its conceptions of Deity. All history attests this fact. Some one said, "Tell me the character of a nation's god, and I will tell you the character of her people."

God in Christ furnishes the grandest conceptions of Deity the world has ever had. Natural religion never revealed the infinite tender love of the Divine Father as it is revealed in Christ. It never revealed the absolute holiness and justice of the Divine Being as it is seen in the character and atonement of Christ. It is a law of ethics that the religion that exalts God most, lifts man the highest. No religion ever exalted God in the conceptions of man as the Christian religion has done. No religion ever taught the moral obligations that the Christian religion does.

No nation or people has ever risen to an exalted plane — either politically, socially, or morally, without exalted ideas of the Divine Being. And it is also true that no nation has ever reached a high plane, or had exalted ideas of God, under any other religion, than the Christian religion. On the other hand, no nation of people have ever accepted the Christian religion, who have not been lifted thereby to a plane above the nations around them that were not Christian. Where the standard of the cross is lifted in any land, civilization goes up. A brief comparison of the nations that are Christian with those that are not Christian, will satisfy any one of the truth of this proposition. Christ is sufficient for the civilization of the world.

II

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT AS AN IDEAL OF PERFECT MANHOOD

Christ is the world's ideal of excellence. There seems to be in the mind of every one some ideal of perfection. But your ideal is not in yourself. You are not satisfied with your own attainments. It is not in any one you ever saw; it is not in any one you ever heard or read of, except Christ.

Christ is the ideal of all nations alike. He answers the grandest conceptions of the human mind. He was not only the grandest character who ever lived, but He is the grandest character possible to the conceptions of man. We can conceive of nothing loftier than is represented in Christ. He was grand alike in the loftiness of His mental and moral conceptions, in simplicity, in tenderness and in humanity. He combined the highest moral precepts with the purest and most unselfish life. He is the admiration of all nations. As a pattern of the highest excellence, He stands unrivaled and alone. Even unbelievers concede the beauty of His character to be unsurpassed in the annals of the race.

The entire life of Christ was given for others. His whole "self" seemed to be lost in the all-absorbing desire for the welfare of the world. Has the world ever dreamed of a higher ideal than that? Surely He is God's supply for the universal want of a perfect pattern of goodness. And in following this ideal, man has attained his highest degree of excellence in all that is great and good.

Take the ideal of Christ out of the world, and you take away the prop that supports man in the hours of trial; you sever the tie of society, rob the dying of their comfort, plunder the sacred chambers of the heart, and deprive the race of its highest ideal of excellence.

III

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT AS A SAVIOUR

Various ethical systems and teachers have failed in their endeavors to uplift man, because they have failed to reach the fountain-head of our trouble, namely, sin in the heart. They could not save men from their sins. Christ is the only one who can regenerate the heart. He is the only one who can bring God into the human heart, thus giving man a power within himself whereby he may be victorious.

The angel said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." This is what the world wants most in every age and every land. The great cry of the ages is for the deliverance from the power of sin. From the forests of Africa, from the jungles of India, from the

great empire of China, from the highlands of Europe, and from the ice-bound coasts of the north, the cry is going up to heaven for salvation from sin. Back through the ages past this cry is heard, even to the very gates of Eden, when Abel offered his sacrifice as an atonement for his sins. Is there no supply for this want, is there nothing to fill this great void in the human heart? Yes, in Christ Jesus. But Jesus Christ alone meets this great need of the human heart and brings into our soul the consciousness of pardoned sin and the joy of a peaceful conscience. He begins at the heart, and purifies the fountain of the thoughts and acts. His teaching is that, "Except a man be begotten from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He alone can impart this new life, and pour the healing oil into the fountain of human thoughts. "Christ is all, and in all" as a Saviour. He is sufficient for every sin. He can meet our every need. Praise God!

IV

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT DURING THE TIME OF TEMPTATION

You will remember that after Christ had been baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, and the Spirit had come upon Him in the form of a dove, and the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of God, that Christ went into the mountains to fast and pray. After forty days of fasting and prayer the devil comes and tempts Him. He was perfect and Holy, the Divine Son of God, and yet, He was tempted. That settles the fact of our temptation. If Christ was tempted by the devil we will not escape, for the servant is not above his Lord in this. Pure though our hearts may be, and dedicated to God though our lives are, yet we will nevertheless be tempted.

But we are glad that there is one that is sufficient for us in every hour of temptation. Every temptation that the devil brought to Christ was beaten back and defeated by Christ. "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, that He might be able to succor those that are tempted." Thank God there is one who is sufficient for us in the darkest hour of temptation. He "Will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape." Thank the Lord!

We are told that on one occasion Napoleon ordered a coat of mail made. And when he went to get it he was not quite sure that it was impenetrable, so he said to the manufacturer, "Put it on yourself and let me try it." Then with shot after shot from his own pistol he found out that it was all that it was pretended to be. I am glad, thank God, that there is a coat of mail for each of us, and no fiery dart of the enemy can ever penetrate it. Christ is sufficient in temptation.

V

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE COMFORTING OF THE SORROWING AND SUFFERING

This world is full of woes. There are pains, and heartaches, bereavements and sorrows, disappointments and sadness. Man needs a friend who will ever stand by him in these times of darkness and trial. He needs some balm to soothe these aches and sorrows, and heal his wounded heart. Where can he find it but in Christ? No other heart ever beats so close to ours in times of deepest anguish as His. Not even the heart of a wife or mother can get so close to ours in suffering and sorrow as Christ's. Your wife may stand by your bedside in sickness, and bathe your fevered

hands or wipe the clammy sweat from your brow, and stoop and plant the kiss of affection On your cheek; but she can never come into your heart in the midnight hour and whisper words of peace and comfort as Jesus can. He is the one who meets the need of the sorrowing suffering heart. "In sorrow He is our comfort, in trouble He is our stay."

"O Thou who driest the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to thee.

The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.

But Christ can heal the broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

O who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not His wing of love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom,
Our peace-branch from above.

Then sorrow, touched by Him, grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

VI

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT IN THE HOUR OF DEATH

Man is the only creature that, "Through fear of death, is all his lifetime subject to bondage." The last and greatest enemy of man is death. Death is the great enemy he has had to dread in every age. From the beginning of the race he has sought to find some way to bridge the dark river, and extract the sting from this last dreaded foe. Christ Himself died "That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Varied and vain have been the efforts on the part of man to bridge the chasm that separates the future world from this. The impenetrable darkness that broods over the valley of death, and the rising floods of doubt that sweep away the frail devices of human fancy, have rendered hopeless and fruitless the task of spanning the river. Is the grim monster death to mock forever at the wails of anguish that rise from the hearts that it robs of all their cherished hopes, and fondest joys, and dearest

objects? No! Jesus Christ has bridged the river, He can scatter the mists, destroy the monster death, deprive the grave of its victory, and throw a light across the chasm to the distant shore.

Jesus is sufficient in the dying hour. Follow me to the bed chamber of the dying saint. That chamber, "Where the good man meets his fate." Mark the halo of glory that veils his face! See that heavenly smile that lights his countenance; mark the rising joy beaming from his eye, or glistens in the tear drop; listen to his words, as he tells of the shining ones that have come to meet him. He tells you that death has no sting, and that "These are the happiest moments he has ever experienced in all his life." Ask him the secret of his joy; and he will tell you that it is the presence of the divine Christ in his heart. In every land of earth, in every condition of society, with every shade of mind and degree of intelligence, these triumphs of Christ may be found. Praise God!

Jesus Christ has conquered death; He has robbed the grave of its gloom; He has brought life and immortality to light! He is sufficient in this dark hour that is coming to all humanity.

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

By

I. C. Mathis, Evangelist

CHAPTER IV THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27

How wonderfully rich is the first chapter of Colossians! Some one has said "It is a casket of closely packed gems." The words of my text seem to be the brightest gem of all. There is no wealthier word in the entire chapter than this text.

The heart of the Christian like Solomon's temple is to be a habitation of Deity. It is our privilege to have Christ dwell in our hearts continually. In Eph. 3:17 Paul prayed, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The glory of Christianity is, that we may have Christ come, not only to make an occasional visit, but to abide with us, by day and by night, at home and abroad, everywhere and all the time. He promises to indwell and abide with His children forever. He comes into our hearts and whispers, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And then He says, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour." What a transcendent thought: What a glorious experience! Christ in us, "The hope of glory."

I

PAUL SPEAKS OF THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST AS A MYSTERY

Paul says it is a mystery "Which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest unto His saints." This is one of the secrets that the Lord has hid "From the wise and prudent, and hast revealed" unto His saints. The mystery that has been hidden, now revealed, is that there is redemption for the whole Gentile world, as well as for the Jews. "The middle wall or partition between" Jew and Gentile is broken down and all alike may have Christ in us, "The hope of glory."

However the word "mystery" here as used by the apostle does not have a meaning identical with its present day meaning. Paul borrowed the term, we are told by Bible expositors, from contemporary religions. They made much of their "mysteries." By a "Mystery" they indicated a truth, or a rite which was reserved for a select few. It was something which was not generally known, but was understood only by those who had learned the secret. IT WAS THAT WHICH COULD ONLY BE KNOWN BY A SPECIAL REVELATION. Now Paul gives this suggestive word a Christian application. The heathen religionists said, "Our mysteries can only be known by the favoured few who have been initiated." Paul exclaimed in triumphant tones, "Our mysteries may be known to all who will submit to the obedience of faith." For He teaches that Christ is to dwell in our hearts, "by faith."

It is through the little unimposing door of FAITH, that Christ enters human personalities. "Christ in you:" the "you" is not necessarily the clever, the intellectual or the ecclesiastical. The "you" is the believing, the trustful, the reliant believing soul. Wonderful condescension! He whom throngs of angels adore dwells in the heart that trusts Him! How sublime is this mystery! Have you learned this secret? Genius and culture are alike strangers to this mystery. Only faith knows the secret.

II THIS IS THE CENTRAL FACT OF CHRISTIANITY

Christ's indwelling is the goal and end of redemption. He died and arose and ascended and intercedes for us in order that He may dwell in us. Christ has two dwelling places, one glorious beyond compare, the other mean and inadequate, the heaven of heavens and the trustful reliant heart. Christ is on the throne in the highest, and yet in His Spirit He dwells in our hearts.

No other religion can make a similar claim to this. No follower of Mohammed would dare make such a claim. This might equally be said of every other religion outside of Christianity. They taught certain ethical principles, but they could give their followers no such promise as could Christ, that is, that they would come into the heart, enabling them to work out those principles in daily living. This is the glory of Christianity.

Then this great truth is made even more glorious when we remember this fact: That I can have Christ in my heart, and yet that does not deprive you. He can dwell in your heart. He is the universal Christ. The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on yonder's mountain top waves its boughs and says, "Thou art my sun." In the early springtime the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue and whispers with its perfumed breath, and says, "Thou art my sun." So this glorious indwelling of Christ is not for any favoured few, but all who will open the door of their heart and let Him come in.

I remember on one occasion when I was having an early morning walk in the state of Ohio, how this truth was so forcefully illustrated to me. I noticed that the drops of dew as they hung on spears of grass and leaves were unusually large. They were glistening in the early morning sunshine like so many thousands of diamonds. On closer examination I noticed that each drop of dew had a perfect image of the sun mirrored within it. And yet there was the sun in the heavens shining with undimmed splendor and glory. So I am glad that you can have Christ to dwell in your heart, and I can have Him to dwell in my heart, and still He shines on as the "Sun of Righteousness" with undimmed splendor and undiminished glory. My friend do you know this wonderful experience? While it transcends definition, it does not transcend experience.

If Christ dwells in me, my nature becomes His palace, and He, my King, reigns there with unchallenged rule. He does His own sweet will therein. My King commands within me, and I delight to do His will. He is the inward light. The Christian does not depend so much on arguments without as an illumination within. The indwelling Christ will witness to the truth and reject the error. Verily this is Christianity's sublimest doctrine, its coronating experience, its central fact.

III

THIS IS THE SANCTIFYING PRINCIPLE OF LIFE

Sad it is that so many of the most earnest souls are looking in the wrong direction for holiness of heart and life. Paul said in Eph. 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in Love." This holiness is in Him. It is by the yielding up of our nature, our hearts to the indwelling Christ that true holiness is achieved.

"Christ in you." This is the fount of sweetest comfort. Nothing soothes and sustains amid the sorrows of life like the consciousness of the indwelling of Christ. There are those that I know that could not sustain the heavy and crushing burdens if Christ did not dwell in their heart. This consciousness has supported them on the sad journey to the cemetery, and on the sadder journey home again. This glorious experience has been their consolation and stay.

"Christ in you." Here is the secret of self reverence. If my body is His shrine can I desecrate that shrine? One in whom Christ dwells must reverence himself. This is not merely respecting one's self, but self-reverential. Not self-conceited, but self-awed! Herein is the explanation of the dignity which graces many of the humblest Christians. We are often made to wonder at the refinement of spirit and manner manifested by some who are poor and unschooled. We call it "native" refinement. But it is not "native." It springs from the fact that Christ dwells within. Even lowly people are noble-mannered when Christ is homed within their hearts.

"Christ in you." This is the secret of enduring suffering. With Christ in our hearts we can say with Paul, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings" if you realize it is for His sake. It was the indwelling Christ who upheld Paul as he traversed his thorny pathway to glorious achievement and final martyrdom.

Paul avows that the experimental doctrine of the indwelling Christ is exceeding precious. He writes of "The riches of the glory of this mystery (Col. 1:27)." This is a present heaven. Who can adequately set forth the rapture of the experience of the indwelling Christ? It defies all description. Blessed forever with ever accumulating blessedness are they who know in their daily experience this central fact of our holy faith. To them God has made known "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery."

IV

THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S INDWELLING

The indwelling of Christ in the human heart is the hope of the gospel. This is the goal of the Christian. The greatest need of this age is an every-day ever-present Christ. And when He comes into our heart to dwell in all His fullness tremendous results will follow.

1. We will be strengthened in the inner man. In the third chapter of Ephesians Paul prays that the Ephesian converts might "Be strengthened with might — in the inner man." Every one of us needs

this strength as much as the Ephesians needed it, and without it we will suffer defeat at the hands of our enemy. This is not physical, nor intellectual, but spiritual strength.

The outward man, the body is strengthened by food and exercise, the intellect by close study and application, but we are strengthened spiritually by the indwelling of Christ in His fullness in our hearts. This is the great need of the modern Church. We are to be strong in the Lord and the power of HIS might and this comes by His personal indwelling in our hearts. "All power," said Christ, "is given unto me," and if He dwells in our heart there is power to keep, power to make me victorious. I cannot fail if He dwells in my heart in all His fullness.

2. We will be filled with a desire to do good. The sublimest eulogy on the life of Christ that was ever written is expressed in the five words, "He went about doing good." If Christ indwells our heart tides of benevolence will flow out to our fellow men. We will not be asking, How much can I get out of the world, but how much can I give to it. Lord Shaftsbury of England once said with tears in his eyes, as he was talking about the wrongs of the working girls in London, "When I think that I am growing old, and that I have not long to live, I hope it is not wrong, but I just cannot bear the thought of dying and leaving the world with so much wickedness in it." Christ dwelling in our hearts will fill us with a desire to do good for others.

Herein lies the secret of a soul winning passion. "Christ in us causes us to love a lost world and yearn for their salvation. Just a few moments ago there was a man to see me that is a good illustration of this truth. He has been saved only a few months, but he is overflowing with the love and fullness of Christ. How he prayed for the revival! His pastor told me that he had gotten more than thirty people into the services of the Church who had been to the altar during the last few months. Christ dwelling in this good man's heart gives him a burden for souls that is only satisfied when he sees their salvation.

This is our great need in the church today. When the church is indwelt by Christ there will be a great longing cry to get the gospel to the ends of the earth. More missionaries will be called to the foreign field and more people will be called to support the missionary enterprise with their money. Amen Lord, let it be so.

3. We will be filled with peace in the midst of strife and turmoil. The song of peace like the musical murmur of the fabled fountain of immortality has been filling the ears of the people for ages. This comes only with the indwelling of Christ. Two great painters were asked to paint in their own way their conception of Christian peace. The first threw on the canvas a scene in the mountains. Rough and rugged hills filled the horizon in every direction. Nestling among them where no breath of the tempest could ever sweep over its surface was a beautiful lake. "That" said he, "is my idea of Christian peace." When the second painter unveiled his work, it was observed that he too, had painted a mountain scene. But it was entirely different. In the background there were jagged cliffs, towering mountains, and storm scarred valleys, Down one of the narrow valleys that had been carved into the heart of the granite by the forces of nature, came a mountain torrent, leaping from ledge to ledge, until it reached the edge of a yawning chasm, into which it plunged with every appearance of a deafening roar. Out of the seething abyss came clouds of mist, and the sunlight smiting through them painted the morning and evening glories. Just by the edge of the chasm the artist had painted

a tree. On the tree was a limb that was wet with the spray that broke over it. On that limb was a nest, and in the nest was a bird calmly sitting on her eggs; while near at hand was her mate, with beak wide apart, as if singing one of his sweetest songs. "That," said the artist, "is my idea of peace." What a beautiful picture of peace that is. We have peace in Christ not because He shields us from every storm that sweeps in fury over the sea of life, for He does not do that; but because in the storm He holds us fast and puts into our soul a song of peace.

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." The indwelling Christ is the hope of the glorious life to come. We know there is glory beyond the evening shades of time because we have Christ in us as a present fact. The proof of heavenly bliss is the indwelling Christ. This is the crowning evidence of immortal bliss to the believer. A man in whom Christ dwells will not die eternally. Heaven, immortal heaven, is the destiny of one whose breast is the shrine of Christ. If I know that He dwells in my heart I have infallible proof of heavenly glory when my pilgrim days are done.

Dear reader do you have Christ dwelling in your heart? If not will you not right now get upon your knees and by humble obedient faith receive Christ into your heart, its most precious guest?

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

By

I. C. Mathis, Evangelist

CHAPTER V FOLLOWING CHRIST

"And He saith unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19.

In the chapter from which our text is taken there are three outstanding and important epochs in the life of Jesus. One is the temptation in the wilderness, another the beginning of His public ministry, and the third His calling of these two disciples. "And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Christ is the true shepherd and we as Christians are the sheep of His pasture. According to Christ there are two outstanding characteristics of sheep. He said, "They hear my voice and they follow me." The sheep do not lead the Shepherd, but the Shepherd leads the sheep. The greatest desire of the true Christian is to follow Christ wherever He leads. Let us notice what it means to follow Christ.

I

FOLLOWING CHRIST MEANS SURRENDER

The constant attitude of Jesus to the Father was, "Not my will, but thine be done." And the life of the true Christian is a life of surrender. It may mean a surrender of our own plans, or a surrender of our own desires. It will surely mean a surrender of our own wills to the will of the Lord. Here is the trouble with many a struggling soul at the altar of prayer. It seems so hard for some of them to make an Unconditional surrender of everything to the Lord. But when we have done this the struggle will be over and the victory will be ours.

But some one says, "How do you make a complete surrender to the Lord?" Perhaps I can illustrate it by this incident. A minister took for his text these words, "Let God." A young man went out of the service saying in his heart "That is the prayer of my life. That is the greatest desire of my heart, but I do not know how to surrender and 'Let God' have complete control of my being." Going home he cut the letters out of some card board and put them on the wall of his room as a motto. Then he would cry unto God and say, "That is the desire of my heart, but Lord, how can I do it? One day the window was open and God answered his question. The wind blew in and one of the letters fell from the word God, and the two words "Let Go" remained. God answered the question of how to surrender, by having the wind blow the letter "D" from the word God. His heart thrilled with joy! He saw that it means to let go of everything else and let God have His way. A complete and unconditional surrender to the will of God.

II FOLLOWING CHRIST MEANS SEPARATION

Christ is to be the standard of all our life; we know ourselves only as we know Him; we settle all doubtful questions by reference to Him. One of the most important questions is our relation to the world. We are to be as separated from the world as was the Master Himself. God says, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The Lord's command is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In many places worldliness has robbed the Church of her power and glory. It is pathetic, but nevertheless true, that in many places the Church has become a Lazarus on the door-step of the world, crying for a few crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, when it should be a mighty spirit-filled, fire-baptized host, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." God's plan for His Church is that it will be a mighty conquering host asking for, and giving no quarters to the world, sin, and the devil.

But there are mistakes that can be made on both sides of this question. Sometimes holding ourselves too much apart from the world, sometimes entering too deeply into it; becoming monastic, and becoming worldly. In two different passages of Scripture, Christ teaches us our right attitude to the world. In John 17:16, He said of the disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Then in the eighteenth verse of the same chapter He said, "As thou has sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world." Christ then is to be the measure of the believer's separateness from the world and his entrance into it. In these two passages quoted above, Christ teaches us our right attitude to take to the world. Separateness is put first; we must know that we are not of the world before we are ready to be sent into it.

Now what is the practical result of this conscious Separateness? Shall we hold ourselves aloof from the world, entering neither into its problems nor its work. Surely not; this is not God's plan for the Christian. See how Christ entered into life, how close He came to men. But Christ was in the world because He was sent here. Always there rested upon Him the sense of a mission. And we are sent into the world, even as He was. A Christian is a "sent" man, an ambassador, on a mission. We are sent into joy, into sorrow, into life, business, into conspicuousness and obscurity. Our warrant for being in any place, or accepting any experience, is that we are "sent" into it. We are sent to reveal the Father as did Jesus. We are sent to seek and to save the lost as did Jesus. We are in the world because the world needs us, and when our work is done our Father will call us home. But this leads up to a third condition that I want to mention in following Christ.

III FOLLOWING CHRIST MEANS SERVICE

It is not enough to cease to do evil, but Christ desires that we do good. Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Then He said to His disciples "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Our gospel is spelled with a "go" and what we need is more "go" in our gospel. The unfinished task of Christ has been assigned

to you and to me. If we fail, in that measure, does He fail. The extent of our services is the measure of our love.

There is a legend that once upon a time a man went out looking for a king. He had his own idea as what it took to make a king. He said it took four things: First, the animals must obey him, secondly, the sun must be his servant, thirdly, the waters must stop and flow at his command, and fourthly, men must reverence him. He started out looking for this king. One day he saw a man out in his field herding his flock; by word of mouth or motion of his hand he could control them. He said to himself, "This man has one of the elements of a king; the animals obey him." He went to the man's house and saw him take down his sun-glass and catch the rays of the sun and kindle his fire. He said, "He has the second element of a king; the sun is his servant." Then the man invited the stranger into his fields in the valley below. He opened the flood gates and irrigated his fields, and then closed them up and the water stopped. He said, "He has the third element of a king. The waters flow at his command and stop at his bidding." Then they went into a village near by, and he saw that men revered this man and treated him with great respect. He said to the man, "Do you know that you are a king? You have every element of a king." "Yes," said the man, "I know I am a king, but I am a king to serve and not to be served." The most kingly and queenly thing in the world is service. Jesus Christ came into the world to serve. He said, "I am among you as he that doth serve." No one has the proper conception of Christianity who does not realize that he is saved to serve.

This principle of service, or self-giving is the first and greatest principle of the Christian religion. It has been said that the first law of nature is the law of self-preservation. The smallest insect or the most timid bird will fight to protect life; and we know to what desperate ends men will go to preserve life. But the first law of the Christian religion is not the law of self-preservation, but the law of self-giving. First of all, we have the example of Jesus in self-giving. He left the glory He had with the Father before the world was and took upon Himself the form of a servant and became a man, lived a life of suffering and died a death of shame. He said: "I have come to give my life a ransom for many."

Then I think that we are agreed that Moses and Paul are the two greatest men of all history. Moses was in the king's palace and might have sat upon the king's throne. But he preferred to live in God's service rather than to have a place of such prominence. He went down into Egypt, and lived with the slaves that he might serve them. Some one might have said: "Moses will die and soon be forgotten." But who were the men and women in the King's palace when Moses was there? Their very names have perished; but the name of Moses is immortal because of his unselfish and sacrificing service. Paul no doubt, was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin at one time. I suppose that when he left that body with all its self-conceit and pomp and splendor they said, "Saul is crazy." But Paul's name will never die as long as the sun shines and the world stands.

Some people have the idea that Christianity consists of mere negative goodness. They seem to think that if they abstain from the commission of certain overt acts of sin and unrighteousness that is all the Lord expects of them. They would not want to be ranked as the open enemies of Christ, but still they do very little work for Christ and His cause. Christ cursed the fig tree not because it bore evil fruit, but rather because it bore no fruit at all. Christ-like character is not made up alone of negatives. But we are to be like Christ in service. "He went about doing good."

God has a work for every one to do. He has a plan for your life and mine. Isaiah, in the sixth chapter of his prophecy tells us of his call to service. He is in the temple at worship. The fire from off the altar has been placed upon his lips purging his heart from all sin, and he heard a voice asking, "Who will go for us." Isaiah with a heart aflame with love and devotion to God says: "Here am I, send me." He is saying yes to the call of service. We cannot all be preachers, missionaries or separated gospel workers. It is not God's design that we should be, but He does have a place of service in the whitened harvest fields for every one who will follow the Christ.

There is a very interesting story concerning Dr. Duff, Missionary from India, that shows the true Spirit of service that should characterize every Christian. On one occasion while addressing a missionary meeting in Edinburg, Scotland, after speaking for one hour, he fainted on the platform. He was carried to a side-room where restoratives were administered to him. When he regained consciousness he said: "I must finish my speech." The doctor said, "It will kill you if you do." and Dr. Duff said, "It will kill me if I do not." They carried him back to the platform where he addressed the audience from a chair. Spreading forth his hands as if over the audience he asked, "Men of Scotland, have you no more sons to give to India?" He said, "If you have not, though my life is far spent and my health gone, I will go back to India that God and the world may know that there is one man in Scotland who cares."

IV FOLLOWING CHRIST WILL MEAN ETERNAL REWARD

Unselfish service is sure to be recognized and rewarded by the Lord. That woman who broke the alabaster box of ointment had no thought of making her name immortal. Jesus said, "She hath done what she could." But she erected a perpetual monument that day to her name. If she had put the contents of that box into the erection of a marble monument it would have perished; if she had put it into a tablet of brass it would have corroded, but the monument she erected that day grows brighter and brighter as time goes on.

The Lord has promised that even a cup of cold water given in His name shall not lose its reward. We are saved by faith, but we will be judged and rewarded according to our works. Our service for Christ and a lost world will be the measure of our reward at the final day of reckoning. He has promised to reward the faithful, and, only the faithful.

I have read the story of a young, German servant girl, that illustrates the thought of reward for service. She went to a great, holiday affair, where the army was to pass by, and be reviewed by the Emperor. She went early so she could get a good seat. She did not often get a day off from her work and she was determined to make a good day of it. She was there for several hours before the crowds arrived; but soon the people had gathered in great throngs and were fighting for positions that would afford the best views. She noticed down in the crowd a real elderly lady who was being pushed and crowded by the great throngs, and who was unable to see anything because of the great pressing crowd around her. The young girl thought to herself, I will give my seat to this aged mother. Then she remembered how long she had been there and she drew back from the thought of sacrificing her good seat for this aged lady. But, finally getting the attention of the elderly lady, she beckoned her to come and take her seat, and she would take her place in the crowd. She gave up the good seat that

she had gone hours ahead of time to procure. While standing there in the crowd being jostled by the surging masses of humanity, she felt a wave of disappointment sweep over her, for she was unable to see the marching soldiers and the great review. She was aroused from her dejection and disappointment by the touch on the arm by a man who wore a government uniform and who said, "Her highness the Empress would like to see you in the royal box, follow me please." The poor ignorant servant girl was frightened. She asked herself, what have I done? But as she was ushered into the royal box the Empress arose extending her hand to the poor frightened girl and said, "Daughter I saw that act of kindness and sacrifice when you gave up your seat to the aged mother, and I want you to sit with me today in the royal box."

There is coming a time when the Lord is going to say, "Son, Daughter, I have watched your life of sacrifice and service, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." Thank God, there is to be a day of final reward if we faithfully follow the Christ. And, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

THE END