

“ALL IN ALL.”

A TRACT ON COLOSS. iii. 11.

BY THE

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“CHRIST IS ALL.”

Colossians iii. 11.

Reader,

What do you think of these words? They are short words, and soon spoken; but they contain great things.

These three words are the essence and substance of Christianity. If your heart can really go along with them, it is well with your soul: if not, you may be sure you have yet much to learn.

Let me try to set before you in what sense “Christ is all;” and let me ask you, as you read, to judge yourself honestly, that you may not make shipwreck in the judgment of the last day.

I. First then, I would have you know, Christ is *all in all the counsels of God concerning man.*

There was a time when this earth had no being. Solid as the mountains look,—boundless as the sea appears,—they once did not exist. And man, with all the high thoughts he now has of himself, was a creature unknown.

And where was Christ then?

Even then Christ was “with God, was God, and was equal with God.” (John i. 1; Phil. ii. 6.) Even then He was the beloved Son of the Father: “Thou lovedst me,” He says, “before the foundation of the world;” “I had glory with thee before the world began.” (John xvii. 5, 24.) Even then He was the Saviour “foreordained before the foundation of the world,” (1 Peter i. 20.) and believers were “chosen in Him.” (Ephes. i. 4.)

There came a time when this earth was created. Sun, moon, and stars,—sea, land, and all their inhabitants, were called into being, and made out of nothing. And, last of all, man was formed out of the dust of the ground.

And where was Christ then?

Hear what the Scripture says: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” (John i. 3.) “By Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth.” (Col. i. 16.) “And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” (Heb. i. 10.) Can you wonder that the Lord Jesus in His preaching should continually draw lessons from the book of nature? When He spoke of the sheep, the ravens, the lilies, the fig-tree, the vine,—He spoke of things which He Himself had made.

There came a day when sin entered the world. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and fell. They lost that holy nature in which they were first

formed. They forfeited the friendship and favour of God. They became guilty, corrupt, helpless, hopeless sinners. Sin came as a barrier between themselves and their holy Father in heaven. And had He dealt with them according to their deserts, there had been nothing before them but death, hell, and everlasting ruin.

And where was Christ then?

That very day He was revealed to our trembling parents, as the only hope of salvation. The very day they fell they were told that the seed of the woman should yet bruise the serpent's head,—that a Saviour born of a woman should overcome the devil, and win for sinful man an entrance to eternal life. Christ was held up as the true light of the world, in the very day of the fall, and never has any name been made known from that day by which souls could be saved, excepting His. By Him all saved souls have entered heaven, from Adam downwards, and without Him none have ever escaped hell.

There came a time when the world seemed sunk and buried in ignorance of God. After 4000 years the nations of the earth appeared to have clean forgotten the God that made them. Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, had done nothing but spread superstition and idolatry. Poets, historians, philosophers, had proved that with all their intellectual powers they had no right knowledge of God, and that man, left to himself, was utterly corrupt. "The world by wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. i. 21.) Excepting a few despised Jews in a corner of the earth, the whole world was dead in ignorance and sin.

And what did Christ do then?

He left the glory He had had from all eternity with the Father, and came down into the world to provide a salvation. He took our nature upon Him, and was born as a man. As a man He did the will of God perfectly, which we all had left undone. As a man He suffered on the cross the wrath of God which we ought to have suffered. He brought in everlasting righteousness for us. He redeemed us from the curse of a broken law. He opened a fountain for all sin and uncleanness. He died for our sins. He rose again for our justification. He ascended to God's right hand, and there sat down, waiting till His enemies should be made His footstool. And there He sits now, offering salvation to all who will come to Him,—interceding for all who believe in Him,—and managing by God's appointment all that concerns the salvation of souls.

There is a time coming when sin shall be cast out from this world. Wick- edness shall not always flourish unpunished. Satan shall not always reign. Creation shall not always groan being burdened. There shall be a day of res- titution of all things. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as

the waters cover the sea.

And where shall Christ be then? And what shall He do?

Christ Himself shall be King. He shall return to this earth, and make all things new. He shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and the kingdoms of the world shall become His. The heathen shall be given to Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. To Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

There is a day coming when all men shall be judged. The sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them. All that sleep in the grave shall come forth, and all shall be judged according to their works.

And where will Christ be then?

Christ Himself will be the Judge. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:—and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (John v. 22; Matt. xxv. 22; 2 Cor. v. 10.)

Oh! reader, if you are one that thinks little of Christ, you are very unlike God. You are of one mind, and God is of another. You are of one judgment, and God is of another. You think it enough to give Christ a *little* honour,—a *little* reverence,—a *little* respect. But in all God the Father's eternal counsels, in creation, redemption, restitution, and judgment,—in all these, Christ is "all"

Surely you would do well to consider these things. I warn you, it is not written in vain, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." (John v. 23.)

II. I would have you know, in the second place, that "*Christ is all*" in the *Bible*.

In every part of both Testaments Christ is to be found,—dimly and indistinctly at the beginning,—more clearly and plainly in the middle,—fully and completely at the end,—but really and substantially everywhere.

Christ's sacrifice and death for sinners,—and Christ's kingdom and future glory, are the light you must bring to bear on any book of Scripture you read. Christ's cross and Christ's crown are the clue you must hold fast, if you would find your way through Scripture difficulties. Christ is the only key that

will unlock many of the dark places of the word. Some people complain that they do not understand the Bible. And the reason is very simple. They do not use the key. To them the Bible is like the hieroglyphics in Egypt. It is a mystery, just because they do not use the key.

It was Christ crucified who was set forth in every Old Testament sacrifice. Every animal slain and offered on an altar, was a confession that a Saviour was looked for who should die for sinners,—a Saviour who should take away man's sin, by suffering in his stead.

It was Christ to whom Abel looked when He offered a better sacrifice than Cain. He offered the firstlings of his flock with the blood thereof,— and in so doing showed his belief that without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Heb. xi.4.)

It was Christ of whom Enoch prophesied in the days of abounding wickedness before the flood. "Behold," he said, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 15.)

It was Christ to whom Abraham looked when he dwelt in tents in the land of promise. He believed that in his seed,—in one born of his family,—all the nations of the earth should be blessed. By faith he saw Christ's day, and was glad.

It was Christ of whom Jacob spoke to his sons, as he lay dying. He marked out the tribe out of which He would be born, and foretold that gathering together unto Him, which is yet to be accomplished. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.)

It was Christ who was the substance of the ceremonial law, which God gave to Israel by the hand of Moses. The morning and evening sacrifice,—the continual shedding of blood,—the altar,—the mercy-seat,—the high priest,—the passover,—the day of atonement,—the scape-goat:—all these were so many pictures, types, and emblems of Christ and His work. God had compassion upon the weakness of His people. He taught them Christ line upon line, and as we teach little children by similitudes. It was in this sense especially that the law was a schoolmaster to lead the Jews unto Christ.

It was Christ to whom God directed the attention of Israel by all the daily miracles which were done before their eyes in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud and fire which guided them,—the manna from heaven which every morning fed them,—the water from the smitten rock which followed them,—all and each were figures of Christ.

It was Christ of whom all the judges were types. Joshua, and David, and Gideon, and Jephthah, and Samson, and all the rest whom God raised up to deliver Israel from captivity,—all were emblems of Christ. All were meant to remind the tribes of that far higher Deliverer, who was yet to come.

It was Christ of whom David the king was a type. Anointed and chosen when few gave him honour,—despised and rejected by Saul and all the tribes.—persecuted and obliged to flee for his life,—a man of sorrow all his life, and yet at length a conqueror;—in all these things David represented Christ.

It was Christ of whom all the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi spoke. They saw through a glass darkly. They sometimes dwelt on His sufferings, and sometimes on His glory that should follow. They did not always mark out for us the distinction between Christ's first coming and Christ's second coming. They were sometimes moved by the Holy Ghost to write of the times of Christ crucified, and sometimes of Christ's kingdom in the latter days. But Jesus dying, or Jesus reigning, was the thought you will ever find uppermost in their minds.

It is Christ, I need hardly tell you, of whom the whole New Testament is full. The Gospels are Christ living, speaking, and moving among us. The Acts are Christ preached, published, and proclaimed. The Epistles are Christ written of, explained, and exalted. But all through, from first to last, there is but one Name above every other, and that is Christ.

Oh! reader, you should ask yourself, what your Bible is to you? Is it a Bible in which you have found Christ? Is it a Bible in which "Christ is all?" If not, my dear brother or sister, I tell you plainly you have used your Bible to very little purpose. You are like the man who studied the solar system, and left out in his studies the sun, which is the centre of all. It is no wonder if you find your Bible a dull book.

III. I would have you know in the third place, *that "Christ is all" in the religion of all true Christians on earth.*

In saying this, I wish to guard myself against being misunderstood. I hold the absolute necessity of the election of God the Father, and the sanctification of God the Spirit, in order to effect the salvation of every one that is saved. I hold that there is a perfect harmony and unison in the action of the three Persons of the Trinity, in bringing any man to glory, and that all three cooperate and work a joint work in his deliverance from sin and hell. I hold that every one who reaches heaven, will ascribe all the glory of his salvation to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God.

But at the same time I see clear proof in Scripture, that it is the mind of the blessed Trinity that Christ should be prominently and distinctly exalted, in the matter of saving souls. Christ is set forth as the "Word," through whom God's love to sinners is made known. Christ's incarnation and atoning death on the cross, are the great corner-stone on which the whole plan of salvation rests. Christ is the way and door, by which alone approaches to God are to

be made. Christ is the root into which all elect sinners must be grafted. Christ is the only meeting-place between heaven and earth, between the Holy Trinity and the poor sinful child of Adam. It is Christ whom God the Father has sealed and appointed to convey life to a dead world. It is Christ to whom the Father has given a people to be brought to glory. It is Christ of whom the Spirit testifies, and to whom he always leads a soul for pardon and peace. In short, it has pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell. What the sun is in the firmament of heaven, that Christ is in true Christianity.

Reader, I say these things by way of explanation. I want you clearly to understand, that in saying "Christ is all," I do *not* mean to shut out the work of the Father and the Spirit. Now let me show what I *do* mean.

Christ is *all in a sinner's justification before God.*

Through Him alone we can have peace with a Holy God. By Him alone we can have admission into the presence of the Most High, and stand there without dismay. In Him alone can God be just, and justify the ungodly.

Reader, wherewith can any mortal man come before God? What can we bring as a plea for acquittal before that Glorious Being, in whose eyes the very heavens are not clean?

Shall we say that we have done our duty to God? Shall we say that we have done our duty to our neighbour? Shall we bring forward our prayers?—our regularity?—our morality?—our amendments?—our church-going? Shall we ask to be accepted because of any of these? Which of these things will stand God's eye? Which of them will actually justify you and me? Which of them will carry us clear through judgment, and land us safe in glory? None, none, none! Take any commandment of the ten, and let us examine ourselves by it. We have broken it repeatedly.—We cannot answer God one of a thousand. Take any of us, and look narrowly into our ways,—and we are nothing but sinners. There is but one verdict.—We are all guilty,—all deserve hell,—all ought to die. Wherewith can we come before God?

We must come in the name of Jesus,—standing on no other ground,—pleading no other plea than this, "Christ died on the cross for the ungodly, and I trust in Him."

The garment of our Elder Brother,—the righteousness of Christ,—this is the only robe which can cover you and me, and enable us to stand in the light of heaven without shame. The name of Jesus is the only name by which you and I will be let through the gate of eternal glory. If we come to that gate in our own names, we are lost. If we come in the name of Jesus, it is a passport and Shibboleth, and we shall live.

The mark of the blood of Christ is the only mark that can save us from destruction. When the angels are separating the children of Adam in the last day, if we are not found marked with that atoning blood, we had better never

have been born.

Oh! believe me, Christ must be “all” to that soul who would be justified.—You must be content to go to heaven as a beggar,—saved by free grace, simply as a believer in Jesus,—or you will never be saved at all.

Is there a thoughtless, worldly soul among the readers of this tract? Is there one who thinks to reach heaven by saying, “Lord have mercy on me,” without Christ?—My dear friend, you are sowing misery for yourself, and unless you alter, you will awake to endless woe.

Is there a proud, formal soul among the readers of this tract? Is there any one thinking to make himself fit for heaven, and good enough by his own doings?—My dear brother, you are building a Babel, and you will never reach heaven in your present state.

But is there a labouring, heavy-laden one among the readers of this tract? Is there one who wants to be saved, and feels a vile sinner? I say to such an one, “Come to Christ and He shall save you. Come to Christ and cast the burden of your soul on Him. Fear not: only believe.”

Do you fear wrath?—Christ can deliver you from the wrath to come. Do you fear the curse of a broken law?—Christ can redeem you from the curse of the law. Do you feel far away?—Christ has suffered to bring you nigh to God. Do you feel unclean?—Christ’s blood can cleanse all sin away. Do you feel imperfect?—You shall be complete in Christ. Do you feel as if you were nothing?—Christ shall be “all in all” to your soul. Never did saint reach heaven with any tale but this, “I was washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.”

But again, Christ is not only all in the justification of a true Christian, but He is also *all in His sanctification*.

I would not have you misunderstand me. I do not mean for a moment to undervalue the work of the Spirit. But this I say, that no man is ever holy till he comes to Christ and is united to Him. Till then his works are dead works, and he has no holiness at all.—First you must be joined to Christ, and then you shall be holy. “Without Him, separate from Him, you can do nothing.” (John xv. 5.)

And no man can grow in holiness except he abides in Christ. Christ is the great root from which every believer must draw his strength to go forward. The Spirit is His special gift,—His purchased gift for His people. “A believer must not only receive Christ Jesus the Lord, but walk in Him, and be rooted and built up in Him.” (Colos. ii. 6, 7.)

Would you be holy? Then Christ is the manna you must daily eat, like Israel in the wilderness of old.

Would you be holy? Then Christ must be the rock from which you must daily drink the living water.

Would you be holy? Then you must be ever looking unto Jesus,—looking at His cross, and learning fresh motives for a closer walk with God, —looking at His example, and taking Him for your pattern. Looking at Him, you would become like Him. Looking at Him, your face would shine without your knowing it. Look less at yourself and more at Christ, and you will find besetting sins dropping off and leaving you, and your eyes enlightened more and more every day.

Ah! reader, the true secret of coming up out of the wilderness, is to come up “leaning on the Beloved.” (Cant. viii. 5.) The true way to be strong, is to realize our weakness, and to feel that Christ must be all. The true way to grow in grace, is to make use of Christ as a fountain for every minute’s necessities. We ought to employ Him as the Prophet’s wife employed the oil,—not only to pay our debts, but to live on also. (2 Kings iv. 7.)

I do pity those who try to be holy without Christ. Your labour is all in vain. You are building up a wall with untempered mortar. Believe me, believe me, you are beginning at the wrong end. You must come to Christ first, and He shall give you His sanctifying Spirit. You must learn to say with Paul, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.” (Phil. iv. 13.)

But again, Christ is not only all in the sanctification of a true Christian, but *all in His comfort in time present*.

A saved soul has many sorrows. He has a body like other men,—weak and frail. He has a heart like other men,—and often a more sensitive one too. He has trials and losses to bear like others,—and often more. He has his share of bereavements, deaths, disappointments, crosses. He has the world to oppose,—relations to bear with,—persecutions to endure,—and a death to die. And what shall enable him to bear all this? Nothing but “the consolation there is in Christ.” (Phil. ii. 1.)

Jesus is indeed the brother born for adversity. He is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and He alone can comfort His people. He can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, for He suffered Himself. He knows what sorrow is, for He was a man of sorrows. He knows what an aching body is, for His body was racked with pain. He cried, “All my bones are out of joint.” (Psalm xxii. 14.) He knows what poverty and weariness are, for He was often wearied and had not where to lay His head. He knows what family unkindness is, for even His brethren did not believe Him. He had no honour in His own house.

And Jesus knows exactly how to comfort His afflicted people. He knows how to pour in oil and wine into the wounds of the spirit,—how to fill up gaps in empty hearts,—how to speak a word in season to the weary,—how to heal the broken heart,—how to make all our bed in sickness,—how to draw nigh when we are faint, and say, “Fear not, I am thy salvation.”

Ah! reader, we talk of sympathy being pleasant. There is no sympathy like that of Christ. In all your afflictions, believing reader, He is afflicted. He knows your sorrows. In all your pain He is pained, and like the good Physician, He will not measure out to you one drop of sorrow too much. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts refreshed my soul," said David. Many a believer, I am sure, could say as much. "If the Lord Himself had not stood by me, the deep waters would have gone over my soul."

How a believer gets through all his troubles appears wonderful. How he is carried through the fire and water he passes through seems past comprehension. But the true account of it is just this,—that Christ is not only justification and sanctification, but consolation also.

Oh! you who want unfailing comfort, I commend you to Christ In Him alone there is no failure. Rich men are disappointed in their treasures. Learned men are disappointed in their books. Husbands are disappointed in their wives. Wives are disappointed in their husbands. Parents are disappointed in their children. Statesmen are disappointed when they have place and power. But no man was ever disappointed in Christ.

But as Christ is all in the comforts of a true Christian in time present, so Christ is *all in his hopes for time to come*.

Few men and women, I suppose, are to be found who do not indulge in hopes of some kind about their souls. But the hopes of the vast majority are nothing but vain fancies. They are built on no solid foundation. No living man but the real child of God,—the sincere, thorough-going Christian,—can give a reasonable account of the hope that is in him. No hope is reasonable which is not scriptural.

A true Christian has a good hope when he looks forward.—The worldly man has none. A true Christian sees light in the distance.—The worldly man sees nothing but darkness. And what is the hope of a true Christian? It is just this, that Jesus Christ is coming again,—coming without sin,—coming with all His people,—coming to wipe away every tear,—coming to raise His sleeping saints from the grave,—coming to gather together all His family, that they may be for ever with Him.

Why is a believer patient? Because he looks for the coming of the Lord. He can bear hard things without murmuring. He knows the time is short. He waits quietly for the King.

Why is he moderate in all things? Because he expects his Lord soon to return. His treasure is in heaven. His good things are yet to come. The world is not his rest, but an inn. And an inn is not home. He knows that He that shall come will soon come, and not tarry. Christ is coming, and that is enough.

Ah! reader, this is indeed a "blessed hope." Now is the school-time,—

then the eternal holiday. Now is the scattering,—then the gathering. Now is the time of sowing,—then the harvest. Now is the working season,—then the wages. Now is the cross,—then the crown.

People talk of their “expectations” and hopes from this world. None have such solid expectations as a saved soul. He can say, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; my expectation is from Him.”

Reader, in all true saving religion Christ is all,—all in justification,—all in sanctification,—all in comfort,—all in hope. Blessed is that mother’s child that *knows* it, and far more blessed is he that *feels* it too. Oh! that you would prove your own self, and see what you know of it for your own soul!

IV. One thing more I will add, and then I have done. I would have you know that *Christ will be all in heaven.*

I cannot dwell long on this point. I have not power, if I had time. I can ill describe things unseen and a world unknown. But this I know, that all men and women who reach heaven, will find that even there also “Christ is all.”

Like the altar in Solomon’s temple, Christ crucified will be the grand object in heaven. That altar struck the eye of every one who entered the temple gates. It was a great brazen altar, twenty cubits broad,—as broad as the front of the temple itself. (2 Chron. iii. 4, iv. 1.) So in like manner will Jesus fill the eye of all who enter glory. In the midst of the throne, and surrounded by adoring angels and saints, there will be “the Lamb that was slain.” And the Lamb shall be the light of the place.

The *praise* of the Lord Jesus will be the eternal song of all the inhabitants of heaven. They will say with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. v. 12. 13.)

The *service* of the Lord Jesus will be one eternal occupation of all the inhabitants of heaven. We shall serve Him day and night in His temple. Blessed is the thought that we shall at length attend on Him without distraction, and work for Him without weariness.

The *presence* of Christ Himself shall be one everlasting enjoyment of the inhabitants of heaven. We shall see His face, and hear His voice, and speak with Him as friend with friend. Sweet is the thought that whosoever may be wanting at the marriage supper, the Master Himself will be there. His presence will satisfy all our wants.

Oh! reader, what a home heaven will be to those who have loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Here you live by faith in Him, and find peace, though you see Him not. There you will see him face to face, and find He is altogether lovely. Better indeed will be the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire!

But oh! how little fit for heaven are many who talk of “going to heaven” when they die, while they manifestly have no saving faith, and no real acquaintance with Christ. You give Christ no honour here. You have no communion with Him. You do not love Him. Alas! what could you do in heaven? it would be no place for you. Its joys would be no joys for you. Its happiness would be a happiness into which you could not enter. Its employments would be a weariness and a burden to your heart. Oh! repent and change before it be too late.

And now, reader, I trust I have shown you how deep are the foundations of that little expression, “Christ is all.”

I might easily add to the things I have told you, if space permitted. The subject is not exhausted. I have barely walked over the surface of it. There are mines of precious truth connected with it, which I have left unopened.

I might tell you how *Christ ought to be all in a visible church*. Splendid religious buildings, numerous religious services, gorgeous ceremonies, troops of ordained men, all, all are nothing in the sight of God, if the Lord Jesus himself in all his offices is not honoured, magnified, and exalted. That church is but a dead carcase, in which Christ is not “all.”

I might tell you how *Christ ought to be all in a ministry*. The great work which ordained men are intended to do, is to lift up Christ. We are to be like the pole on which the brazen serpent was hung. We are useful so long as we exalt the great object of faith, but useful no further. We are to be ambassadors to carry tidings to a rebellious world, about the King’s Son, and if we teach men to think more about us and our office than about Him, we are not fit for our place. The Spirit will never honour that minister who does not testify of Christ,—who does not make Christ “all.”

I might tell you how language seems exhausted in the Bible, in describing Christ’s various offices. I might tell you how figures seem endless, which are employed in unfolding Christ’s fulness. The High Priest, the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Advocate, the Shepherd, the Physician, the Bridegroom, the Head, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Way, the Door, the Vine, the Rock, the Fountain, the Sun of Righteousness, the Forerunner, the Surety, the Captain, the Prince of Life, the Amen, the Almighty, the Author and Finisher of Faith, the Lamb of God, the King of Saints, the Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Counsellor, the Bishop of Souls,—all these, and many more, are names given to Christ in Scripture. Each is a fountain of instruction and comfort for every one who is willing to drink of it. Each supplies matter for useful meditation.

But I trust I have said enough to throw light on the subject I want to impress on your mind. I trust I have said enough to show the immense importance of the practical conclusions with which I now desire to finish this

tract.

1. Is Christ all? Then LEARN THE UTTER USELESSNESS OF A CHRISTLESS RELIGION.

There are only too many baptized men and women who practically know nothing at all about Christ. Their religion consists in a few vague notions, and empty expressions. “They trust they are no worse than others. They keep to their church. They try to do their duty. They do nobody any harm. They hope God will be merciful to them. They trust the Almighty will pardon their sins, and take them to heaven when they die.” This is about the whole of their religion!

But what do these people know practically about Christ? Nothing, nothing at all! What experimental acquaintance have they with His offices and work, His blood, His righteousness, His mediation, His priesthood, His intercession? None, none at all! Ask them about a saving faith,—ask them about being born again of the Spirit,—ask them about being sanctified in Christ Jesus. What answer will you get? You are a barbarian to them. You have asked them simple Bible questions. But they know no more about them experimentally, than a Buddhist or a Turk. And yet this is the religion of hundreds and thousands of people who are called Christians, all over the world!

Reader, if you are a man of this kind, I warn you plainly that such Christianity will never take you to heaven. It may do very well in the eye of man. It may pass muster very decently at the vestry-meeting, in the place of business, in the House of Commons, or in the streets. But it will never comfort you. It will never satisfy your conscience. It will never save your soul.

I warn you plainly, that all notions and theories about God being merciful without Christ, and excepting through Christ, are baseless delusions and empty fancies. Such theories are as purely an idol of man’s invention, as the idol of Juggernaut. They are all of the earth, earthy. They never came down from heaven. The God of heaven has sealed and appointed Christ as the one only Saviour and way of life, and all who would be saved, must be content to be saved by Him, or they will never be saved at all.

Reader, take notice. I give you fair warning this day. A religion without Christ will never save your soul.

2. Let me say another thing. Is Christ all? Then LEARN THE ENORMOUS FOLLY OF JOINING ANYTHING WITH CHRIST IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION.

There are multitudes of baptized men and women who profess to honour Christ, but in reality do Him great dishonour. They give Christ a certain place in their system of religion, but not the place which God intended Him to fill. Christ alone is not “all in all” to their souls.— No! It is either Christ and the

church,—or Christ and the sacraments,—or Christ and His ordained ministers,—or Christ and their own repentance,—or Christ and their own goodness,—or Christ and their own prayers,—or Christ and their own sincerity and charity, on which they practically rest their souls.

Reader, if you are a Christian of this kind, I warn you also plainly, that your religion is an offence to God. You are changing God's plan of salvation into a plan of your own devising. You are in effect deposing Christ from His throne, by giving the glory due to Him to another.

I care not who it is that teaches you your religion, and on whose word you build. Whether he be Pope or Cardinal, Archbishop or Bishop, Dean or Archdeacon, Presbyter or Deacon, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Baptist or Independent, Wesleyan or Plymouth Brother, whosoever adds anything to Christ, teaches you wrong.

I care not what it is that you add to Christ. Whether it be the necessity of joining the Church of Rome, or of being an Episcopalian, or of becoming a Free Churchman, or of giving up the liturgy, or of being dipped,—whatever you may practically add to Christ in the matter of salvation, you do Christ an injury.

Reader, take heed what you are doing. Beware of giving to Christ's servants the honour due to none but Christ. Beware of giving the Lord's ordinances the honour due unto the Lord. Beware of resting the burden of your soul on anything but Christ, and Christ alone.

3. Let me say another thing. Is Christ all? Then LET ALL WHO WANT TO BE SAVED, APPLY DIRECT TO CHRIST.

There are many who hear of Christ with the ear, and believe all they are told about him. They allow that there is no salvation excepting in Christ. They acknowledge that Jesus alone can deliver them from hell, and present them faultless before God. But they seem never to get beyond this general acknowledgment. They never fairly lay hold on Christ for their own souls. They stick fast in a state of wishing, and wanting, and feeling, and intending, and never get any further. They see what we mean. They know it is all true. They hope one day to get the full benefit of it. But at present they get no benefit. The world is their "all." Politics are their "all." Pleasure is their "all." Business is their "all." But Christ is not their all.

Reader, if you are a man of this kind, I warn you also plainly, you are in a bad state of soul. You are as truly in the way to hell in your present condition, as Judas Iscariot, or Ahab, or Cain. Believe me, there must be actual faith in Christ, or else Christ died in vain, so far as you are concerned. It is not looking at the bread that feeds the hungry man, but the actual eating of it. It is not gazing on the life-boat that saves the shipwrecked sailor, but actual getting into it. It is not knowing and believing that Christ is a Saviour, that

will save your soul, unless there are actual transactions between you and Christ.

Take the advice I give you this day, and act upon it at once. Stand still no longer, waiting for some imaginary frames and feelings which will never come. Hesitate no longer, under the idea that you must first of all obtain the Spirit, and then come to Christ. Arise and come to Christ, just as you are. He waits for you, and is as willing to save as He is mighty. He is the appointed Physician for sin-sick souls. Deal with Him as you would with your doctor about the cure of a disease of your body. Make a direct application to Him, and tell Him all your wants. Take with you words this day and cry mightily to the Lord Jesus for pardon and peace. Tell Him that you have heard that He receives sinners, and that you are such. Tell Him you want to be saved, and ask Him to save you. Rest not till you have actually tasted for yourself that the Lord is gracious. Do this, and you shall find, sooner or later, if you are really in earnest, that "Christ is all." .

4. One more thing let me add. Is Christ all? Then LET ALL HIS CONVERTED PEOPLE DEAL WITH HIM AS IF THEY REALLY BELIEVED IT. LET THEM LEAN ON HIM AND TRUST HIM FAR MORE THAN THEY HAVE EVER DONE YET.

Alas! there are many of the Lord's people who live far below their privileges. There are many truly Christian souls who rob themselves of their own peace and forsake their own mercies. There are many who insensibly join their own faith, or the work of the Spirit in their own hearts, to Christ, and so miss the fulness of Gospel peace.

Reader, if you are a believer, I beseech you for your own sake, to make sure that Christ is really and thoroughly your all in all. Beware of allowing yourself to mingle anything of your own with Christ.

Have you faith? It is a priceless blessing. Happy indeed are those who are willing and ready to trust Jesus. But take heed you do not make a Christ of your faith. Rest not on your own faith, but on Christ.

Is the work of the Spirit in your soul? Thank God for it. It is a work that shall never be overthrown. But Oh! beware, lest unawares to yourself, you make a Christ of the work of the Spirit. Rest not on the work of the Spirit, but on Christ.

Learn, I entreat you, to look more and more at the great *object of faith*, Jesus Christ, and to keep your mind dwelling on Him. So doing you would find faith, and all the graces, grow, though the growth at the time might be imperceptible to yourself. He that would prove a skilful archer, must look not at the arrow, but at the mark.

Alas! I fear there is a great piece of pride and unbelief still sticking in the hearts of most believers. Few seem to realize how much they need a Saviour. Few seem to understand how thoroughly they are indebted to Him. Few seem

to comprehend how much they need Him every day. Few seem to feel how simply and like a child they ought to hang their souls on Him. Few seem to be aware how full of love He is to His poor, weak people, and how ready to help them! And few therefore seem to know that peace and joy which is to be had in Christ.

Change your plan, dear believing reader, if your conscience tells you you are guilty,—change your plan, and learn to trust Christ more. Physicians love to see people coming to be consulted: it is their office to receive the sickly, and if possible to effect cures. The advocate loves to be employed: it is his calling. The husband loves his wife to trust him and lean upon him: it is his delight to cherish her, and promote her comfort. And Christ loves His people to lean on Him, to rest in Him, to call on Him, to abide in Him.

Believing reader, do so more and more. Live on Christ. Live in Christ. Live with Christ. Live to Christ. So doing you will prove that you fully realize that “Christ is all.”

Reader, I conclude this tract with words once preached before the English House of Commons, which I commend to your serious attention:—

“A man may want liberty, and yet be happy, as Joseph was. A man may want peace, and yet be happy, as David was. A man may want children, and yet be blessed, as Job was. A man may want plenty, and yet be full of comfort, as Micaiah was. But he that wants the Gospel, wants everything that should do him good. A throne without the Gospel is but the devil’s dungeon. Wealth without the Gospel is fuel for hell. Advancement without the Gospel is but a going high to have the greater fall.

“Christ is all in all, and where He is wanting there can be no good. Hunger cannot truly be satisfied without manna,—the bread of life which is Jesus Christ;—and what shall a hungry man do without bread? Thirst cannot be quenched without that water or living spring, which is Jesus Christ and what shall a thirsty soul do without water? A captive, as we are all, cannot be delivered without redemption, which is Jesus Christ;—and what shall the prisoner do without redemption? Fools, as we all are, cannot be instructed without wisdom, which is Jesus Christ;—without Him we perish in our folly. All building without Him is on sand, which will surely fall. All working without Him is in the fire, where it will be consumed. All riches without Him have wings, and will fly away. A dungeon with Christ is a throne, and a throne without Christ a hell. All mercies without Christ are bitter, and every cup is sweet that is seasoned with a drop of His blood.

“He is the way: men without Him are Cains,—wanderers, vagabonds. He is the truth: men without Him are liars, like the devil of old. He is the life: men without Him are dead in trespasses and sin. He is the light: men without Him are in darkness, and go they know not whither. He is the vine: men that

are not in Him are withered branches, prepared for the fire. He is the rock: men not built on Him are carried away with a flood. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last,—the author and the ender,—the founder and the finisher of our salvation. He that hath not Him, hath neither beginning of good, nor shall have end of misery. Oh! blessed Jesus! how much better were it not to be, than to be without thee!—never to be born, than not to die in thee! A thousand hells come short of this, eternally to want Jesus Christ.” (*Owens Works. Vol. viii. p. 36. Johnston’s Edition.*)

Reader, may you and I be able to say amen to the spirit of this passage, and then it will be well with our souls.

I REMAIN

YOUR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

J. C. RYLE.

*Helmingham, Stoneham,
April, 1853.*