

KNOTS UNTIED

BEING

PLAIN STATEMENTS ON DISPUTED POINTS IN RELIGION,

FROM THE

STANDPOINT OF AN EVANGELICAL CHURCHMAN.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE volume now in the readers hands requires a few words of explanation. It consists of eighteen papers on subjects which are matters of dispute among English Churchmen in the present day, systematically arranged. A moment's glance at the table of contents will show that there is hardly any point of theological controversy belonging to this era which is not discussed, with more or less fulness, in these papers.

The doctrinal tone of the volume will be found distinctly and decidedly "Evangelical." I avow that, without hesitation, at the outset. The opinions expressed and advocated about the matters discussed, are those of an Evangelical Churchman. What THAT means every intelligent Englishman knows, and it is mere affectation to profess ignorance about the point. They are not popular opinions, I am aware, and are only held, perhaps, by a minority of the English clergy. But they are the only opinions which I can find in Holy Scripture, in the Thirty-nine Articles, in the Prayer-book fairly interpreted, in the works of the Reformers, or in the writings of the pre-Caroline divines. In the faith of these opinions I have lived for thirty-five years, and have seen no reason to be ashamed of them, however rudely they may have been assailed.

The object of sending forth this volume is to meet the wants of those who may wish to see theological questions fully discussed and examined from an "Evangelical" standpoint, and complain that they cannot find a book that does this. There are hundreds of English Churchmen who will never look at a tract (though St. Paul's Epistles, when first sent forth, were only tracts), but are willing to read a volume. To them I offer this volume, and respectfully invite their attention to its contents. If it does nothing else, I hope it may convince some readers that in the controversies of this day the reasonings and arguments are not all on one side.

The friendly readers of the many popular tracts, which God has

enabled me to write in the last twenty-five years, will not find in this volume much that is new to them. They will find some of their old acquaintances, but altered, remodelled, recast, and partially divested of their direct and familiar style. But they will find the same arguments, the same matter, and the same substance, though presented in a new form, and adapted to the tastes of a different order of minds. I am sure they will agree with me, that it is well to use every means of doing good, and if possible to meet the wants of every class of readers.

Whether the volume will do any good remains to be seen. At any rate it is an honest effort to untie some theological knots, and to supply some clear statements of truth from the standpoint of an Evangelical Churchman. That God may bless the effort, and make it useful to the cause of Christ and to the Church of England, is my earnest prayer.

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Stradbroke Vicarage,
May, 1874.

II.

ONLY ONE WAY OF SALVATION.

IS THERE more than one road to heaven? Is there more than one way in which the soul of man can be saved? This is the question which I propose to consider in this paper, and I shall begin the consideration by quoting a text of Scripture: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

These words are striking in themselves; but they are much more striking if we observe when and by whom they were spoken.

They were spoken by a poor and friendless Christian, in the midst of a persecuting Jewish Council. It was a grand confession of Christ.

They were spoken by the lips of the Apostle Peter. This is the man who, a few weeks before, forsook Jesus and fled: this is the very man who three times over denied his Lord. There is another spirit in him now! He stands up boldly before priests and Sadducees, and tells them the truth to their face:—"his is the stone that was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Now I need hardly tell a well-informed reader that this text is one of the principal foundations on which the eighteenth Article of the Church of England is built

That article runs as follows: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved."

There are few stronger assertions than this, throughout the whole Thirty-nine Articles. It is the only anathema pronounced by our Church from one end of her great Confession of faith to the other. The Council of Trent in her decrees anathematizes continually. The Church of England uses an anathema or curse once, and once only; and that she does it on good grounds, I propose to show, by an examination of the Apostle Peters words.

In considering this solemn subject, there are three things I wish to do.

I. First, I wish to explain the doctrine here laid down by the Apostle.

II. Secondly, I wish to supply some reasons why this doctrine must be true.

III. Thirdly, I wish to show some consequences which naturally flow from the doctrine.

I. *First, let me explain the doctrine laid down by St. Peter.*

Let us make sure that we rightly understand what the Apostle means. He says of Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other." Now what does this mean? On our clearly seeing this very much depends.

He means that no one can be saved from sin,—its guilt, its power, and its consequences,—excepting by Jesus Christ.

He means that no one can have peace with God the Father,—obtain pardon in this world, and escape wrath to come in the next,—excepting through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ

In Christ alone God's rich provision of salvation for sinners is treasured up: by Christ alone God's abundant mercies come down from heaven to earth. Christ's blood alone can cleanse us; Christ's righteousness alone can clothe us; Christ's merit alone can give us a title to heaven. Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, kings and poor men,—all alike must either be saved by the Lord Jesus, or lost for ever.

And the Apostle adds emphatically, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no other person commissioned, sealed, and appointed by God the Father to be the Saviour of sinners, excepting Christ. The keys of life and death are committed to His hand, and all who would be saved must go to Him.

There was but one place of safety in the day when the flood came upon the earth: that place was Noah's ark. All other places and devices,—mountains, towers, trees, rafts, boats,—all were alike useless. So also there is but one hiding-place for the sinner who would escape the storm of God's anger: he must venture his soul on Christ.

There was but one man to whom the Egyptians could go in the time of famine, when they wanted food.—They must go to Joseph: it was a waste of time to go to any one else. So also there is but One to whom hungering souls must go, if they would not perish for ever: they must go to Christ.

There was but one word that could save the lives of the Ephraimites in the day when the Gileadites contended with them, and took the fords of Jordan (Judges xi.): they must say "Shibboleth," or die. Just so there is but one name that will avail us when we stand at the

gate of heaven: we must name the name of Jesus as our only hope, or be cast away everlastingly.

Such is the doctrine of the text. “No salvation but by Jesus Christ;—in Him plenty of salvation,—salvation to the uttermost, salvation for the very chief of sinners;—out of Him no salvation at all.” It is in perfect harmony with our Lord’s own words in St. John’s Gospel,—“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” (John xiv. 6.) It is the same thing that Paul tells the Corinthians:—“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. iii. 11.) And it is the same that St. John tells us in his first Epistle:—“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John v. 12.) All these texts come to one and the same point,—no salvation but by Jesus Christ.

Let us make sure that we understand this before we pass on. Men are apt to think, “This is all old news;— these are ancient things: who knoweth not such truths as these? Of course, we believe there is no salvation but by Christ.” But I ask my readers to mark well what I say. Make sure that you understand this doctrine, or else by and by you will stumble, and be offended at the statements I have yet to make in this paper.

We are to venture the whole salvation of our souls on Christ, and on Christ only. We are to cast loose completely and entirely from all other hopes and trusts. We are not to rest partly on Christ,—partly on doing all we can,—partly on keeping our church,—partly on receiving the sacrament. In the matter of our justification Christ is to be *all*. This is the doctrine of the text.

Heaven is before us, and Christ the only door into it; hell beneath us, and Christ alone able to deliver us from it; the devil behind us, and Christ the only refuge from his wrath and accusations; the law against us, and Christ alone able to redeem us; sin weighing us down, and Christ alone able to put it away. This is the doctrine of the text.

Now do we see it? I hope we do. But I fear many think so who may find, before laying down this paper, that they do not.

II. Let me, in the second place, supply some reasons why the doctrine of the text must be true.

I might cut short this part of the subject by one simple argument: “God says so.” “One plain text,” said an old divine, “is as good as a thousand reasons.”

But I will not do this. I wish to meet the objections that are ready to rise in many hearts against this doctrine, by pointing out the strong

foundations on which it stands.

1. Let me then say, for one thing, the doctrine of the text must be true, *because man is what man is.*

Now, what is man? There is one broad, sweeping answer, which takes in the whole human race: man is a sinful being. All children of Adam born into the world, whatever be their name or nation, are corrupt, wicked, and defiled in the sight of God. Their thoughts, words, ways, and actions are all, more or less, defective and imperfect.

Is there no country on the face of the globe where sin does not reign? Is there no happy valley, no secluded island, where innocence is to be found? Is there no tribe on earth, where, far away from civilization, and commerce, and money, and gunpowder, and luxury, and books, morality and purity flourish? No! there is none. Look over all the voyages and travels you can lay your hand on, from Columbus down to Cook, and from Cook to Livingstone, and you will see the truth of what I am asserting. The most solitary islands of the Pacific Ocean,—islands cut off from all the rest of the world,—islands where people were alike ignorant of Rome and Paris, London and Jerusalem,—these islands, when first discovered, have been found full of impurity, cruelty, and idolatry. The footprints of the devil have been traced on every shore. The veracity of the third chapter of Genesis has everywhere been established. Whatever else savages have been found ignorant of, they have never been found ignorant of sin.

But are there no men and women in the world who are free from this corruption of nature? Have there not been high-minded and exalted beings who have every now and then lived faultless lives? Have there not been some, if it be only a few, who have done all that God requires, and thus proved that sinless perfection is a possibility? No! there have been none. Look over all the biographies and lives of the holiest Christians; mark how the brightest and best of Christ's people have always had the deepest sense of their own defectiveness and corruption. They groan, they mourn, they sigh, they weep over their own shortcomings: it is one of the common grounds on which they meet. Patriarchs and Apostles, Fathers and Reformers, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Luther and Calvin, Knox and Bradford, Rutherford and Bishop Hall, Wesley and Whitefield, Martyn and M'Cheyne,—all are alike agreed in feeling their own sinfulness. The more light they have, the more humble and self-abased they seem to be; the more holy they are, the more they seem to feel their own unworthiness.

Now what does all this seem to prove? To my eyes it seems to prove that human nature is so tainted and corrupt that, left to himself,

no man could be saved. Man's case appears to be a hopeless one without a Saviour,—and that a mighty Saviour too. There must be a Mediator, an Atonement, an Advocate, to make such poor sinful beings acceptable with God: and I find this nowhere, excepting in Jesus Christ. Heaven for man without an almighty Redeemer, peace with God for man without a divine Intercessor, eternal life for man without an eternal Saviour,—in one word, salvation without Christ,—all alike, in the face of the plain facts about human nature, appear utter impossibilities.

I lay these things before thinking men, and I ask them to consider them. I know it is one of the hardest things in the world to realize the sinfulness of sin. *To say* we are all sinners is one thing; to have an idea what sin must be in the sight of God is quite another. Sin is too much part of ourselves to allow us to see it as it is: we do not feel our own moral deformity. We are like those animals in creation which are vile and loathsome to our senses, but are not so to themselves, nor yet to one another: their loathsomeness is their nature, and they do not perceive it. Just in the same way our corruption is part and parcel of ourselves, and at our best we have but a feeble comprehension of its intensity.

But this we may be sure of,—if we could see our own lives with the eyes of the angels who never fell, we should never doubt this point for a moment. In a word, no one can really know what man is, and not see that the doctrine of our text must be true. We are shut up to the Apostle Peter's conclusion. There can be no salvation except by Christ.

(2) Let me say another thing. The doctrine of our text must be true, *because God is what God is.*

Now what is God? That is a deep question indeed. We know something of His attributes: He has not left Himself without witness in creation; He has mercifully revealed to us many things about Himself in His Word. We know that God is a Spirit,—eternal, invisible, almighty,—the Maker of all things, the Preserver of all things,—holy, just, all-seeing, all-knowing, all-remembering,—infinite in mercy, in wisdom, in purity.

But, alas, after all, how low and grovelling are our highest ideas, when we come to put down on paper what we believe God to be! How many words and expressions we use whose full meaning we cannot fathom! How many things our tongues say of Him which our minds are utterly unable to conceive!

How small a part of Him do we see! How little of Him can we possibly know! How mean and paltry are any words of ours to convey any idea of Him who made this mighty world out of nothing, and

with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day! How weak and inadequate are our poor feeble intellects to form any conception of Him who is perfect in all His works,—perfect in the greatest as well as perfect in the smallest,—perfect in appointing the days and hours and minutes and seconds in which Jupiter, with all his satellites, shall travel round the sun,—perfect in forming the smallest insect that creeps over a few feet of our little globe. How little can our busy helplessness comprehend a Being who is ever ordering all things, in heaven and earth, by universal providence: ordering the rise and fall of nations and dynasties, like Nineveh and Carthage; ordering the exact length to which men like Alexander and Tamerlane and Napoleon shall extend their conquests; ordering the least step in the life of the humblest believer among His people: all at the same time, all unceasingly, all perfectly,—all for His own glory.

The blind man is no judge of the paintings of Rubens or Titian; the deaf man is insensible to the beauty of Handel's music; the Greenlander can have but a faint notion of the climate of the tropics; the South Sea islander can form but a remote conception of a locomotive engine, however well you may describe it. There is no faculty in their minds which can take in these things; they have no set of thoughts which can comprehend them; they have no mental fingers to grasp them. And just in the same way, the best and brightest ideas that man can form of God, compared to the reality which we shall one day see, are weak and faint indeed.

But one thing, I think, is very clear: and that is this. The more any man considers calmly what God really is, the more he must feel the immeasurable distance between God and himself: the more he meditates, the more he must see that there is a great gulf between him and God. His conscience, I think, will tell him, if he will let it speak, that God is perfect, and he imperfect; that God is very high, and he very low; that God is glorious majesty, and he a poor worm; and that if ever he is to stand before Him in judgment with comfort, he must have some mighty Helper, or he will not be saved.

And what is all this but the very doctrine of the text with which I began this paper? What is all this but coming round to the conclusion I am urging upon my readers? With such a one as God to give account to, we must have a mighty Saviour. To give us peace with such a glorious being as God, we must have an Almighty Mediator, a Friend and Advocate on our side,—an Advocate who can answer every charge that can be laid against us, and plead our cause with God on equal terms. We want this, and nothing less than this. Vague notions of mercy will never give true peace. And such a Saviour,

such a Friend, such an Advocate is nowhere to be found excepting in the person of Jesus Christ.

I lay this reason also before thinking men. I know well that people may have false notions of God as well as everything else, and shut their eyes against truth. But I say boldly and confidently, No man can have really high and honourable views of what God is, and escape the conclusion that the doctrine of our text must be true. We are shut up to the truth of St. Peter's declaration. There can be no possible salvation but by Jesus Christ.

(3) Let me say, in the third place, this doctrine must be true, *because the Bible is what the Bible is*. If we do not believe the doctrine, we must give up the Bible as the only rule of faith.

All through the Bible, from Genesis down to Revelation, there is only one simple account of the way in which man must be saved. It is always the same: only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ,—through faith; not for our own works and deservings.

We see it dimly revealed at first: it looms through the mist of a few promises; but there it is.

We have it more plainly afterwards: it is taught by the pictures and emblems of the law of Moses, the schoolmaster dispensation.

We have it still more clearly by and by: the Prophets saw in vision many particulars about the Redeemer yet to come.

We have it fully at last, in the sunshine of New Testament history: Christ incarnate,—Christ crucified,—Christ rising again,—Christ preached to the world.

But one golden chain runs through the whole volume: no salvation excepting by Jesus Christ. The bruising of the serpent's head foretold in the day of the fall; the clothing of our first parents with skins; the sacrifices of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the passover, and all the particulars of the Jewish law,—the high priest, the altar, the daily offering of the lamb, the holy of holies entered only by blood, the scape goat, the cities of refuge;—all are so many witnesses to the truth set forth in the text. All preach with one voice, salvation only by Jesus Christ.

In fact, this truth appears to be the grand object of the Bible, and all the different parts and portions of the book are meant to pour light upon it. I can gather from it no ideas of pardon and peace with God excepting in connection with this truth. If I could read of one soul in it who was saved without faith in a Saviour, I might perhaps not speak so confidently. But when I see that faith in Christ,—whether a coming Christ or a crucified Christ,—was the prominent feature in the religion of all who went to heaven;—when I see Abel owning Christ in his "better sacrifice" at one end of the Bible, and the saints

in glory in John's vision rejoicing in Christ at the other end of the Bible;—when I see a man like Cornelius, who was devout, and feared God, and gave alms and prayed, not told that he had done all, and would of course be saved, but ordered to send for Peter, and hear of Christ;—when I see all these things, I say, I feel bound to believe that the doctrine of the text is the doctrine of the whole Bible. The Word of God, fairly examined and interpreted, shuts me up to the truth laid down by St. Peter. No salvation, no way to heaven, excepting by Jesus Christ.

Such are the reasons which seem to me to confirm the truth which forms the subject of this paper. What man is,—what God is,—what the Bible is,—all appear to me to lead on to the same great conclusion: no possible salvation without Christ. I leave them here, and pass on.

III. And now, in the third and last place, *let me show some consequences which flow naturally out of the doctrine declared by St. Peter.*

There are few parts of the subject which seem to me more important than this. The truth I have been trying to set before my readers bears so strongly on the condition of a great proportion of mankind, that I consider it would be mere affectation on my part not to say something about it. If Christ is the only way of salvation, what are we to feel about many people in the world? This is the point I am now going to take up.

I believe that many persons would go with me so far as I have gone, and would go no further. They will allow my premises: they will have nothing to say to my conclusions. They think it uncharitable to say anything which appears to condemn others. For my part I cannot understand such charity. It seems to me the kind of charity which would see a neighbour drinking slow poison, but never interfere to stop him;—which would allow emigrants to embark in a leaky, ill-found vessel, and not interfere to prevent them;—which would see a blind man walking near a precipice, and think it wrong to cry out, and tell him there was danger.

The greatest charity is to tell the greatest quantity of truth. It is no charity to hide the legitimate consequences of such a saying of St. Peter as we are now considering, or to shut our eyes against them. And I solemnly call on every one who really believes there is no salvation in any but Christ,—and none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved,—I solemnly call on that person to give me his attention, while I set before him some of the tremendous consequences which the doctrine we are considering involves.

I am not going to speak of the heathen who have never heard the Gospel. Their final state is a great depth, which the mightiest minds have been unable to fathom: I am not ashamed of leaving it alone. One thing only I will say. If any of the heathen, who die heathen, are saved, I believe they will owe their salvation, however little they may know it on this side of the grave, to the work and atonement of Christ. Just as infants and idiots among ourselves will find at the last day they owed all to Christ, though they never knew Him, so I believe it will be with the heathen, if any of them are saved, whether many or few. This at any rate I am sure of—there is no such thing as creature merit. My own private opinion is that the highest Archangel (though, of course, in a very different way and degree from us) will be found in some way to owe his standing to Christ; and that things in heaven, as well as things on earth, will be found ultimately all indebted to the name of Jesus. But I leave the case of the heathen to others, and will speak of matters nearer home.

One mighty consequence then which seems to be learned from the text which forms the keynote of this paper, *is the utter uselessness of any religion without Christ.*

There are many to be found in Christendom at this day who have a religion of this kind. They would not like to be called Deists, but Deists they are. That there is a God, that there is what they are pleased to call Providence, that God is merciful, that there will be a state after death,—this is about the sum and substance of their creed; and as to the distinguishing tenets of Christianity, they do not seem to recognize them at all. Now I denounce such a system as a baseless fabric,—its seeming foundation man's fancy,—its hopes an utter delusion. The god of such people is an idol of their own invention, and not the glorious God of the Scriptures,—a miserably imperfect being, even on their own showing: without holiness, without justice, without any attribute but that of vague, indiscriminate mercy. Such a religion may possibly do as a toy to live with: it is far too unreal to die with. It utterly fails to meet the wants of man's conscience: it offers no remedy; it affords no rest for the soles of our feet; it cannot comfort, for it cannot save. Let us beware of it, if we love life. *Let us beware of a religion without Christ.*

Another consequence to be learned from the text is, *the folly of any religion in which Christ has not the first place.*

I need not remind my readers how many hold a system of this kind. The Socinian tells us that Christ was a mere man; that His blood had no more efficacy than that of another; that His death on the cross was not a real atonement and propitiation of man's sins; and that, after all, doing is the way to heaven, and not believing. I

solemnly declare that I believe such a system is ruinous to men's souls. It seems to me to strike at the root of the whole plan of salvation which God has revealed in the Bible, and practically to nullify the greater part of the Scriptures. It overthrows the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, and strips Him of His office. It converts the whole system of the law of Moses, touching sacrifices and ordinances, into a meaningless form. It seems to say that the sacrifice of Cain was just as good as the sacrifice of Abel. It turns man adrift on a sea of uncertainty, by plucking from under him the finished work of a divine Mediator. Let us beware of it, no less than of Deism, if we love life. Let us beware of the least attempt to depreciate and undervalue Christ's person, offices, or work. The name whereby alone we can be saved, is a name above every name, and the slightest contempt poured upon it is an insult to the King of kings. The salvation of our souls has been laid by God the Father on Christ, and no other. If He were not very God of very God, He never could accomplish it, and there could be no salvation at all.

Another consequence to be learned from our text is, the *great error committed by those who add anything to Christ, as necessary to salvation.*

It is an easy thing to profess belief in the Trinity, and reverence for our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet to make some addition to Christ as the ground of hope, and so to overthrow the doctrine of the text as really and completely as by denying it altogether.

The Church of Rome does this systematically. She adds things to Christianity over and above the requirements of the Gospel, of her own invention. She speaks as if Christ's finished work was not a sufficient foundation for a sinner's soul, and as if it were not enough to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." She sends men to priests and confessors, to penances and absolution, to masses and extreme unction, to fasting and bodily mortification, to the Virgin Mary and the saints,—as if these things could add to the safety there is in Christ Jesus. And in doing this she sins against the doctrine of God's Word with a high hand. Let us beware of any Romish hankering after additions to the simple way of the Gospel, from whatever quarter it may come.

But I fear the Church of Rome does not stand alone in this matter. I fear there are thousands of professing Protestants who are often erring in the same direction, although, of course, in a very different degree. They get into a way of adding, perhaps insensibly, other things to the name of Christ, or attaching an importance to them which they never ought to receive. The ultra Churchman in England, who thinks God's covenanted mercies are tied to episcopacy,—the

ultra Presbyterian in Scotland, who cannot reconcile prelacy with an intelligent knowledge of the Gospel,—the ultra Free-kirk man by his side, who seems to think lay patronage and vital Christianity almost incompatible,—the ultra Dissenter, who traces every evil in the Church to its connection with the State, and can talk of nothing but the voluntary system,—the ultra Baptist, who shuts out from the Lord's table every one who has not received his peculiar views of adult baptism,—the ultra Plymouth Brother, who believes all knowledge to reside with his own body, and condemns every one outside as a poor weak babe;—all these, I say, however unwittingly, exhibit a most uncomfortable tendency to add to the doctrine of our text. All seem to me to be practically declaring that salvation is not to be found simply and solely in Christ. All seem to me to be practically adding another name to the name of Jesus, whereby men must be saved,—even the name of their own party and sect. All seem to me to be practically replying to the question, “What shall I do to be saved?” not merely, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” but also “Come and join us.”

Now I call upon every true Christian to beware of such ultraism, in whatever form he may be inclined to it. In saying this I would not be misunderstood. I like every one to be decided in his views of ecclesiastical matters, and to be fully persuaded of their correctness. All I ask is, that men will not put these things in the place of Christ, or place them anywhere near Him, or speak of them as if they thought them needful to salvation. However dear to us our own peculiar views may be, let us beware of thrusting them in between the sinner and the Saviour. In the things of God's Word, be it remembered, addition, as well as subtraction, is a great sin.

The last consequence which seems to me to be learned from our text is, *the utter absurdity of supposing that we ought to be satisfied with a man's state of soul, if he is only earnest and sincere.*

This is a very common heresy indeed, and one against which we all need to be on our guard. There are thousands who say in the present day, “We have nothing to do with the opinions of others. They may perhaps be mistaken, though it is possible they are right and we wrong: but, if they are sincere and earnest, we hope they will be saved, even as we.” And all this sounds liberal and charitable, and people like to fancy their own views are so! To such an extreme length has this erroneous idea run, that many are content to describe a Christian as “an earnest man,” and seem to think this vague definition is quite sufficient.

Now I believe such notions are entirely contradictory to the Bible, whatever else they may be. I cannot find in Scripture that any

one ever got to heaven merely by sincerity, or was accepted with God if he was only earnest in maintaining his own views. The priests of Baal were earnest and sincere when they cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out; but that did not prevent Elijah from commanding them to be treated as wicked idolaters.—Manasseh, King of Judah, was doubtless earnest and sincere when he burned his children in the fire to Moloch; but who does not know that he brought on himself great guilt by so doing?—The Apostle Paul, when a Pharisee, was earnest and sincere while he made havoc of the Church, but when his eyes were opened he mourned over this as a special wickedness. Let us beware of allowing for a moment that sincerity is everything, and that we have no right to speak ill of a man's spiritual state because of the opinions he holds, if he is only *earnest* in holding them. On such principles, the Druidical sacrifices, the car of Juggernaut, the Indian suttees, the systematic murders of the Thugs, the fires of Smithfield, might each and all be defended. It will not stand: it will not bear the test of Scripture. Once allow such notions to be true, and we may as well throw our Bibles aside altogether. Sincerity is not Christ, and therefore sincerity cannot put away sin.

I dare be sure these consequences sound very unpleasant to the minds of some who may read them. But I say, calmly and advisedly, that a religion without Christ, a religion that takes away from Christ, a religion that adds anything to Christ, a religion that puts sincerity in the place of Christ,—all are dangerous: all are to be avoided, because all are alike contrary to the doctrine of Scripture.

Some readers may not like this. I am sorry for it. They think me uncharitable, illiberal, narrow-minded, bigoted, and so forth. Be it so. But they will not tell me my doctrine is not that of the Word of God and of the Church of England, whose minister I am. That doctrine is, salvation in Christ to the very uttermost,—but out of Christ no salvation at all.

I feel it a duty to bear my solemn testimony against the spirit of the day we live in; to warn men against its infection. It is not Atheism I fear so much, in the present times, as Pantheism. It is not the system which says nothing is true, so much as the system which says everything is true. It is not the system which says there is no Saviour, so much as the system which says there are many saviours, and many ways to peace!—It is the system which is so liberal, that it dares not say anything is false. It is the system which is so charitable, that it will allow everything to be true. It is the system which seems ready to honour others as well as our Lord Jesus Christ, to class them all together, and to think well of all. Confucius and Zoroaster, Socrates

and Mahomet, the Indian Brahmins and the African devil-worshippers, Arius and Pelagius, Ignatius Loyola and Socinus,—all are to be treated respectfully: none are to be condemned. It is the system which bids us smile complacently on all creeds and systems of religion. The Bible and the Koran, the Hindoo Vedas and the Persian Zendavesta, the old wives' fables of Rabbinical writers and the rubbish of Patristic traditions, the Racovian catechism and the Thirty-nine Articles, the revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg and the book of Mormon of Joseph Smith,—all, all are to be listened to: none are to be denounced as lies. It is the system which is so scrupulous about the feelings of others, that we are never to say they are wrong. It is the system which is so liberal that it calls a man a bigot, if he dares to say, "I know my views are right." This is the system, this is the tone of feeling which I fear in this day, and this is the system which I desire emphatically to testify against and denounce.

What is it all but a bowing down before a great idol, speciously called liberality? What is it all but a sacrificing of truth upon the altar of a caricature of charity? What is it all but the worship of a shadow, a phantom, and an unreality? What can be more absurd than to profess ourselves content with "earnestness," when we do not know what we are earnest about? Let us take heed lest we are carried away by the delusion. Has the Lord God spoken to us in the Bible, or has He not? Has He shown us the way of salvation plainly and distinctly in that Bible, or has He not? Has He declared to us the dangerous state of all out of that way, or has He not? Let us gird up the loins of our minds, and look these questions fairly in the face, and give them an honest answer. Tell us that there is some other inspired book beside the Bible, and then we shall know what you mean. Tell us that the whole Bible is not inspired, and then we shall know where to meet you. But grant for a moment that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is God's truth, and then I know not in what way we can escape the doctrine of the text. From the liberality which says everybody is right, from the charity which forbids us to say anybody is wrong, from the peace which is bought at the expense of truth,—may the good Lord deliver us!

For my own part, I frankly confess, I find no resting-place between downright distinct Evangelical Christianity and downright infidelity, whatever others may find. I see no half-way house between them; or else I see houses that are roofless and cannot shelter my weary soul. I can see consistency in an infidel, however much I may pity him. I can see consistency in the full maintenance of Evangelical truth. But as to a middle course between the two,—I cannot see it; and I say so plainly. Let it be called illiberal and uncharitable. I can

hear God's voice nowhere except in the Bible, and I can see no salvation for sinners in the Bible excepting through Jesus Christ. In Him I see abundance: out of Him I see none. And as for those who hold religions in which Christ is not all, whoever they may be, I have a most uncomfortable feeling about their safety. I do not for a moment say that none of them will be saved; but I say that those who are saved will be saved by their disagreement with their own principles, and in spite of their own systems. The man who wrote the famous line,

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

was a great poet undoubtedly, but he was a wretched divine.

Let me conclude this paper with a few words by way of application.

First of all, if there is no salvation excepting in Christ, let us make sure that we have an interest in that salvation ourselves. Let us not be content with hearing, and approving, and assenting to the truth, and going no further. Let us seek to have a personal interest in this salvation. Let us not rest till we know and feel that we have got actual possession of that peace with God which Jesus offers, and that Christ is ours, and we are Christ's. If there were two, or three, or more ways of getting to heaven, there would be no necessity for pressing this matter. But if there is *only one way*, who can wonder that I say, "Make sure that you are in it."

Secondly, if there is no salvation excepting in Christ, let us try to do good to the souls of all who do not know Him as a Saviour. There are millions in this miserable condition,—millions in foreign lands, millions in our own country, millions who are not trusting in Christ. We ought to feel for them if we are true Christians; we ought to pray for them; we ought to work for them, while there is yet time. Do we really believe that Christ is the only way to heaven? Then let us live as if we believed it.

Let us look round the circle of our own relatives and friends, count them up one by one, and think how many of them are not yet in Christ. Let us try to do good to them in some way or other, and act as a man should act who believes his friends to be in danger. Let us not be content with their being kind and amiable, gentle and good-tempered, moral and courteous. Let us rather be miserable about them till they come to Christ, and trust in Him. I know all this may sound like enthusiasm and fanaticism. I wish there was more of it in the world. Anything, I am sure, is better than a quiet indifference

about the souls of others, as if everybody was in the way to heaven. Nothing, to my mind, so proves our little faith, as our little feeling about the spiritual condition of those around us.

Thirdly, if there is no salvation excepting in Christ, let us love all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and exalt Him as their Saviour, whoever they may be. Let us not draw back and look shy on others, because they do not see eye to eye with ourselves in everything. Whether a man be a Free-kirk man or an Independent, a Wesleyan or a Baptist, let us love him if he loves Christ, and gives Christ His rightful place. We are all fast travelling toward a place where names and forms and Church government will be nothing, and Christ will be all. Let us get ready for that place betimes, by loving all who are in the way that leads to it.

This is the true charity, to believe all things and hope all things, so long as we see Bible doctrines maintained and Christ exalted. Christ must be the single standard by which all opinions must be measured. Let us honour all who honour Him: but let us never forget that the same apostle Paul who wrote about charity, says also, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema." If our charity and liberality are wider than that of the Bible, they are worth nothing at all. Indiscriminate love is no love at all, and indiscriminate approbation of all religious opinions, is only a new name for infidelity. Let us hold out the right hand to all who love the Lord Jesus, but let us beware how we go beyond this.

Lastly, if there is no salvation excepting by Christ, we must not be surprised if ministers of the Gospel preach much about Him. They cannot tell us too much about the name which is above every name. We cannot hear of Him too often. We may hear too much about controversy in sermons,—we may hear too much of works and duties, of forms, of ceremonies, of sacraments and ordinances,—but there is one subject which we never hear too much of: we can never hear too much of Christ.

When ministers are wearied of preaching Him, they are false ministers: when people are wearied of hearing of Him, their souls are in an unhealthy state. When ministers have preached Him all their lives, the half of His excellence will remain untold. When hearers see Him face to face in the day of His appearing, they will find there was more in Him than their hearts ever conceived.

Let me conclude this paper with the words of an old writer, to which I desire humbly to subscribe. "I know no true religion but Christianity; no true Christianity but the doctrine of Christ: the doctrine of His divine person, of His divine office, of His divine righteousness, and of His divine Spirit, which all that are His receive. I

know no true ministers of Christ but such as make it their business, in their calling, to commend Jesus Christ, in His saving fulness of grace and glory, to the faith and love of men; no true Christian but one united to Christ by faith and love, unto the glorifying of the name of Jesus Christ, in the beauty of Gospel holiness. Ministers and Christians of this spirit have been for many years my brethren and companions, and I hope shall ever be, whithersoever the hand of God shall lead me.”