

## The Character of Christ of Supernatural Origin.

BY J. W. LOWBER, PH. D.

What think you of the Christ? is an interrogation the most fundamental and all-engrossing that has ever been propounded to men. For more than eighteen centuries, it has been the most vital question among all classes. Even unbelievers can not let it alone, for they feel that their eternal well-being might depend upon a proper answer to it.

We do not understand by Supernatural, something contrary to all means; but that which is superhuman, and above the common laws of Nature. We believe that the Supernatural comes within the domain of law, but it is a higher law than any with which we are now acquainted. All Nature at first originated in the miraculous, and it is impossible for the world to get rid of the idea of miracle. In all this, however, we believe there was profound method. The mission of the Christ into this world was not without means; but it was the grandest methodical arrangement of which man can form a conception.

The Jews did not originate the character of Christ, for it was the opposite of all their preconceived ideas of the Messiah. It arose far above any conception of which the Jewish mind was capable. It could not have taken its origin among the gentiles, for it was entirely too Jewish for them. That it did not originate with the disciples of Christ is shown in the fact that even after his resurrection from among the dead, it required miraculous power to make them fully comprehend the completeness of his character. We must, therefore, conclude that the character of Christ was of Supernatural origin, and that it required the Great Artist to present to the world such an original and such a perfect picture.

The teaching of Jesus proves His divine origin. It can not be said of Him that He simply taught good things; for every thing He taught was absolutely perfect. At the conclusion of His grand sermon on the mountain, the people were astonished at His teaching; for He taught with authority, and not as their scribes. The first seven beauties of that sermon should convince every honest mind of the divine mission of Jesus. They refer to traits of character and to states of mind; and are paradoxical; for the world's conception of the man who

is superlatively blessed has always been the opposite of what is taught in them. The doctrine was new and strange not only to the heathen world, but also to the most cultivated students of the Jewish law. The truth of all these maxims has been carefully realized by all that have accepted and practiced them. They make up a perfect character.

The life of Jesus corresponded to His teaching; for He perfectly practiced what he taught. Not a man, among the keen-eyed critics, or the vilest opposers of Christianity has been able to produce a single instance, where Jesus violated in practice what He had taught. In this Jesus stands alone; for He is the only teacher who has had a perfect practice, and the only one who has perfectly practiced what he taught. How account for this without admitting the divine authority of Jesus Christ?

The teaching and the life of Christ have stood the test of time. What has become of the philosophers who were contemporary with Jesus? With the exception of a very few they have gone into forgetfulness, to be heard of no more until the unfolding of the records of the last judgment. What has become of the great statesmen of Greece and Rome? With the exception of a few, they too have passed from the records of time, and have gone into the shades of forgetfulness. What has become of the Jewish doctors, who lived in the days of Jesus? Their names have also perished, and they have left but few foot-prints on the sands of time. The name of Jesus acquires more influence day by day: How understand this without accepting the divinity of His mission?

The admissions of those not favorable to Jesus in His day are sufficient to show that His teaching was of superhuman origin. His question to the Jews about the baptism of John silenced them, and showed that they despised the truth. They admitted that He cast out demons, and tried to explain it away. Judas the traitor, understood all the private counsels of Jesus, and he went to the chief priests to confess that he had betrayed the innocent. The wife of Pilate and even the governor himself, pronounced Jesus innocent. After the resurrection of Christ, the guard came into the city to report the fact, and was hired by the Jewish priests to tell an absolutely unreasonable falsehood.—*Microcosm.*

## Personal.

—Bro. J. H. Garrison, editor of the *Christian*, has returned to his home in St. Louis, after an absence of eighteen months in England, with improved health.

—Bro. Rowe, editor of the *Review*, expects to be present at the dedication of the Christian chapel at Blaine, Lawrence county, Ky., on Sept. 17th, though the *Review* used to make it somewhat warm for those who so far conformed to Papal notions as to dedicate their churches.

—Bro. Delainey, of Paris, France, is seeing the fruit of his labors by several persons confessing and obeying the Christ. The wealth of the Indies would scarcely suffice for the means to carry on the work of preaching the Gospel of the Son of God.—*Messenger.*

## The Christ of Fiction.

Nothing is gained by concealment of the actual issue. Two rival Christs are set before us. The one is he whom Christendom has worshipped from its origin; the other is the joint creation of German rationalism and the poetic temperament. Whose is the fiction? Before modern criticism can place the Christ it has evolved from its own imagination upon the throne where the Christ of the Gospel sits, it must deprive the primitive Church not only of a pure conscience and a reasonable faith but of every vestige of intellect and honesty. Whence, then, came the undying force which is gradually winning the world to righteousness?—*Wesleyan Quarterly.*

## A Life of Obedience.

The hardest sort of a Christian to transform into a skeptic is not the man who knows the most, but the man who obeys the most. Infidelity has no chance with the humblest disciple who follows close after Christ in acts of loving service. But a German professor of theology, whose brain is a cyclopedia, living among the dust of libraries, turning Christianity into a problem, drying up the source of spiritual feelings, may be swayed hither and thither by every breeze of unbelief. I have known Christian ministers of the Gospel to become semi-skeptics and lose a strong hold on many truths by putting knowledge above obedience. By shutting themselves away from men and active efforts to save souls,

by confining their interests to one part of their nature, by letting the missionary in their heart give way, and deferring to the philosopher in the head, they have dwarfed and sometimes crucified their faith.—*Journal and Messenger.*

## Conviction of Sin.

Many good men are boldly asserting their belief that conviction of sin is "the great need of our times." This is encouraging beyond expression. The very best of us need it. No man can become so pious as to be able to neglect or dispense with it. Even Paul, the prince of preachers, felt that he was the chief of sinners. And it must not be forgotten that he was now ripe with Christian experience. He was not now a young convert in the first struggle, but an aged and experienced Christian scholar; hence the paramount significance of his conviction. The distinction here suggested between the earlier and later experiences is most vital, and an intelligent view of it would give us a rational conception of the whole question.—*A. L. Cole, D. D.*

The *Review* says a remarkable case is now being tried before the courts of Australia. A Roman Catholic merchant left in his will a bequest of \$7,000 to be used to deliver his soul from purgatory. The executor, who is not only a skeptic but a humorist, demands legal proof from the local priests that the conditions of the will have been complied with before he will pay over the money. The burden of an unexpected problem is thus thrown on the church, as it is called on to prove to the satisfaction of a court of law, that purgatory has an actual existence, that prayer has power to release souls from it, and also that this particular soul has been released. The puzzle is a curious one, and the interested clergymen are much perplexed by the quandary in which they are placed.

"Fools make a mock of sin." This is the lowest degradation, to laugh at that which degrades, this the most wretched death to mock at that which causes death, mocking even in the dying agonies.

After the first day of December next, for every profane oath a man utters in the State of New York he may be fined one dollar and sent to jail for ten days. That is the law of the Empire State.—*E.c.*