Abstract of Annual Sermon

By REV. ROBT. WATT,

of Scott Church, Wilmington, Del., Before the Y. M. C. A. of Washington College in the M. E. Church, Chestertown, Sunday, June 16th, 1895.

Text, Matt. 1:25 He called his name Jesus; John 20:21: As the father hath sent me, even so send I you.

I trust I am not insensible, young gentlemen, to the honor conferred upon me in being invited to address you. And one must be aware too of the responsibility such honor enjoins. I have no formal theme to announce other than that to be found in the texts quoted. They contain the germ of what I would say to you this evening, and they embody so perfectly the thoughts to be presented that no formal theme need be stated.

If any excuse were needed for the discussion of so trite a subject, it is found in the matchless glory and power of the person and teachings of Jesus, the Christ. Reviewed from whatever standpoint conceivable his character and truth rise in sublime superiority over all others. There is none like unto him. Like an Alpine peak which towers immeasurably above its fellows, so do the life and works of Jesus rise beyond all others May I ask you tonight to glance at this name and our relation to it as his servants?

First of all, this name means redemption from sin's guilt and power. "His name shall be called Jesus," sang the Hebrew bard centuries ago, "for he shall save His people from their sins." But modern philosophy sneers at sin—calls it a dogma of ancient ignorance, the figment of a diseased imagination. It has no real extstance. In proof of this they insist that nowhere does the Bible attempt to prove its reality. True, like Hume's argument against miracle, it proves too much. You have studied during your school life the science of physiology. Does the book attempt to prove the reality of the human body? no, the treatise presupposes the thing treated of. The application is plain. The existence of the Word of God, with its Sinai and Calvary, presupposes the real nature of sin. Deny the nature and entity of sin and you rob Jesus Christ of His glory and power. Mere admiration will not answer. I for one, do not appreciate, as it would seem to deserve, the great admiration which the great menof the ages have expressed for the son of man. He compels admiration. Where one looks into that life, a life that throbbed in such continuous sympathy with vexed humanity, admiration is excited as certainly as the sunbeam blushes the rose. "He called his name Jesus, for in him was redemption from the thraldom and guilt of sin. Only his touch can cure the fever; only his voice bid the surging waves "be still."

And in the next place this truth embodies the hope of the world. I am not unmindful of the fact that this century smiles at the statement as the outgrowth of a heated imagination. Philosophy assures us that the age has vanished that tolerated such weakness. "We have learned, says the modern teacher, "that to push humanity to its highest development we have but to educate, train and mould men into a higher life. Throw around them the influences of a noble civilization, and lure them by lofty ideals and the work is done." Indeed! Do not these modern philosophers know that their theories were tested to the full and failed ere Jesus Christ left the bosom of the Father? Do they not know that until he came the world staggered on and its sob of woe never died away until Judea's sky trembled with the song of the herald angels who proclaimed the coming of the Prince of Peace!

But we hear much of the beauty and power of Humanitarianism. What is it? The shadow instead of the substance. It attempts the inspiration of the Gospel apart from its power. It accepts the picture of the Good Samaritan, but denies the genuineness of the artist who portrayed it. Rob Jesus Christ of His divine nature and you cripple His truth and destroy his character. Humanitarianism stands dumb and helpless in the presence of disaster and ruin caused by sin. The Christ of the Gospel speaks and the waves of human passion fall flat and are still. The ideal of this philosophy is as powerless against the storm as the hand of the toddling child.

Infidelity, not to be outdone, and jealous of its reputation for presumption, comes with unblushing effrontery and smiles sarcastically at the name and power of the truth of Jesus. Of this Knight errant we must not trust ourselves to speak at length. But, young gentlemen, bear a single question. Why do the advocates of this Godless creed remain in a land blessed by the presence of the truth of Christ? Why not move to Central Africa, whose gloomy shadows are unmolested by a single beam from the sun of righteousness? Surely they would there find a sphere where their boasted theories could be tested. The mind and heart of the thick-lipped, low-browed savage has never been diseased by the "iniquitous perversions of purblind theologians." Why do they linger under the very shadow of the Redeemer's cross and seek to mingle their jibes with the echos of those who lamented the dying Son of God? So meager has been their measure of success that one would imagine that a new field would have charms inestimable. When they can point to one diseased soul healed and cleansed by their power, one tear wiped from sorrow's eye, one sob quenched or one great achievment wrought, then, and not till then, will the doctrine of Jesus yield them place.

The world's hope and our talisman, must be the doctrine of the Saviorhood of the Christ. To this must we pin our faith, for when the night looms dark and uncertain and our stumbling feet know not which way to turn, lo the star of Bethlehem glows with hope and joy upon our way. Nor do we accept this simply in a blind unreasoning faith. There are reasons sufficiently strong to satisfy the most merciless critic. Glance at a few.

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