

SOUL-SATISFACTION IN CHRIST

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and so he hews out the broken cisterns that can hold no water. And in religion he is more eager and ready to accept unreality than the real. Was it not so with the Jews? What a beautiful time they had at the feast! But for the most of them, Jesus spoiled it all. The programme had been going fine till he stepped in; obtruded himself upon the people with his profession and his claims. I can imagine that when some of the people went home and those who had not been able to go to the feast asked them what kind of a time they had, replied, O, it was beautiful, and wonderful as to the singing and the trumpeting and all the details of the worship, but that tramp preacher from Nazareth at the last spoiled it all. He cried out "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He has got the habit of coming around and disturbing our beautiful services. I think that the authorities ought to stop him. I can imagine that the people talked this way, but especially the priests who were fooling the people by merely playing religion.

The saddest thing to see is people with precious immortal souls to save, merely playing religion and getting nothing satisfying out of it. I went into a home the other night, where there were three lovely children, and Santa Claus had been there. It looked as though he had dumped his pack there, for they had so many things and they were delighted to show them to me. And of course I was interested in the tricycle the steam engine, the dolls and the toys. At last a little four-year-old opened a nice tea set. I said "Oh isn't this lovely! Let us have some of your tea". And immediately she took the hint. I took the cup and she poured it nearly full of imaginary tea, then I said, "I will have some milk, if you please, in my tea." And she poured the milk from the pitcher, and I drank a whole cup full at a gulp and asked for more. We had a real nice time. I drank the most tea there I had for some time. But of course it was all imaginary. It was child's play. Their imagination is vivid you know.

And I said to myself as I left, That is the way people do often in religion. It is only make-believe. They fix up their fountains and go through the motions of drinking but there is no reality and spirit there; and so they get no real soul-satisfaction out of it for they do not touch Christ who is the only one that can meet the need of their soul.

Dr. Stanley Jones, a missionary in India, has written two great books recently. One entitled "The Christ of the Indian Road", and the other "Christ at The Round Table". These books have awakened great interest and much comment. They are the leading sellers of the day. To the round-table Dr. Jones called leading educated Brahmins and Mohammedans and others, where they had the opportunity of telling what their religion meant to them, and did for them. Some of these men were philosophers and could bring forth fine theories and announce beautiful maxims. But Dr. Jones would ask them, "Have you found God in all your quest and devotions? Has he come in to satisfy your soul?" And the answer invariably was, "No we have not found God in all our search. None of our people have. Then Dr. Jones would say, "But I have found God, and he has settled all my doubts and fears. In Jesus I have found an answer to all the deepest longings of my soul. He came to reveal God and to make him real in my heart. And he has done it. Old things have passed away and behold all things have become new."

Now such a testimony sounds strange to those mystical Hindus, who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They

rather glory in their lack of spiritual certainty; their activity that gets them nowhere. Their idea of great holiness consists in punishing the body by a life of rigorous asceticism. Gandhi is perhaps their best representative, and he professes to accept the teaching of Jesus but rejects the Lordship and supreme authority of Christ himself.

But can we laugh at the Orientals! Not much. The trouble with most of our religion is that it teaches about Christ but too often Christ is left out. As the presence of Christ and his message at the feast of tabernacles, caused the church leaders no little confusion, so the programme of the church today would be broken to smithereens if Christ were allowed to come in and have his say. Forms and ceremonies and beautiful music and preaching; Yes all that; But where is the Holy Ghost who alone can make Jesus and worship real! Too often people go to church with the same spirit they go to the movies. They appreciate the singing according to its artistic aspects and tonal qualities; the sermon according to its oratorical skill and interesting features, which deal with the issues of the day. But some will say, "Don't bring your theology to me. I am a practical man". That is just what we want; a practical attitude. We are not dealing pre-eminently with the Christ of theology, but with the Christ of experience. I know that the love of flowers came before the science of botany; that the love of music was before the science of the scales; that the love of children was long before the knowledge of anatomy and physiology; that the desire for food and drink was prior to the science of dietetics. And I know that the experience of Christ was real and glorious before systematic theology was dreamed of. But get the experience and the theology will take care of itself. Jesus said, "If any man will do my will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

Think of a lad rushing into the house on a hot day crying, "Mother I am about dead for a drink!" And think of the mother pouring out a glass of beautiful water and saying, "Johnnie I am glad to see you thirsty, but before you drink I must assure myself that you are fully acquainted with the chemical formulae of water. I want you to know that the formulae is H₂O. I want to know if you understand the muscular activity involved in drinking". I think that Johnnie would become impatient and say, "O Mother cut that stuff out, I want a drink and don't care about your H₂O I am thirsty". To Johnnie a good drink of water was better than a lecture on chemistry.

But suppose Johnnie had come and professed to be thirsty and his mother had got him the water, but before he would drink it, he must have a perfect explanation of the nature of water and how it could possibly slake his thirst? Would it not be the mother who would protest? I think so, and rightly too. So when many want me to explain all the mystery of Christ's person and all the mystery of the incarnation, I can't do it and am glad I can't. But I can do it just as well as I can explain all the mystery of water and its power to slake my thirst and save my life. All I can say is, "O taste and see that the Lord is good". Happy is the man who doesn't philosophize and question, but stoops down and drinks and lives.

When men give Christ the proper place in their affections and will, they will give him his true place in their theology. He is all of God they want and all they need; and giving him the supreme place they honor both the Father and the Holy Ghost. You remember the time when Jesus and his disciples had come to that city called Samaria. It was the city the orthodox Jew gave a wide berth. They hated the Samaritans. But Jesus had to go through that city, because he knew a woman

was there who had a thirsty soul, in spite of all her sin and wrong doing. His disciples had gone into the city to buy meat, and Jesus weary and tired sat on the well-curb. O how manifest was his humanity! Just a tired, weary, thirsty hungry man, some would say. But soon a woman came to draw water, and Jesus broke through the conventional standards and politely asked her for a drink. She was surprised and said so. "How is it that a Jew asks me a Samaritan, for a drink?" Then said Jesus "if thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that asketh thee water to drink, thou wouldst have asked of me and I would have given you the living water, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst".

We know the outcome of that conversation. Jesus uncovered that woman's sin and dug deep, into her life and heart. She ran back into the city crying "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ?" She had found the living fountain.

And so Christ answers the longing of every honest heart. If you come to Jesus just to study him as a man, that is all you will see, and all you will find. If you come to him with your soul need and put him to the test he will respond to your deepest need and settle every question of your heart. For forgiveness? Yes thank God! He has power to forgive sin and there is no forgiveness apart from him. For holiness or soul health! Yes thank God! He came to destroy the works of the devil in my heart. He said "John baptized with water unto repentance, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He did that on the day of Pentecost and is doing it today to all that will trust Him. He of God is made unto us Wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

He will answer your longing for power and comfort. He it is that sends the Comforter so that we need never be lonely or lonesome. I am with you always even to the end of the age." Thank God a multitude can testify to this experience today, and it is so real to them that while they do not know theology as a science, they do know Jesus to the satisfying of their souls. I visit a Polish girl in West Boston, who was stricken with arthritis three years ago. She had been brought up in the Roman Catholic church and did not know God. A converted Russian young woman came and told her of Jesus. She got a Polish Bible and read it night and day. She wept her way to Jesus' feet. I found her in a helpless condition. Cannot move arms or lower limbs, yet her face is radiant with a light that never shone on land or sea." She has Jesus and that is all she needs. I took others to visit her and they wept for joy with her at the recital of her experience. She said, "Believe me, I am having a lovely time with Jesus here, and if the President of the United States were to come and tell me that I am deluded I would not listen to him, for I know whom I have believed. He satisfies my heart. I once went to the theatre and the movies and to all the worldly things and sought for satisfaction. I have found what I longed for in Jesus." Such a testimony is more to me than a long argument to prove the divinity of Jesus. This is the supreme testimony and argument.

But someone may say, "This is largely emotional. Well all we do has the emotional aspect. Emotion as I understand it is some variation either pleasant or otherwise in the realm of our consciousness. You have a physical emotion over a turkey dinner and other good things, and you have emotion in conversation and in reading a book according to the kind of book. People have great emotion over the imaginary and the sentimental, and the condemnation of the age is that

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