

ARTICLE II.

CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

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WE have four pictures of Christ in the Bible, — one given in each of the Gospels. They are essentially the same, for they represent the same glorious person, yet they are distinct from one another.

In the first chapter of Ezekiel, there is a vision that appears to the prophet, of four living creatures sent forth from the throne of God, — wonderful creatures, shining like fire and speeding swift as lightning on their course. They are a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. You see them again in the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation, and there they are represented as being in the midst of, and round, the throne of God. Clearly, these creatures correspond to the cherubim of the Jewish worship, and represent the fourfold energy of God as it issues forth toward the world. Accordingly they may be taken as symbols of the fourfold life of God revealed in Christ, and set forth in the four Gospels. Matthew gives us Christ as the lion; Mark, Christ as the ox; Luke, Christ as the man; John, Christ as the eagle. Matthew, Christ the lion, sets forth his power and majesty, the lion of the tribe of Judah; Mark, Christ the ox, his strength for labor, bending his neck beneath the yoke; Luke, Christ the man, his humanity as one with us in nature and experience; John, Christ the eagle, his divinity, soaring above the earth into the presence of God.

The closing verse of each Gospel gives the characteristic of

each. Matthew's last verse is, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." That is Christ the King. Mark's last verse is, "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." That is Christ the Worker. Luke says, "They . . . were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. That is the disciple's joy in Christ, their Friend. John says at the close of the twentieth chapter (which is the real end of the Gospel, for the twenty-first is an appendix), "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." That is Christ, the Divine One.

Matthew tells of Christ the King. The Jew, trained in the Old Testament, was expecting that the Christ would be a king. Prophecies of his kingly power run through all those Scriptures. God told Adam that "his seed should bruise the serpent's head." He made a covenant with Abraham "that his seed should possess the earth." Through Jacob, he said that "the scepter" should "not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come." He covenanted with David, that his seed should sit upon his throne forever. Isaiah described a king who should reign in righteousness, and the subsequent prophets fill in the details of the kingly character. Suddenly the Old Testament ends with evident incompleteness, leaving every Jew looking for the promised Messiah.

We are then confronted with Matthew's Gospel. It was written by a Jew for the Jews. It has in mind Old Testament prophecies and Jewish expectations. Its object is to prove that the prophecies of the coming King are realized in Christ,

that he is indeed the very King whom the Jews were to expect. It says repeatedly, This was done that such and such a prophecy might be fulfilled. You find that or similar phrases more than forty times in this Gospel. They form its very warp and woof. You find it in Luke less than twenty times, and in Mark hardly more than once. This Gospel is written as the key to the Old Testament kingly prophecies. It comes in its right position in the Bible, just after the Old Testament, because it is linked closer to the Old Testament than is any other Gospel. It is the gate which opens from the one book to the other; the bridge by which you pass from the old economy to the new. It admits all that can be said of the regal grandeur of the promised Messiah, and then says, Look on this Jesus, and see if this grandeur is not manifest in him.

With this thought in mind, let us glance through the Gospel. The first verse is significant: a kind of key-text to the whole: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." But why call him especially the son of David, the son of Abraham? Because the two covenants of kingly power and world-wide rule were made to the seed of David and to the seed of Abraham, and it is Matthew's aim to show that Jesus is that seed. Look now at Matthew's genealogy. Luke also gives a genealogy, but note the difference between the two. Matthew's does not go farther back than Abraham, for he wishes to show Christ's connection only with the Jews. Luke's runs back to Adam, for he aims to show Christ's relation with the race. The two lines of descent are characteristic. Matthew gives the legal line, by which Christ was David's heir by Jewish law: Luke, the natural line, by which he was David's son in flesh and blood. In Matthew the incarnation is revealed to Joseph, Jesus' legal parent: in Luke, to Mary, his natural parent. In Luke the

glad tidings are sung to humble shepherds, types of the lowly classes the world over; in Matthew a star, itself an emblem of royalty, brings the wise men to worship at the feet of the King of the Jews. So from the beginning, you see characteristic differences.

You find them all the way through. When Christ comes to be baptized, Matthew tells of John's hesitancy in doing it, a touch revealing the King not found in Mark or Luke. After the temptation, we read only in Matthew, of angels ministering to him.

Turn to the Sermon on the Mount. You find many parts of that in Luke, but there it comes in incidentally. In Matthew it forms the King's inaugural message, and the promulgation of his laws. It occupies the same place here that the revelation of the law from Sinai did in the Old Testament. There Jehovah, having called out a people for himself and brought them forth from bondage, appeared to them on Mount Sinai, issued his laws for them, and unfolded the worship they should engage in and the kingdom they should have. Christ in Matthew is Jehovah once more on earth, repeating this Old Testament history. Here, having called out a people for himself, he ascends a mountain near Capernaum, makes himself known as a King of the new Israel, issues laws which are not an abrogation but a fulfilment of the Old Testament, and unfolds the worship and describes the kingdom set before this new people. As you read this manifesto, how can you help seeing another and a spiritual book of Exodus and Leviticus for another and a spiritual Israel, while the contrast, at the close, between the safety of those who hear and do his sayings and the ruin of those who hear but do them not, what is that but the blessings and the cursings of the book of Deuteronomy, when Moses says, See, I have set before you life and

death: choose life, that ye may live (Deut. xxx. 15, 19). When Jehovah spake the law from Sinai, the people trembled; so when this Jehovah had uttered his laws, the people were astonished, for he spake as one having authority. Such is the Sermon on the Mount.

The parables in the thirteenth chapter have a kingly character; they are a prophecy of the fortunes of Christ's kingdom. Christ's commission of the apostles in Mark and Luke occupies but a few verses; in Matthew it fills a chapter, for it is the King delegating his authority to his under-ministers. From now to the closing era of his life, occurs the movement towards Jerusalem. It is the King advancing toward his capital to take possession of his throne. It is a royal progress from the twentieth to the twenty-fifth chapter, and at every step he dilates in grandeur; he enters the city in triumph; he combats and overawes the Pharisees; he weeps over the city, and foretells its doom and the ending of the world, closing with the three parables descriptive of its final triumph and its overthrow of opposition,—the wise and foolish virgins, the servants with their talents, and that last perhaps sublimest picture in the Gospels, where Christ shows himself as the sublimest figure, Christ the King in glory and the angels round him, while he awards to all mankind their everlasting portion. Surely the grandest prophecies of the Old Testament are more than fulfilled here.

At last Christ bows his royal head in death, but through all these shameful scenes he moves as king. It is Matthew, and he only, who tells of the legions of angels who are ready to do his bidding; of the dream of Pilate's wife; of the earth rending at Christ's death, and the saints coming from their graves to form his retinue as he ascended; of the angel, with countenance like lightning, who rolled back the stone from the

tomb, and before whom the keepers became as dead men. Matthew records but two scenes in Christ's resurrection life, but in both he appears as king. In one he is worshiped, in the other he declares, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . whatsoever I have commanded you." We have no hint in Matthew of the ascension. It is a remarkable omission, yet it is to be explained by remembering Matthew's object. He wishes to keep before our thought Christ as king of this world; and therefore the last view he gives of him is not ascending into heaven but ruling over earth. So ends Matthew's description; it is all Christ as King.

Mark shows us Christ as Worker. In Matthew we had royal power, in Mark we have constant action. There Christ wore royal robes and called for homage. Here royalty is laid aside, and but one thought controls him, — how to use every moment and put forth every power to do man service.

An ox is an emblem that we shrink from using in regard to Christ. Yet if we think of oxen at the plow, every muscle tense with effort, the heads bent, the strong shoulders under the yoke, subduing acre after acre by their indomitable strength; and if we remember that in Ezekiel's vision, the ox was winged, and rushed as swift as lightning on its course, and that it probably refers to the winged oxen sculptured on the walls of Nineveh, — it becomes no unfit emblem of the strong, resistless energy of Christ.

It is generally believed that Mark wrote his Gospel for the Romans. There are Roman words in it, and references to Roman customs, and explanations of Jewish peculiarities which none but a Roman would require. It is probable that, laboring among Romans, he was led to show them that there was that in Christ which was adapted to them, that the very

energy of which they boasted and in which they stood supreme among mankind, had its highest manifestation in Christ. He was "the noblest Roman of them all."

See how many things combine to give the impression of Christ as the Worker.

Notice the omissions of this Gospel. If a man claim to be a king, you need to know his ancestry, for his claims are based on that. But if he is to be your servant, you do not care for this; you wish to know what he can do, and the sooner he begins to work, the better. Therefore, while Matthew, telling of Christ as king, gives his genealogy, Mark omits it all. Indeed, he tells us nothing of Christ's antecedents. There is no reference to the angels' song, or the wise men's visit; not an incident of the nativity; we are not even told that Mary was his mother or that Bethlehem was his birthplace. There simply come eight swift verses describing John who was his forerunner; one more tells of his baptism; two of the descent on him of the Spirit; two more of the temptation; and by the thirteenth verse of the first chapter, he has entered on his work. Three and a half chapters in Matthew, and as many more in Luke, are condensed, in Mark, into thirteen verses. There are numerous other similar omissions. Mark leaves out nearly all the discourses, for he is telling of the worker, not the teacher. He condenses the commission of the apostles, which in Matthew occupies a chapter, into three or four verses. He omits the curses pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees. He records only four parables, while Matthew has fifteen, and Luke twenty-one. Then he never calls Christ "Lord" till after the resurrection. Even in conversation, when, according to the other evangelists, Christ is addressed by this title, Mark, as of set purpose, omits it everywhere but once (and that might have been an

interpolation), as if feeling that it would mar the impression that he wishes to make. Matthew has many references to the prophecies: Mark, after the first three verses, has but one. Matthew speaks often of the law: the very word "law" is not found in Mark.

Now look at what Mark does record. This is far the briefest of the Gospels, yet it tells of nearly as many miracles as do any of the others. And they are told in an intense and vivid way; you can fairly see Christ working them. You catch his tone, his look, his gesture; you hear his very words. Mark uses the present tense of the verb in narrating them, as if they were occurring even while he told them. He tells of the circumstances, the astonishment of the multitudes, the awe of the disciples. Matthew, for example, says, when Christ was baptized, "The heavens were opened"; Mark, according to the Greek, says, They were "rent asunder." Matthew says Christ rebuked the wind and the waves on the Sea of Galilee; Mark gives the words of the rebuke (you can hear them ring across the angry billows), "Peace, be still." Matthew gives the record of the healing of the man sick with palsy: it is brief and general. Mark gives every incident — the eager crowds about the door, the four men carrying the paralytic, the uncovering and breaking through the roof. Compare the two accounts of the Gadarene demoniac. In Matthew, the act is subordinate to the person who works it: in Mark, the act is everything, and he brings it out with such vivid and dramatic force that you seem to stand upon the spot and witness it.

Then Mark makes you feel, as do none of the other evangelists, the pressure of the ever-present crowds, and the whirl of excitement amid which Christ moved. He says the people thronged him continually; that his fame spread wider, the

more he sought to conceal it; that whole villages and towns and districts were roused by his presence; that the sick sought to touch the mere hem of his garment.

He describes the swiftness of his work. There is not one languid moment. One deed treads on the footsteps of another. See how frequently in the first three chapters you find Mark's favorite words "immediately," "straightway," "forthwith," which are the same word in the original. In the first chapter only, you have "straightway coming up out of the water," "immediately the Spirit driveth him," "straightway they forsook their nets," "straightway he called them," and so on, the word used ten times in this one chapter. What a sense of breathlessness is here! The narrative fairly seems to pant in its efforts to keep up with the swift successiveness of the deeds of power and mercy.

It is Mark who twice records that he "had no leisure so much as to eat"; that his friends sought "to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself." The other evangelists tell us much of Christ's suffering, his sorrow, and weariness. In Mark there is hardly a hint of this. You would scarcely know that his work cost him anything. You may well believe it indeed. Such constant teaching, so many miracles, the perpetual presence of the sick and those possessed with devils, must have drawn upon his vital power, and worn down brain and heart and limbs, but he never hints at it himself. Doubtless he tells it to the Father, but the world knows nothing of it. Not until, for the accomplishment of his mission, he needs to speak of it; not until the Worker prepares to cease his work and begins to suffer, and Gethsemane and the cross are nigh at hand, does he give evidence of his trials. He is like a soldier in the thick of battle, who hides his wounds and stays the blood that he may fight on.

Such is the picture that Mark gives, one utterly absorbed in loving work for men. I know no other biography that gives you such a sense of consecration and intensity. Lives of reformers, heroes, martyrs, seem languid and inert beside it. His ministry lasted hardly three brief years, but into them he compressed the energies of well-nigh a century. No life was ever so crowded with activity as his. Christ the Worker is as far beyond mere human comparisons as is Christ the Sufferer.

Now we come to Luke, who tells of Christ the loving Friend. Here we learn how human Christ was, how wide in sympathy, how quick and deep in pity and in love.

Luke begins, and he is the only one who does, by telling us of Christ's infancy and youth. We have here the joy of Mary when she was told she was to be his mother, and Elisabeth's sympathetic delight. We are told how he was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger, circumcised on the eighth day, and presented in the temple. We have an account of his childhood, and a glimpse of his boyhood when, at the age of twelve, he went up to Jerusalem and astonished the doctors by his understanding and his answers. We learn that through successive years "he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Who can compare this with the opening of the other Gospels, and not see that Luke is preparing to give us a deeper insight into Christ's human nature than the others? We feel that we know a man better if we have been acquainted with him as a child, and we feel that we shall better understand Christ's manhood for these glimpses into his childhood's life.

Now glance along the Gospel, and see how his humanity is dwelt on. Here we learn how he rejoiced in spirit when the gospel was revealed to babes; how he wept as he journeyed

to Jerusalem; that in Gethsemane he sweat as it were great drops of blood, and an angel came to strengthen him. Luke alone tells us that Christ turned and looked on Peter in the judgment hall, the reproachful look that showed the wounded heart; that with his latest breath he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"; that after the resurrection he ate with the disciples to prove his resurrection body, and made the hearts of the two burn within them as he walked with them to Emmaus.

Luke dwells more than any other on Christ's prayers. He alone tells us that Christ prayed when he was baptized and when he was transfigured; that he prayed all night before he chose the twelve apostles; that he prayed for Peter, that his faith fail not, and for those who crucified him. He tells how he taught others to pray both by precept and example, giving, as illustrations, the man going for bread to his friend at midnight, the widow pleading with the unjust judge, and the contrast between the Pharisee and the Publican.

Think too of the character of the parables Luke records. There are a number given both by him and Matthew, but even in those there are characteristic differences. The same parable has more majesty in Matthew and more tenderness in Luke. In Matthew the feast to which the gospel is compared, is given by a king to his subjects; in Luke it is given by a friend to his neighbors; while in those that are peculiar to each, the differences are striking. Compare the three in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew and the three in the fifteenth of Luke. These are perhaps the most striking parables in either Gospel, and how clearly does each show the evangelist's intention. In Matthew the three are the wise and foolish virgins, the servants with the talents, and the nations at the king's right hand and left: they speak of our responsibility to a sovereign in

whose hands is our eternal destiny. But in Luke the clustered characteristic three are the shepherd searching for his sheep, the woman for her coin, and that tenderest of parables, the prodigal son. There is nothing here of the awful sovereign, but the compassionate Redeemer loving, seeking, finding, lost humanity.

Luke shows Christ's sympathy for special classes. This is the children's gospel, for his tenderness to children is specially displayed. It is woman's gospel, for his affectionate regard for her is strikingly manifested. Think of the accounts of Mary and Anna and Elisabeth, the women who ministered to him, the one who washed his feet with her tears, the widow at Nain, Mary and Martha at Bethany, and the daughters of Jerusalem who bewailed him as he went to Calvary. It is the gospel for the poor, for Christ's own poverty is dwelt on, while all through occur incidental but noteworthy tokens of his sympathy for them. It is the outcast's gospel, for here you have Christ's friendship for the publican, the Samaritan, and the harlot. Modern Christendom has learned its lesson of compassion from this Gospel, shown in the erection of asylums and reformatories.

It shows peculiarly Christ's feeling toward sin and his efforts for man's rescue. In none of the other Gospels do we see so fully the pollution of the human heart, and Christ's patience and his power to save. More frequently than in any other Gospel does Christ call men sinners, and he himself is called the Saviour and his work salvation. His love is no weak sentimentalism ignoring the evil in the characters of those he loved; while he pities, he condemns, and he sees that only as they are rescued from the sin itself can there be any real salvation.

This Gospel lets us see what suffering Christ's sympathy
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cost him. Mark hides the sufferings that we may think upon the work; Luke shows the sufferings that we may know what the work cost him, and so appreciate the greatness of his sacrificing love.

Such is Christ in Luke. We here have come in contact with Christ's heart, and it is the noblest, tenderest heart that ever beat; of broadest sympathies, of truest love, of supremest sacrifice. All that men call heroism is in it, unquailing courage, resolved and purposed consecration; but there is also the supremest tenderness, the largest charity, the keenest sense of other's woes. The loftiest qualities of manhood, the gentlest traits of womanhood, are blent in him. His heart is an open port from all life's storms. If we would know Christ's power we look to Matthew; if we would be stirred to work we turn to Mark; but if ever burdens grow heavy and human sympathy is withheld we turn for solace to that revelation of the human heart of Christ in Luke. Read that Gospel, and you understand how we have a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, a high priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, for he "was in all points tempted like as we are."

From Christ the Son of man, in Luke, we turn to Christ the Son of God, in John. John was well fitted to give this picture. More perhaps than any other of the apostles, he adored the Lord. He seemed to forget himself in thinking of Christ. He never called himself by name in this Gospel, but designated himself as "the one who lay on Jesus' bosom," "the disciple whom Jesus loved." After ages have called him "John the Divine." He wrote the Epistle which begins, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," and the keynote of which is, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

He wrote this Gospel in his old age, fifty years, perhaps,

after Jesus had passed away, but the intervening years had not dimmed the vision of Christ; rather had constant meditation made Christ grow more real and wonderful.

In speaking of this Gospel, we notice, first, that John points directly to the person and the character of Christ, and dwells on his words and acts only as they set him forth. The whole Gospel seems to stand in the attitude of John the Baptist, and to say, "Behold the Lamb of God." The first miracle is spoken of as manifesting forth his glory. His first disciples were won, not by what he said or did, but by dwelling in his presence. They said, "We have seen the Messiah." That thought is everywhere. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" His discourses are chiefly revelations of himself. He does not give precepts, or speak of the kingdom, or of his coming again; it is himself, in glorious, present reality, whom he reveals. He constantly utters phrases such as these, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; "I that speak unto thee am he." The personal pronoun "I" which in all the other Gospels he employs but thirty times, here he uses nearly one hundred and thirty times; and the phrase "I am," used in the others nine times, occurs here forty-five times.

Then, Christ is set forth as the revelation of God. This is indicated by John's method of beginning his Gospel. While Matthew gives Christ's genealogy as king of the Jews, and Luke as son of Adam, John describes him as coming from God. We have no word of his earthly antecedents; simply that before his appearance on earth he had dwelt eternally in heaven. The title given to him at the beginning of the Gospel, "Word of God," implies this. A word is that by which

you express your thought. Often in our words we utter merely some transient or surface thought. But what if at some mighty moment of our life, when our being was astir to its foundations, we could utter some word or sentence which was a revelation of what was deepest in us, our innermost convictions, our holiest and most controlling purpose; if our inner self should there find utterance? Such was Christ to God, God's supreme word, his message and his self-revelation, the central, final, utterance of himself to sinful, ruined, yet redeemable man. You frequently find expressions such as these: "I and the Father are one"; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

It is this which gives a sense as of heaven to all Christ says. There is no account of the Transfiguration or the Ascension, for none is needed. There is no need of the Transfiguration, for the divine glory constantly shines through and transfigures him; nor of the Ascension, for he continually dwells in heaven. Even his sufferings hardly seem to touch him. Only on one brief occasion does he speak of his anticipation of the cross; and even when the end draws near, he refers to it only to comfort his disciples. In Gethsemane we are told nothing of his agony or prayer, simply of his self-possession when he meets his murderers. All through those scenes he lives as in a realm where trouble cannot come. He is the Son of man who is evermore in heaven.

This revelation of God in Christ is set forth as meeting our soul's deepest needs. There is little said here of our earthly requirements. You find more commands in Matthew, more inspiration to work in Mark, more human sympathy in Luke; but for our deepest need, for fellowship with God, we come to Christ in John. Christ describes himself in ways like

these: "I am the bread of life"; "I am the living water"; "I am the light of the world"; "I am the door," "the shepherd," "the vine," "the resurrection and the life." His miracles are self-manifestations. The word used for them is not *dunamis* (power), but *semeia* (signs) — tokens, that is, of what he is. When he turns the water into wine, or gives the blind man sight, or heals the impotent, or feeds five thousand, or raises Lazarus, it is always to body forth the spiritual miracle he will work when he gives to them himself; and ordinarily he follows the miracle by such an explanation.

The manner in which Christ and his salvation becomes ours is represented in the clearest light, far more so than in the other Gospels. That familiar verse in the third chapter expresses it, beginning, "God so loved the world." Six of John's favorite words are in this verse — love, gave, world, believe, hath, life. Christ is God's gift to men. He is also the giving of God himself; for God was in Christ, and all the treasures of the Godhead are bestowed on men when Christ is given them. This salvation becomes ours simply by receiving it. Figures which Christ himself uses indicate this. What do we do with bread, with water, with life, but receive them into ourselves? "Believe" is one of John's favorite words. You find it three times as often in this Gospel as in the other three together. There is a slightly different meaning to it in John from what it has in Paul's Epistles; with Paul, faith is resting on a promise; with John, it is recognizing a reality. Indeed, the difference between Paul and John runs everywhere. Paul looks at sin on the ethical side, as breaking God's law and requiring to be punished: John sees it in its essence as shutting God out of the heart, and so being its own punishment. Salvation, according to Paul, is reconciliation with God; to John, it is the indwelling of God. God's gift, according to Paul, is

righteousness; according to John, it is life. The one emphasizes obedience; the other, fellowship. One is practical and executive; the other, mystic and interior. Paul is the man of intellect; John, of intuition. Paul reasons; John sees. Paul builds truths into a system; John's sentences shine forth as separate stars in the firmament of truth. Salvation, in John's Gospel, is God's communication of himself to the receptive soul. Forgiveness, reconciliation, is only the beginning, the doorway, by which all of God becomes ours. The three great words which describe God, and show that he meets the needs of man, are, light, life, love. God is life, eternal, underived. Salvation consists in this life flowing into man's dead soul. God is light, which means holiness, knowledge, joy; to be saved is to have this light shine into our dark hearts. God is love, which in its very essence is self-communication and self-sacrifice, which pours itself into hearts whose sin and ruin was that they were self-centered, and therefore isolated, and which by its incoming merges them once more in the harmonious universe of God.

This salvation, therefore, is a present reality. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." John speaks little about heaven or about Christ's second coming; his teaching centers on what Christ is now. Salvation, with John, is not going into heaven; it is heaven coming into us. You have it taught in those wonderful chapters from the thirteenth to the seventeenth. Before this, Christ had been offering himself to the world; now, he is alone with his disciples. Read those chapters, and you see what communion with Christ is, and what the present blessings are which Christ bestows. He is not here as a king declaring laws; or human friend, offering affection. He is the Divine One pouring heavenly life into man's soul, the crystal river from the throne of God, coming into the channels of

earthly consciousness. It is peace, joy, rest. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." "Abide in me, and I in you." Then in their presence he prays for them, showing the twofold relationship in which he will stand to them henceforth, — interceding for them with the Father, and pouring the Spirit into their souls. It is the experience of heaven. And this is given that we may understand the blessedness the soul may have when it accepts Christ. Thus, this is the gospel of the risen life; the life of the soul in conscious fellowship with God.

Each Gospel meets our needs. It was divinely ordered that we should have four biographies of Christ, that each aspect of his life in its separateness might stand before us. Compassed by the rebellion of the world, Matthew tells of the King, before whom one day all rebellion is to yield. To kindle us to toil, we have Christ in Mark, the tireless worker. When troubles press and we long for consolation, we have the friend that sticketh closer than a brother, Christ in Luke. Yet we need something beyond all these. These are earthly aspects of our life. We are of God, born of him, made for him. Darkness and emptiness of heart are ours, because he is shut away from us. Therefore Christ in John comes to us. He is God made flesh, the life of heaven let down to earth. He speaks of purity and peace and love; he bids us open our hearts and let him enter. We do so; and, as he enters, our agitation passes away, our fears are hushed, our needs are met; a life of love and joy and worship, the life of Christ, the life of heaven, begins.

This view of Christ in John is to be our eternal portion. The time is coming when we shall not need to be told of Christ the King, for there will be no rebellion; shall need no

kindling to work, for work will be delight; shall require no sympathy, for burdens will be things of the past; but forevermore, Christ as the revealer and communicator of God will shine upon us, and we shall be lost in worship.

The Gospels bring us by successive stages into ever-growing knowledge of Christ. It is as if we should meet some great and kingly person, and at our first interview with him, be impressed by his stately bearing and evident consciousness of power. That is Christ in Matthew. Presently we know him better, and find him using his power in constant acts of service. That is Christ in Mark. Grown more familiar with him, we are admitted into his family and to the unreserve of the home circle. Then we see what a rare, unselfish, kindly heart beats under the royal vestments and kindles the active life. That is Christ in Luke. More intimate with him yet, we are present with him in those high and sacred moments when his inner self lies bare and he holds fellowship with the Father, when what is temporary and superficial is laid aside and the life that came from God and goes back to God is revealed. That is Christ in John.

The Gospels separate into couplets in which one is the complement of the other: Matthew gives us sovereignty, and Mark, service; Luke, the revelation of ideal humanity, and John, the revelation of God.

This fourfold Christ stands foursquare to all the race. As the New Jerusalem in John's vision was foursquare, with gates on every side, and, approach it from what side you would, there was an open entrance straight before you; so this fourfold Christ confronts humanity. He faces alike all quarters of the globe, — east, west, north, south. Men may approach him from every race and clime, from diverse ages and states of civilization; yet before each man stands this

Christ, and an open doorway meets him, leading straight into the Redeemer's heart. He is the Christ for all the world.

This Christ is the evidence of his own reality. He is too wonderful to have been fabricated by men's imagination. "It takes a Jesus to forge a Jesus." As well think the bushmen of South Africa, dwelling in their huts of bark and branches, could have drawn the plans for Saint Peter's, as that these low-thoughted, Galilean peasants, with their experience of stunted humanity, could have conceived this Christ. He must have existed or they could not have drawn him. Admit, if you will, minor historical inaccuracies, still this stupendous Jesus, outreaching all humanity, must have stood before them; what they painted, they must, in substance, have actually seen.

This Christ proves Christianity. Such a being could not have appeared in the world but for a worthy object. Men do not build cathedrals simply to camp in for a summer's outing, nor construct a reservoir in the mountains that boys may dip into it their tin cups. Christianity must be the world's supreme religion, because Christ is history's supreme person.

Nay, more, Christ is Christianity. We may have our separate philosophies and theologies, and our life and conduct may vary with our individuality and circumstances. But, for all of us, to trust, to love, to worship Christ; to take him as master and guide, the inspirer of our actions, the rest of our souls; to have fellowship with him, the joy of earth, and seeing him face to face, the glory of heaven, — this is the heart and center of the Christian life.