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THE GREATEST OF ALL.

THE CENTRAL FIGURE.

WHAT is Christianity? By its very name, the system of truth, the body of doctrine, the course of life, taught by Jesus the Christ.

Who is a Christian? By his very name, one who accepts and practices the teachings of Jesus the Christ.

The central figure of Christianity must therefore be Jesus of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, whose prophetic title, the Christ, indicates a divine commission.

MORE THAN A MAN.

Jesus of Nazareth is the most important of the world's historical figures. His influence is felt over the earth. He differs from all other men.

Other religious leaders are easily understood; their struggles and successes are those of mortals; the time-hoary crust of legendary embellishment is easily recognized; they are great men as other great ones of time.

Jesus is a solitary figure in the world's history. Human standards fail to measure Him. His simple, clear doctrine transcends all other teaching. He outreaches the experience of humanity. He perplexes and defeats His enemies; He rejuvenates and blesses His followers. Tens of thousands of books have been written about Him. Friend and foe alike admit the enduring greatness of His teaching, and the invincible power of His life—that He was more than a man.

Who was He?

BEFORE THE WORLD WAS.

Before the earth was, Jesus lived in the spirit world with His Father, our God. The host of men and women who have lived, live or shall live on earth, were there also, as spirits, children of God. Jesus was their Elder Brother.

The ages rolled on. The hosts of spirits were active in the use of their wills. Effort led to progress. They grew in experience. Then the Father devised a plan for their further advancement—the plan of salvation. His Son, Jesus, was appointed to be the Leader in carrying out the plan.

The plan was simple. The deathless spirits were to come down upon earth, in forgetfulness of their previous existence,

clothed in bodies subject to death ; there to resist evil, to learn the beauty of sacrifice, to overcome the stubborn earth, to taste of sickness and to suffer death. All this, that they might develop greater power, firmer wills, more complete obedience to God's laws, and to gain greater fitness for future, eternal progress. The plan was simple but capable of testing the temper of an eternal spirit. Earth-life was to be a school ; a period of learning in the university of eternity. It was in the plan, also, that Jesus should come on earth, born of a mortal woman but begotten of His Father, to serve in the consummation of the plan.

THE ATONEMENT.

An eternal spirit equipped with an imperishable body is capable of fullest joy and development. The body laid in the grave would have to be obtained again. The Father had so promised. This, the Son, the Christ, undertook to secure for the children of earth. Adam transgressed a law, a necessary transgression, so that his deathless spirit might become associated with a mortal body. He thereby became subject to death. Adam's posterity inherited mortality and inevitable death. By Adam's act, death came into the world ; by the act of another, the consequences of death could be set aside, and the bodies of men resurrected into everlasting life. One man may cut the wires yielding light to a city ; another may reunite them, and again flood the city with light. Jesus gave His life, His earthly life, that all mankind might be resurrected, and eternally enjoy the association of body and spirit. This was the atonement of Jesus, the Christ. The mystery of the process may be beyond our understanding, but the certainty of the immeasurable service to man remains.

THE GOSPEL GIFT.

Jesus did more than atone for the transgression of Adam. He brought to earth the principles of truth for man's guidance into happiness on earth and in heaven. This system of truth, the Gospel, was taught Father Adam ; it was restated at various times, as men fell away from the truth ; when Jesus came upon earth, He taught it in its simplicity to the people of His day ; and in these days, after a long period of spiritual darkness, He has restored it again. Through the ages, Jesus, by prophets and by the inspiration that comes to every righteous man, has sought to hold Adam's children in a path of conduct that will lead them back into God's presence, there forever to taste the joy of unending, continuing progress. He has lighted the path of life for every willing traveller.

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE.

Jesus, by His own example, showed us how to obtain enduring happiness, which is, and should be, the object of every person. God desires His children to have joy. The attainment of a fully satisfying life comes from compliance with definite conditions. The foremost of these is that the searcher for happiness must overcome every desire and act that may be in opposition to the Gospel code; for the cause of human salvation he must be ready to sacrifice his every earthly desire, his possessions, his all, his life if needs be. Only in the spirit of sacrifice can the gift of eternal joy, beginning on earth and continuing through all time, be obtained and made secure. Jesus suffered the hardships of life, relinquished the gifts of earth, gave His life, that all men might be brought into eternal happiness. His sacrifice was more than that of a man. His pains of suffering were exquisitely keen, for His understanding and organization were those of a God. He suffered for all, and the sacrifices and sufferings of all the world were concentrated in His agony as He hung upon the cross. The lesson of sacrifice was the culminating gift of His life. By this vast sacrifice, terrible as it must have been, He won great joy for Himself—the joy of having opened the door of salvation to His brothers and sisters. His love for us made possible His sacrifice.

THE REDEEMER.

Such, then, is Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, our Elder Brother, who has watched over the generations of men from the beginning of earth; who has taught and taught again the Gospel message to a world hard of hearing and weak of will; who suffered the pains of the world and died that men might again possess their bodies, purified, imperishable; who by His example showed us the beauty and necessity of love and sacrifice; who still guides and leads and assists us; and who on the last great day will be our interpreter, our defender, our advocate with God, and bring us into eternal life.

He is our Redeemer.

THE SURE KNOWLEDGE.

A Christian must possess the certain knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth came on earth to teach and die for the good of man, in fulfillment of an eternal plan. Without such a certainty of knowledge, faith in Christian doctrine is slight and weak.

The full, convincing truth of the personal claims and universal message of Jesus, the Christ, may be won by every sincere seeker after the truth.

The seeker must first place himself in harmony with the truth desired, by prayer to God for assistance in finding the truth, no more, no less. Such prayer must be the constant accompaniment of the further search.

Then there must be a sincere and careful examination of the doctrine taught by the Christ—an unbiased and unprejudiced study.

Finally, the doctrine must be practised in daily life ; that is, put to the test.

Full knowledge, an unshakable assurance, of the divinity of Jesus, the Christ, can be obtained in no other way.

Such a search, prayerful, studious, practical, will never fail to reveal to the soul of the searcher that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Redeemer and Leader of mankind.

ONE WITH HIM.

To know for oneself, with certainty, that Jesus is the Christ, with all that is thereby implied, is to be, as it were, one with Him, to partake of royal joys on earth and in heaven. The plan of salvation is for all men ; Jesus is the central figure of the plan ; every true Christian collaborates with Him in the accomplishment of divine purposes, and thus becomes one with Him, and tastes measurably of the sweet fruit of obedience.

One doctrine was preached by Jesus ; one law was taught by Him. When the doctrine and the law are modified by men, unwilling to walk the straight and narrow path laid out by Jesus, such oneness, such life satisfaction is not possible. To accept and to obey the injunctions of the Saviour, untouched, unchanged by men, is the only method of pleasing Divinity, and of walking in the full light of truth.

The Church of Jesus Christ must show the way to the oneness with the Lord by complete and absolute conformity with the law of the Lord. Therefore, there can be but one church, wholly acceptable to the Lord. In this day, the original Church of Jesus Christ has been re-established. Jesus of Nazareth is its central figure ; His unchanged teachings are its guide ; and His authority, anew committed to man, is the power by which it has its being.

Further information concerning the teachings and practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be gladly furnished seekers after truth.

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