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Doctrinal Theology.

CHRISTOLOGY

Christology is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Person and the Office and Work of Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. The doctrine of Christ is not a product of human speculation, or of a process of evolution from the consciousness of the church. *Search the Scriptures*, says Christ, *for they are they which testify of me,*¹⁾ and the risen Lord himself taught his disciples from the same source; *beginning at Moses and at all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*²⁾ Christ is also the central subject of the New Testament. *The Gospels were written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ.*³⁾ The modern distinction between the historical Christ and the Christ of Scripture is a delusion. The Christ of Moses and the prophets, the apostles and evangelists, and no other, is the historic Christ, that was, and is, and shall be. All other Christs, the Christs of Ebionites and Docetists, of Gnostics and Manichaeans, of Nestorians and Eutychians and Apollinarians, of Monophysites and Monothelites, of Socinians and other Unitarians, of Schleiermacher and Strauss and Schenkel and Renan, are caricatures or fictions,

1) John 5, 39.

2) Luke 24, 27.

3) John 20, 31.

SKETCH OF A MISSIONARY SERMON ON 1 PET. 2, 11—20.¹⁾

Theme: TO MANIFEST THEIR FAITH BY THEIR WALK AND
THUS WIN OTHERS FOR CHRIST—THE FOREMOST MIS-
SIONARY DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.

How is this duty to be fulfilled?

I. *Abstain from Fleshly Lusts.*

II. *Have your Conversation Honest among the Gentiles.*

Introduction: We are celebrating a mission festival. To-day we meditate especially over the deplorable lot of such as still sit in the darkness and shadow of death. Throughout the year, it is true, we are reminded of the sad condition of unbelievers. For as often as we consider what we have become through the grace of God: Christians, children of God, heirs of eternal life, so often also do we think of times past when we "were without Christ, . . . having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2, 12), so often do our thoughts wander also to them who are still far from the kingdom of God. But to-day the principal thought dwelt upon is the deplorable condition of such as are dead in trespasses and sins.

And of whatever phase of mission work we may speak—of home mission or foreign mission, of mission among the Jews, or among the negroes, or among the heathen, etc.,—we are confronted with the image of him who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, and to whom we should show mercy as did the good Samaritan. (Luke 10, 30 ff.)—The purpose of this festival is to remind ourselves emphatically of our Christian duty to dispel the darkness and shadow of death as much as lies in our power and to set the light of the Gospel upon the candle-stick. That is mission work.—But, my friends, when speaking of mission work we must not draw the circle of our vision too

¹⁾ This sketch is a practical supplement to the exegetical treatise on pp. 67 ff. by the same contributor. ED.

large. Perhaps the majority of people hearing of mission work allow their thoughts to wander to the heathen in distant lands, to the land of the Filipinos, to China, Japan, etc., perhaps also to the Far West of our own country, or to the sunny South. Hence they imagine to have fulfilled their mission duty for a whole year by dropping their contribution into the alms bag.—That is an erroneous conception!—What is mission work essentially? To bring people to the knowledge of the truth. Hence wherever there are such as are still without hope in this world, there you are to fulfill your mission duty. But such people we do not only find in China, in Japan, in India, etc., not only in the Far West of our country or in the sunny South, but also in our next neighborhood, in this our own city. Towards these you are to do your duty. “Well,” some one may think, “what is the preacher driving at? We support a parochial school, in which our children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We maintain a church in which the Word of God is taught in all its truth and purity. Whoever will may come.”—All well and good! But is it not possible that although you help in supporting school and church, although you contribute to the mission fund annually, you yourself may act as a barrier shutting out others from heaven? May you not be the cause that others decry Christianity as hypocrisy? Of the Word of God we say and sing:

“Thy Word doth move the inmost heart,
 Thy Word doth perfect health impart,
 Thy Word my soul with joy doth bless,
 Thy Word brings peace and blessedness.”

This Word works faith in us. And this faith, as Luther says, “is a divine work in us, which changes us and regenerates us of God, and mortifies the Old Adam, making us quite different persons in heart, mind, disposition, and in all our faculties, and brings with itself the Holy Ghost. Oh, this faith is a living, active, efficacious, powerful prin-

ciple. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before it asks, they are already done, and it is always a-doing."

Since this is true the change faith has wrought in you must be observable in your daily walk. Thus the unbeliever rightly concludes. Hence you are to conduct yourself as to make the non-Christian confess: 'The religion of the Christian truly has the power to bring about a change of heart and life. And to lead such a conversation is your foremost missionary duty.—In the present text Peter inculcates this duty.

The foremost Missionary Duty of Christians:—to Manifest their Faith by their Walk and thus Win others for Christ.

I. Abstain from Fleshly Lusts.

Peter addresses this epistle to the "elect strangers" (1, 1. 2). Why are they called strangers? *Strangers*—their earthly condition; *elect*—their spiritual condition.—Their dignity set forth, 2, 9. 10. Then follows v. 11 of our text. Statement of connection. Explanation of v. 11, showing incompatibility of being a pilgrim and stranger and still living in fleshly lusts, culminating in the assertion "they war against the soul." Application: We too are "elect strangers," we too are surrounded by "Gentiles." The ways of the world the same as of yore: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life."—"Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we are dead."—Our flesh totally corrupt. Great danger of losing the soul. Demas returned to the world and many are his followers. Terrible thought this—to lose the soul.

But the thought we wished to emphasize especially today: The unbelievers know that we glory in being "strangers and pilgrims;" they know from hearsay of the great power we ascribe to the Word. They do not read the Bible, they read you, your lives. Do you live as a pilgrim in this world? If you think, speak, act as do the children of the world; if

you attend theaters, dances, and balls as they do; if they perceive no essential difference between themselves and you, whose fault is it if they regard Christians as evil-doers, as hypocrites? — “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.” (Rom. 2, 24.) Up, fellow-pilgrim, know your calling! Through the grace of God prove by your walk that your treasure is in heaven. — But a still more urgent reason to manifest our faith, etc.

II. Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles.

What is the meaning of these words? Summary statement. — The text indicates that the Christians were reviled as *evil-doers*. Historical explanation. How were they to conduct themselves in view of these accusations? “Have your conversation,” etc. — Exemplifications: How they were to conduct themselves as citizens (cf. vv. 13—17), how as servants (vv. 18—20). Purpose: “that . . . glorify God.” Application: Christians to-day are spoken against as “evil-doers.” — One Judas casts reproach upon the other Eleven. — “Christians are hypocrites!” — Even the Son of God was spoken of as an evil-doer, — a winebibber, a deceiver. Nevertheless we should do all in our power “to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

The idol of to-day is the “almighty dollar.” Do not worship it. — Matt. 6, 19—34. — Our age one of revelry, debauchery, and unchastity. — Of us it should be said: “They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot” (1 Pet. 4, 4). This Christian life is a confession of our faith in Christ and a powerful object sermon for the “Gentiles,” the non-Christians. Thus you are a true missionary of God, you further God’s kingdom and destroy that of the devil. —

Though we should do all we can to publish the Gospel abroad and at home, we must not neglect this our foremost duty. — To this end may God indelibly inscribe upon our hearts and minds the words of Peter: 1 Pet. 2, 11, 12.

L. W.