

**CHRISTIANITY: THE
DELIVERANCE OF THE
SOUL AND ITS LIFE**

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Christianity: The Deliverance of the Soul and Its Life by William Mountford

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WILLIAM MOUNTFORD

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BY
WILLIAM MOUNTFORD, A. M.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY
REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON.

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,
118 WASHINGTON STREET.
1847.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.



PERHAPS every spiritually-minded man has desired, not only to hold, but to declare in words both clear and fervent, a faith that will satisfy the soul. This latter object has been attained, with an uncommon degree of success, in these pages. They present before us the Christian idea, in its simplicity and its power, — that simplicity, indeed, which, in spiritual things, is power. They do not address us in the technical language of creed-makers, nor cover up the quick and glowing truth under the cumbering mechanism of a scholastic-looking system. They offer religion to manly, thinking, sincere persons, — a religion which comprehends life as well as law, devotion as well as obedience, drawn from the spirit no less

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than from the letter of a gospel, beyond all question everlasting. It is a religion earnest, genial, trustful, invigorating, somewhat advanced, it is to be hoped, beyond that jejune code of ethical obligations and social proprieties that has sometimes striven, both in England and this country, to pass itself off as an administration of Liberal Christianity. Not more at issue with a spiritless and superficial morality, than with an over-wrought, a vague and sentimental pietism, it would inspire the frigidity of the one by leading it reverently to Jesus Christ, and curb the ranting excesses of the other by restoring it to reason.

The title chosen by the author will be found to describe the scope and import of the volume. It analyzes the experience of an inquiring, living soul, leads it through successive stages of its history, and reveals the all-embracing principle which alone can unfold its immortal capacities, answer its wants, satisfy its aspirations, and give it peace. What the heart cries out for, it at last finds, — a Master, a Mediator, a Redeemer.

The first Part exposes the difficulty ; represents the soul unregenerate, its state of sin, discontent, craving, heaviness, sorrow, — the prodigal in the

far country. Then comes the dreariness of that cold response which mighty Nature, with all her marvellous mechanism, is able to offer to this longing. And then, the blessed assurance of Him who showed us the Father, and whose divine, threefold doctrine was Faith, Hope, Charity.

In the second Part is a Christian answer to the question, so prominent in our day, and so much involved in many of the phases of modern social philosophy, how far art, refinement, intellectual culture, can be regarded as the instrument of man's salvation, rather than a belief in truth supernaturally revealed, and the voluntary reception of a life supernaturally communicated.

In the remaining portions, and scattered through the book, indeed, are many reflections, indicating a wise and careful notice of the theological tendencies of the time, and suggesting, to appreciative and susceptible minds, a great deal.

As throwing further light, possibly, at the outset, on the design, we venture to quote the following sentences from a private letter of the author:—“As it seems to me, the present unbelieving tendency originates in the heart, and still more in the imagination, and not with any *σκέψις* of the reason. By the help of learning

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and argument, the truth of Christianity is abundantly demonstrable; but then it is not with the soul, but with the heart, that man believes unto salvation. And hence we have, at present, the maximum of Christian evidence, with the minimum of Christian conclusion. Therefore, purposely, the little book which I now send you is not cool ratiocination; and its logic is intended to be that of a soul in its completeness, and not that of a mind in a merely mathematical mood."

Readers in America, knowing Mr. Mountford only through this work and "Martyria," may be interested in the information that he is a young man, a graduate of the York (Dissenters') College, and the minister of a Unitarian congregation in King's Lynn.

F. D. H.

Boston, December, 1846.

TO
ARTHUR LUPTON, JUN., B. A.,
OF LEEDS.

DEAR FRIEND:—

You listened once to these two discourses, or rather to portions of them. To you, I inscribe them; for in the subjects on which they treat, few persons are more deeply interested than you are; and these following pages, few persons, if any, will read with more favor than yourself. As I write this, there throng into my memory thoughts of the times when we were fellow-students in the dear, quiet College at York, and remembrances, also, of other days, which since then we have enjoyed together; and there rise in my

mind, too, feelings which sanctify these recollections into something more than pleasant.

With you, the religious prospects of England are a frequent subject of speculation; and I think myself, that there are influences working in society, which in a few years may ripen into the anxiety at least, if not into the success, of a Reformation.

At present, all sects, both Established and Dissenting, which have life of their own, manifest their vitality, for the most part, in internal controversy. A very significant circumstance this! For it betokens, that what doctrines they do hold, they hold in they know not what spirit. And it is the spirit which lends to the letter its meaning. For instance, the thirty-nine articles were once a portion of common life; they were thought of and felt at the fireside and in the market-place, as well as once a week at Paul's Cross; but now they are intelligible nowhere, in their first sense, except in a theological library, and there even, only with an effort. *Profess*