

THE GALILEAN GOSPEL

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The Galilean gospel by Alexander Balmain Bruce

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ALEXANDER BALMAIN BRUCE

**THE GALILEAN
GOSPEL**

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THE GALILEAN GOSPEL.



THE
GALILEAN GOSPEL

BY

ALEXANDER BALMAIN BRUCE, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF APLOGETICS AND NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS, FREE CHURCH
COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

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—
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P R E F A C E.

THIS book is not a miscellaneous collection of sermons, gleaned from a ministry of sixteen years, and strung together by a catching title. It is intended to serve a definite purpose, and the greater part of the contents has been written expressly for this publication. My aim has been to convey as vivid an idea as possible of the Gospel Christ preached, and above all of the evangelic spirit as reflected in His teaching and life. I believe that this will meet a want of our time, and will be welcomed by many. While there is little in the actual Christianity of our day, or in the state of the churches to awaken enthusiasm, it is rest-giving to go back to the beginning of the Christian era, and drink of the pure wells of truth opened in Galilee in the days of the Son of Man. Reflecting on the baleful controversies of centuries, and the tragic divisions resulting therefrom, on the theological schools and their conflicting oracles, the sigh involuntarily escapes from the breast, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away to Jesus of Nazareth, and forget the windy storms of human opinions and passions!" He does not disappoint the weary heart. In His teaching is eternal wisdom; in Himself, perennial beauty. What one has found he will desire to communicate to others, in the belief that it must be good for all to know the authentic Gospel preached in Galilee, and the type of piety exemplified by the Preacher. Here, as in all things, Jesus must be the model. Attempts may legitimately be made to define, by historical examples, the characteristics of evangelical religion; but the surest and most direct road to this knowledge is to study the words and ways of Him who, just because He is at the fountain-head anterior to

all divisions, is apt to be overlooked in our theological definitions and historic studies. It is well to remember whence the term evangelic comes. It is formed from the Greek name for the Gospels : τὰ εὐαγγέλια, the Evangels. The Evangels or Gospels have for their burthen the ministry of Christ. That ministry is the gospel in its purity and Divine poetic simplicity. That, therefore, is the source whence our notions of evangelic truth and piety must in the first place be taken. It will be well for the church to remount to that source, and to have her ideas of Christianity rectified by the standard, and her intuitions restored where they have become obscured through the moss of ages. When this has been done, it will be acknowledged that evangelic piety does not belong exclusively to a sect or theological school, but is catholic and unsectarian ; and also, that it is not to be identified with the conservative spirit in religion. The days in which we live are trying. Unbelief threatens to sweep away all realised religious ideals, creeds, churches, clergy. With some things one might be willing to part, under stress of weather, to save the ship. It is well to know what is ship and what is ballast. A recent writer on *Natural Religion* proposes to throw overboard everything except that with which men like Strauss, Mill, and Tyndall could agree, and to be content with nature, art, and humanity as sufficient to satisfy the religious cravings of the soul. Even Christ and the Gospels may be dispensed with. To us Christ and His Gospel are the only things absolutely indispensable. While the spirit of the age is falling away to the worship of the unknowable, the beautiful, the scientific order of the universe, we would say, "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." This book is a slight contribution to the study of some of these golden words. It is written mainly for the people. May it help them to a better knowledge of the people's Friend.

THE AUTHOR.

GLASGOW, November 1882.

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