

**JESUS AND THE GOSPEL:  
CHRISTIANITY JUSTIFIED  
IN THE MIND OF CHRIST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649618170

Jesus and the Gospel: Christianity Justified in the Mind of Christ by James Denney

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# JESUS AND THE GOSPEL

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IN THE MIND OF CHRIST

BY

JAMES DENNEY, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE  
LITERATURE AND THEOLOGY, UNITED FREE  
CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW; AUTHOR OF  
"THE DEATH OF CHRIST"

*τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;*

NEW YORK  
A. C. ARMSTRONG & SON  
3 & 5 WEST EIGHTEENTH STREET  
MCMIX

## PREFACE

THE Introduction to this book makes its purpose sufficiently clear, and a preface is hardly needed except to indicate the readers whom the writer would wish to reach.

The argument appeals, on the one hand, to those who are members of Christian Churches and to the Churches themselves. Amid the vast unsettlement of opinion which has been produced by the emancipation of the mind and its exercise on the general tradition of Christianity, it calls attention anew to the certainty of the things which we have been taught. It demonstrates, as the writer believes, that the attitude to Christ which has always been maintained in the Church is the one which is characteristic of the New Testament from beginning to end, and that this attitude is the only one which is consistent with the self-revelation of Jesus during His life on earth. But it makes clear at the same time that this Christian attitude to Jesus is all that is vital to Christianity, and that it is not bound up, as it is often supposed to be, with this or that intellectual construction of it, or with this or that definition or what it supposes or implies. The Church must bind its members to the Christian attitude to Christ, but it has no right to bind them to anything besides. It can

never overcome its own divisions, it can never appeal with the power of a unanimous testimony to the world, till both these truths are recognised to the full.

On the other hand, the argument appeals to those who are outside of the Churches, who do not take up the Christian attitude to Christ, and who on general philosophical grounds, as they would say, decline even to discuss it. To them it is simply an appeal to look at the facts. They have a place for Jesus in their world, but it is not the place which Christian faith gives Him. It is the hope of the writer that he may convince some that it is not the place which He claims. This is surely a serious consideration. The mind of Christ is the greatest reality with which we can come into contact in the spiritual world, and it is not treating it with the respect which is its due, if we decide beforehand, as so many do, that Christ can only have in the life and faith of humanity the same kind of place as others who are spoken of as the founders of religions. The section of the book entitled *The Self-Revelation of Jesus* is an attempt to bring out the significance which Jesus had, in His own mind, in relation to God and man. This can be done, as the writer is convinced, in a way which is historically unimpeachable; and unless we are prepared summarily to set aside Christ's consciousness of Himself, it is fatal to such appreciations of Him as have just been referred to. To be a Christian means, in one aspect of it, to take Christ at His own estimate; and it is one step to this to feel that He is putting the most serious of all questions when He asks, *Who say ye that I am?*

Much of the indifference to Christianity in certain circles comes from the refusal to treat this question seriously. It would fulfil the deepest desire of the writer if what he has said of the self-revelation of Jesus prevailed with any one who has regarded it as an unreal question to take it up in earnest, and to let the Christ who is historically attested in the gospels freely appeal to his mind, not as an illustration of some philosophical theorem of his own about God or Man, but as the Sovereign Person that He was and is.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to Messrs. T. and T. Clark for the use they have allowed him to make of an article on *Preaching Christ* contributed by him to their *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.





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