

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

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The Christian Society by George D. Herron

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GEORGE D. HERRON

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

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...BY...

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PREFACE. ♦

EXCEPTING the fourth, the following chapters were prepared and spoken, in February, as a course of lectures to the students of Michigan University, Ann Arbor, under the auspices of the Students' Christian Association and the two Bible Chairs recently established in connection with the University. They have just been repeated, at the request of theological students and pastors, at Princeton, New Jersey. They have also been given, in whole or in part, to the students of Indiana State University, Bloomington; of Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin; of Union Theological Seminary, New York City; and the first has recently been given as an address to the Congregational Club of Brooklyn, New York. They are now given to the people in this form. The fourth chapter was spoken to the Congregational Club of Minnesota in September, 1890. It has since gone through different


forms and editions of publication, and is now included in this volume, that it may be more permanently preserved.

I wish to say, in publishing these lectures, that no institution, no organization, no particular school of thought or fellowship of men, is in any wise responsible for the beliefs and convictions—I have no opinions—I herein express. For these expressions I alone should be held accountable to the people, as I shall be to God.

I have not spoken, as some would say, to discredit, but rather to glorify the church. I would save the church from the false position of existing and working for its own glory and religious aggrandizement, from the fatal Jewish position of seeking to bring the world under the dominion of itself, and speak some word that would help to convert it to the Christian pursuit of sacrificing itself for the world. I would have the church become the incarnation and representative of Jesus in bearing away the sins of society; in being rejected by the proud and selfish and mighty, that it may bring deliverance to the captives of social tyr-

annies, and preach the gospel of the kingdom of God to the people. I would see the church glorified with the glory that Jesus had upon the cross, and sanctified with the disposition which made him of no reputation in his own eyes.

The church was not sent to be an institutional dominion, but a sacrificial and redemptive life in the world. Yet the church is not engaged in sacrifice and redemption, so much as in artificial organization ; not engaged in discerning and teaching right from wrong, so much as in definition of doctrines. The analogy between Protestant Christendom in relation to its mission of social redemption, and the relation of the Jewish church to the first appearance of the Son of God, is true. I am haunted continually with the vision of the living Jesus weeping over our majestic temples of worship, our halls of theology, our conventions of religion, as though he were again in the sacred sorrow of that weeping over Jerusalem, his heart again broken because only the remnant may receive the mission which the institution rejects.



The coming social incarnation of the Son of God is the church's present day of visitation. Will the church know its visitation or put the Christ of judgment to a social crucifixion?

GEORGE D. HERRON.

Iowa College, Grinnell, Iowa,

March 5, 1894.

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