

**CHRISTIAN CHARACTER;
BEING SOME LECTURES
ON THE ELEMENTS OF
CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

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Christian character; being some lectures on the elements of Christian ethics by J. R. Illingworth

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J. R. ILLINGWORTH

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BY

J. R. ILLINGWORTH, M.A., D.D.

Virtus est ordo amoris.—AUGUSTINE

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PREFACE

THE following pages contain the substance of some lectures upon Christian ethics originally delivered from notes. Their aim was simply expository; to indicate in outline the essential and permanent elements in Christian life and character. For though the emphasis laid upon particular virtues, as well as upon the means of their attainment, has varied in different periods of history and different schools of thought, the fundamental nature of the Christian character, as exhibited by its best representatives, has always remained the same. And that character has been essentially dependent upon belief in the cardinal doctrines of the Christian creed. Nowadays, however, the necessity of this dependence is denied in many quarters; while, in others, Christian ethics altogether are pronounced inadequate to modern needs. Hence

the endeavour of the lectures was to recall the claim—the continuous claim—of Christianity to be the adequate guide of all human development, the adequate goal of all human desire, and this only on account of its further claim to be a divine revelation.

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CHAPTER I

LIFE THE END OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

THE Christian life presupposes the Christian religion. When, therefore, we speak of Christian ethics, we do not mean a series of precepts, or a course of conduct which may be adopted by the adherents of any other creed, but the life which is the practical outcome of belief in the Incarnation, and which it was the object of the Incarnation to introduce into the world. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," is Christ's account of His own purpose for the world. "I live; yet not I, Christ liveth in me," is its echo in the typical Christian experience of St. Paul.

And this life is further emphasised in the New Testament by continual contrast with the death that is its opposite. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." There is a