

**THE GOSPEL OF DIVINE  
HELP: THOUGHTS ON  
SOME FIRST PRINCIPLES  
OF CHRISTIANITY**

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The Gospel of Divine Help: Thoughts on Some First Principles of Christianity by Edward Worsdell

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**EDWARD WORSDELL**

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THE  
GOSPEL OF DIVINE HELP.

THOUGHTS ON SOME FIRST PRINCIPLES OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

*Addressed chiefly to the Members of the  
Society of Friends.*

BY EDWARD WORSDELL, B.A.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and  
for ever.”—HEB. xiii. 8.

SECOND EDITION.

*With Prefatory Note by J. C. Whittier.*

LONDON:  
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1888.

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## Prefatory Note.

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I AM glad to learn that a second edition of the "Gospel of Divine Help" is called for. It supplies a want which, it seems to me, was never so strongly felt as at the present time, not only in the Society of Friends, but among the thoughtful and earnest seekers after truth in other denominations, who find it impossible to accept much which seems to them irreverent and dishonouring to God in creeds founded on an arbitrary arrangement of isolated and often irrelevant texts—the letter that killeth without the Spirit, which alone gives life.

It is scarcely possible to overestimate the evils of doubt, anguish, despair, and infidelity, resulting from doctrines which attribute to the Heavenly Father schemes and designs utterly at variance with the moral sense of His creatures, and which in them would be regarded as unspeakably unjust and cruel.

To those who have become confused and be-

wildered by having these dreadful conceptions of the All-Merciful forced upon them as a vital necessity of Christian belief, this little book may afford a clearer view of the simple truths of Divine Revelation. I cannot but believe that even those who may dissent from, or not fully adopt, some of its conclusions, must feel, as they read, the prayerful reverence and earnest sincerity of its author in his desire to vindicate the ways of God to man, and win souls to the Divine Master, by presenting the "sweet reasonableness" of His Gospel of Love. The entire freedom of his book from self-assertion, assumption, and dogmatism, affords small opportunity for unfriendly criticism. It is the honest work of an honest man, desirous of helping others who may be in doubt and discouragement, to find the light and peace into which he has been providentially led. It has my respect and sympathy.

*John G. Whittier.*

*Oak Knoll, Danvers,*

*Eleventh Month 30th, 1887.*



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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It has been a matter of deep regret to the writer, that this Essay, addressed especially to the Society of Friends on matters of vital importance to itself as a Christian Church, has remained entirely unnoticed by the *Friend* and the *British Friend*, and practically so by the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*.

In contrast with the attitude of these periodicals of his own Society, the writer may be permitted to refer his readers to the review contributed to the *Nonconformist* by the former editor of the *Expositor*, Samuel Cox, D.D., of Nottingham, which will be found at the end of the volume, together with a summary of some other press notices.

The circulation of a thousand copies of this Essay within a few months of its publication, and chiefly, it is believed, amongst Friends, shows that it deals with questions which not only *ought*, in the belief of the writer, to command the gravest consideration of Friends, but which, perhaps, are already doing so to an extent that has not hitherto been sufficiently recognised.

Owing to the thorough criticism bestowed in many quarters on the proof sheets of the first edition, no statement made in it has now to be withdrawn or seriously modified.

A few verbal alterations have been made, some

additional matter appears in the text and appendices, and an index has been added.

The fact on which the whole essay is founded, and which the writer would wish above everything else to emphasise, is that if A loves goodness, and knows that B does not, then in exact proportion to A's love of goodness will be his desire that B should come to love it also. This principle is a primary fact of our moral consciousness—a Divine law written on the heart. *It is as inconceivable morally that a righteous Being should cease to desire the sinner's righteousness, as it is inconceivable intellectually that two and two should not make four.*

Now God's love of goodness, imaged to us in His Son, is infinite. How soul-stirring, nay, almost soul-appalling, is the thought that no one of us can escape from His most loving purpose that not only here, but throughout the great hereafter, we are, through His help, to become ever more truly His sons in ever nearer approximation to the infinitely adorable righteousness of Christ!

Even the news of the love of his Creator would not be "good news," or "gospel," for a man, unless that love were wise and righteous. But the news of this Divine Purpose for him is precisely the *best* news that can be brought to him, and is therefore "The Gospel."

E. W.

*November, 1887.*

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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I HAVE shrunk exceedingly from handling from an intellectual standpoint, and with something of cold precision of language, themes so momentous and heart-searching as those of this essay. True religion is matterless of intellectual apprehension, than of constant and constraining spiritual consciousness. But there has seemed a necessity laid upon me. In a limited circle of acquaintance amongst those brought up as Friends, I know personally no less than twenty, who have reluctantly drifted into Unitarianism or Agnosticism, largely through failing to distinguish between the teachings of Christ and the assertions of theologians. And I know a much larger number, who, whilst still retaining their faith in Christ, are sorely perplexed by much which they suppose that they are bound, as Christians, to believe.

Now the intellectual side of our nature demands that the Gospel should be disentangled from any untenable beliefs that tradition may have associated with it.