THE SON OF MAN IN HIS RELATION TO THE RACE: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, XXV. 31-46

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The Son of Man in His Relation to the Race: A Re-Examination of the Gospel of Matthew, XXV. 31-46 by Anonymous

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A RE-EXAMINATION OF

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, XXV. 31–46

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16th STREET

1888

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DEDICATED,

WITH WARMEST ADMIRATION,

To the Memory of a Woman

WHOSE PUREST JOY IT WAS

TO LISTEN TO THE CRY OF DISTRESS AND DRY

THE TEAR OF SORROW

AND WHO THUS DEMONSTRATED THAT

SHE WAS

A CHRISTIAN

PREFACE

THE sayings of Jesus are the thoughts that yet breathe, and the words that still burn. They will never die. Their vitality is more strikingly manifest than ever.

The dust raised in the old battle-fields of theological controversy still floats in the atmosphere of religion, and rather obscures our vision of the Christ. But modern, earnest, inquiry seeks Christ Himself and will be content only as it hears His voice. "How do we know but what some Peter (even though he might be a bishop), standing in the porch of truth, warming himself among the priests' servants, may not be denying the very Christ whose utterances alone we want to hear? At any rate let us hear Christ first and the Churches afterwards." True, my friend!

Rec'd. MUP. 7-10-40

This is a hopeful sign of the times. These men are seeking after God. And it is in this spirit the writer has endeavoured to learn what Christ said about the subject of this Essay.

If his view be *new*, it is not necessarily true; but it is not necessarily false. It unfolds a conviction which years have only strengthened.

As the subject grew clearer, it became increasingly evident that the relations of Judaism to Christianity, and the relations of Christianity to heathenism, had not, by those who laid the foundations of the creeds of Christendom, been at all adequately discriminated. Instead of being clearly differentiated from Judaism, the good wine of Christianity has been run into the old bottles of Judaism, to the confusion of letter and spirit, of form and substance, and of chronological relation.

Christianity emerging from Judaism, took on many forms of Jewish law and observance. The earliest converts and teachers were Jews. The Law was *their* schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. But Gentile converts to Christianity did

not, and were never intended, to pass through the forms of this school at all.

Christianity came to the Greeks at Athens not in the garb of the sacrificial priests,—but as certain of their poets had hinted, as the revelation of the universal Father. And missionary Christianity, going into all the world, is charged to conduct its converts no more through the portals of Judaism than through the dismal swamps and wildernesses of Eastern or Western Theology. Its burden is simply to preach the *glad tidings* to every creature under heaven, wisely adapting its form to the nation's best spiritual conceptions and aptitudes, through which they may be feeling after God. Would not this be following exactly the example of the Apostles, in the use of the habits of thought and practice of the people, to whom they first took the Gospel?

Perhaps we ought not to be very much surprised at the perplexities and confusion of Theological dogma, when we call to mind the frequent blunders of our Lord's immediate disciples, in the