

**THE CHRISTIAN
CONTEMPLATED; IN A COURSE
OF LECTURES DELIVERED IN
ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649327911

The Christian contemplated; in a course of lectures delivered in Argyle Chapel, Bath by
William Jay

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM JAY

**THE CHRISTIAN
CONTEMPLATED; IN A COURSE
OF LECTURES DELIVERED IN
ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH**

THE
CHRISTIAN
CONTEMPLATED
IN A
COURSE OF LECTURES,
DELIVERED IN
ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH.
BY WILLIAM JAY.

Behold the awful portrait, and admire:
Nor stop to wonder—imitate and live.
YOUNG.



SECOND AMERICAN EDITION.

Philadelphia:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM STAVELY,
No. 99, South Second street.
.....
1830.

HC

PREFACE.



CUSTOM seems to have rendered it almost necessary, for an Author never to appear before the public without a Preface; in which something, if not concerning himself, yet concerning his work is looked for, as a respect due to his readers. Yet Rosseau says, it is a part of the book never read, unless by women and children. The Author however indulges a hope that this is not very extensively true; since, in writing the following introductory remarks, he certainly intended, as will appear from their length, something more than a ceremonious conformity to example.

The design of this Series of Lectures was—to diversify a little the ordinary course of ministerial instruction—to excite and secure attention by a degree of allowable novelty and curiosity—and to bring together various things pertaining to the same subject; so that they might aid each other in illustration and improvement, by their arrangement and union.

But why publish them? The writer is aware what an abundance of religious works is perpetually issuing from the press: and he would not wonder, if some should think that *he* has too often appeared before the public already. Yet he trusts an author is not necessarily supposed to say to his readers, “Now attend only to me.” Surely many publications may be serviceable for different purposes, and in different degrees; and a writer may be allowed to conclude, that the production of his pen may obtain a measure of welcome and useful attention—without the vanity of supposing that it is superior to every other, or the folly of expecting that it is to supersede any other. If too the author be a public teacher, and has met with acceptance, it is natural to suppose that he will secure a considerable number of connections more immediately his own, and who will be rather partial to the writer, for the sake of the preacher. Such was the case here. In two or three days after this Course of Lectures was finished, a large number of copies was called and subscribed for by those who had heard them.

Many of these applicants were persons whose opinion and desire would have had weight with any one who knew them; while all of them had claims upon the preacher, as stated, or occasional parts of his audience.

The Author can truly say that he yielded to publish with a reluctance which only an *ascertained* earnestness could have overcome. Yet he is now glad, especially with regard to his own audience, that the importunity was expressed, and has been complied with. For near thirty-five years he has been labouring to serve his present charge, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace, and he hopes he may add, in righteousness of life: and though he commenced his connection young, yet such a period strikes far into the brevity of human life, and calls upon him to think, and feel, and act, with increasing seriousness and diligence, knowing that the night cometh wherein no man can work, and to be concerned that after his decease, his people may be able to have the things he has spoken always in remembrance. The work, therefore, as a brief epitome of his preaching, will serve as a kind of ministerial legacy to be perused, particularly by the younger members of his church and congregation, when the clouds of the valley will be sweet about him; and by which, though dead, he may yet speak—perhaps, in some cases, to more purpose than while living. The work may tend to correct some pious mistakes both on the right hand, and on the left. It contains many of the Author's views on important subjects after considerable experience and observation. For such remarks his station has been favourable, and his opportunities numerous; especially from the variety and latitude of his religious intercourse. This has never been confined to Christians of his own denomination. He has not suffered prejudice so to magnify, what his convictions might have led him to consider the mistakes or imperfections of any who differ from him, as to make him overlook their excellencies as individuals or communities; or to prevent his mingling with them in company, and co-operating with them in services; or to deprive him of that pleasure and profit which he knows may be derived from those who cannot frame to pronounce exactly the Shibboleth of a spiritual tribe. He has always preferred to study religion, not in its abstractions, but in its subjects: not in its speculative opinions, but in its practical principles: not in its distant generalities, but in its appropriated and particular influences. He has

always endeavoured to follow it out, from its too common confinement in certain notions, seasons, and services, into actual and ordinary life; and to esteem and applaud it only in proportion as it exerts and displays itself in that "wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

This may in some measure account for the desire which has given rise to the publication. For it is to be presumed, that there will be some considerable conformity between the views of a minister and the people of his charge after a voluntary, long, and perfectly affectionate connection. It is certain that these Lectures would not have been completely congenial with the taste of some hearers. *They* would in *any* course of religious discussion have said, "We want more of doctrine, and more of Christ." Now we are far from treating these terms *themselves* with contempt or disrespect. We love the doctrines of the Gospel; and believe that it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. We attach importance to evangelical truth; and have no notion of piety without principle, or of good fruit but from a good tree—This is our creed: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Yet, we cannot be ignorant that the complaint we have supposed, is too often the whining and seditious jargon of a party; and the very last party in the world we should ever consult with regard to preaching. These desperate adherents to something not easily fixed and definable in sentiment, but always accompanied with a spirit as well known and invariable in its operation, as any of the laws of nature, are, in spiritual things, what some discontented zealots are in political; and as the latter render the cause of rational liberty suspicious and despicable, so the former disserve and disgrace the cause of evangelical religion—They are gospel radicals. They are not always even moral: they are never amiable. They neither pursue, nor think upon the things that are lovely, and of good report. They set at nought all sacred relations, proprieties, and decencies; while many of them abandon family worship, and leave their children without any attempts to

bring them into the way everlasting, not knowing but they may be some of those against whom God "has sworn to have indignation for ever," and not daring to go before him, or to be profane enough to take the work out of his hands. Self-willed are they; self-confident; presumptuous; censorious; condemnatory of all that are not initiated into their temper and exclusions. With regard to their ministers, they are not learners, but judges; and often make a man an offender for a word. In hearing, all is fastidiousness. Appetite has given place to lust. They go to the house of God, not for wholesome food—they want something to elevate and intoxicate. The preacher is nothing, unless he can make them drink and forget their duty, and remember their danger no more. Their religion is entirely an impersonal thing, any further than as it consists in belief and delusion. They look for all in Christ, not as the only source from which it can be received into us—this is truth: but as the only residence in which it is to remain, while they themselves continue the same. They are complete in him—not as to the all-sufficiency provided in him for their actual and entire recovery; but without their being new creatures. They look after nothing in themselves—and nothing in themselves should be looked for as the ground of their acceptance with God, or as self-derived or self-sustained: but they look after nothing in themselves even as the effect of divine agency and communication—forgetful of the inspired prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me:" regardless of the assertion, "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure:" subverting the promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; and from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit also will I put within you; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Their state is not a condition to be submitted to any process of trial, as those enemies to Christian comfort would have it, who admonish persons to examine themselves whether they are in the faith; and to prove their own selves; and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. Their peace requires that all this should, without hesitation, be taken for granted; while every thing is to be cried down as unbelief that would dare to lead them to question for an instant their security,

or to keep them from being at ease in Zion. The sinner is not only guilty, but diseased; but they are concerned only to remove the sentence of condemnation, while the disorder is left. They absolve, but not heal: they justify, but not renovate. The king's daughter is all glorious within, while her clothing is of wrought gold: with them the righteousness of Christ is a fine robe to cover a filthy body. All their sin, past, present, and future, is so completely done away, that it were folly to feel anguish on the account of it. Their miscarriages are not theirs; but those of sin that dwelleth in them. Their imperfections are regretless, because unavoidable: no man can keep alive his own soul.

Now we are willing to concede that all those from whom we occasionally hear complaints, do not go into these lengths; and we are persuaded that were there worthier individuals perfectly informed concerning the men we have very truly but inadequately sketched, they would exclaim, "My soul, come not thou into their secret; and mine honour, to their 'system' be not thou united." Yet *they* sometimes murmur, as if in sympathy with them; and borrow their language, unconscious whose technicality it is: and are in danger that their good should be evil spoken of. To be strenuous for evangelical preaching is commendable; but they view the desideratum in too confined an import. They think it, if not improper, yet needless, for a minister to inculcate many things which he *must* feel to be binding upon him. "Oh!" say they, "the grace of God will teach people all this." The grace of God will incline, and enable us to do all this: but it is the Bible that teaches. This contains all our religious information; and we only want to be led into all truth. The sacred writers never left these things to be taught by the grace of God, without instruction. They never intrusted them to *inference*. They particularized and enforced them. There is not one of Paul's Epistles, a large proportion of which might not have been spared as impertinent, upon this plea: for as surely as the former parts lay the foundation doctrinally, the latter labour to build us up on our most holy faith. But these would restrain a public teacher from the extensiveness of the Gospel itself; and oblige him to hold forth Christianity only in the first rudiments, not in the advanced science. They would confide him to a kind of abstract inculcation of a small class of principles; which principles are indeed unspeakably important, yet lose much of their importance

itself, by being unaccompanied with certain alliances, and developments, and applications. Yea, they would not willingly allow him to do more than constantly iterate from Sabbath to Sabbath, a few well-known and favoured sentiments, in a manner the most undeviating, and in phraseology the most hacknied. They prefer a scheme of divinity drawn up by some fallible fellow-creature, to the Scripture at large, which, like God's other works, no one can perfectly systematize; but in which, as in nature, we have, instead of mechanism, infinite freshness, and richness, and variety, and irregularity: that is, order beyond our reach. They are sure, if not to oppose, yet not to aid; if not to stigmatize, yet not to countenance and applaud any attempt, the preacher shall make to extend the views of his hearers; to improve their understandings; to lead them through the whole land of Revelation in the length and breadth thereof; in a word, to do any thing that would follow up the recommendation of the Apostle, "Leaving therefore the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."

Here the Lecturer is unspeakably happy in being able to say to the people he addressess, "Ye have not so learned Christ." He therefore felt no embarrassment in the study or in the delivery of these discourses. He had only to consult his own convictions, and was not necessitated to think of the likings or dislikings of a sickly fancy, a perverted orthodoxy, a party spirit, or an anathematizing bigotry. Neither would he ever consent to officiate in any congregation where he could not stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. This freedom he thinks a preacher cannot too highly value and assert in the discharge of his work—A freedom from the fear of man that bringeth a snare—inducing and enabling him to say, as he rises from his knees to enter the pulpit,

"Careless, myself a dying man,
Of dying men's esteem;
Happy, O God, if thou approve,
Though all beside condemn."

A freedom (whatever advantages they may afford him by their collectiveness and arrangements) from the fetterings and exclusiveness of human systems of theology—a freedom from the least sense of any obligation requiring him, in the interpretation and improvement of any passage of