

## THE DEITY OF OUR LORD.

By Rev. S. E. Wishard, D.D.

There is doubt in the world on the vital questions concerning God and man. The person and character of Christ have always been questioned, not because there was any ground for doubt, but because the obdurate will of this old nature of ours is in a state of hostility to God's will, way and word. The "New Thought" people consent that our Savior was a remarkable man and teacher, who would probably change some of his opinions if he were now living. The theosophist defines him as "one aspect of God."

We have, however, the mind of God on all the great questions that concern us. Hence we turn to him on the ever-recurring question of the person and character of Jesus Christ. Just a few things should be known. The old prophecy concerning him in Isaiah 9: 6 is very specific. Predicting his coming the prophet said: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." In harmony with this prophecy our Savior affirms his own deity. He said to the Jews who refused to receive him: "I am not of this world. If ye believe not that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins" (John 8: 23, 24). The reader will notice that the pronoun "he" was put in by the translators; it is not in the original. Christ here gives himself the name "I AM," the same name that God gave himself when he sent Moses to Pharaoh (Ex. 3: 14).

Again, he said to them: "Before Abraham was, I AM," giving himself the name of deity and affirming his pre-existence. In his prayer, also, before he went out to Gethsemane, he said to the Father: "Now O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He claims that he was with the Father in past eternity. "Before the world was" (John 17: 5).

To Philip he said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He had previously said in the presence of the Jews: "I and my Father are one," for which "they took up stones to stone him" (John 10: 30). In John 5: 18 it is stated that "the Jews sought to kill him, because he . . . said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." He did not deny their charge, that he claimed to be equal with God. Hence his claim of equality, unity and eternity with God, was a distinct claim of deity.

The inspired apostles certify that his claim was correct. The Apostle John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1: 1). The same apostle says again: "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5: 20).

After our Savior's resurrection, when he challenged Thomas' unbelief concerning his personal identity, the convinced disciple exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20: 28).

Paul writes of the Jews: "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9: 5). It is written in the epistle to the Hebrews 1: 8: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Divine attributes, which belong only to God, are ascribed to him. The Scriptures affirm his omniscience. When Philip brought Nathaniel to him, he said: "Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile." To the astonished Nathaniel he said: "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee" (John 1: 47, 48). "He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man" (John 2: 25). While a long distance from Bethany he informed the disciples of the death of Lazarus, saying: "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe," for he purposed to raise him from the dead (John 11: 14, 15, 43). He knew all about Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial and his crucifixion long before the events took place. Being omniscient he frequently replied to the secret

thoughts of his enemies before they had expressed them.

His omnipotence is practically affirmed in his promises: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20). With his commission to the church to preach the gospel to all nations, he promised: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20). None but an omnipotent being could fulfill that promise.

His omnipotence is positively asserted by his beloved disciple John: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1: 3). Omnipotence alone can create. "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, . . . by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1: 2). Here is creation proven. To Lazarus, dead four days, he said, "Come forth," and the dead came out of his grave (John 11: 43, 44). He only who is "The Life" can give life to the dead. But the omnipotent Savior did that for Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9: 18), for the widow's son of Nain (Luke 7: 11), for Lazarus and the nobleman's son (John 4: 50).

Our Lord was, and is, and is to be worshipped. In the epistle to the Hebrews, 1: 6, the Father is represented as saying of the Son: "Let all the angels of God worship him." God only is the object of worship; therefore Christ is God. Stephen in the hour of death knelt down and prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7: 59). The dying thief prayed, saying: "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The prayer was answered by the suffering Savior: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23: 42, 43).

Paul addressed his first letter to the Corinthians to "all that in every place that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 2). This same apostle besought the Lord thrice concerning that thorn in the flesh. The Lord answered him: "My grace is sufficient for thee . . . Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12: 8, 9).

He is to be adored and worshipped by all the heavenly and redeemed hosts. John says, in the revelation which Christ gave him: "The four and twenty elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. . . . And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 4: 10 and 5: 11, 12). And this is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, our Savior and our God, "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7: 25).

I can not see, I can not understand,  
But yet I trust and feel that Love alone  
Has guided and is guiding me. His hand  
Will never needlessly afflict his own.

So from this single thought I will not swerve  
That somehow, somewhere, an unlooked-for gain,  
Of life, of love, of joyous power to serve,  
Is coming to me on the wings of pain.

D. A. L. Gregor.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—God's Gift to us (II. Cor. 9:15).  
Tues.—Christ's gift Himself (Eph. 5: 25-27).  
Wed.—The heart to God (Prov. 23: 23-26).  
Thurs.—The life to service (Rom. 15: 1-5).  
Fri.—Substance to the poor (I. John 3: 17-19).  
Sat.—Ourselves to Christ (Matt. 4: 18-22).

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS.\*

(By Robert E. Speer).

"As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious God, may we  
Ever more be led to Thee.

"As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King."

These should be our first gifts on Christmas Day. What we have we should bring to Christ. It may be that some of us have hearts which have never been given to Him.

The best gift that we could bring to the Saviour would be our full selves. Perhaps we have gifts which He gave us, gifts of voice or hand which He is waiting to have us bring back of our free will to Him for His use. Shall we withhold or give this Christmas time to Him who giveth all?

The noble thing would be to do now what Chinese Gordon did, as is recorded on the tablet in St. Paul's cathedral, London. "To the memory of Major-General Charles George Gordon who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God."

The tablet contains, too, something of the record of his wonderful life; but the secret of it all was that gift of all that he was and had to Christ in the poor and needy.

Perhaps we think that we do not have anything that would be of value to Christ. But if the boy who had the fish, and fishes had thought this and failed to bring his few possessions to the Saviour, the multitude might have gone unfed. Much of the best work in the world is done by people who have no wealth and no social prominence, but who give honest hearts to God and loving service to their neighbors. That is the kind of material which Jesus can take and use in the richest way.

Giving presents to one another at Christmas time is a true Christian way of celebrating our Saviour's birth. He loves to see His children loving and glad, and He would not think, we may be sure, of disapproving of their using His birthday as a time for giving good gifts. Any spirit of selfishness or barter is contrary to His spirit, but we do not need to spoil the day by wondering whether Jesus would sanction our spending money on each other for love's sake. Nothing could please Him more, except such giving as His own, of Himself and what He had to those in need.

But giving wisely in Christ's spirit is not the same thing as waste. We are not encouraged to buy extravagant and costly things, and often we do so expecting that other extravagant and costly things will be bought for us. A great deal could be done for Christ and for Christ's if we would this Christmas time cut off all this excess of expenditure and give it to the great cause of missions. Way will we not do this? The money that will be wasted this Christmas would suffice to carry the gospel to millions of people in Asia, or to teach and train tens of thousands of those who are pouring into our own land from Europe and who are God's present to us, to be cared for as His own and accounted for to Him.

It is the true knight, and the "white soul" who does his duty lovingly and in all relations of life.

What greater than to be right with God—and right with all men—and one's best and truest self. Duty covers all these.

\*S. S. Lesson, December 19, 1901.—Our Christmas Gifts (Matt. 2:1-11).