

He has always been, and this He always will be. When Goethe, and Renan, and Mill declare that His worship will renew itself to endless ages, what sentiments concerning the future interest which He may awaken may we not expect to hear from those millions who now worship Him as God! A proper knowledge of Him is the greatest desideratum of the Christian Church.

He is one whom we would fain understand. We would read His place in the history of events. We would know whence He cometh and whither He goeth. But in order to obtain this knowledge we must make our excursions both backward and forward, we must investigate the past, we must trace up the future. We must know something of what transpired in the world anterior to His birth, and something of what followed His death.

Since He is called the Supreme Person of history, and His life and doctrine have become the greatest problem of the world, He is interesting to history, to philosophy, and to religion. And whoever will make Jesus Christ an object of study, and subject Him to the same analysis as any other problem, cannot come upon Him suddenly, but must approach Him through the avenues of those thoughts which were planted by the men whose conceptions prepared the way for His appearing. For not more surely was John the Baptist the voice of one who prepared His way in the wilderness of unbelief to men of faith, than the academicians were men who prepared His way in the wilderness of thought to men of reason. And since He is made an object of scientific study, as well as an object of religious faith, one has no alternative but to say, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar shalt thou go." And we must study Him in connection with the thinking as well as in connection with the believing of the human race.

When I speak of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, I must have some standard of comparison. I must know what consciousness in general means, and what it means as applied to other men, for without this knowledge I cannot estimate its quality in Christ.