

A FEW PREFATORY WORDS.

It is very desirable that young Christians should not grow up without definite conceptions of the fundamental doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures. Yet many otherwise intelligent Christians cannot state clearly what they believe, or the grounds of their faith. Those who have no definite beliefs respecting the Scriptures, the Christian Church and the ministry, or the doctrines concerning Christ and His salvation, are at a great disadvantage when they have occasion to discuss such questions with persons who have well-defined views on these subjects, whether these views be true or false. Those who drift into erroneous and heretical opinions generally do so because they have not an intelligent grasp of Scriptural truths, such as they need to oppose the plausible errors with which they are plied. Persons who have no settled opinion on a question are in danger of accepting the first plausible view of the subject that is cleverly presented to them.

The following brief statements of Scripture Doctrine were written for the New York *Christian Advocate* at the suggestion of the Editor, and are published in this form with his kind permission. I do not claim that this is an authoritative statement of Methodist doctrine, though I think it will be found in essential harmony with Wesleyan teaching. I was, however, more anxious to state simply and plainly what I believe the Scriptures to teach, in opposition to current doubtful dogmas, than to give formal Methodist definitions in every case. It is not possible for me to give credit to every theologian to whom I may be indebted. Brief as these expositions of doctrine are, I venture to believe that those who fully master and make them their own will be able to give a reason for the faith and hope which they cherish.

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TORONTO, December 4th. 1897.