

# THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME III. No. 24

ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 24 1901

WHOLE No. 79

With this issue we close the third year of this paper, and we heartily thank all those friends that have given us their patronage during these years, most of whom continue their subscriptions yet, and we hope they will still continue to do so. Our aim is to keep this paper a purely religious journal, with no advertisements, nor patent medicine testimonials, nor any controversial matter. But a helpful journal to both old and young. Our object is to put within easy reach of all our people a knowledge of what our ministers and churches are doing for the Master, and to supply the best religious reading matter that can be obtained. We do not try to interfere with the larger organ of our denomination in any way; but among our people where it does not go we endeavour to put this one in. Our friends may rest assured that we shall spare no time, labour nor means to make the paper helpful, and satisfactory to all who have a taste for religious reading. As there is a strong commendation of it with this issue we will say no more at present.

Wishing you all the compliments of the season will start out on a fourth years' service for you.—  
THE MANAGER.

## Limiting Ch. ist.

O. P. EACHES, D. D.

JESUS Christ is Christianity, not a part of it, but all of it. To construct the person of Christ, to explain away the claims made by him, is to limit Christianity itself. It has been affirmed by many writers that there was in reality no such thing as demoniacal possession in New Testament times. That this was the general belief is admitted without question. Jesus walked among men with a knowledge superior to the misconceptions and ignorances of that age. Inasmuch as this question did not touch any of the fundamentals of the faith Jesus did not discuss the truth or falsity of their belief, he simply accommodated himself to their harmless delusion. Concerning this view Edersheim says, "This view seems, however, scarcely worth refuting since it imputes to Jesus, on a point so important, a conduct not only unworthy of him or indeed of any truly great man, but implies a canon of accommodation which might equally be applied to his miracles or to anything else that contravened the notions of an interpreter and so might transform the whole gospel narratives into a series of historically unworthy legends." Jesus distinguished between physical sickness and the afflictions caused by evil agencies (Matt. iv: 24). In the quiet discussions with disciples, apart from the public, Jesus asserted the reality of this evil agency. When he sent out the twelve he affirmed very clearly a dark power that made the life wretched. He places this spirit possession along side of sickness and death (Matt. x: 8). When the seventy returned with the assertion that evil spirits were subject to them, Jesus confirmed the truth of their belief and their mastery. He connected this evil agency with the Satanic existence and power (Luke x: 20). Regarded in the light of history impartial criticism can arrive at no other conclusion than that Jesus shared the views of the evangelists as regarded those who were demonized.

The above view seems to impugn his honesty as a teacher. Dr. Gilbert, in the November number of the *Biblical World*, affirms that Jesus shared in the views of the men of his age, not knowing that these beliefs had no foundation.

He affirms the ignorance of Jesus on this point. The position held by Professor Gilbert is that there was no connection of any evil agency with this malady known in the New Testament as spirit possession, but that it was a form of insanity begotten in that age, occasioned by perverted views as to the Messiah. It was a kind of religious mania. He attributes to Jesus a belief in the reality of demoniacal possession. He asks can we believe in him as the Messiah if it appears that he shared in a popular error? He answers the question by saying, "He did not claim any special knowledge outside of the religious sphere. It then in subjects that lay apart from his Messianic work he shared the views of his age, that should not in any way affect our confidence in him as Messiah."

It seems to be a matter of great doubt whether an intelligent century would be willing to entrust the final word concerning eternal interests to a person who made clear and definite statements concerning his mission, his work, his power, and these statements are admitted to be erroneous. A man who did not understand himself, his age, his mission, his adversaries, his achievements is not that one who can fittingly represent the truth itself. That Jesus lived an emptied life is taught in Phil. ii: 8. That Jesus was not in the exercise of unlimited knowledge in his early ministry is plain from Mark xiii: 32. That he depended on the fullness of the Holy Spirit for guidance and the revelation of the truth is taught in John iii: 34. But when Jesus spoke on any subject he spoke in an authoritative way, his words were the truth, were a finality. He gave to his teachings more fixity than belongs to the laws of nature. It was as the Messiah, the Lord of the new kingdom, that Jesus sent out the twelve and endowed them with power against this evil malady. He taught that it required his supernatural help to achieve conquest against evil possession. He taught that it required his supernatural help to achieve conquest against him as Messiah were enrolled the hosts of darkness, under a Satanic agency. It was a part of his Messianic mission to relieve distress occasioned by sickness. Having power as the Messiah over sickness he distinguished other physical infirmities and healed them. He taught that it required a special spiritual power to overcome these evil agencies (Mark ix: 29). We cannot make two Messiahs or cut up the one Messiah into two parts, making the one authoritative and investing the other with serious errors in teaching. A mistaken Christ cannot long remain a Christ to build on. He said nothing concerning chemistry or geology. God gave him no mission on these subjects. His supreme mission was to understand that age and all ages, to understand his work, the obstacles, the method of overcoming them, to teach men righteously concerning unseen agencies. If Jesus was mistaken on this point, may he not be mistaken as to miracles, the finality of his words, his supreme leadership? That Jesus did not fall into the absurdities of the Jewish misconception concerning demonized persons is evident from a statement of the Jewish beliefs prevalent. But we may build up a calm and sane statement of Jesus' distinct teachings on this subject, given all through his ministry, spoken as teacher in answer to inquiries. There are many subjects on which Jesus did not speak. But when he did speak he spoke as the Messiah. To draw a line through the New Testament and affirm certain teachings as distinctly erroneous, admittedly so in our age, is to create a secondary Christ.

Overcoming the world implies overcoming a state of worldly anxiety. Worldly men are almost incessantly in a fever of anxiety lest their worldly schemes should fail. But the man who gets above the world gets above this state of ceaseless and corroding anxiety.

## "NUMBER ONE."

"He is a number one boy," said grandmother, proudly. "A great boy for his books; indeed, he would rather read than play, and that is saying a good deal for a boy of seven."

"It is, certainly," returned Uncle John, "but what a pity it is that he is blind."

"Blind!" exclaimed grandmother, and the number one boy looked up too, in wonder.

"Yes, blind, and a little deaf, also, I fear," answered Uncle John.

"Why, John! what put that into your head?" asked grandmother, looking perplexed.

"Why, the number one boy himself," said Uncle John. "He has been occupying the one easy chair in the room all the afternoon, never seeing you, nor his mother when she came in for a few minutes' rest. Then when your glasses were mislaid, and you had to climb upstairs two or three times to look for them, he neither saw nor heard anything that was going on."

"Oh, he is so busy reading," apologized grandmother.

"That is not a very good excuse, mother," replied Uncle John, smiling. "If 'Number One' is not blind nor deaf, he must be very selfish indeed to occupy the best seat in the room, and let other people run up and down stairs while he takes his ease."

"Nobody asked me to give up my seat nor to run no errands," said "Number One."

"That should not have been necessary," urged Uncle John. "What are a boy's eyes and ears for, if not to keep him posted on what is going on around him? I am glad to see you fond of books, but if a pretty story makes you forget all things except amusing 'Number One,' better run out and play with the other seven-year-old boys, and let grandmother enjoy the comfort of her rocker in quiet."—*Youth's Evangelist*.

It is admittedly difficult to construct a clear and definite hypothesis concerning demoniacal possession, admitting only the truth, keeping out the untrue. But concerning the mysteries that surround our physical and moral natures perhaps Jesus was as accurate an observer as modern scientific men. If Jesus declared that certain physical ailments were the result of evil agencies and theological professors declare that they were a form of insanity and that Jesus was undoubtedly mistaken, it ought not to be a stigma on one's sanity if he affirm that he prefers the teaching of Jesus to that of the professor. A professor may be mistaken, it is less probable that Jesus was.—*Hightstown, N. J.*

It will be a great relief to us if as many as possibly can, who are in arrears for this paper will remit us at an early date, and renew their subscription at the same time. Any subscriptions that began in any month after July, 1901, will not be charged for any time that they have been getting the paper until Jan. 1902. We want all our subscriptions to begin either with January or July. Therefore we are giving free of charge any time between January and July, and between July and January.

Rev. F. B. Meyer was recently asked: How did you find Christ? This is his written reply: "I do not remember when I first became a Christian. The love of God came over me as the dawn over a summer sky; and it was only in after years that I realized what God had done for me in those early days. My mother and father were godly people. They expected me to be a Christian, and at my mother's knee I said my morning and evening prayers. It is to their prayer and faith and unremitting care that I owe everything."