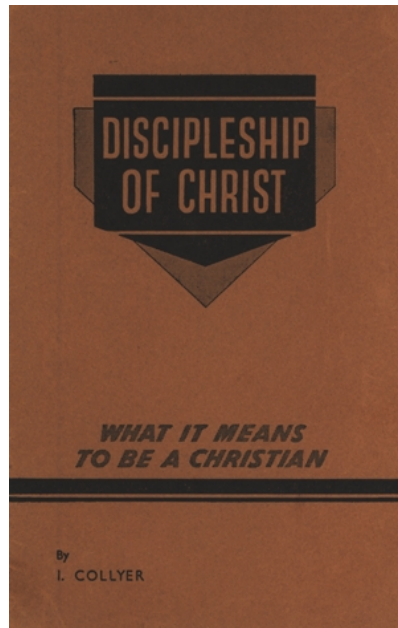


# DISCIPLESHIP OF CHRIST



## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

by Islip Collyer

### Introduction

“ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Justification can only come through the mercy and forgiveness of God and by an imputation of righteousness which is beyond our natural powers to attain. This constitution of righteousness is offered through Christ, the only perfect one, and it is offered on the basis of faith in the Gospel.

This is the doctrine plainly and most emphatically taught by the apostle Paul. He repeatedly affirms that it is not by works that we can be justified; “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Romans 9:16). But while belief and obedience to the Gospel turn a sinner into one who is called a saint, they do not ensure acceptance into the Kingdom of God. “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”: but it is those who “are Christ’s” who are the true heirs (Galatians 3:27-29). This means that having put on Christ we must abide in him John 15:4. Having been buried with him by baptism into his death, we must “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Having put off the old man and put on the new, there must be continual renewal after the example of the One who made this newness possible (Colossians 3:10). This involves “working out our salvation with fear and

trembling”; patient continuance in well doing; “keeping the body under and bringing it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). We must not be weary in well doing. He that sows to the spirit will reap the fruit of the spirit, and he that sows to the flesh will reap the fruit of the flesh—that is, corruption (Galatians 6:8).

All the thoughts expressed in these quotations are from the apostle Paul. It is one of the most astonishing perversions of theological reasoning which has regarded Paul as denying the need for works of righteousness. His contention is that our own works are totally inadequate, and God has shown mercy in making it possible for us to draw near through Christ. But in drawing near we must do our best, feeble though that is. Apart from Christ we are as naked savages not fit to approach anywhere near to the palace of the King. The King is willing to excuse our native uncouthness if we have faith in His promises and render obedience to the Gospel call. He has provided garments for us to put on, but no one must suppose that once having been clothed he will be acceptable in spite of ill behaviour. We must give of our best even if it is only regarded as a thank offering, for even our best is far short of perfection. We must wear the divinely appointed garments or we cannot draw near; we must wear them worthily to the limit of our ability, or we cannot be tolerated among the redeemed.

## **Growth Follows Birth**

So the apostle Paul, while emphasizing the fact that we can only draw near through Christ and the divine forbearance expressed in him, insists on the need for personal righteousness quite as much as the other Apostles. The baptism of regeneration is the Christian birth; then must follow the Christian life. Christ and his apostles all emphasize these two aspects of preparation; the belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then seeking to do whatever he has commanded (John 3:15; Matthew 28:20); the justification through faith, and then the “patient continuance in well doing” (Romans 2:7); faith, and then the works which will show our faith (James 2:14-26); acceptance of the “exceeding great and precious promises” God has given, and then adding to our faith all the Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:4-8).

It would be a simple matter to show the course of Christian duty if it were not for the many complexities of the human mind. The whole ground is covered by those two great precepts cited by the Lord Jesus as the foundation of the Law and the Prophets. If we loved God with all our heart and strength, and loved our neighbours as ourselves, we should be perfect (Matthew 22:36-40). We are far from perfect in our native condition, and even when we have been brought under the constitution of righteousness through Christ we are still in need of constant instruction and admonition. Our faulty memories need frequent reminders of the foundations, and our dull perceptions require to be shown in a thousand ways how the principle of love can be applied in the complexities of human life.

## **Being “In” Christ**

It may be helpful to consider our duties on the basis of some of the Lord’s teaching in which he presented a very profound thought in the simplest of words. He said to the

disciples, “You in me, and I in you” (John 14:20). In the next chapter the same thought is repeated under the figure of the true vine: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4). Then in the prayer uttered just before the supreme trial, there is a plea for unity, “that they may be one, as we are one”; and then at the end of the supplication we have the words, “that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:21, 26).

There is not much difficulty in understanding what is meant by our being in Christ. The phrase is used repeatedly in connections which are self-explanatory. “I knew a man in Christ”, says the apostle in drawing a lesson from past experience (2 Corinthians 12:2). He also speaks of some “who were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7). He says that a maiden or a widow is at liberty to be married to whom she will, “only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39). He wrote explicitly that “as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). And again, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). He also wrote of the “washing of regeneration”, by which disciples can be saved (Titus 3:5). Clearly it is this regeneration,

this new birth out of water, this putting on of Christ, which brings us under the constitution of righteousness and makes us “in Christ” (John 3:3-6).

To be a true Christian, however, involves something more than this. We may have believed the good news of the Kingdom of God and of the redemption offered through Christ. We may have been baptized into him, and we may still abide in him; but the searching question arises from his simple words, is he in us? The apostle Paul evidently felt that the believers in Galatia had not attained to this necessary “newness of life”. He wrote: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you . . .” (Galatians 4:19). They had believed the Gospel, and had turned to the living God; they had been baptized, and so, having “put on” the sin-covering name, they were in Christ; but as yet Christ had not been formed in them.

## **Having Christ “In” Us**

This expression is much more than a form of words. It defines a change of mind and a development of character quite as real as the growth of the body: the permeation of something into the individual as real as the taking of food. A newborn babe has the germ of human character which needs to be nourished by food from without as the body does, only the food is of a different kind. On all planes of possible development—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—we need nourishment and use if we are to grow. Too much exercise without adequate nourishment has a stunting and deforming effect. Too much food without sufficient exercise leads to unhealthy fatness and not to strength. If there is a reasonable balance of food and exercise there may be healthy development.

All wise parents try to achieve this balance with their children—sufficient food but not excess, sufficient exercise but not too strenuous. On the physical plane the facts are so obvious that only foolish or careless parents fail to see them. Sometimes on the mental plane, the effect is not quite so clear, and grave mistakes are made. The same principle

prevails, nevertheless. Robert Hall once said of a certain man that he was clever, but that he had so many books on his head that his brain could not work. Such a result will sometimes follow when children, urged on either by their own ambition or that of their parents, study too hard and read too much. They imbibe ideas, but fail to make them their own by thought and exercise. They may end by having a great knowledge of books but little capacity for using their knowledge. Less reading and more exercise of thought would have been better for them.

## **Strength Comes With Use**

In moral and spiritual things the need for proper exercise is even greater. A mere knowledge of right only brings added condemnation if it is not rightly used. Moral truths need to be expressed in action, coming to life and developing through deeds and words. Spiritual truths need all this with an added exercise of contemplation and integration which may end by making them more real in the make-up of a man than his physical frame.

The Lord Jesus offended the Jews of his day by saying that a man was defiled not by the physical food which builds up his body but by the thoughts which come from the heart. There are many different foods for our physical frames, and so long as they are adequate for the renovation of flesh and blood it matters little what we choose. A few microscopical specks of dirt such as might come from unwashed hands cause no defilement. Even on the physical plane there are worse things which we do not see and which we cannot possibly avoid.

Surely we can all see the force of the distinction drawn by the Lord. If we admire and love a man, it is not for the excellence of his physical frame or the beauty of his countenance. It is true that the face often reveals something of that which is within, but it only acts as the index of something more important than flesh and blood. If we feel that a man is a defiling influence, it has nothing to do with his flesh and bone, or the kind of food out of which his substance has been built. It has to do with character, and the kind of mental food by which that has been nourished. We are led to the conclusion that this unseen mental and moral growth is in a sense more real, and certainly is far more important, than the growth of the body. A man may be full of the spirit and essence of art or poetry; he may be the embodiment of revolutionary thought and political reform; or he may be so fully imbued with the thoughts of a teacher that his mentor seems to live again in him. Just occasionally we meet one who perhaps with rough appearance and little of superficial culture, thrills us with the conviction that Christ is in him. This ideal should be the aim of all disciples, as it was the subject of the Lord's repeated exhortation and prayer.

## **The Last Command**

The last charge given to the disciples before the Lord was taken from them has often been quoted as emphasizing the importance of baptism. The argument is sound and strong. Christ told his disciples to preach the Gospel and baptize believers. Then he immediately added, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have

commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). This admonition coming so definitely in connection with the ordinance of baptism, is surely most significant, and if a man refuses to recognize the command to be baptized we should hardly expect him to trouble about obeying Christ in any other matter. The command involves much more than the initial act of obedience. It may involve much labour until Christ is formed in us.

No doubt there is a very natural tendency to choose the injunctions which accord with our own judgment, and to neglect all others. We must be on guard against this fatal weakness if we desire to be true Christian disciples. We must obey the Master in all things that he has commanded, even when his laws are far removed from human judgment or from our natural inclinations. He commanded his disciples to return good for evil, to love even their enemies, to do good to those who wronged them, and to pray for those who spitefully used them (Matthew 5:38-48). These are hard sayings, not much heeded even in Christendom. Christ taught non-resistance to evil, forgiveness from the heart for every wrong, gentleness of speech, and refraining from retaliation.

Christ condemned the use of oaths (Matthew 5:33-37). Some disciples have regarded this as applying only to serious oaths such as were at one time required in every judicial court. They have supposed that it had no reference to the many meaningless oaths with which ordinary conversation is interlarded. There is good reason to believe that this is a complete misinterpretation of the command. If the Lord had made any exceptions they would surely have been in favour of the serious oaths which a lawful court of justice might require. The condemnation was of a kind of speech which was common in the first century, and perhaps even more prevalent in our time: meaningless oaths which slip from careless tongues without expressing any serious intention. The Jews had fallen into the error of using such words in their conversation. Jesus condemned the practice. Surely he would protest quite as much against the meaningless oaths of ordinary conversation now. Sometimes the words are from pagan gods, sometimes corruptions of the names of God and Christ. They come of evil, and should be avoided. The command not to resist evil is more far-reaching and difficult (Matthew 5:39). It seems so contrary to natural instincts and to temporal interests. Some would say that one who made a serious attempt to carry the precept into effect would be despised and oppressed from school days onward. So there is a growing tendency to regard such an attitude as a “slave morality”, not to be cultivated or admired by free men. We see in the state of Europe today an illustration of how the rejection of Christian ethics has worked.

It is not possible to find many examples either of success or failure in the application of Christian principles in this matter, for they have so rarely been attempted. Both in national and individual life, the most that has been accomplished has been in the nature of compromise. Even this has saved the world from some evils. The history of the last two thousand years has been black enough, but we can see evidence that it would have been still blacker if no attempt had been made to learn from Christ. We can see now the effect of a thorough return to paganism and the casting off of the last restraints imposed by the compromise with Christianity. The pagan mind endures little, and is unkind. It envies, it rejoices in iniquity, and it is puffed up with pride. In short, it is in nearly all matters the opposite of Christian love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

## **The Law of Love**

On analysis we find that the law of love is the basis of all the instruction given by Christ and his Apostles. They often mentioned details which would not have occurred to us, but the details are all strictly related to the fundamental principle presented in the law through Moses and stated by Christ to be the foundation of his teaching: the whole-hearted love of God, and the self-sacrificing love of man.

The Lord Jesus gave a new impetus and even a new significance to the old command. Some disciples have been puzzled by his saying: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13:34). In view of the fact that this law was so old and Christ had emphasized its fundamental character, why did he call it new? It is easy to find the answer to this question, and when found it becomes perhaps the most moving and searching of all thoughts for disciples.

The Mosaic law commanded that a man should love the Lord his God with all the heart, soul and strength, and that he should love his neighbour as himself; but these were not, and could not be, the laws by which a man could be judged before any merely human tribunal. The feelings and thoughts of a man's mind cannot be assessed correctly by a human judge. The law courts of mortal men can only judge in a negative manner. That was inevitably true in the old dispensation, and so a man who in no way injured his neighbours was legally correct in his social behaviour, even though wrong feelings were in his heart and wrong thoughts in his mind. Human judges were guided by the sight of their eyes and the hearing of their ears. Christ is under no such limitations. Even in the days of his flesh he knew what was in man, and needed not that any should tell him. When he comes as the ruler of mankind, he will not judge after the sight of his eyes or the hearing of his ears. With an all-penetrating knowledge, he will look into the heart of a man, and judge him by what he really is, and not what he appears to be. For us to be acceptable disciples this law of love must be in our hearts. There must be not merely an outward show of piety, but the reality of love for God, not merely a formal show of solicitude for a neighbour's welfare, or conventional acts of charity, but a real love of man. The Lord will look into our inmost being, and require that the reality of love shall be there.

## **What is Christian Love?**

The emphasis put on this principle suggests that we need an adequate definition of what is meant. Christian love is something much greater than natural affection as understood by the world. The Apostle to the Gentiles gave a comprehensive definition which is well known but not much heeded except by those who make a genuine effort to be Christians. Rarely has a command been presented in such emphatic and uncompromising terms. Before defining the quality, the Apostle affirms that apart from it all other virtues fail. Faith and works and even heroic self-sacrifice count for nothing, if the greatest virtue of all is absent. Such strong language ought to arouse every reader, and induce a very intent examination of the definition which follows. Then with the first of the essential qualities enumerated, an attentive reader might well fear that almost everyone is condemned. In the Authorized Version we have the words, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind". The Revised Version more correctly renders the essential word as love, but the first two qualities mentioned are the same, long-suffering and

kindness.

Long-suffering is not characteristic even of Christians. An impatient intolerance is more often seen. Then we must recognize that Christian kindness is something much more than a complacent feeling of goodwill toward something which engages our natural affection. The most brutal of men can sometimes appear kind when they are well fed and comfortable. It may only be the kindness of an indolent toleration. Much more than this is needed. If we listen to conversation in ordinary households, or follow the course of national diplomacy or of business enterprise, we may often be pained to find that we are in some measure joining in that which is distinctly unkind. Harsh criticisms are often passed; failings and even misfortunes are made more grievous by unsympathetic words.

It might be urged in defence of human nature that very often there is a remarkable manifestation of kindness even to those who have no claim of kinship or community of interests. We must all thankfully admit that this is true. Yet we also have to admit that frequently such charitable actions serve the more effectively to reveal the difference between a natural good fellowship and Christian love. A clash of interests or even the clash of divided opinion will put our kindness to the test. We have known men who have seemed remarkable for their good humoured kindness and indulgence to those with whom they came in contact in ordinary life, to become fiendishly cruel as the result of menaced interests or even merely of diverse opinions. Religious controversy has been one of the saddest fields for this evil. It is possible for a man to be very religious, his habits ascetic, and his mind filled with Bible texts, and yet to be to the last degree impatient and unkind when his opinions have been seriously challenged. He may be an indulgent father and a kindly friend so long as his cherished convictions are not contradicted, but his sympathies cannot endure the simplest of tests. He may have plenty of knowledge by which he is in some measure “puffed up”. Christ has not been formed in him. Opponents are treated as enemies, and unkindness to enemies is often even cultivated.

## **Wherein We Are Weak**

If we follow the apostolic definition further we must be conscious of still more searching questions. “Love envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” It cannot be denied that as a race we are very weak and faulty in these matters. Envy is one of the commonest of human sins, often being the basis of personal hatreds, political agitations, and national wars. We may find it easy to “weep with those who weep”, but hard to “rejoice with those who rejoice”. The good fortune of another man is often provocative of angry resentment. The elevation of a fellow worker often causes a dissatisfaction with a position which hitherto had been accepted without complaint. A disciple of Christ needs to bring the matter home to himself, and cleanse his heart from this evil thing.

In the matter of being puffed up and vaunting ourselves, our weakness would be amusing if it were not tragic. If a disciple is at all capable of that occasional introspection which is necessary (1 Corinthians 11:28) he will probably sometimes discover himself spreading forth his talents and making the best show of them to his fellows. One who does not boast is often restrained more by an intelligent appreciation

of its folly than by a true humility. It is possible to exercise great skill in vaunting oneself, never appearing to boast, but contriving to let people know of those qualities which they might fail to observe in the absence of these clever but apparently undesigned displays.

Then we may note the many minor struggles and tragedies of human life in which several of the evils enumerated by the Apostle are blended. The efforts of successful business people to get into “the best society”, and the cruel humiliations to which they are subjected by those who are determined to keep them out. In turn, their still more emphatic repudiation of ambitious climbers from a still lower grade. This proud assumption of superiority may be seen in all grades of society, and it is not entirely excluded from Christian brotherhood, where there may be a tendency to form cliques, to keep out all who are not of the elite, and to treat less favoured members with patronage rather than friendship.

We must take note, too, of our ready tendency to resent such treatment from those who are more fortunate, a tendency so strong that sometimes—perhaps we might even say often—such an assumption of superiority is suspected even when it does not exist. On the one hand is an attitude based on sinful pride, on the other a feeling of resentment based on envy. True Christian love will cut out all these evils.

## **Rejoicing in the Truth**

The Apostle continues that love is not self-seeking, thinks no evil, rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

We may be sure that the word truth is here used in a special and Scriptural sense. There are many reports which are true as records, but the things are evil in themselves, so that love could never rejoice in them. The evil, the foolish and the insignificant facts of life have nothing to do with that which the Scriptures speak of as the Truth. The Lord Jesus spoke of truth which should make his disciples free (John 8:32). The apostle Paul wrote of truth which should be received in the love of it, and the apostle John wrote that his greatest joy was to find disciples walking in this truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10; 3 John 4). It is the truth of the Gospel and of salvation through Christ. It has ramifications wide enough to set the bounds of all our conversations and of our far ranging thoughts. Do we always rejoice in this, or do we sometimes find pleasure in the contemplation of iniquity? The conversation in thousands of homes may give a sad answer to these questions. It is to be feared that there is a tendency in us all to find a certain pleasure in the record of evil. A lapse from the path of virtue on the part of one who is not a close friend provides a subject for comment in which the error may be deplored, but with a certain evil satisfaction in contemplating the weakness which has been exposed. Especially is this wrong feeling present if the absent sinner has made great professions of piety, even reproving us for faulty conduct. The pleasure found in such conversations, redolent of scandal, is surely “rejoicing in iniquity”. Christian love finds no place for it.

There is another way in which this evil is manifested in connection with a matter still more definitely ingrained in human nature. A publisher once remarked to the writer that any hint of salacity in a forthcoming book was the best possible advertisement. Here is wrong thought, wrong feeling, possibly leading to wrong action. It begins with



rejoicing in iniquity, and may end with a collapse of all moral restraint.

Some opponents of Christianity have fulminated against Scripture narrative because of the vices and sins there described. The real objection of such critics has been the feeling of repugnance aroused by the manner in which these things are presented. In the Bible, evil is never dressed up with a delicate finery which might make it attractive. It is revealed in stark and disgusting reality. We may learn much from it, but we could never rejoice in it.

## **The Positive Qualities**

We will not look any more at negatives, those evils from which Christian love is free, but rather contemplate the positive qualities: long-suffering, kindness, humility, seemly conduct, rejoicing in the truth with never failing patience and endurance. These are qualities which can always find full scope in human life. They do not need an elaborately set stage or the stimulus of great events. They are perhaps better revealed in the little experiences of ordinary life. They begin in the home, and if not found there it is improbable that they will be developed anywhere else. Our life is mainly made up of insignificant events, little vexations and trials of patience, little duties and causes of weariness. There are opportunities every day for the development of Christian character and the application of Christian discipline, just because every day brings its trials.

When we remember that the Lord Jesus placed love as a new commandment, clearly ranking it with those fundamental laws by which we shall be judged; requiring that we should not only abstain from injuring others, but that the reality of love should be in our hearts; when we reflect on this obligation, it is well also to remember the Apostle's definition. It harmonizes with the words of the Master. We must treat others as we should like to be treated, forgive from the heart all who trespass against us, return good for evil and seek no revenge. A faithful attempt to live by such rules will make for long suffering and kindness and all the other qualities mentioned by the Apostle.

## **The Realism of Christ**

Some critics say that these principles will not work, that in practice they break down, and that even partly applied they lead to failure. It is certainly true that a fully Christian nation could not survive for long in the jungle of human life unless God gave it constant protection. But Christ never envisaged his disciples as statesmen and rulers in a godless world. His statement regarding the strong man armed showed that he recognized all the facts (Luke 11:21). He knew that the law of the jungle would prevail in the Gentile world. He told his disciples that they would be persecuted and possibly even killed. They were to avoid such evils if they could; and endure them faithfully if there was no legitimate way of escape (Matthew 10:16-18, 23, 28). His instruction "when they persecute you in one city flee to another", is a sufficient indication that he was not contemplating a nation. He was clearly thinking of a despised and feeble community such as his followers have always been.

But while it is clear that this complete application of the law of love is intended as a discipline in preparation for a change of nature, it is a mistake to suppose that it would

always be an unworkable ideal in private life. There have been times when those who approached nearest to the ideal have been persecuted and slain, but there have been times when such disciples have been respected, admired and even loved by men who have made no profession of Christian principles. Even a boy at school does not encounter such difficulty as might be expected, if he applies the law with any degree of thoroughness. One whose gentleness is born of timidity and cowardice will certainly be despised, but one who is brave and self-sacrificing will not be regarded as contemptible merely because he does not try to injure any one, or seek revenge for injuries received. In the contacts of the world those who try to apply Christian principles of conduct are not hated for their works of love. If they confined their ministrations to the ordinary affairs of mortal life, they might be popular. If, however, they rejoice in all the truth that has been revealed to them, and extend their kindness beyond the bounds of mortality—if, in short, they try to teach the ways of God, antagonism is soon aroused. Then it is that persecution of many different kinds may arise to put love to the test. The trials may take the most extreme form in those persecutions which have made Christians flee from their homes or suffer martyrdom; or they may be in the little vexations of everyday life, with long drawn out tests of patience and forbearance.

We are not given much information as to the life of the Lord Jesus in the first thirty years of his mortal pilgrimage, but it is clear that where he was known his righteousness was recognized. John the Baptist did not know that Jesus was the Messiah until the manifestation of Spirit power at baptism, but John knew that he was an exceptionally righteous man. “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” John said (Matthew 3:14). When Jesus went forth on his mission of teaching and healing he was welcomed by the “common people”, who heard him gladly (Mark 12:37). It was his proclamation of unpalatable truths which aroused the bitter antagonism of power and authority. So has it been with his disciples. As men of widely differing character have been attracted by Christ there have been many different kinds and degrees of failure. It is sad when those who seem exceptionally well able to cultivate Christian virtues, fail in their duty by suppressing vital truths. It is still more tragic when men of quick understanding arouse the full storm of evil and bitterness by proclaiming Christian truths, and yet fail to live the Christian life.

## **Life In Christ**

Everything depends on those two thoughts expressed by the Lord in those words which have often been regarded as strange and almost meaningless! “You in me, and I in you.” The language is so simple and elementary, the idea so profound. Through Christ life is offered to a perishing world; only “in him” is there safety just as the ark offered the only deliverance from the waters of the flood. Having believed and rendered the initial obedience of baptism we are “in him”. We must “abide in him” all through life. Under the cover of his righteousness the best conduct we are capable of rendering will be accepted, although in itself it would be totally inadequate. We are “called to God’s kingdom and glory”, invited to be “partakers of the divine nature”, called with “a high and holy calling”, far beyond anything for which we are naturally fitted (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Peter 1:4; Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:9). Through Christ we are offered deliverance, and all who are “in him” in the final sense when he has passed judgment will be “made alive” in the full and final change of nature, this mortal putting on immortality, and this corruptible putting on incorruptibility (1 Corinthians 15:53).

The first step for us to take is easy. If we believe in Christ with that heart-felt confidence which makes for righteousness (Romans 10:10), - if as a beginning of that righteousness we submit to the simple ordinance of baptism in accordance with his command—we are in him, at least in a nominal sense. His final verdict will depend on the other phase of the simple formula. Is he in us? Have we taken his spirit-quickening words into our minds and built them up into our characters as completely and as literally as on the physical plane we build up our bodies with food and drink?

“Be not conformed to this world”, says the Apostle, “but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). The only way to effect this transformation is by continually thinking of Christ and keeping his teaching and example before us in the ordinary experiences of life—his devotion to the will of the Father; his kindness and service to humanity; his complete forgiveness even of the deepest wrongs; his humility, self-sacrifice and steadfast courage. Gradually with the sustained effort to put his principles into practice such thoughts may be built up into character. The essentials for Christian discipleship may be expressed in these simple words of one syllable. We must be in him, and he must be in us.

Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association Ltd  
404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham, B28 8SZ, UK

Republished by

The Christadelphian Scripture Study Service  
17 Braemar Road, Torrens Park 5062, Australia