

THE CRISES OF THE CHRIST

THE RISES OF THE CHRIST

BY

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

*Author of "The Spirit of God," "God's Methods with Man,"
"Life Problems," etc.*

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TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER

*Who forty years ago gave me to CHRIST, and who, never doubting
the acceptance by HIM of their child, did from infancy,
and through youth, train me as HIS ; from whom I
received my first knowledge of HIM, so that when
the hour came for my own necessary choosing,
so did I recognise the claims of HIS
love that without revulsion, and
hardly knowing when*

I YIELDED TO HIM

*my allegiance and my
love, devoting spirit, soul and body
to HIS sweet will, and glad service ; in
thankfulness to them for their earliest teaching,
and continuance of revelation of HIM, by example in
many differing circumstances, in which their loyalty to HIM
was a perpetual witness to my heart, of the perfection of HIS love ;
in thankfulness that they still are with me labouring together in prayer,*

I DEDICATE THE BOOK.

7 “ *You have had various ‘lives of Christ,’ German and other, lately provided among your other severely historical studies. Some, critical ; and some, sentimental. But there is only one light by which you can read the life of Christ,—the light of the life you now lead in the flesh ; and that not the natural, but the won life. ‘Nevertheless, I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’*”

JOHN RUSKIN, “St. Mark’s Rest.”

"Christ has come, the Light of the world. Long ages may yet elapse before His beams have reduced the world to order and beauty, and clothed a purified humanity with light as with a garment. But He has come: the Revealer of the snares and chasms that lurk in darkness, the Rebuker of every evil thing that prowls by night, the Stiller of the storm-winds of passion; the Quickener of all that is wholesome, the Adorner of all that is beautiful, the Reconciler of contradictions, the Harmoniser of discords, the Healer of diseases, the Saviour from sin. He has come: the Torch of truth, the Anchor of hope, the Pillar of faith, the Rock for strength, the Refuge for security, the Fountain for refreshment, the Vine for gladness, the Rose for beauty, the Lamb for tenderness, the Friend for counsel, the Brother for love. Jesus Christ has trod the world. The trace of the Divine footsteps will never be obliterated. And the Divine footsteps were the footsteps of a Man. The example of Christ is such as men can follow. On! until mankind wears His image. On! towards yon summit on which stands, not an angel, not a disembodied spirit, not an abstract of ideal and unattainable virtues, but THE MAN JESUS CHRIST."

"The Testimony of Christ to Christianity."

PETER BAYNE, A.M.

INTRODUCTORY

THE SUBJECT AND THE SCHEME

THE authoritative literature concerning the history of the Lord Jesus Christ is contained within the New Testament. He is the supreme subject of the whole library. Every several book gathers its value from its testimony to His person, His teaching, or His work. The perfection of the whole is created by its unification in Him. The first four of its books chronicle His deeds, and His words, during the brief span of a lifetime, lasting for a generation. The rest of the book is occupied with the subject of His deeds and His words through all subsequent generations. The book of Acts is the first chapter in that history of the Church, which is the history of the deeds of Christ by the Holy Spirit through His people. The epistles contain the teaching of Christ by the Spirit, through chosen men, for the guidance of His Church until His second advent. The last book contains a prophetic vision of the final movements, which shall firmly establish His reign over the whole earth.

The Old Testament foretells His coming, and chronicles for these days the methods by which the hope of His advent was kept alive; and, indeed, burned ever more brightly through the processes of the past. The New is the history of that advent; and the new message of hope, under the inspiration of which men move through

the confusion of conflict towards the certainty of ultimate victory.

The history of the New Testament is at once the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and the account of the accomplishment of the mission of the Christ. These are phases forming the one perfect story. The life of Jesus was the carrying out of the mission of the Christ. The work of the Messiah was accomplished in the orderliness of the life of Jesus.

In this connection it is interesting to notice the opening and closing verses of the New Testament. Matthew, the evangelist, places Jesus in His relation to the race. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."¹ The reference is not to the whole of the New Testament, nor even to the whole of the Gospel, but to the genealogy which immediately follows. The use here of the word "Christ" declares the appointment of this Man to definite service. It is rather a title than a name. By His name "Jesus" He is indicated as united to the race, coming through the chosen people. By the title "Christ" He is identified as the One who comes to fulfil the promises of the past, by the accomplishment of Divine purposes.

The last verse of the New Testament reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the saints. Amen."² Here there is prefixed to the name "Jesus," the title "Lord." The Revised Versions, both English and American, have relegated the word "Christ" to the margin. Many ancient authorities, however, include it. The essential value of this comparison of verses is not interfered with, whichever view may be taken. The New Testament opens with a declaration, introducing the Man Jesus, and declaring His appointment to service. It closes with a benediction, which announces the crowning of

¹ Matt. i. 1.

² Rev. xxii. 21.

Jesus as Lord, consequent upon His accomplishment of the purpose appointed; and the use of the word "grace" as the portion of the saints, revealing the glorious issue of that work.

He came for a purpose. The purpose is realised. He was anointed of God for the doing of a work. The work is accomplished, and He is now the Lord through whom the grace of God is expressed towards, and becomes operative in, such as are subject to Him. Thus between the opening words of Matthew, and the closing statement of John there lies the story of His life and the account of His mission.

The literature of the Church has been enriched by many lives of Jesus. Some of these have emphasised the facts of His humanity, while others have emphasised the truth of His Deity. All have been of value. They have, however, been largely devoted to the contemplation of the Person of Jesus, rather than to a consideration of the accomplishment of a Divine work. It is to this particular aspect of the life of Jesus Christ that the present volume is devoted. Interest in Jesus Himself is of preeminent importance. The mystery of His Person, the graciousness of His teaching, the beauty of His character, the wonder of His deeds, all these are of such value that it is impossible to attend to them too closely, or to write too much concerning them. It is, however, of equal importance that this wonderful life should be seen as that of the anointed Servant of God, the Christ, who in all the details of the passing days, was working a larger work, and towards a mightier issue than a mere contemplation of the human life might seem to suggest. Indeed, the beauty of the life itself is only fully appreciated when it is seen as related in its every part to this mighty movement of God towards the redemption of man.

Here therefore attention is to be fixed, not so much upon the words of His lips, or His workings of wonders

and signs, as upon His uttering of a Divine word, and His accomplishment of a Divine work.

It is for this reason that the volume is entitled "The Crises of the Christ." In all the works of God there is to be discovered an unvarying method of process and crisis. The process is slow, and difficult to watch in its progress. The crisis is sudden, and flames with a light that, flashing back upon the process, explains it, and forward, indicates a new line of action, which after all is the continuity of that which has preceded it. This might certainly be illustrated by reference to the observation of all natural phenomena. The story of the earth, as read by scientists, is the story of slow movements, and of mighty upheavals. The history of the butterfly of many hues is that of the pupa, dormant to all appearance, which through crisis emerges into the flower of the air. The crisis is not an accident, not a catastrophe, in the sense of disaster, but a stage in an orderly method. This method, it may be said in passing, is also to be seen in God's revelation of Himself to men, the history of which is recorded in the Divine Library.

In the great song of Isaiah,¹ which assuredly is Messianic in value, there is an indication of this method, and perhaps the key to the interpretation of the whole Scripture, as a Divine revelation. The first lessons concerning God that men had to learn were of Him as the "Wonderful Counsellor." Then through long centuries there was unfolded the fact that He is "the Mighty God." Then in the mission of Christ, in which is included the days of His earthly life, and these years of the application of His work, men are learning that God is "the Everlasting Father." And yet again, in an age that has not yet dawned upon the world, but which must surely come, men will know Him as the "Prince of Peace." In each case

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

the process has been slow, but the lesson once learned, the crisis has initiated a new movement, and commenced a new process.

This same method obtains in the work of the Christ, and in that method, the crises rather than the processes form the subject of the present consideration. Of these there are seven. The initial, that of the birth of Jesus; then secondly, the baptism; thirdly, the temptation; fourthly, the transfiguration; fifthly, the crucifixion; sixthly, the resurrection; and seventhly, the ascension. These are not at equal distances as to time, but they follow in orderly sequence, and in their entirety contain the whole story of that work by which redemption has been wrought for the race.

Each of them ushered in a new order of things in the work of Christ, crowning that of the past, and creating the force for that which was to come.

All these lie between two facts, which must be considered. The first is that of the ruin of the race, which created the necessity for the work of the Christ. The second is that of the redemption of the race, which issues from the work of the Christ. A preliminary section of this volume will be devoted to the ruin which called for Christ, and a final section to the statement of that redemption which constitutes His answer to the call. Thus with reverence, and a deep sense of its transcendent wonder, let the great subject be approached.

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PRELIMINARY

THE CALL FOR CHRIST—MAN FALLEN

- I. Man Distanced from God by Sin
- II. Man Ignorant of God through Sin
- III. Man Unlike God in Sin

"This, we say, is man, the fallen principality. In these tragic desolations of intelligence and genius, of passion, pride, and sorrow, behold the import of his eternity. Be no mere spectator, turn the glass we give you round upon yourself, look into the ruin of your own conscious spirit, and see how much it signifies, both that you are a sinner and a man. Here, within the soul's gloomy chamber, the loosened passions rage and chafe, impatient of their law; here huddle on the wild and desultory thoughts; here the imagination crowds in shapes of glory and disgust, tokens both and mockeries of its own creative power, no longer in the keeping of reason; here sits remorse scowling and biting her chain; here creep out the fears, a meagre and pale multitude; here drives on the will in his chariot of war; here lie trampled the great aspirations, groaning in immortal thirst; here the blasted affections weeping out their life in silent injury; all that you see without, in the wars, revenges, and the crazed religions of the world, is faithfully represented in the appalling disorders of your own spirit."

—HORACE BUSHNELL, "The New Life."

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.—GEN. iii.

Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.—ROM. v. 12.

I

MAN DISTANCED FROM GOD BY SIN

IN the mission of Christ, that wisdom of God was manifested, and that power of God operated, through which it became possible for ruined man to be redeemed and reconciled. The marvel of that wisdom, and the light of that power, can only be fully appreciated, in the measure in which the extent and nature of the calamity which called for Christ is understood. The whole subject is indicated in the titles of the three chapters, forming this preliminary section. The first deals with the initial act of sin, and its result, man distanced from God by sin. The second deals with the relative result of sin, man ignorant of God through sin. While the third has to do with the effect of sin upon man, man unlike God in sin.

In dealing with the first of these phases of the one fact, it is necessary first to consider man according to the Divine ideal in his unfallen condition ; secondly, to consider the fall, as to man's action ; and thirdly, to contemplate the resulting fact, man's alienation from God.

I. The essential truth concerning the nature of man is contained in a descriptive expression found in the book of *Genesis*, and in *New Testament Scriptures*. He is spoken of as being "created in the image and likeness of God." In order to understand the significance of this expression,