

**A BOOK OF INSTRUCTION
FOR CATECHUMENS**

Section II

Christian Faith and Life

CAIRO 1924

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INDEX

	Page
A. (Lessons 1 - 22) CHRISTIAN FAITH.	7
B. (Lessons 23 - 31) CHRISTIAN LIFE.	30

FOREWORD.

The need of a systematic handbook of lessons in the Christian doctrine and life, for catechumens in Mohammedan lands, has long and often been keenly felt by the compiler of the present section, and, he doubts not, by many others of his own and other communions. The existence of a bare course of lessons, with a printed table, is indeed something to the good; but it is not enough. The busy worker, the inexperienced teacher, the catechumen himself, needs *helps* to the study of those lessons. From the viewpoint of the community there is thus assured a certain fulness of scope, with a certain adequacy of treatment; and of course the individual teacher may adapt, modify and enrich at will. From the viewpoint of the learner, an impossible amount of note-taking is saved; and he is also supplied with material on which to work privately between lessons.

Moreover, for any organised church or congregation to possess an authorised handbook of this type is a clear witness, to the world *and to itself*, that it desires, purposes, and wills to be a home for those who are converted to Christ from other faiths and are baptised into the fellowship of the church.

It may be that these "helps" will also prove helpful for the Christian grounding of those who are young in age or in the faith, other than converts from non-Christian religions.

The present section is the second of a series of three. The first section comprises brief lessons on the life of our Lord and Saviour in a carefully arranged sequence. The third and last contains the lessons on the sacrament of Baptism itself, which are given after the completion of the first and second courses, when the day of baptism is now in sight. This third series—a very brief one—is in catechism form. It is supposed that an enquirer begins with the lessons of the first section, and that when he becomes a catechumen he may add to them the lessons of this second series.

The groundwork of this second series is the Nicene Creed, with the following subjects grafted, so to speak, on to it, at the places and in the order afforded by the thought-sequence of the Creed:

The Creation of the World.
 The Creation and Fall of Man.
 The Preparation for Christ.
 Christ's Teaching of the Kingdom.
 Christ's Atonement.
 Man's forgiveness.

After this doctrinal teaching there follow lessons on the Commandments and Christ's "royal law"; then some more lessons on Christian life and conduct; and, finally, the means of grace whereby the life of the newly-baptised may be sustained, strengthened and increased.

It may be that every church should have its own handbook of lessons. Though the origin of the present series is Anglican, every word has been scrutinized from the point of view of non-Anglicans, and it is believed that the teaching throughout, (including the section on Baptism), having been as it were drawn straight from the pure wellspring of Holy Writ, is Scriptural and therefore Catholic in the broadest sense of the term.

If this handbook should be adopted in its entirety by another community, the compiler will only feel the more thankful.

Otherwise its material is at the service of any and all who desire to undertake another compilation.

An Arabic edition of these lessons is in the press; and it is thought that this English edition may be found useful for translation into other languages, also, that are spoken in the other Mohammedan mission-fields.

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W. H. T. G.

(A) (Lessons 1—22) **CHRISTIAN FAITH.**Introductory—**LESSON 1.**

“I believe in” . . . ” (See Nicene Creed).

Faith: what is it? What is it to say “I have Faith in . . .”?

It is not mere *theological assent*, whether that assent is *traditional* (handed down by family, denomination, nation) or *acquired* (by change of creed or denomination).

Such a thing *in itself* has no converting or quickening power, and so no saving power. (St. James 2. 19—26).

Faith is the turning of the whole man—in his soul and will and affections—to the object of faith, with burning love and complete surrender. The soul, thus surrendered, takes Him, to Whom she has surrendered, as only Saviour from sin and death, in time and eternity; and as sole teacher and model in all the relations of life.

Only God, as He reveals Himself, can be this object of faith. It is of His “Grace” that He so offers Himself.

Jesus is the object of faith because He is God’s revelation of Himself. By believing thus in Christ, we believe in *God*. (1 S. Pet. 1, 11.)

When Jesus was in the flesh, “faith in Him” meant just this, (give examples): after He ascended “faith in Him” meant this still. (St. John 20. 28; Acts: Epistles): this and this alone is the living faith that “justifies” or “saves.”

Readings for the Week.

- (1) St. Luke 6, 36—49 (especially 47 and 49).
- (2) St. John 6. 60—68.
- (3) St. Luke 7. 2—10.
- (4) Acts 16. 19—34.
- (5) Galatians 2. 20, 21.
- (6) Romans 1. 16, 17 and 5. 1—6.

LESSON 2.

"I believe in One God, the Father, Almighty."

It follows from what was said in the Introduction that when anyone from and with his heart says this word, he must have some *experience* of Him in Whom He believes, and *knowledge* of His word and message.

The object of these lessons in Parts 1 and 2 is to lead to that experience and increase that knowledge.

"One God." The idea is a familiar one in this land. But it is like a frame for a picture. All depends on what picture is in the frame. We are now going to study the picture . . .

"The Father." Here is the picture!

The full riches of this word will only appear gradually, as we progress in these lessons: nay, only with years of experience. But, for a start, think of the most fatherly father you ever knew on earth: . . . God is more Fatherly than that!

It was Christ Who brought this knowledge. Therefore He said "No man cometh to THE FATHER but by Me."

"Almighty." But in creating man—not a machine, not a brute-beast without reflection—but a rational spirit, endued with will to choose and responsibility to act, i.e. "might," God voluntarily limited this "All-mightiness." This means that He chose:

(1) To allow of the possibility of evil and sin entering the world through man;

(2) To contend with that evil and redeem the world from it by moral and spiritual means *only*—i.e. not by absolute power and mere superior force.

Readings.

- (1) Genesis 1. 1—25.
- (2) St. John 1. 1—5.
- (3) Psalm 19.
- (4) Job 42. 1—6.
- (5) Revelation 4.
- (6) Genesis 1. 26—2. 3.

LESSON 3.

“Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.”

(That is to say the material *and* the spiritual worlds: men *and* angels).

Read Genesis 1. 26—2. 3. “Let us make man in our Image.”

In what respects is man “in the Image of God?” (N.B. even Islam has enshrined these words in a hadith qudsi and been greatly exercised by them).

Answer:

In respect of his *memory*, which looks back:

In respect of his *prescience*, which looks forward:

In respect of his *power of choice*, (see last lesson):

In respect of his *potentiality of holiness*.

In all these respects, then, man is more “like” God than he is to the beasts.

And it is in these respects that man is said to be *Spirit*, as God is. cf. St. John 4. 24. 1 Cor. 2. 11.

The angels are also spirits, and in His image: Psalm 103. 20. 21. But they are not joined to material bodies as man is.

Readings.

- (1) Gen. 1. 26—2. 3.
- (2) Psalm 8.
- (3) Acts 17. 24—28.
- (4) Col. 3. 8—11.
- (5) Psalm 103.
- (6) Genesis 2. 4—25.

LESSON 4.

Man, "made" and unfallen. Read Genesis 2. 4—25.

By reason of his material body, man had to subject the lower, the material, the beastlike to the higher, the spiritual, the Godlike; in order that the latter qualities might be manifested in human flesh.

Thus man was not created perfect (i.e. complete), but simply with powers that might lead to perfection. These were undeveloped, but at least sin had not tainted them, nor created a bad conscience, nor upset the balance between his animal and spiritual natures. His relation to God, too, was only "perfect" as that of a very young child to its father is;—perfect as far as it goes, imperfect to what it will become after choice has been exercised and God chosen, temptation resisted, and self rejected.

Thus Genesis 2. depicts this state of innocence (see v. 25); and the unspoiled familiarity of his relation with God, his heavenly Father;—this we may realise by contrasting 3. 8. with this chapter.

The Command in vv. 16—17. Knowledge of evil can come to a child in two ways, (a) *either* by his practising the good, while his father tells him about the evil, or shows it to him, as he is able to bear it; (b) *or* by his *practising* it, in disobedience to his father. Which way would you choose for your son to "know good and evil?"

Did the prohibition of v. 16 mean that the heavenly Father would *never* cause his child to understand about the mystery of evil? (N.B. that mystery was already operating in the universe. There was sin in the Heavenlies. Some of the angels had rebelled and fallen).

Readings.

- (1) Gen. 2. 4—17.
- (2) Gen. 2. 17—25.
- (3) Acts 14. 15—17.
- (4) Ps. 119. 1—16.
- (5) St. Mark 10. 2—9.
- (6) Gen. 3. 1—11.

LESSON 5.

The Fall of Man. Read Genesis 3. 1—11, 22—24.

Remember the two ways whereby a child may be initiated into evil. God's way was the first. Now to see Satan's way.

He first suggested doubt of God's word and love (3. 1).

Then he told an utter lie (v. 4), making it attractive and acceptable by means of a half-truth (v. 5).

Thus he made the forbidden act seem infinitely attractive (v. 6), so that lust was engendered; and so the act of disobedience followed.

And now men *knew* "good and evil" by having committed evil: and the immediate consequences were:

- (1) A bad conscience (vv. 7. 11).
- (2) The victory of the body and the lower nature over the spirit and the higher, and so the degradation of both.
- (3) A broken relation with the Father (vv. 8—10).
- (4) Death (vv. 22—24).

Would it have been even kind to let fallen man live for ever? The death of the body now figured to man how sin kills the soul.

For Meditation. Compare the above with your own experience in sinning through temptation.

Lust makes you sin, even when you know it to be wrong. Oh! how attractive the sin seems because of the gratification expected from it! But, after commission, the pleasure turns to ashes, and misery takes its place. And yet even so, you cannot shake clear of sin *even* when you loathe it. You return to it again and again. "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Thus Adam's fall is repeated in the fall of each son of Adam.

Readings.

- (1) Gen. 3. 1—11.
- (2) Gen. 3. 22—24.
- (3) James 1. 12—17.
- (4) Romans 7. 9—24.
- (5) Isaiah 6. 1—5.
- (6) Job 42. 1—6.

LESSON 6.

The promise of a Saviour. The growth of evil. Read Genesis 3. 12—21; 4. 1—13.

In the very hour of man's fall the love of God promises a Saviour (v. 15): in this verse both the Incarnation and Atonement are hinted at.

(If you saw your child drowning would you give orders for rescuing him, or plunge in and rescue him yourself?)

But sin had to be fully manifested first. In that one deadly seed a whole weed-jungle of sins lay hid. The story of Cain shows: first, how the corruption of Adam's nature caused a corrupted issue; secondly, the fearful manifestations of sin: from disobedience to hate! from hate to murder!

Readings.

- (1) St. Matthew 5. 21, 22. St. John 3. 10—15.
- (2) St. Matthew 5. 27—29. 2 Samuel 11. 1—4.
- (3) Romans 1. 18—32.
- (4) Romans 2. 1—11.
- (5) Ephesians 5. 3—6.
- (6) Revelation 20. 11—15, 21. 7. 8.

LESSON 7.

The preparation for the Second Adam, the Redeemer and Saviour.

(1) *The Flood* was a reminder to man of the universal destruction which universal sin merits, unless there is a redemptive work done by God Himself.

(2) *The Choice of Nation* to serve as depository and minister of the knowledge of the true God, and thus to be the spiritual trustee for the whole world, and prepare the way of the coming Saviour.

Abraham was chosen to found that nation. "He had faith in God (see Lesson 1) and it was counted to him for righteousness"; and thus he became "the father of all who have faith."

(3) This *chosen individual* (B. C. 2000) founded a *family*; the family became a *tribe*; the tribe a *nation* under Moses (1500) (after a period of bondage in Egypt), under whom they received a *law* and a *covenant*; the nation received a *country* under Joshua (1400), and a *kingship* under David (1000). (These dates are round and rough, to give a general impression).

(4) David was anointed king over this chosen nation; and so he and his successors were called "Anointed" ("Christs"). But it was soon seen that they were only pointing to *the true Christ, the true King of the true Kingdom of God, the "Son of David," the King of Kings.*

Spiritual men waited for His appearing.

Readings.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) Gen. 6. 9—22 | } or Psalm 105. |
| (2) Gen. 12. 1—7 | |
| (3) Ex. 19. 1—8 | |
| (4) Josh. 1. 1—11 | |
| (5) 1 Samuel 16. 1—13. | |
| (6) Psalm 89. 19—37. | |

LESSON 8.

When the fulness of time had come, God, after He had spoken in old times by the prophets at these different times and in all these different ways, (Hebrews 1. 1), finally spoke to us by His Son, the Heir of all things.

And so, after confessing God the Father and Creator, we come on to confess our faith—

“In One Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God.”

“One Lord” because He alone is worthy to be Lord of your life, as you see from your study of the Gospel: for God was incarnate in Him alone and He is God’s last word to men.

“Jesus” (which means “Saviour”)—the human name which He took after His incarnation, which He bore all through His ministry on earth and which He still bears in eternity, for He is “the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.”

“Christ” which means “Anointed King,” the Head of the Kingdom of God, (see last lesson).

“The only-begotten Son of God.” We have seen that man (Adam) was the *created* image of God. Christ was the *uncreated* image of God. In Him we see God’s essence reflected as in a mirror. He “came forth from the Father” from all eternity (this is the meaning of the word “only-begotten”): and, being the perfect “image” of that Father, is the eternal “Son.”

Therefore “he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.”

Readings.

- (1) Hebrews 1. 1—4.
- (2) Hebrews 2. 3—9.
- (3) Acts 2. 22—36.
- (4) 2 Cor. 4. 1—6.
- (5) St. John 1. 15—18.
- (6) St. John 14. 6—11 and 10. 30.

LESSON 9.

“Begotten of His Father before all worlds; God, of God; Light, of Light; True Deity, of True Deity; not created but begotten; of one and the same essence as the Father; through Whom were all things made.

These sentences give the true meaning of texts like the following: St. John 1. 1, Colossians 1. 17, 2. 9, Phil. 2. 6.

The divine essence is one. “We believe in one God.” But this unity does not negate the possibility of diversity under some other aspect than *essence*, that is, under the aspect of “*Persons*.”

Unity and diversity are seen together in nature, where unity is constituted by diversity; and the higher and richer the unity, the greater is the diversity. The unity of an animal is higher than that of a plant; and its diversity is greater. The unity of a human being is higher than that of an animal; and his diversity is greater. In God, then, Who is the highest and richest unity of all, the diversity is also the greatest, namely the diversity of the Persons of the Trinity.

And so Christ existed before His birth in the world; before the world; from all eternity. And so “God was in Christ.”

Readings.

- (1) St. John 1. 1, Col. 1. 17 and 2. 9, Phil. 2. 6.
- (2) St. John 1. 2—11.
- (3) St. John 8. 51—58.
- (4) St. John 17. 24—26.
- (5) 1 Cor. 8. 1—6.
- (6) Rev. 1. 7—18.

LESSON 10.

“Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.”

A mystery. No man can say *how* this was. All we know is that this mystery was a revelation of love, love “*for us men and for our salvation.*” St. John 3. 16.

“Came down.” The condescension is best brought out in the wonderful passage in Phil. 2. 6 seqq.

“Born of the Virgin Mary.” The incarnation was a real historical event; and the circumstances of the Birth of this Incarnate One agreed with that wondrous Divine act, in respect of their purity, humility and glory.

“Let this mind be in us” who bear the name of Him, Who thus came down and thus was born.

Readings.

- (1) St. Luke 1. 26—35.
- (2) St. Luke 2. 1—16.
- (3) Gal. 4. 4—7.
- (4) Phil. 2. 3—11.
- (5) Heb. 2. 9—16.
- (6) St. John 1. 11—18.

LESSON 11.

“And was made man.”

See again Phil. 2. 6 seqq.

And now see also St. John 1. 1 and 14: where “Flesh” means humanity in its fulness. Jesus was “true Man.” The whole Gospel narrative of that matchless life, which you are now studying, is the picture of a true man. True infant; true child; true boy; true youth; true man; true human; truly tempted (Hebrews 4. 15; 5. 2, 7—9); truly died.

Your lessons in that Gospel picture are to make you love and adore the original.

That picture is quite obliterated and unrecognisable in the Koran.

That human picture was a divine one too.

You remember the text with which we began these lessons “God made man in His likeness.” So in Jesus at last the likeness, defaced in Adam, was restored. And it was restored in Him in order that it might be restored in us, too, in Christ; Colossians 1. 15., 3. 10, 11. Romans 8. 29.

Readings.

- (1) Phil. 2. 3—11.
- (2) The texts in above lesson.
- (3) St. John 20. 30, 31.
- (4) Acts 10. 34—43.
- (5) 1 John 1. 1—4.
- (6) 1 John 4. 9—16.

LESSON 12.

“And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried.”

See again Phil. 2. 6 seqq.:—lower, lower, *lowest*, He stooped, that He might pick even the lowest from his grovelling in the dust of sin and shame.

“**Pontius Pilate**”—mentioned to remind us that the death, like the birth (“*Virgin Mary*”) was a true historic event.

The death was witnessed by eyewitnesses (St. John 19. 33, 35).

The entire church testified to it from the first (1 Corinthians 15. 3).

“**For us**”—that is “for our sins” (1 Cor. 15. 1—3). The atonement is a *fact* which all can understand, believe, and experience, even if we cannot fully *explain* the fact. For there is a difference between a fact and the theory that explains it. One breathes air long before one knows about breathing. It may be that we shall never be able fully to state and explain the atonement theoretically. It is too vast and its mystery is rooted in the eternities.

But in the next lesson we shall see what the Bible says about it.

Meanwhile read in the coming week Isaiah 53, and His own word, St. Matthew 20. 20—28.

Readings.

- (1) Phil. 2. 3—11.
- (2) Isaiah 53.
- (3) St. Matthew 20. 20—28.
- (4) St. Matthew 16. 21—26.
- (5) 1 Peter 2. 19—25.
- (6) St. Matthew 11. 25—30.

LESSON 13.

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

In the Cross the Holiness and Love of God appeared simultaneously (Psalm 85. 10). The *Holiness*, by demonstrating there the damnableness of human sin, and that it deserves the awful death of “separation from the life of God” (2 Thess. 1. 9: and the *Love*, by demonstrating this in *His Own being*. See Romans 3. 25 and 8. 3.

He who looks to that Cross with the eye of repentance and faith has passed this judgement of God upon himself and his sin. He becomes in his own eyes and the eyes of God “crucified with Christ” and therefore passes out of judgement, St. John 5. 24;—“from judgement into life.” Whose life? The life of Him Who died *and rose again*: a new heavenly life, unto God.

Romans 6. 3, 4. Colossians 3. 1. 1 St. Peter 2. 22—24.

Readings.

- (1) St. Matthew 27. 33—50.
- (2) St. Mark 15. 22—37.
- (3) St. Luke 23. 33—47.
- (4) St. John 19. 17—37.
- (5) Rom. 5. 6—10.
- (6) 1 John 4. 7—10.

LESSON 14.

“And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures.”

The resurrection is also a historic event (“the third day”). It, also, was “according to the Scriptures” (St. Luke 24. 25—27). It, also, had testimony of eyewitnesses and of the entire apostolic college and the apostolic church. (Acts 1. 22. 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4).

Study again the meaning of this new life. The living Christ is “our life” here and hereafter (Col. 3. 4).—“*Here*” St. John 14. 19 and Romans 6. 4: “*hereafter*” St. John 11. 25, 26 and Romans 6. 5.

See also St. John 3. 16, St. John 6. 33, 35, 51—57. In this last passage “eating and drinking” mean assimilating, appropriating, saying “It was all *for me!*”

This is faith.

Readings.

- (1) St. Matthew 27. 57—28. 8.
- (2) St. Mark 15. 42—16. 8.
- (3) St. Luke 23. 50—24. 12.
- (4) St. John 19. 38—20. 9.
- (5) Romans 6. 3—11.
- (6) Col. 3. 1—11.

LESSON 15.

“And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.”

He took our glorified humanity back to the divine glory.

Read again Phil. 2, and now finish the passage, vv. 9—11; also St. John 16. 28; 17. 5; Heb. 4. 14—16.

The name Jesus, His human name, ensures the permanence of the human nature in His glory.

His work in glory is *intercession*. Heb. 7. 25 and Romans 8. 32.

His expectation, victory through the preaching of the word: Heb. 10. 12, 13.

Readings.

- (1) St. Luke 24. 36—53.
- (2) St. Mark 16. 14—20.
- (3) Acts 1. 1—12.
- (4) Romans 8. 31—39.
- (5) Hebrews 7. 25—8. 1.
- (6) Hebrews 10. 11—23.

LESSON 16.

“And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead.”

He has come again already by His Spirit: but when all is ready, there shall be an appearing and an unveiling.

The “coming again by the Spirit” is spoken of in St. John 14. 17, 18; St. Matt. 28. 20. See Lesson 18. (3)

“The appearing and unveiling,” see Heb. 9. 28; 1 John 3. 2, Acts 1. 11, (“this same Jesus”), 1 Thess. 4. 14—17.

Shall we not then “love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4. 8), and “purify ourselves” against that day? (1 St. John 3. 3).

Readings.

- (1) St. John 14. 1—6 and 15—18.
- (2) Acts 1. 9—14.
- (3) 1 Thess. 4. 13—18.
- (4) 1 Cor. 15. 50—58.
- (5) Hebrews 9. 24—28.
- (6) 1 John 3. 1—3.

LESSON 17.

“Whose kingdom shall have no end.”

What is this “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of Heaven”? Christ was always speaking of it and illustrating it in a crowd of parables. You have seen this in your Gospel lessons.

It is a spiritual organisation founded by Christ under His own Headship. It works to-day in this world as it has worked from the day in which He inaugurated it, for holiness and justice and beauty and truth and happiness, but it is not of this world, for its origin is God. Its aim is not to set up a kingdom and empire, like those of this world only more splendid, but to bring all the relationships of life, family, municipal and national, into loving subjection to God, and so to make *these* holy and just and beautiful and true and happy, as He is.

We shall further study this life in section B.

The kingdom grows from smallest beginnings in the hearts of men (St. Matt. 13. 33). It grows very great in the world. (St. Matt. 13. 31, 32).

It works quietly and gradually in this world, but it will be fully revealed in glory, at the revealing of the Christ, and made universal (see last lesson) in all heaven and earth: see St. Matt. 13. 24—30 and 36—43.

This is the Kingdom which “shall have no end.”

A man enters it by the door of the new birth, (St. John 3. 3). Quietly though this change may take place in the soul of a man, yet the actual birth, the actual entrance may call for a terrible effort, great courage. (St. Matthew 11. 12). Acts 14. 22).

Readings.

- (1) St. John 3. 1—8.
- (2) St. Matthew 13. 1—10 and 18—23.
- (3) St. Matthew 13. 24—30 and 36—43.
- (4) St. Matthew 13. 44—52.
- (5) St. Matthew 25. 14—30.
- (6) Eph. 5. 1—5.

LESSON 18.

“And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son: Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified: Who spake by the Prophets.”

(1) The Spirit of Life and of the Word, in the Old Testament, His work in the dispensation of the Father: Gen. 1. 2, Is. 61. 1, (i.e. in creation and prophecy).

(2) His work in the dispensation of the Son: St. Luke 1. 35, St. Luke 3. 22, 4. 18.

(3) His work in the present dispensation, which is His Own: to reveal Christ spiritually to the souls of men so that they are born again, and to make Him dwell spiritually in those souls, thereby “sanctifying” them and making them like Him (see last lesson), St. John 3. 3, Acts 1. 4, 5, 8; St. John 14. 16—20, 16. 13, 14.

Readings.

- (1) St. John 14. 15—26.
- (2) St. John 16. 5—15.
- (3) Acts 1. 6—8, 2. 1—13.
- (4) Acts 2. 14—36.
- (5) Acts 2. 37—47.
- (6) Acts 5. 1—11.

LESSON 19.

“And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and Son: Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified: Who spake by the Prophets.” (*Continued*)

Therefore the Holy Spirit is *now* called, indifferently, “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of the Father” or “the Spirit of the Son,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “the Spirit of Jesus,” “the Spirit of the Lord (Jesus)”: for His function now is to take of the things of Christ and to show them to the soul: to cause the living Christ to dwell in the soul.

In bringing Christ to the soul He brings the qualities of Christ and so the power of Christ:

Qualities Galatians 5. 22, 23; 2 Cor. 3. 18.

Power Romans 8. 9—11; Acts 1. 8.

Note. (Scripturally and theologically the Eastern Church is right in saying “Proceeding from the Father”: dispensationally the Western Church is right in saying “from the Father and the Son,” for this reminds us that He comes *through Jesus Christ* to the soul, and so brings to the soul *Jesus* in His fulness. Perhaps the two ways may be reconciled in this—“Proceeds from the Father through the Son”).

Readings.

- (1) St. John 15. 1—8.
- (2) Romans 8. 5—16.
- (3) Gal. 5. 16—25.
- (4) 2 Cor. 3. 3—18.
- (3) 1 Cor. 2. 1—12.
- (6) 1 John 4. 7—13.

LESSON 20.

And now after confessing our faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and after hearing of the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating and sanctifying believers we are ready to hear

“And I believe one Catholic Apostolic Church”

for the “Church” is the Body of Christ by the operation of this Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4. 4), His temple (Eph. 3. 22), the sum of the “vine-branches” (St. John 15. 5), the sum of “the members” (Col. 1. 18).

Into this living communion (called in the Apostles’ Creed “The Communion of Saints”) we are baptized by the one sacrament and nourished by the other. And therefore we love the brethren. For if we saw them “in Christ” we should just by doing so love them: our *not* doing so is because of narrowness of heart, or because man-made doctrines and traditions prevent us from seeing that to God we and they are fellow-members in Christ.

“Catholic.” Nothing is Catholic (found “in all the world from the beginning”) that is not **“Apostolic.”**

The spiritual Church cannot be other than *one* (Eph. 4. 4—6). To this inward, unseen, spiritual unity an outward, corporate, visible unity ought to correspond, and *did* correspond for some centuries. But this order has been broken owing to the national and political passions of men, and exaggerations or errors. Christians who believe in the order of the church as developed by the unresisted Providence of God in those first centuries, and who work humbly in the strength of it, should yet refuse to make pronouncements as to what Christian community is the true Church and what is not: for the outward unity is too much broken and the confusion too great for such a summary judgement. Rather must we believe that God will work out an outward unity according to His Own will, when we all, in the Spirit of Christ and true humility, are willing to get together, to know

each other more in Christ, to pray together, to confess each other's share in the spiritual body of Christ, and the divineness of each other's work. In doing so we shall also be contributing our ideal of corporate unity to the common stock, and preparing the way for the reunited Church that shall one day be.

Readings.

- (1) Eph. 1. 15—23.
- (2) Eph. 2. 11—22.
- (3) Eph. 3. 1—10.
- (4) Eph. 4. 1—16.
- (5) Eph. 5. 22—33.
- (6) 1 Tim. 3.

LESSON 21.

“I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.”

The special lessons on Baptism (in Part 3) will explain this at length. But it must here be pointed out that “remission of sins” of course presupposes a living, personal repentance and a living, personal faith in the Saviour. Hebrews 6, 1, 2 makes it clear that such “repentance and faith” are the first two steps to be made by the soul, baptism being the third. See too Acts 2. 38 and Romans 10. 9, 10. Repentance and faith begin and increase *before* baptism, and are realised *in* baptism.

Baptism is the grafting of the repentant, believing soul into the corporate community of Christ on earth. This incorporation does convey forgiveness of all sins. For when Christ’s body on earth pronounces absolution it is Christ the Head pronouncing it in heaven; and the word of Christ is identical with the word of God. See St. John 20, 22, 23.

Readings.

- (1) St. Matthew 3. 1—11.
- (2) St. Matthew 28. 16—20.
- (3) Acts 2. 37—41.
- (4) Acts 10. 1—23.
- (5) Acts 10. 24—48.
- (6) Rom. 6. 1—11.

LESSON 22.

In Hebrews 6. 1, 2, as we saw last time, "repentance and faith" were the first lessons of the soul coming to the knowledge of God in Christ.

The next, we saw, were "baptism and the laying on of hands." And then came "the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement." And so the Creed, and this section of our lessons, close with

"And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming age."

In saying this we also say "I look for the coming of Christ again," for it is His coming that ushers in the resurrection and the judgement.

Then shall those who are Christ's be manifested and glorified: Rom. 8. 18—21, 1 St. John 3. 2, 1 Cor. 15. 51—57.

But this glorious hope is also a call to godly fear. It is a warning as well as an encouragement. For it is possible to fall away. The branch of the vine may become withered (St. John 15. 2, 6); the lamp may go out for lack of oil (St. Matt. 25. 1—12); the living member may die and be cut off (Rev. 3. 1).

Therefore in going on to lessons on Baptism itself it is right that the soul be filled with godly fear, and cry to God to teach it how to abide and remain faithful till the end. "Be ye faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."

"He that abideth to the end the same shall be saved."

Readings.

- (1) 1 Cor. 15. 1—11.
- (2) 1 Cor. 15. 12—28.
- (3) 1 Cor. 15. 35—49.
- (4) 1 Cor. 15. 50—58.
- (5) Rev. 20. 12—21. 8.
- (6) Rev. 21. 22—22. 5.

(B) CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE "KINGDOM OF GOD."

LESSON 23.

The "Commandments." Exodus 20. 1—17.

If you understand the meaning of faith in the Introduction, and if the lessons on the Gospel (Part 1) and Christian Doctrine (Part 2, section A) have entered into your soul, then you know already that this living faith produces a change of heart, a change of life, and a change of actions, just as surely as a living seed will produce flower and fruit.

That faith just is the "love" in and by which the soul "fulfils" the first four commandments (or prohibitions) by loving God (St. Mark 12. 29, 30).

Consider this fully, and then consider how the last six are similarly "fulfilled" in Christian life.

Christian life is none other than likeness to Christ (Romans 8. 29). Evidently therefore it is more than mere abstention from sinful things. It is love and daily service, just as it was with Christ. He took those Old Testament commandments, which were largely negative "Thou shalt not kill" etc., and showed how they could only be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God by love: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" See St. Luke 10. 25—37. Romans 13. 8—10: and Christ's own commentary on the meaning of this, in Mt. 7. 12.

In St. Matt. 25. 31—46 we see that Christians will be condemned not for falling into sins, but for neglecting to bring forth deeds of love and service and holiness.

Thus: the *sixth* prohibition is a commandment to love and service, 1 St. John 3. 14—18, and only so is truly kept.

The *seventh* prohibition is a commandment to purity and self-control in all things: Eph. 5. 2—5.

The *eighth* is a commandment to works of charity: Eph. 4. 28.

The *ninth* is a commandment to loyalty in one's membership in a community of brothers: Eph. 4. 25.

Only so are these *prohibitions* truly kept by those who have entered the Kingdom of Heaven: i.e. by doing their opposites.

Readings.

- (1) St. Matthew 25. 31—46.
- (2) St. Luke 10. 25—37.
- (3) James 1. 17—27.
- (4) James 2. 1—13.
- (5) James 2. 14—26 and 4. 17.
- (6) 1 Peter 2. 9—17.

LESSON 24.

The "Commandments." (Continued)

But Jesus taught another thing, too, about these commands in His new Kingdom of God: namely that the sinful acts, which they forbid, have their origin in the region of the heart and the thoughts, and that therefore what God will condemn man for is not the act, but the heart and the thought.

See St. Matt. 15. 10—20.

Now see how He and His disciples applied this to the commandments:

The 1st: see St. Matt. 22. 36—38.

The 2nd: see Col. 3. 5.

The 3rd: see St. Matt. 5. 33—36.

The 4th: see Hebrews 4. 1, 2, 9—11; St. Mark 3. 1—5.

The 5th: see Col. 3. 20, 21.

The 6th: see St. Matt. 5. 21—26 and 38—48.

The 7th: see St. Matt. 5. 27—32.

The 9th: see St. Matt. 5. 37.

And you can imagine how He would have applied the 8th in the same way; e.g. St. Luke 14. 12—14.

The 10th commandment itself shows how the others must be spiritually fulfilled.

Last time we saw that the best way to obtain release from these sins of heart and thought is by doing their opposites, St. Paul said "Overcome evil *with* good," Romans 12. 21.

Readings.

Go over the above references again, with thought and prayer.

LESSON 25.

Love.

We have seen how "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Now for a fuller lesson on what this "love" is.

Study 1 Cor. 13.

This love is particularly important as between Christian and Christian; see St. John 13. 34, 35, 1 John 3. 14—17, 4. 20, 21.

But does this special love mean that non-Christians are not to be loved, to be served, to be treated with mercy and pity? This is a most important question, and the answer to it is found in Gal. 6. 10, and St. Luke 10. 29—37, and in the example of Christ Himself.

For all human love depends on divine love ("we love because He first loved us"). Well, does God love *only* His own believers? The answer to this is St. John 3. 16, St. Matt. 5. 43—48, and Rev. 5. 9.

How, then, shall the Christian not love and serve those whom God his Father loves and serves?

Readings.

- (1) 1 Cor. 12. 31; 13. 3.
- (2) 1 Cor. 13. 4—13.
- (3) 1 John 3. 11—15.
- (4) 1 John 4. 7—21.
- (5) St. Luke 10. 29—37.
- (6) St. Matthew 5. 38—48.

LESSON 26.

The Works of Love.

Romans chapters 12 and 13 give us a picture of the life which lives by the Spirit of love and moves on the levels of the Kingdom of God.

vv. 1, 2. It is the result of self-consecration.

vv. 3—5. He who lives this life does not aspire to the highest posts, but seeks to know in what sphere to glorify God.

vv. 6—21. And in that *sphere* his service is very intense and very abundant and very full of self-sacrifice. Not only in his private relations, but also in his social relations too, (chap. 13. 1—10).

And here is an important point for you as church-member: if your heart has been touched, will not your *pocket* have been, too (Rom. 12. 8)? If you are a lover, will you not be a *giver*?⁽¹⁾

Readings.

- (1) Romans 12. 9—21.
- (2) Romans 13. 1—10.
- (3) Col. 3. 8—17.
- (4) Col. 3. 18 to 4, 1.
- (5) 2 Cor. 8.
- (6) 2 Cor. 9.

(1) This is the point where practical instruction should be given on *systematic* giving (2 Cor. 8. 1—5, St. Matt. 6. 1—4).

LESSON 27.

How to feed the soul in the Christian Life.

(a) Bible Study.

Life must be maintained, fed, nourished, protected, that it may grow and increase; for growth is its law. And this necessitates daily effort. Let us study the "means of grace." And first the study of the Bible.

Let us see what the Word of God has been in the experience of His saints.

First, and above all, the *Master Himself*: St. Matt. 4. 4: and look at the use made of that "Word" in the Temptation 4. 1—10: and throughout His whole life; e.g. St. Matt. 22. 29—32, St. Luke 24. 27.

The Saints of the Old Testament: e.g. Psalm 119, 9, 11, 18, 97, 103, 105, 129—131.

Let this Psalmist speak for all. Finally, see Job 23. 12.

The Saints of the New Testament: e.g. 2 Tim. 3. 15, 1 St. Peter 2. 2, Col. 3. 16.

Ask your spiritual adviser to tell you of the various methods of daily Bible study: continuous reading (on a fixed plan); topical study, etc.

LESSON 28.

How to feed the soul in the Christian life.

(b) Private Prayer.

Let us again study the *example* of Jesus Christ: St. Luke 4. 42, 5. 16, 6. 12, 22. 39—46.

“Rise and Pray”: let us now study His *precept*: St. Matt. 6. 5—15, 7. 7—11, St. John 14. 12—14, 16. 24.

What is this asking “IN HIS NAME”? Is it merely using the phrase “For Christ’s sake” at the end of the prayer? No, it alludes to the faith by which the soul and Christ become one, so that the prayer of the soul is *in the Spirit* of Christ, and becomes His prayer.

The following alludes to this, yes, and to deeper things than this, even: Romans 8. 26.

Ask your spiritual adviser to help you with a method of daily prayer: to supply you with a handbook of prayers and to teach you how to frame prayers for yourself.

Do not forget that prayer may be momentary, ejaculatory, as well as at stated times.

LESSON 29.

How to feed the soul in the Christian Life.

- (c) The services of the Church, and the great Communal Sacrament.

The Christian life is not a solitary life. It cannot be rightly lived except with others who are Christ's and who are living His life.

Study deeply the following in this connection: St. Matt. 18. 15—20.

Then Heb. 10. 22—25; Acts 1. 14, 2. 2 and following.

Thus the meeting of Christians together is itself a sacrament, that is, a special mystic grace is attached to it.

And so the great Sacrament of Spiritual Feeding was made a *communal* service from the first: see the Institution of it in the Gospels, and 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.

LESSON 30.

Selfdiscipline and its spiritual reward.

You will be tempted: you will often tend to go backward: you will have to fight. You must practise self-discipline. The "means of grace" already studied are a great part of this method of self-discipline. But let us add one more study, and contemplate the following:

1 Cor. 5. 24—27; and this,—2 Cor. 13. 5.

Here we have two things:

- (1) Self-examination and self-criticism.
- (2) Self-denial.

(1) Ask your spiritual adviser to show you a method of self-examination and self-criticism. We are very good at criticising others, very poor at applying the same to ourselves; but see what is said of the former in St. Matt. 7. 1, and of the latter in 1 Cor. 11. 31.

Many small faults, and some big ones, many small omissions to do good, and some big ones, simply are not realised by their author unless he takes time to be alone with God, and to pass his day, or week, or month, or year under his own scrutiny before God, allowing the Spirit of God to make *His* comments to the conscience.

(2) Ask your spiritual adviser to show you a method of *fasting*. Here are some aspects of this subject:

- (a) Going permanently without some things that some people consider lawful, for the sake of those who would be "offended" by your use of them. A clear example of this is the use of wine and all similar liquids in this country. From every point of view you must be a "total abstainer."

(b) Going without food, or without some "pleasant" sorts of food, drink, tobacco, etc., for a certain period, in view of some special season of prayer or communion, or in order to make some special money-contribution to the work.

(c) Giving up some personal gratification for someone else; or some ambition for Christ's sake.

Readings.

St. Matthew 6. 16—18; 1 Cor. 7. 5; Acts 13. 2, 3, and 14. 23; Genesis 22. 16, 17, 18.

LESSON 31.

Are you willing to make the enterprise of this life of love, of witness, and of service (lessons 22—26) ? Are you willing to go on practising the means whereby it may be nourished and trained (lessons 27—30) ?

If so, but not unless, you may come on to the lessons which concern baptism directly, provided one thing more—*that you count the cost.*

Let us in a final lesson study the mind of our Master in this matter also.

St. Matt. 5. 1—12 is a portrait of a subject in the Kingdom of God by the hand of the King Himself. Note the traits and note the conclusion. Then read vv. 13—16.

And now take the following passages and try to penetrate into their depths, and into what they must mean for *you*, if, in this land, you confess Christ crucified:

St. Matt. 16. 24—26; St. John 12. 20—26; St. Luke 14. 25—37.

* * *

Well, are you willing ?

