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CHRISTIANITY DEFINED.

An Exchange gives the following definition of the word Christian: –

"A Christ-ian is one who has the Christ spirit. This is our understanding of the original meaning of the word. We suppose all will assent to and accept it as correct....Men are Christ-ians according to the spirit of the Christ which is in them and manifested in the flesh. In some persons it is small, in others large. Either hidden or manifest this spirit resides in all. Consciously or unconsciously it is contained in every man or woman that lives or has lived."

We are well aware that the above passes current for truth, and that *nearly* "all assent to and accept it as correct;" but we shall neither by silence nor in any other way, leave the impression that the TOWER assents to such a definition. We strongly protest that it is a false representation, and a rapidly growing error. One reason perhaps for the growing popularity of the above definition is that it embraces nearly all mankind under a name which has grown popular among civilized people.

According to this definition, nearly every one outside of prisons, gambling dens, etc., and many in them, are Christians; for is there not *something* true and noble in ninety-nine out of every hundred people? Our Exchange declares that "consciously or unconsciously, it [the spirit of Christ] is contained in every man or woman that lives, or has lived." Then it would follow according to its idea, that "every man or woman that lives or has lived," has been a Christian. Only by following to its legitimate conclusion such a definition of Christianity is its absurdity manifest. And yet to this absurd definition, as our Exchange asserts, nearly all assent. [R761 : page 3]

Confucius, Plato and other moral philosophers truly deserve the respect and esteem of all who can appreciate their strivings after

righteousness and truth, but to hold them up as Christians – Apostles of Christianity – because they recognized and practiced some of the truths which Christianity inculcates, would be as absurd and illogical, as to call every stone a diamond, because a diamond is a stone.

Truly "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But this does not prove that because a man possesses some elements of character corresponding to some elements of the spirit or disposition of Christ, he is therefore one of His followers – a Christian. In like manner it would be correct to say, If this be not a stone, it is not a diamond; but such a statement would not imply to any intelligent mind, that everything that has any of the qualities of a stone, is a diamond.

Those who call morality, Christianity, and who recognize everyone possessed of moral qualities as a Christian, have accepted a false standard, and all the conclusions they may draw therefrom, must be equally false. According to this false standard, the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day at whose instance he was crucified were very eminent Christians; for certainly a more morally exact people, it would be difficult to find on the pages of history. They were people of noted piety according to this same worldly moral standard. They were noted as such, as highly in their day, as are the clergy of the various religious systems to-day; yet if these were Christians, the founder of the system, Jesus, did not know it, for He said of them "Ye are of your father the devil." (John 8:44.) Not that they were utterly devoid of every moral principle, but they were under the control of evil in the main as is the large majority of mankind to-day, who are no more Christians than were those who crucified Jesus. The apostles' estimate of who are Christians differs widely from that of our Exchange, but agree with that of Jesus. John says (1 John 5:19) "We know that *we* are of God, and the *whole world* lieth in wickedness." And again (3:1.) "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon *us*, that we should be called the SONS OF GOD [Christians]: therefore, the *world* knoweth *us* not, because it knew Him not."

According to the moralist's estimate set forth by our Exchange, the preaching of Christ Jesus throughout the world was unnecessary. If preaching be necessary it should be morality and not justification and remissions of sins in the name of Jesus through faith in him, and a work accomplished on behalf of all by Him. Thus they could go among the Chinese and teach morality in the name of Confucius; they could go among the Mohamedians preaching morality in the name of Mahomet and find what our Exchange calls "Christians." Many of these are doubtless as moral as people living in so called Christian lands. But Paul knew and taught far differently, and our Exchange and all who accept such as its definition of Christianity as correct, would do well to carefully consider the teachings of the great Apostle and exponent of Christianity. He believed with Peter and John that Jesus was the only "door" of access to God, that "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts 4:12.

It was because he believed that faith in Jesus was the *only* way of salvation, that he labored and sacrificed to spread that name; and in this light how forcible his argument when he says (Rom. 10:14): "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," but "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" His argument is that Faith in Christ is essential, and that knowledge is a pre-requisite to faith.

Hence our argument is: No one can be a Christian without first having a knowledge of Christ. Not merely a historic knowledge that such person lived, died and rose, but a knowledge of the *object* of these, and the *results* accomplished thereby, for us. All this and a grateful mental acceptance of those results, constitutes believing in Jesus – believing in Him as our *ransom*, who in consequence shall soon deliver from death those whom he redeemed with his own precious blood.

To such a believer only, is the name Christian at all applicable, and in its strictest sense it applies only to those, who heartily believing, present themselves joint sacrifices together with Jesus; or as he himself expresses it, (Matt. 16:24): "If any man come after me [be my disciple, a Christ-ian] let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Let him deny all ability to wash away his own sins, let him deny his own righteousness and accept of mine, and *then* become my follower.

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ" in this respect – to sacrifice earthly advantages and things highly esteemed among men, for the sake of being co-workers with Jesus in the accomplishing of the plans of Jehovah – "he is none of His;" (Rom. 8:9.) he is not in the true sense of the word a Christian. Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are *partakers of Christ's sufferings...* If any man suffer as a CHRISTIAN let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." 1 Pet. 4:12-16.

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