

**THE UNEXPLORED SELF;
AN INTRODUCTION TO
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE FOR
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

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The unexplored self; an introduction to Christian doctrine for teachers and students by George R. Montgomery

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GEORGE R. MONTGOMERY

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BY

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PREFACE

AMONG the prospective teachers who came under my instruction at Yale University and at Carleton College, I discovered a sense of unpreparedness for the definitely religious influence which a schoolroom must have, even though no religion is taught. Furthermore, students with whom I have talked seem to have perplexingly wrong ideas as to the content of Christianity. It is the teachers and students that have been primarily in mind in the preparation of this Introduction to Christian Doctrine.

The beginnings of this volume, however, go back a long way. After graduation, I set out indefinitely to follow up my statement in the class book as to my object in life, viz., to discover as far as possible the purpose in existence, and so far as that purpose was found, to carry out my share in it. After drifting here and there I had the good fortune to take a long journey on horseback with another newspaper correspondent, who was thoroughly familiar with the philosophies and had every idea labelled by a school and a sub-school. Our journey took us through wild country where we had practically no diversion but to

talk. A horseback journey with a small caravan is, in this respect, different from any other kind of a trip; there is no haste, no sight-seeing, no reading, and the travellers have plenty of breath to converse and plenty of time to think.

Every few days we would come to some centre where American missionaries were stationed and the contrast between the atmosphere around them and elsewhere was marked. It happened that at one place we were invited in to "family prayers" and the story of Paul's conversion on his way to Damascus was read. This incident, of course, may have had its part in the result.

Along the way we discussed every conceivable subject, although the problems of philosophy were especially congenial to us. At the beginning we were both agnostics; I had, however, without knowing why, pretty well made up my mind that there must be a value in existence and the fact that the missionaries were doing something, while we were only talking about it, impressed me. I found that from the foundation of a meaning in things, without any of my friend's erudition or his skill in analysis, I was yet able to hold my own and to build up a more satisfactory system than he could. At the end of the two months my mind was made up to accept the propaganda of that basis as my life work and this volume is a part of that development and propaganda.

I regret the savor of sensationalism in the title, but it about expresses my intention. The

word self is freer from limiting connotations than would be the words mind, ego, or soul. The exploration of the mind has been relegated to psychology; the very existence of the soul or of the ego has been disputed; every one, however, is interested in the self and no one can deny its reality. Yet even with so uncontroversial a word, I find myself using it in three different senses: first, the self in its large sense, including every nook and corner of the interests; second, the central self, or, if you will, the very self of very self, the nucleus of the new self; third, in contrast with the new self, the older interests or the old self.

I am indebted to Rev. John De Peu of Bridgeport, Conn., and to Prof. H. H. Tweedy of Yale University, who read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

G. R. M.

NEW YORK CITY,
May 15, 1910.

NOTE.—In the following pages I have endeavored to avoid polemics and to direct the attention to the essentials. A little volume, however, which has just come to hand has suggested a few words in explanation of my attitude toward controversial subjects. The book is entitled, *The Fundamentals*, and the preface says that a copy has been "sent to every pastor, evangelist, missionary, theological professor, theological student, Sunday school superintendent, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. secretary in the English-speaking world."

The first chapter is a defence of and an insistence upon the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. If the enormous distribution of the book extends the idea that belief in the Virgin Birth is a primary tenet of Christian Doctrine, the result will be unfortunate. Discussion of the Virgin Birth is a matter for those who have advanced far in Christian thought. If put

foremost it entails so many other questions that the inquirer will likely never reach the true gospel as presented by Christ and the apostles.

The entire volume of which I am speaking is conceived in a combative mood and instead of making clearer the fundamentals will tend to provoke debate among those who already accept Christianity.

The second chapter, for instance, is entitled: "The Deity of Christ." I am perfectly willing to accept the phrase provided the New Testament idea of Christ's personality be retained, but, in general, any distinction between divinity and deity belongs to an advanced understanding of theology and is out of place at the very beginning.

The chapter on "Higher Criticism," likewise, affirms that as a pre-requisite to Christian faith must come the acceptance of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Such assertions divert the discussion from the fundamentals to the disputes. The triviality of this particular dispute appears when we imagine some one coming forward with a theory of Samuel's having written the two books that go by his name. Samuel dies quite some time before the close of the first book and it would be absurd to insist that quotation from either of the books by name would determine authorship.

It is the radical and militant spirit of the entire volume that is deplorable, and it is gratifying to know that more and more the spiritualism and conservatism of the Pauline and Johannine theology are prevailing over the crass materialism of the metaphysicians.

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