

LESSON III

WHY WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST (I)

Though unbelievers scoff at and deny his claims to deity, even they admit that there was a real man named Jesus and that he lived at the time, in the place and under the historical circumstances attested to by the writers of the New Testament. Unlike the mythological characters invented by men with fertile imaginations whose fictitious deeds were chronicled in some of the literature of antiquity, Jesus Christ really did live. Even his enemies grant this much! But it is not the mere fact of his having lived that makes Jesus important. It is the way that he lived and the impression that he made on our world that make us stop to consider the marvelous claims that he and his disciples made about him. Concerning the impact of his life on the history of mankind, an unknown author has written:

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, and that a despised one. He worked in a carpenter shop for thirty years, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a really big city. He never travelled, except in his infancy, more than two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He had no credentials but himself.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them betrayed him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through a mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, his seamless robe. When he was dead, he was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed grave through the courtesy of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today Jesus is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of all human progress.

I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that have ever sat, and all the kings that have ever ruled put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth like this one solitary personality.

All time dates from his birth, and it is impossible to understand or interpret the progress of human civilization in any nation on earth apart from his influence. Slowly through the ages man is coming to realize that the greatest necessity in the world is not water, iron, gold, food and clothing, or even nitrate in the soil; but rather Christ enshrined in human hearts, thoughts and motives.

Men of every generation in the history of the world have been affected by Christ. Even men who lived before Christ came to earth were affected by him. Through the writing