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The Guru

He stood in the dusty street of the village. Behind Him rose the flat hills. Before Him lay the still waters of a small inland lake. Around Him was gathered an excited crowd.

He seemed in some ways like the ordinary people around Him. But how extraordinary were His words! He was speaking to the crowd, and in words, which no one could mistake. He said:

“I have come down from heaven to do the will of him who sent me, but not to do my own will.”¹

And the people wondered and some of them murmured. They thought, “Don’t we know this man’s village, his father and mother? How can he say he has come down from heaven?”

Some time afterwards the Guru went up to the chief city of that area which nestled among the low mountains of the south. He was teaching in the court of the temple there, and to the surprise of many of His hearers, He firmly and plainly stated:

“My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God, or whether I speak on my own authority.”²

Some of the people there said to Him, “You have a demon.”

Later in that same city His enemies (who claimed to be God’s people” surrounded Him, spitting out their hatred. He said to them:

“If God were your Father you would love me, for I have come here from God. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.”³

When that dispute was over, they snatched up stones

to throw at Him, but he escaped out of their hands. After some time, though, they managed to seize Him and put Him to death as a blasphemer.

However, that was not the end of the story. For the country where He spoke these words, and lived and taught and died, was Israel. The tie was nearly 2000 years ago. And the person is famous in this country, and throughout the world, as a great Guru. His name, of course, is Jesus Christ.

It is obvious that if the above things He said are true, he is a mighty prophet and teacher of mankind, and we should all listen to Him earnestly and carefully. But if we are sensible people can we believe His words? Are there good reasons why we should listen to Him? The answer to this is, certainly. We shall see some of these reasons as we go on. Jesus did not encourage blind faith, but gave solid evidence for what He taught. He really did come from God, as he said, and His teachings have great significance for the whole human race – yes, even for us who live in this modern scientific age. So in this little book we shall see what He had to say about God and man and the way to God and other matters of great importance.

Great Promises

Jesus made other amazing statements about Himself and great promises to the people.

For example, He reveals that he can give us a deep purpose in life and real satisfaction in living, that he can give us true rest of heart and mind.

He speak of joy that will endure, and peace that does not pass away.

He promises release from the fear and power of death, and eternal life with God, forever removed from sorrow, suffering, decay, and destruction.

He tells us He can liberate us from all bondage, whether of fear, ignorance, or evil, if we will put His Word into practice. Liberation or salvation is not some far-off event that

is attained only by a very few who work hard at it. His promise of liberation is for all who receive it and it is for now.

He declares that He can give us a new heart and nature, and fit us to live in God's presence.

He shows that we can really know God and be brought into perfect harmony with God.

From the distant past even to this present hour the people of India have known a multitude of gurus. They have heard of the necessity of a guru for spiritual enlightenment. They have admired those gurus who seemed to be genuine, and meditated on their teachings.

A Mysterious Universe

We live in a mysterious universe. There are many things, important things, we do not at all understand. If we are honest we will admit that by nature we know very little about either ourselves or God.

Material things can be seen with our physical eyes, handled with our hands, examined through telescopes and microscopes. Even so, they are great mysteries about them, and we see the necessity of teachers who can instruct us in the various sciences, and we study their books.

But the subtler things of the spirit no physical eye can see and no hand can handle. Not telescope, no microscope reveals God. No textbook of science instructs us about things in the spiritual world or shows us the way to God. To learn these things we need a different kind of teacher.

Ideal Guru

In this book we present some of the words of one who has been called an ideal guru. He had all the qualities most admired in spiritual teachers.

Jesus was full of compassion and took upon Himself the responsibility of bringing His disciples into harmony with God. He evidently knew God and the way to bring others

to God. He was a true Mediator, bringing God and man together.

He was completely non-violent. Never once did He injure anyone. On the contrary, He was devoted to the well being of others and his whole life was spent for their good.

He could explain the scriptures and teach, not by word only (important as this is). But by life, by His daily acts, by His holy, loving character.

He was gentle and humble in heart utterly without arrogance.

He was devoid of the love of fame or the desire for selfish gain. His whole behavior was pure and good.

Truly His was a beautiful life; a life which flowed with love for God and man; a life of purity, renunciation, unselfishness and sacrifice.

His Brief Life

He was born in the village of Bethlehem, a few miles south of Jerusalem, but grew to manhood in Nazareth, in the hills of Galilee. He was poor and labored with His own hands to earn a living. He never married. Little is known of those quiet early years, but we are told that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."⁴

At the age of 30 He left His home and became a traveling teacher in the villages, towns, and cities of His little country. It seems that He owned no property, for He said of Himself. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no place to lay His head."⁵ He rarely crossed the borders of Israel, for He knew that the purpose of His life would be fulfilled there.

In a short time He became famous throughout the land, and multitudes came to hear His words and to see the mighty works which He did.

The religious leaders of what day were not pleased. They thought they saw in Him a threat to their own position. Also they were filled with envy. So they had Him cru-

cified. Crucifixion was one of the most barbaric methods of execution ever devised. The sufferer had his feet and outstretched arms nailed to a wooden cross. The cross was then raised in the air and planted in the ground, and the one being punished died a lingering and painful death. And so the Guru died at the young age of about thirty-three.

Before He died he said He would rise from the dead, and after His death His disciples became sure that he had rise. They reported seeing Him a number of times, until, after forty days, he disappeared from their view.

Such, in brief, is His story.

He said He came down from heaven, that God had sent Him. Then what was the meaning of His short life and His death on the cross? Why did he have to die like that? Could not God who sent Him also protect Him from His enemies? What meaning does His teaching, His life and death, have for us today? Jesus Himself gave us the answers to these questions, and His are the answers we shall look at in this book.

The only record of any fullness we have of His life is found in the Bible, particularly in the four Gospels which begin the New Testament.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all lived at the same time as Jesus. Matthew and John were among His twelve closest disciples. Mark and Luke knew the disciples and had every opportunity to investigate and know the truth. They all knew the facts of Christ's life. They knew what He said and did, and they wrote it down for our understanding.

We should be very glad that we have this record. After all, we can't study the life and teaching of anyone unless we know what he did and said. And if we want to know what kind of life Jesus really lived and what He taught, the only way is to examine the history that is given to us. There are god reasons to believe that the record we have in the Gospels is reliable and gives us a true account of

His deeds and words. This, too, we shall see in due course.

So in the book we shall look at words that fell from the lips of Jesus, and those things He taught His disciples. Quotations from other parts of the Bible are also included, for Jesus taught that the whole is the World of God.

Let us now turn our attention directly to the teachings of the great guru Jesus Christ.

Note : Many quotations from the Gospels and other parts of the Bible are used throughout this book. The references are given at the end of each chapter for those who may wish to look them up.

Reference in this chapter :

- 1 John 6:38
- 2 John 7:16,17
- 3 John 8:42
- 4 Luke 2:52
- 5 Matt 8:20.