

Misunderstood

by Robertson L. Whiteside

To misunderstand a person is to fail to understand his purposes and aims. We may know exactly what he is doing, but we fail to understand his reasons for so doing. Because of this we often criticize when we should praise, and thereby cause many heartaches. Children are sometimes misunderstood, and so are parents, and such misunderstanding may cause wounds that never heal. Offense is often taken where none is intended, because we do not understand. Serious troubles have come up in churches because no honest effort was made to understand one another. When we know that our own purposes are good and true, we do not like for others to misunderstand and criticize. To put all we have and are into an unselfish effort to do good, and then to be misunderstood and criticized, and sometimes abused, by our friends and those we would help, causes indescribable sorrow to any unselfish soul.

Both enemies and friends misunderstood Jesus, and for a time even his brothers and his mother. His enemies said he was a lawbreaker and a blasphemer and possessed of a demon. His friends said that he was mentally unbalanced, crazy (Mark 3:21); and his brethren seemed to think so, too. *"For even his brethren did not believe on him"* (John 7:5). But little men cannot even understand great men; much less can the finite understand the Infinite. A few years ago a man wrote a book about Jesus, and the title of the book was *"The Man Nobody Knows."* There is more in the title of his book than even its author would recognize. *"No one knows the Son, save the Father,"* said Jesus (Matthew 11:27). Nothing less than Deity could fully understand Deity.

But these people could have known and recognized his mission and the purity of his life and motives. They, for a time at least, rejected the only key to the wonders of his life and works. They tried to account for him as a man. On these grounds no one can account for him. Had they seen in him God manifest in the flesh, all else could have been easily accounted for; for this great truth that he was the God-man is the only explanation of his marvelous life and works. The world's greatest tragedy is its failure to understand Jesus.

— *Doctrinal Discourses, pages 64-65*

Editor's Note: I would like to commend to our readers this little book entitled *"Doctrinal Discourses."* It was published by his daughter, Inys, in 1955. It is a republication of a number of his articles written for brotherhood papers. The articles are brief, to the point, and well thought out.

His commentary on Romans was the first commentary I owned on that book and deliberately so. C.R. Nichol said of this work after his death: *"His last book, a 'Commentary on the Book of Romans,' is outstanding and pronounced by many the best commentary ever written on that book. It shows scholarship, close study. One of the most delightful features of the book, in addition to teaching the truth, is that it is couched in language that the ordinary reader grasps, and at the same time appeals to the most profound scholars."*

Everything brother Whiteside has written was written in the style of scholarship easily understood. Some today think that his work on Romans is pretty light, but I would beg to differ with them. It is basic, fundamental and true. If you begin with it, then the more complicated commentaries might help you later.

It was said of him that he could get more out of a passage of Scripture and stop right there than any other man. That is a fine compliment.

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