

*The Magnificence of Jesus*



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**By**

**HARRY RIMMER, D.D., Sc.D.**

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*Volume Six*

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF JESUS:  
A TEXT-BOOK OF CHRISTOLOGY  
BY HARRY RIMMER, D.D., Sc.D.

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## FOREWORD

“THE Magnificence of Jesus” constitutes the sixth and last volume of the set of apologetics called The John Laurence Frost Memorial Library. Since the Scripture enjoins the believer in Christ to “be always ready to give to him that asketh a reason for the hope that is in your heart”; apologetics, the science of evidence, becomes of paramount importance. In an earlier day when the habit of Bible study was a common practice in the Christian community, men *were* able to give cogent and convincing reasons for their Christian faith. But in the careless surrender of our principles which marked the debacle of historic belief that was occasioned by the rise of modernism, the Bible lost its grip upon the minds of the ministry. Hence its power was not applied to the problems of living by the mass of the laity, and we naturally entered the somber and bleak stage of spiritual degeneration from which the Church is now beginning to emerge. The quickest way to destroy any edifice is to tear out its foundation. Since the Bible is the foundation of Christianity, when faith in its validity and authority was weakened, the natural result was the surrender of orthodox Christianity, and the rise of infidelity. Hence the system of teaching called modernism manifested itself as the smartest move our enemy, Satan, had ever made against the Church of Christ.

When a generation of the practice and application of modernism left the starving still hungry for spiritual bread and the thirsty still famished for living waters, the retreat from the ghastly substitute for faith and salvation set in. At once there was a search for some acceptable teaching to displace the confessed failure of the system of scholarly unbelief which left the soul lost and the heart bleak and comfortless, and the return to orthodoxy was inevitable.

Having lost their grip upon the reality and certainty of the divine Revelation which is the holy Word of God, the survivors of the tragedy of modernism demanded that we prove our premises anew before they would or could accept the authority of that Book. Thus the revival of interest in apologetics both paced and accompanied the revival of historical belief, and remains today the most important theme in our program of teaching. This series of six volumes is an attempt to condense, redact, clarify and present the reasons for the faith from which many of us never departed.

The preparation and presentation of these books has been made possible by the generous aid of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Frost, who desired to erect a continuing memorial to the son of their love, who took a short-cut and arrived Home ahead of his parents.

John Laurence Frost was born in Los Angeles, California, July 8, 1912. I first met him when he was studying at Harvard Military School, in Los Angeles, from which school he graduated in 1930. At that time I had a laboratory in connection with my home in the same city, and was doing some research in the biological sciences. Like most lads in prep school, Laurence met many theories and statements in his text-books and courses of study which shook his faith. He formed the habit of bringing these problems to me, and fortunately, I was always able to supply him with a satisfactory answer.

I was attracted to the lad because of his quick and intelligent mind, for his mentality was far above normal for his age. Our friendship deepened. Larry's faith became settled, and he became a propagandist for orthodoxy.

He would come to the laboratory and get numbers of our publications, which he distributed to interested members of his classes, and to some of his instructors as well. His testimony and earnestness made a fine impression on his fellows: for he was certain that Christianity was true, and that an answer could be found to every problem infidelity raised against the Faith.

After graduation from prep school he went to the University of Southern California, and found that his position was opposed to the trend of belief and education, as his instructors were confirmed in the destructive philosophy of organic evolution. Once again I was able to help him through to a successful philosophy, and he came to see the perfect harmony that exists between science and Scripture.

Our ways parted when Laurence went to Stanford University and I went to the state of Minnesota. In his senior year at Stanford, while accompanying his parents on a tour of Europe, Laurence was stricken with poliomyelitis, and died in Italy. His body was brought home for burial, and his sorrowing parents erected many fine and worthy monuments to his memory. These memorials were more than statuary: they were such as will live in the lives of many, for generations.

This series of apologetics is but one of those memories. The plan upon which we operate is already bearing fruit. These books are made available to all students in seminaries, without cost, and thousands have already been distributed. Any candidate for the ministry, regularly enrolled in an accredited theological seminary, receives these volumes, without cost to the recipient. They are available to the general public at a modest price: the commercial distribution being in the hands of the publishers.

Our files contain many hundreds of letters from young ministers who have been the beneficiaries of this gift, and their testimony to the worth of the memorial is unanimous. They all tell how they have been confirmed in the faith, strengthened in their own experience, and inspired to preach the Word of God and the Christ of that Word. Thus it may be said of Laurence, as was said of Abel: "By his gift, he, being dead, yet speaketh!" And his voice is heard by and through the ministry of the English speaking world for the entire coming generation.

In the original plan, the sixth volume was to have been "The Antiquity of Man." But circumstances, the passage of



time, and the weight of experience gained through the success of the earlier volumes, led us to change this plan. The successful minister is he whose ministry is Christocentric: the true Christian is he who "lifts up his eyes and sees Jesus only."

Christianity is Christ.

To know Him aright is life eternal.

There is no other name given under heaven whereby we might be saved—the sinner has the choice of Christ or nothing.

So we present to the reader a simple statement of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God has revealed Him in the pages of His Word. As you read these proofs and evidences of the deity of Jesus, may your faith be strengthened, your mind enlightened, and your spirit saved by an acceptance of Him who came that *you* might have life, abundant.



## CHAPTER I

### THE DEITY OF JESUS

ONE of the strangest and most intriguing sentences in the entire Bible is the one which commends us to "magnify" the Lord Jesus Christ. At first sight this seems to be a contradiction in terms. To magnify is to enlarge. In the pursuit of scientific knowledge we use in field and laboratory an ocular instrument called a microscope. Through the almost magical power of this amazing mechanism things which are normally invisible to the human eye are clearly seen in minute detail. It is possible by the aid of the microscope to enlarge creatures which cannot be seen by the unaided eye, to the extent of more than two thousand times their normal size. Thus we are able to study their nature, watch their processes, and derive much information concerning their cycles of life.

We seldom stop to think, however, that when we have thus magnified a protozoan to the utmost limit provided by modern optical methods, we have not changed its size one iota. The creature under observation remains its original invisible self, as the microscope leaves the specimen unchanged and unaffected in every sense. The power of the microscope affects only the observer, giving to him a wider, broader and deeper vision through which he can gain additional knowledge.

It is in exactly this same manner that we can and should magnify Jesus Christ. We certainly cannot enlarge Him, Who is the creator of the heavens and the earth. His natural magnitude is such that He fills the universe. Since it is Jesus Who upholds all things by the word of His power, there is naught that man can do to enhance His nature or increase His stature.

But if we have the proper equipment and sufficient intelligence to use the help thus provided, we can enlarge our own

understanding and broaden our own point of view. It is for this purpose that the Spirit of God has given us an amazing instrument, which we call the Bible.

When we study the man Jesus Christ, looking at Him through the lens composed of the pages of God's Book, He remains unaffected, but our vision is enlarged and we begin to see Him as He is and was.

Therefore, it shall be the purpose of this study in Christology to present to you the Christ of the Scriptures. We have no desire to attempt originality in this presentation nor to tell you any "new thing" about the Son of God. Since He was in existence with God as God before the earth was created, the ancient aphorism would apply to Him, "If it's new, it isn't true."

Nor shall we obscure the issue by presenting human theories and man-made conceptions concerning the Saviour. The magnificence of Jesus is seen only in the bright light of revelation.

For this reason, we will deal with the clear, logical and orderly sequence of revelation which the Scripture presents, concerning the Person, Origin, Nature, Incarnation, and Offices of Christ.

It may sound a little strange to the average listener when we use the phrase, "The Science of Christ." Yet this is exactly what we mean by the term "Christology." A science may be defined as "a correlated body of absolute knowledge." When we gather together all the assured and proved facts pertaining to a certain subject, we correlate and integrate these facts and name such a collection, "the science" of that subject. Therefore, a study which deals with the comprehensive and complete body of knowledge concerning Christ, would be a science of Him.

To the casual reader it may sound like a senseless repetition when in the six-fold division of this material we separate the Person, the Origin and the Nature of the man Jesus. Of no other person this earth has ever known would it be possible to differentiate between his birth and his origin, or to speculate about his nature.

But, at the very outset of our consideration of the man Jesus Christ, we face this quaint and unique anomaly. There is no mystery about *your* origin. Your life began as the natural climax of common biological procedures.

Nobody wonders about *your* nature. You are a human being with a nature such as is common to all humanity.

But the origin of Jesus Christ is not related to His birth, nor was His nature dependent upon His human ancestry. There is a sharp, clear-cut gem of startling brilliance in the single verse in the Acts of the Apostles, which states that the coming of Jesus to save the earth had been predetermined in the counsel of God before the earth was formed. If this be true, the coming of Jesus to Bethlehem of Judea, was not His *origin*, it was His *incarnation!*

The Nature of Christ is derived from His eternal being, and the ministry of Jesus is confessedly beyond the power of man's comprehension. If our Saviour had never made any other claim to deity, He still would have covered the subject conclusively when He said, "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given it to the Son to have life in Himself."

There are two kinds of life which must be recognized at the outset of this study. Creature life is always *imparted*, and is derived from vital ancestry. Hence the life of a creature leads the explorer back through an inevitable chain of biological links to the imperative necessity of a primal creation.

But the Creator life has no beginning, even as it can have no end. Hence, the life of the Creator is *inherent*. Thus Jesus claimed to have the kind of life which characterizes the Godhood, when He said, "As the Father hath life inherent, so hath He given it to the Son to have life inherent."

If we attempt a study of the Nature of Jesus, all of our thinking must be correlated to the fact of His eternal being and His identity with God. Understanding of His ministry must be rooted in the comprehension of His Person.

When we outline our material for systematic presentation, the study of the Nature of Christ and the Person of Christ are inseparable subjects and are also equally related to the fact of His origin. In like manner the Incarnation, the offices and works of Jesus are also inter-dependent, but they also rest upon the first three phases of our inquiry. He could not have become incarnate had He not been in existence. It is equally certain that the authority of His offices derives from His Person, even as His works are possible only because of His nature.

This book shall then have one purpose. It shall be a simple, brief, and condensed attempt to assemble the evidences and revelations concerning Jesus Christ, in order that we might have an adequate understanding of Him, Whom to know aright is Life Eternal.

Of course, all of these ideas and presentations are closely bound together. Though we seek to divide the components of our subject for orderly analysis into the five natural divisions, we can nevertheless express the whole idea of the nature of Jesus Christ in the one word, "Deity."

One of the basic and underlying reasons for the common lack of Scriptural understanding on the part of the average Christian is resident in our natural carelessness in the use of words. Very often many words can be used to convey the same idea, whereas one specific word carries a definite and single understanding which admits of no error in thought. It is not enough, for instance, to speak of the divinity of Jesus. The word "divinity" has many wide and proper applications. It pertains to anything that is heavenly, celestial, dedicated to religious purposes or supernatural in nature or application. Indeed, the word has come to mean far more than this. I lost all affection and respect for the word "divinity" when I was forced to partake one night of a gooey, sugary and revolting concoction called divinity fudge. The young people's party, which had been given in my honor, was composed largely of high school lassies who seemed to think that this confection was indeed divine! It was so messy it practically required a

spoon to aid in its consumption. I believe the recipe called for white of egg, sugar and nuts,—especially nuts!

When I think back on that insipid, sweet conglomeration, I can understand why the word divinity means so little in the thinking of the average person.

We can apply this common expression to Jesus and still find ourselves welcomed by those who hold the degraded views of Christ which constitute the Unitarian philosophy.

But the word deity has but one proper connotation. It pertains exclusively to the Godhead. When we say "the Deity of Jesus," we leave no doubt as to our meaning in the mind of the intelligent listener, and we have put ourselves squarely on record as accepting the conception of Christ, which is the heart of the Christian revelation. Indeed this is the essential and basic premise of Christianity.

After the fact of deity is established, an incarnation becomes more reasonable than a birth. In like manner, if the fact of deity can be demonstrated, the pre-existence of the Incarnated One cannot be questioned. Also, for a Person Who existed before His earthly incarnation, the problem of origin, unfathomable at best, must be abandoned to the obscurity of an Infinite, Eternal God. The only statement which illumines the dark problem of the origin of such a man, was uttered by John when he wrote that Jesus "was in the beginning with God, as God."

It is not an overstatement to say that our hope of redemption from sin is dependent upon the fact of the deity of Jesus. Protestant Christendom at least is united upon one basic premise; namely, no *man* can save men from sin. The forgiveness of iniquity, and salvation from the consequences of sin lie solely and exclusively within the power of God Himself. With the single exception of Jesus Christ, the earth had never known a man who was completely and utterly sinless. From the fall of Adam to the present hour, every natural human being has required and does require a saviour for himself. How then can one who needs a saviour be the Saviour of others?

All sin is an offense again God. Therefore, forgiveness lies exclusively with Him. All that man could never do in accomplishing the redemption of a lost race, lies easily within the power of God to accomplish. Therefore, we say that if Jesus Christ were only human, we are yet dead in our sins, cut off from God, without hope in this world or help in the age to come; for *no man* could be the saviour of men.

It is equally certain, however, that if Jesus Christ was God before He became man, the God who thus manifested Himself in human flesh, could be the Saviour of men. We can only trust in Christ, in confidence and security, if we know beyond question that He is the God Who is able to save. For this reason, we must maintain that the fact of deity in our Redeemer is a prerequisite to our salvation.

I do not mean to imply that you are lost if you do not possess this knowledge of the nature of Christ. *We are not saved by what we know.* Indeed, we were redeemed and regenerated by faith in Jesus before we knew much concerning the nature and ministry of His Being. It is the fact at issue and not the comprehension thereof which is vital in this respect. So I merely seek to emphasize the underlying fact of deity as the basis and foundation of salvation.

Also, the Person of Christ must be understood before we can fully comprehend His offices and His works. This is equally true of the mystery of the incarnation. It applies with the same force to the problem of the virgin birth. If the deity of Jesus is established, then the supernatural event which resulted in the Bethlehem birth becomes the only acceptable explanation for the appearance of God in human form.

To show the inter-relation of the various phases of this deep study, let us apply the law of Mendel to the birth of Jesus and illustrate the necessity of conceding His deity.

In case you have forgotten Mendel's law, may we summarize it for you in this brief citation: "Every individual is the sum total of the characteristics, recessive or dominant, in its two immediate progenitors." In plain language, Mendel's law



states that there is nothing in any individual that was not in the father or the mother of that person; and everything which was in the father and the mother, is in the offspring. Some of these characteristics inherited from our immediate parents may not be apparent and, therefore, we call them recessive characteristics. Such recessives, however, generally become dominant in the next generation, and it is quite common to note characteristics of grandparents being strongly developed in the grandchild. A certain percentage of the dominant characteristics of the parents will become recessive in their children, even as recessive characteristics, transmitted by the parents, become dominant in the following generation.

It might be humorously suggested that Mendel's law is a splendid thing for young married couples to remember. It might save some arguments in the family. When little Willie becomes very naughty and lies on the floor, kicks and hollers, "I won't," the intelligent parents will never argue concerning his resemblance to either the father or the mother. Remember that this is the grandparents coming out in Willie, and much friction might be saved in the immediate family!

It is a common practice in the study of genetics and normal biology to work out tables of probability which will accurately forecast the characteristics of future generations, if the breeding experiments are carefully controlled. Since Mendel's law states that in every individual we find all of the characteristics of the two progenitors, (which of course, go straight back to the first created pair of each species) we have an argument for the virgin birth. Apply this biological principle to your own personal thinking of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in the following syllogism:

If Jesus had a mother who was human, as was true in the case of Mary, from her He would inherit all the characteristics of humanity. If the father of Jesus was also human (whether it was Joseph or some other nameless man), from him He would also inherit human characteristics. So we work out this single equation: man plus man equals man. In this case Jesus

Christ was only human. Since man cannot save men from sin, we would then still be lost in spite of our trust in Christ.

Make the reverse application to this same problem and we are equally in darkness and doubt. If Jesus had had a mother who was deity, from her He would have inherited all the characteristics of deity. If He had a father who was God, from Him He would inherit the characteristics of the Godhead. God plus God equals God! Such a being is so utterly remote from and unapproachable by sinful man, we would have no way of access to His presence. You see, the problem of salvation is to bridge the unfathomable abyss which separates a holy God from an unclean sinner.

Still applying Mendel's law, we see how this was made possible. Let us accept for the moment the fact that the historical record is true and that Jesus Christ had a mother who was human. From her He inherited the *heritable* characteristics of humanity. If He was conceived in the womb of His virgin mother, by the direct miracle of the Holy Ghost, and God was His Father, Jesus did derive from Him the attributes of deity. Thus we write our third equation: Man plus God equals the God-man, namely, Jesus Christ, Who retained His deity while presenting Himself in the mantle of flesh. Since God can save men, Jesus Christ becomes our Saviour only if the virgin birth of the Redeemer is true.

Let us hasten to concede that the Scripture does not demand belief in the virgin birth as a prerequisite for salvation. It does, however, set forth the certainty that the *fact* of the virgin birth must be true before we can be saved. Undeniably, the church is full of ignorant Christians. In fact, when we first turned to Christ as Saviour, we were all ignorant and were moved purely by an act of faith. We can be saved without understanding the nature of the process just as babies are born knowing nothing of embryology. To illustrate this point, let us remember that when you were a baby you drank milk and ate simple foods which kept you alive in spite of your ignorance of the operation of metabolism. You did not have to

comprehend digestion and ingestion before you could derive benefit from your food. The life was in the food in spite of your ignorance of the manner in which it could become incorporated into the very substance of your body.

Let us presume that nobody could breathe without fully understanding the function of the diaphragm. In that case you would have perished within one hundred twenty seconds after your birth. For many years the breath of life has entered your lungs because the functioning of the diaphragm is a fact. It is not your knowledge of this fact, but the integrity of the fact that made your life possible.

In this exact sense, it is the fact of the deity of Jesus which is the basis of your salvation. You could be saved and remain an undeveloped babe in Christ. For you must see that salvation does not depend upon your understanding of its mysterious operation, but upon the mighty facts which constitute the source of its power.

This issue has been obscured by the deliberate attempts of false teachers seeking to distinguish between the Christ of the New Testament and what they call "The Jesus of History." Of course this is purely a gratuitous and unwarranted assumption. The Christ of the New Testament and the historical Jesus are one and the same Person. Jesus is the Christ, and there is no source of knowledge concerning Him outside of the pages of the New Testament. All historical evidence concerning the nature, work, and offices of Jesus are bound in the one volume which is the Word of God. *Hence we have no right to any conception of Jesus Christ which is contrary to the portrait of Him found in the New Testament.* No honest teacher or student can claim the right to a conclusion which is contrary to the evidence. The historical facts of the man Jesus, and the evidence which support His very existence as a person carry with them the delineation of His Nature.

Hence it is sheer folly to claim the right to depart from these acceptable, established evidences and preach a Jesus whom Paul and the other apostles never knew. The fundamental

error of this school consists of an over-exaltation of the manhood of Jesus, which completely ignores His deity. It is neither honest nor scholarly to over-emphasize one phase of any subject, while disregarding equally apparent phases of that same subject.

For instance, one of the leaders of current thought wrote a masterful book some years ago which was entitled, "The Manhood of the Master." No honest reader could find any fault with that book. Beyond question it was a good book, very credibly written. It completely covered its theme and developed its thesis in a skilled and scholarly fashion. I personally read the book a good many times with delight and benefit. This was the finest presentation of the human side of Jesus which has been produced in our century. The author made a fatal mistake, however, when he failed to write a companion book which he should have entitled, "The Deity of the Master." He quit when he had covered one-half of the theme of Jesus—Who was *both* man and God!

No informed person denies that in the days of His flesh, Jesus displayed a perfect humanity. This fact is stated in New Testament scripture and is frankly confessed by all our great creeds. It is fundamentally dishonest for any teacher to present half of the facts in his case, close the issue and come to a conclusion on the basis of insufficient evidence. The New Testament scriptures are equally adamant in their clear cut demand for acceptance of the deity of Jesus. Becoming man, He remained God: and the Christ of the New Testament, who is the Jesus of history, can only be denominated the God-man.

This dishonest clouding of the issue is the customary technique of false teachers. They seek to obscure the clear revelation of God by inventing these subtle discrepancies which exist only in their imaginings. For instance, Modernism portrays a startling contrast between the God of the Old Testament and the God who is revealed in the pages of the New Testament.

Digging into the unlimited resources of their fevered imaginations they tell us that the Old Testament Deity appears as a

harsh and repulsive God of warfare and battle. He manifests hate and brutality, even going so far as to order the extermination of helpless people like the innocent Caananites. According to this school of interpretation, those victims were murdered so that the Jews could have their land.

On the other hand, we are told by this same flighty group of pseudo-historians, that the God of the New Testament is purely and exclusively, "A God of Love." These men who deny the inspiration of the New Testament text are apparently unconscious of their quaint position when they then proceed to predicate their whole conception of God upon one verse of the Book they have previously repudiated. They seem to know and possess only one proof-text, namely, "God is love." In this subtle fashion they seek to convince us that the Old Testament records are highly unreliable and are opposed to and contradicted by the later writings of the Gospel. They assure us that the earlier portions of the Book are but the folklore and fables of a semi-barbaric people who naturally clothed their brutal conceptions of the Deity in the garments of their own base nature. So their traditions portray an Old Testament God who is a tribal deity, functioning only in the land of Palestine, and dealing exclusively with the twelve tribes of Israel. But in later years, according to this theory, as men became civilized and cultured, the idea of God underwent an advancing evolutionary process. This culminated when men grasped the fact that God is the Father of all humanity, a loving God who makes of all mankind one vast brotherhood!

Aside from the fact that this just isn't so, it is also a gross over-simplification.

The Scriptures are themselves the refutation of this false statement concerning the Hebrew conception of deity. Teachers who claim that the Old Testament teaches a God who is harsh, brutal and bloodthirsty, have evidently never read the Bible. Or if they did, they certainly missed the magnificent portrayal of the gracious, merciful and loving nature of God as His character was revealed in the tragic episode of

Sodom. Here we have the record of one of those allegedly innocent Caananite-ish people who were exterminated by the hand of divine judgment when God Himself moved against their iniquity. The destruction of Sodom came as a merited punishment for the consistent practice of sin so vile we could not portray its particulars in a book which must pass through the United States mail. Yet, in spite of the flagrant evil of the Sodomites, God was willing to spare the entire city if ten righteous persons could be found within its borders. Surely mercy and grace could be carried to no greater extreme than that! The account makes no attempt to excuse the sinners or condone their conduct. On the contrary: for the uncompromising language of the Genesis record paints the dark and somber portrait of a city and degenerates in words that are scathing and brusque. But even though the guilt is recognized and acknowledged, the God of the Old Testament reveals Himself as being so kind and forgiving that He stands ready to forgive the guilty rather than bring suffering upon the sinless.

Such false teachers evidently never read the Psalms, or if they did they missed the number of times the Psalmist speaks of God as being gracious, merciful, tender, loving, forgiving, and as manifesting "loving-kindness" toward the penitent.

Consider the outstanding instance of Psalm 78, which reviews the sad and tragic history of Israel's disobedience to God, in spite of all the mighty works which He had wrought for her redemption and deliverance. It reviews the escape from Egypt, the preservation in the years of wandering, and the bitter fact of ingratitude on the part of those who thus benefitted from God's grace. Admitting the justice that would ensue if God forsook so wicked a people, the Psalmist then bursts into an ecstasy of praise because God again forgave His People and continued to love them!

So even in this particular Psalm, which recognizes the necessity of punishment, the mercy and gentleness of God are nevertheless exalted. The key to the entire Psalm is verse 38, which states:

"But he being full of compassion forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away and did not stir up all his wrath."

This is strange language, indeed, to try to integrate into the modernistic picture of an Old Testament portrayal of God. What is unkind, vicious or repulsive about this Hebrew characterization of God? Note that He is not depicted as being *occasionally* moved to compassion. The text specifically says, "Being *full* of compassion." Recognizing the justice of God's indignation against sin, the psalmist nevertheless remembers that "*many* a time turned He His anger away." Again, confessing with humility that the people deserved rigid punishment, once more the writer reviews the history of Israel and humbly confesses that God "did not stir up all His wrath." This is certainly the zenith of loving kindness and tender mercy. It is culled almost at random from the alleged folklore and myths of the Hebrew people and goes back to a period that preceded the coming of Christ by a full thousand years of time.

This is not an isolated instance, but is a true presentation of the general picture of God as His character is presented in the Old Testament text. No higher and more gracious aspect of the love of God has ever been furnished to this sad world than the lovely drama which constitutes the Book of Hosea. This is one of the most touching and moving records of human tragedy in all living literature. The prophet Hosea tells us how God used this man's own misery and domestic unhappiness to instruct the entire nation of Israel concerning their conduct toward God. Encouraged to do so by the commandment of God, Hosea married a confessedly wicked and adulterous woman, entering into that union with the knowledge that she would not be faithful to him. Exactly as he expected, his wife heeded the call of sinful living with strange men and soon wandered off in the paths of illicit love. When her misconduct brought upon her the judgment of the law of that day and she was sold into slavery, he mortgaged his possessions

and beggared himself to buy her back. Again she left his protecting affection and strayed away with strangers. Once more he forgave and restored her to suffer the same harsh treatment, when she further sinned against his love.

Then from this experience, God illustrated His complaint against Israel. He had taken this nation to be His own peculiar people, even designated them as "the wife of Jehovah." He surrounded her with blessing and promise, with prosperity and peace. She repaid God by going off into idolatry and forsaking Him Who had redeemed her, and this she did not once, but repeatedly. The book of Hosea reaches its climax in the beautiful figures of speech which constitute the portion that might be called, "The Lamentation of God." We find this in the eleventh chapter, verses one to four. Here Jehovah says:

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love! and I was to them as they take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them."

Every parent understands the figure of speech in these touching words, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." You remember when your first child began to learn to walk. You stood it on rubbery legs that bent at the wrong time and in the strangest directions. You held your arms straight out and with a strong hand under each arm of the wobbly babe you taught him to take his first feeble steps. My, what excitement there was in the family when the wee one could toddle a dozen steps by himself without crashing in an unexpected dive! There is no intimate experience of parenthood more tenderly humorous to recall than this instance when you were teaching your baby to walk.

This, then, is the picture of God in the Old Testament; a loving, gentle, kind Father whose strong arms support the



toddling race of Israel as He seeks to teach them to stand by themselves. How in the name of honest scholarship the Modernists can claim that "the God of the Old Testament is brutal and harsh" passes the understanding of normal men.

Out of the many, many such references in Old Testament scriptures, all of which depict a God of gentle mien, the best summary is in Psalm 86:15, where the Psalmist writes of God in these words:

"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious,  
long suffering,  
and plenteous in mercy and truth."

Not even in the New Testament, with its full revelation of the love of God, can you find a stronger statement of the tender kindness of our heavenly Father than this Psalm contains. The conclusion then must be that the Modernists' picture of God in the Old Testament is unwarranted by the facts in the case, and is a deliberate attempt to replace revelation with the figments of human imagination.

The second premise of Modernism is equally untenable. The statement that the God of the New Testament is purely a God of love is not only an over-simplification but frankly ignores the evidence and the issue. Some teachers are fond of chanting poetic phrases about "gentle Jesus meek and mild," and shutting their eyes to the sterner side of His nature. Such men must have overlooked this picture of the Saviour in Revelation 19:11-16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

In these startling verses, we are given a portrait of Jesus Christ as He shall be seen when He returns to this earth to take over His dominion. There is no question but that the rider of this white horse is our Lord Jesus. He bears the names of deity, and is called by the title which John gives to Christ in the prologue to his gospel, "The Word of God." The name engraved upon His vesture is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; therefore, we are forced to the conclusion that we are dealing here with the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The fifteenth verse constitutes a complete negation of the mawkish concept of Jesus underlying Modernism. John portrays Christ as coming with the sword of His Word, where-with He shall smite the nations! Note, please, that the purpose of the Word which Christ wields upon His return is not to *convert, comfort, or console*; but to chasten! In this aspect of His work, Jesus is said to rule with a rod of iron, and He comes treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. How different is John's portrayal of the "New Testament Jesus" in this chapter of the Revelation, from the common trend of Modernistic thought!

We realize of course that the Modern teachers will at once denounce the Book of Revelation, claiming that it is made up of weird figures and may not be taken literally. They claim to draw an understanding of Christ from the Gospel record, but when we consider their teachings in the light of the four Gospels, their case is no better than it is in the Revelation. As an instance, we refer to the direct action taken by our Lord when He cleansed the temple with whip in hand. It

has been suggested by men who seek to twist the evidence to fit their fancy, that it was not a real whip which our Lord used. This school of interpretation claims that it was merely a symbol of authority. Analysis of the record, however, will not bear out this position.

The godless wretches whom Jesus assailed were degenerate Jews of the lowest type. Their stock in trade consisted of cash. When such men fled in haste and terror, leaving their physical assets behind them, they were pursued by something more than a symbol of authority. What authority would these men recognize in a humble, unknown, peasant from Galilee? And had they indeed recognized His right to cancel their concession as money changers in the temple, they would have taken time at least to have packed up their belongings and secured their wealth. But when the lash fell upon them, wielded by the arm made strong by the labors of His carpenter shop, they waited for no ceremony or preparation but fled in haste and fear. I do not imply that Jesus was a brawler, but I do deny that He was the kind of milk-sop that Modernism has painted Him.

The Modern theory collapses completely in the light of the teachings of Jesus. In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, we have a series of parables which portray our Saviour's idea of the coming kingdom. In the parable of the wheat and the tares He portrayed an enemy who scattered the seed of a harmful weed, after the good seed had been planted. When His disciples asked Him to explain to them the meaning of these figures of speech, He said:

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seeds are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

How can any honest reader escape the significance of those words? Jesus clearly taught that this gospel age is to end in a harvest conducted by angels. All those who have wrought iniquity and have rejected the offer of mercy and grace shall be sternly dealt with and consigned to that place of punishment which is figuratively called "a furnace of fire." Whatever may be implied in this illustration, the fact stands clear that *the Son of Man shall Himself superintend the meting out of due and just punishment to the wicked.*

Our Saviour *was* gentle, and meek, and mild in the days of His flesh where and when His purposes were served by the exercise of mercy and love. But when the issue demanded, He could be stern and severe in His character as judge. How then can we reconcile these glaring discrepancies between the theories of Modernistic interpretation and the clear statements of the Word of God? Frankly and simply, they cannot be reconciled.

A complete picture of God and comprehensive understanding of His dealings with man can nevertheless be derived from the statement of Holy Writ which says that God, "is the same yesterday, today and forever."

Whether He deals with men under Old Testament laws, under the grace of the gospel offer, or reigning in the Kingdom age,—under any and all circumstances, God never changes!

He is always merciful and kind where He *can* be.

He is stern and just where He *must* be.

The reason for this will become apparent when we survey the attributes of God in a later chapter in this book. At this

point, we need merely to emphasize the fact that though Jesus Christ is God, changeless in nature, *conditions may cause His manifestations to assume various aspects.*

Again reminding the reader that we are not entitled to any conception of Christ which differs from the revelation of Him made in the Scriptures, we dare repeat that phrase, "Jesus Christ is God." All Bible students should be, and generally are, familiar with the epistle of Paul to Titus. Six times in this short epistle we meet the heartening and blessed phrase, "Our Saviour." The first time is in 1:3 where the apostle says--

"But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

The second occurrence is in the fourth verse:

"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."

In verse three it is God who is our Saviour, but in verse four God is called the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

We find this same phrase in 2:10,

"—, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Its next appearance is 2:13,

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

So, one verse says that God is our Saviour and the next one says that Jesus, when He comes again, will be manifested as both God and Saviour.

Later, in the third chapter, we find this same contrast and connection. Verse four reads:

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared;"

and the sixth verse reads,

"Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Simply then, we read these things together. The Holy Spirit uses the phrase "Our Saviour" six times in these three short chapters. Three times, it is God Who is the Saviour and three times it is Jesus Christ. The apparent contradiction is harmonized in the one statement that Jesus Christ is both God and Saviour. Hence, we are justified in using the term deity in connection with One Who merges His identity with the identity of God for the salvation of men. For if Jesus Christ is the Saviour of men, His saving power must derive from His own Godhead. It is only logical to speak of Jesus as God our Saviour, for none but God could save men.

In any case, this is the most important subject with which the intellect of man can deal. Any text that deals with Christology can only be valuable if it helps the reader to summarize and comprehend the evidences that are intended to convince the Christian of the deity of Christ, thus establishing the grounds of their salvation. It is one thing, however, to state a fact and quite another to prove it with irrefutable evidence.

We repeat for the sake of emphasis, that our only source of knowledge in the study of Christology consists of the historical records which men call the Bible. But when we refer to them and accept them in their entirety, we find no difficulty in proving the Godhood of the man Jesus and thus assuring the certainty of salvation for those who trust in Him.

So, from this point we will proceed to present to you in a concise and simple form those evidences and facts as they are set forth in the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER II

### JEHOVAH-JESUS

**T**HE primary revelation of God is shrouded in such mystery that the human mind is bewildered and baffled in its attempt to understand Him. For instance, it is clearly revealed in scripture that God is one Being constituted by three Persons. We give to this complex person the name "Trinity" and make our prayers to the God Who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It would be folly to seek to explain this startling revelation to the sin-darkened mind of natural man. We can only say that we believe it because we do not comprehend it. By that we mean that the mind of man can embrace any subject which *originates* in minds of men. No man can conceive a scheme of thought so complex that no other human mind can grasp it. It has been said for instance, that the theory of relativity propounded by Professor Einstein is so incomprehensible, that only twelve other men in the universe have mastered it. (I am not sure that there *are* twelve, as I have never met the other eleven!) It is inevitable, however, that there must be *some* who do comprehend this theory. The doctrine of the Trinity, on the other hand, bewilders the most astute and is frankly beyond the comprehension of the most learned. Therefore, we say if this theory cannot be *comprehended* by man, it could not be invented by human processes. This inscrutable mystery of the Godhead must be a revelation from a Being whose nature is infinitely higher than ours, and whose understanding surpasses our highest possible mental spheres. We must have something to worship which is infinitely greater than we. Hence our natural reason leads us to accept with gratitude and by faith that which we cannot receive through sheer understanding.

God, Who is the Trinity, has revealed Himself to men by many means. The reason for this becomes apparent when we remember the darkness of man and the infinite brightness of God. There must be a *progressive* revelation of God to man because of man's natural limitations. As an illustration, let us presume that some professor of mathematics left the State University to teach geometry to boys and girls in the kindergarten. His progress would be utterly nil. This failure would not be due to the lack of understanding of the teacher, for we may concede that he is a master of this subject. But the immature minds of babes are not capable of dealing with higher mathematics. Mathematics depends upon a progressive education. Children must learn to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. They go from the study of the multiplication tables to fractions and decimals, and over a span of years, as their understanding is enlarged their ability to deal with the science of figures develops to the point where calculus becomes easy.

In exactly that same manner, God finds it necessary to deal with humanity. It is for this reason that in earlier ages God revealed Himself in different portions and by many means to the fathers. The Old Testament is a record of that progressive revelation.

Some years ago I saw a skilled surgeon perform an operation on eyes which had been blinded for many years. I watched with delight and admiration as this master of surgery exercised his amazing technique of surgical healing. When the operation was finished they covered the eyes of the patient with several layers of gauze and varying thicknesses of bandages. Over the entire dressing, they bound a black cloth before the attendant wheeled the man away.

I asked the doctor, "Will the operation be successful?"

He replied, "It is successful now."

Greatly interested, I persisted, "Will the man be able to see?"

With equal emphasis, "The man can see now!"



Although I was pretty sure I knew the reason, I nevertheless asked the doctor, "Then why did you cover the man's eyes with so many bandages?"

While divesting himself of his robe, the doctor took time to say, "If I let that man see now, *he will never see again!* I have restored *sight* to those eyes, but they will have to learn to bear the *light*. He will lie for some time in a darkened room, having the bandages removed one after another at long intervals of time. After some days, the hour will come when, with all shades drawn, he will open his eyes and see things in the subdued light of that darkened room. Twenty-four hours later we will increase the light, gradually, until at last he can walk out in the full light of the day. If the strength of full daylight, however, reached his eyes without preparation, he would be instantly blinded anew and no power on earth could ever again make him see!"

This is an exact picture of God's dealing with man. If the full holiness and splendor of God were suddenly revealed to sinful creatures, they would be blinded by His glory beyond hope of recovery. God has led the race step by step through a long series of revelations concerning Himself. This progressive revelation was made necessary by the very weakness of sinful nature. But it must be emphasized that in every age, God was not willing that any should perish, and has made a revelation of Himself that is sufficient to lead men in that age to a saving relation to Him.

This long series in the chain of revelation climaxed in the person Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour is God's last word to man!

The Spirit of inspiration is not abroad in the earth today as it was in Bible times, simply because *God has no more to say*.

The revelation which began in the prophets of old and continued through the New Testament apostles is a complete, comprehensive and satisfactory presentation of the God who is Creator and Saviour.

Thus, if we reject Jesus Christ, God has no other means of reaching man, *for Christ is the God whom we thus reject.*

Because of the nature of God (which is enshrined in holiness) there has always been the need of a mediator between God and man. We read in I Timothy 2:5—

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus.”

It may be added, after a complete search of the Scriptures, that there has always been this one mediator between God and man. He appears in revelation under different names, all of which, however, apply to the same Person.

Among the sacred names of God as He revealed Himself to the Hebrews in Old Testament times, is one hallowed name, the exact form of which is lost to our modern age. The American Revised Version seeks to recapture this name under the form “Jehovah.” Other scholars say it should be “Yah” or “Yawah.” This is a question of small moment, and one that it is impossible to settle, because of the dramatic disappearance of that word from written records. The loss of the exact form came about in this fashion: The name (which we will call Jehovah) occurs in the Old Testament text something over seven thousand times. It was held in such reverence and awe, men never spoke it in audible tones. When the priest was reading the law and came to this sacred name of God, he shut his eyes, bowed, crossed his hands on his breast, and worshipped. The congregation, knowing that he was thinking the name of God, bowed with him and joined in that homage.

When a scribe was copying the law, the ceremonial admiration of that name was so great, he always used a new pen to write the holy appellation when he met it in the text. In the course of time, it became agreed that since the name was never spoken they would leave a blank in the record, and copies thus were made in this fashion. When the reader came to this blank, he knew that the name of God was intended, and he paused and worshipped at the thought of that name. Thus, after generations and centuries of this practice, the name be-

came lost. For the sake of convenience, we will use the English form "Jehovah" and simply state that it was the holiest word for absolute deity in the Hebrew text, and that *it always means the Person of Jesus Christ!*

This subject is too important to pass over quickly. What we are saying now is that Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, is the same Person as Jesus, the Saviour of New Testament records.

Every time the person of Jehovah occurs in the Old Testament, it is in connection with God's dealings with men. When questions of mercy and grace are implied, the Person of the Trinity who functions in that crisis is always the Jehovah Person.

The name first occurs in the second chapter of Genesis, in connection with the finishing of the planet earth for the coming of men. Thus Jehovah is the God Who is Providence.

The next occurrence is related to the specific creation of man, as the story is recapitulated in Genesis 2:7.

From this point onward, in Holy Writ, all of God's dealings with men in connection with the outpouring of His kindness and love come through Jehovah.

The third chapter of Genesis contains the first announcement of a coming redeemer. It was Jehovah Who said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

In the fourth chapter of Genesis, the God Who accepted Abel because he came by means of the shed blood of the lamb, was named Jehovah.

In the sixth chapter of Genesis, when God made provision for the salvation of the believing remnant from the judgment of the flood, it was Jehovah Who gave to Noah the pattern of the ark.

On the eve of the departure of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, it was again Jehovah Who demanded the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, and who commanded the application of its blood on the lintels and the doorposts.

When the law was given from the slopes of Sinai, it was Jehovah Who gave this code to men, outlining their whole duty to God in that age.

It would be impossible to thus present in one chapter the many thousands of occurrences of this name in the record of God's dealings with men. We merely cite again the text previously quoted, "There is one mediator between God and men." Since God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His Person is unchanging *regardless of the name He bears*, Jesus was Jehovah and Jehovah is Jesus. This alone would be sufficient proof to establish the deity of our Saviour.

When we thus state that Jesus is Jehovah, we must expect to present proof for this startling and significant statement. Such proofs are easy to produce. In fact they constitute one of the most entrancing series of studies to be found in the Bible.

We may begin such a study by noting how the New Testament apostles who knew the Lord Jesus Christ, applied the Jehovah texts of the Old Testament to His Person and works. The significance of this is seen when we remember that the apostles were godly Jews. The name of God was sacred to them, and they would never have been guilty of such blasphemy as applying the divine name to one who was purely human. Take your Bible and note how frequently the apostles cited the Old Testament passages describing Jehovah and applied them to the Person of Jesus.

The first text that we note is Isaiah 40:3:

"The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God."

The reader will note that the prophecy states that the God whose name is Jehovah is expected to visit the earth, and that He will be preceded by a forerunner. Now read what the apostle Matthew says in Matthew 3:3:

"For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight."

Matthew thus states that the coming of John the Baptist as forerunner of Jesus was the final fulfillment of this prophecy of Isaiah. Therefore Jesus is the God whose name was Jehovah and of whom Isaiah was speaking.

A similar prophecy is made in Malachi 3:1:

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and Jehovah, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts.”

This prophet also states that the God whose name is Jehovah is coming to the earth. According to this prophecy, Jehovah shall appear in His temple bringing a new covenant; and His coming shall be heralded by a forerunner.

Now read Mark 1:2:

“Even as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way.”

There is no escaping the conclusion that Mark believed that the prophecy of Malachi was fulfilled in its entirety. This New Testament writer acknowledges John to be the promised forerunner, and Jesus is accepted by him as the God Jehovah.

It is not too much to say that this is the common and consistent practice of New Testament writers.

Note the clear statement of Isaiah 44:6:

“Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.”

In these tremendous and impressive words, the Lord God describes Himself as the Redeemer whose name is “Jehovah of Hosts.” He claims eternal existence for Himself in the phrase, “I am the first and I am the last,” and declares that He is the only God in existence. Now consider the amazing audacity of John the Apostle, who knew Jesus perhaps better than any other man that ever walked the earth. In the Book of the Revelation, in chapter one, verse seventeen, and chapter twenty-two, verse thirteen, John describes Jesus in these words:

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last . . . I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

It is impossible to escape the significance of this statement of John. He applies to Jesus the Old Testament description of the one great God. He makes Him to be first and last, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.

This certainly was the view held by Paul the Apostle. Note this clear prophecy of Jeremiah 23:6:

"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness."

When the Saviour of Israel comes He shall bear the designated name of "Jehovah our Righteousness." With this thought in mind, open your Bible to I Corinthians 1:30 and there you will read:

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

Thus Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, ascribed to the man Jesus the attribute of righteousness which is one of the names of Jehovah. Jeremiah the prophet salutes God in this characteristic name "Jehovah our Righteousness." Paul the Apostle addresses the Saviour in these familiar terms "Jesus Christ our Righteousness."

It would profit the reader to make an exhaustive study of this common procedure of the apostle, but we can take time to present but one more. The twenty-fourth Psalm is the Psalm of the uplifted gates, and of the coming in of the Lord of glory. Verse ten of this Psalm reads:

"Who is this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory."

In the second chapter of I Corinthians, Paul the Apostle sets forth the hidden mysteries of the Gospel, admitting the

impossibility of making it clear to the sin-darkened intellects of lost men. So when he speaks of the crucifixion of the Saviour in the eighth verse, he says,

“Which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Thus the conclusion of Paul the Apostle is that the God of Psalm 24:10 is the Redeemer who triumphed through Calvary's dark and tragic suffering. To this agrees the Apostle James who says in James 2:1:

“My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.”

These brief references must suffice to suggest the significant fact that the apostles did use the Jehovah texts of the Old Testament ascribing them to the Jesus whom they knew.

Even more important is the manner in which the apostles applied the Jehovah name to the living Christ. In their writings, the apostles used the name of God frequently, and often ascribed it to the Person of Jesus. One instance will suggest itself immediately to the Bible student's mind. In the twentieth chapter of John, there is a record of strange things that occurred after the resurrection of the Saviour. John tells us that upon the day of the resurrection, the disciples were gathered together for evening worship in a room which had been made secure against intrusion. Jesus appeared in their midst, and convinced them of His resurrection from the dead. One man, however, was absent from the company and did not see the Saviour at that time. This man, whose name was Thomas, refused to accept the testimony of the disciples, and said that he would not believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead until he could see with his eyes and feel with his fingers the wounds that he had seen made.

For this reason, history has named him “Doubting Thomas.” This is manifestly unfair, as Thomas was not so much a *doubter* as an *investigator*. He should be called “Scientific

Thomas!" He was the kind of man who wanted physical evidence and who insisted on making personal investigations before he accepted any fact that was outside the sphere of normal conduct. I am rather glad that Thomas is in the record. It has been charged that the disciples were hysterical, suffering hallucinations, had neurotic visions, and that Jesus was not really raised from the dead. The calm and skeptical demands of Thomas certainly set him far beyond the circle of hysteria!

The attitude of Thomas was very natural. He had helped take a dead body down from its place of execution. With his own hands he had handled a corpse, and had helped prepare it for burial. He was with that company which carried this dead body to the place of entombment and laid it away from the light of day. Quite naturally he wanted *proof* before he would believe that that body was again alive! Skepticism may challenge the testimony of other witnesses to the resurrection, but the cool analytical procedure of Thomas, the scientific investigator, stands as the unanswerable testimony to the fact that Jesus did rise from the grave.

Eight days later, when the disciples were again gathered together, and Thomas was with the company, Jesus appeared to them with a personal message for the stubborn fellow. He challenged the apostle with these words:

"Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

When Thomas *saw* Christ alive after His burial, he could no longer deny the evidence of his own senses. He cast himself down before the Saviour and saluted Him with these words, "*My Lord and my God.*" Such language cannot be misunderstood. It is comprehensive, clear, and final. The name of God *was* ascribed to Jesus by those who knew Him when He walked the earth.

The apostles had the finest authority for so doing, for Jesus Himself assumed the name of Jehovah! In His teachings to



His disciples and in many of His controversies with His enemies, He frequently called Himself by the name of God. One outstanding case of our Lord's use of the divine name is introduced in the great controversy recorded in the eighth chapter of John. Let us refresh the reader's mind by recalling to him that the subject of the disputation was the origin and nature of the Saviour. His enemies were sneering at His claims to preexistence, and were accusing Him of blasphemy, because He identified himself with the Person of God. When He continued to refer to God as His Father, they took refuge in the fact that they were children of Abraham, and were thus the heirs of all the covenants and promises that God had made with the patriarch. Jesus quietly replied that Abraham, their father, had rejoiced to see Christ's day, and was glad because of the promise of His appearing.

With deepening anger, the Jews demanded to know how a man not yet fifty years old could have known Abraham and the prophets, and brought the argument to a conclusion by demanding, "Whom makest thou thyself to be?"

Their indignation burst its bounds when Jesus calmly replied, "Before Abraham was, I AM."

So they took up stones wherewith to slay Him. According to their law, they were justified in so doing, for God had commanded that blasphemy against the sacred name should be punished by death.

Perhaps the startling nature of this episode is not clear to the modern reader, but to the Jews, whose minds were steeped in the Mosaic writings, His meaning could not be made clearer. To shed light upon the amazing audacity of His utterances, we should revert to the third chapter of Exodus. There we are told that as Moses was tending his sheep on the plains of Midian, his attention was attracted to a bush which spontaneously burst into flame. His curiosity was further excited by the fact that the bush was not consumed in this mysterious fire, but the longer it burned, the brighter the fire became. Drawing near to examine this phenomenon, Moses

was greeted by the voice of God, offering him a commission to lead the children of Israel out of bondage into the freedom of the promised land. In the course of the conversation there recorded, Moses asked a natural question. It must be remembered that the Jews had been in bondage for many, many generations and had absorbed the philosophy and religion of Egypt. The Egyptians were the most pantheistic and polytheistic race of antiquity. We have their records containing the names of more than twenty-two hundred different gods and goddesses whom they worshipped. In their years of slavery, the people of Israel had accepted the Egyptian pantheon, and had forgotten the name of the God of Abraham. Therefore, when Jehovah spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and told him to tell the children of Israel that "God" had sent him, Moses, to be their redeemer, the leader asked a natural question. He said, "*Which God shall I tell them sent me? When I go to the children of Israel and say, 'God hath sent me,' they will say, 'What God?' What is Thy name?*"

To this query God replied, "My name is I AM."

So when the Jews asked Jesus, "Who do you make yourself to be?" and He named Himself as the "I AM," *they understood Him to be claiming identity with the God Who spoke to Moses from the burning bush!* In their eyes this was the ultimate blasphemy, and they were justified in their attempt to execute the offender, unless, of course, He was speaking the truth.

Why should not the apostles, who knew the Saviour, apply the name of Jehovah to Him when He claimed the name for Himself?

To make the case even stronger, a casual survey of the New Testament is sufficient to show how Jesus assumed to Himself the attributes and authorities of Jehovah. All we can know of the attributes of God, we learn from the pages of His revelation. There is no other source of information concerning the character and nature of the Infinite God except a self-revelation. Let us compare a few statements of Holy Writ concerning God's attributes and authority with Christ's as-

sumption of these same qualities in the days of His flesh. Read first of all Isaiah 43:11:

"I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no Saviour."

These words from God to Isaiah permit of no misunderstanding, and are not subject to the vagaries of individual interpretation. The God Who is Jehovah says in plain words, "Beside Me there is no Saviour." Now read Luke 19:10 and John 10:9:

"For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost . . . I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture."

In words that a child can understand, Jesus said He came to be the Saviour of men. In others words, *He came to accomplish the task that is peculiar to Jehovah*. When He offers Himself as Saviour, He puts Himself in the place of the Almighty Who has previously established the fact that He alone can be the Saviour of the lost of Adam's seed.

From your earliest childhood you have been accustomed to repeating the beautiful melodies of the twenty-third Psalm. We recall to your minds its opening verse:

"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want."

In this figure of speech, the heavenly Father portrays Himself as the Guide, Protector, Defender, and Provider for those who are His flock. To the Christian mind that lovely phrase "Jehovah is my shepherd" speaks volumes of meaning.

How startling it must have been to the people of Palestine when they heard the words of Christ as recorded in John 10:11,

"I am *that good shepherd*; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

This was an astonishing assertion that Jesus made, when He laid claim to the possession of one of the chief offices and attributes of Jehovah. Unless Christ is to be judged guilty of blasphemy, it must be conceded that He identified Himself with the Person of God in such instances as these.

For another such episode, read Deuteronomy 30:20:

"To love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Two things are said of God in this short passage: first, He is our life, secondly, He is the length of our days.

Of the man Jesus, the Apostle John said in John 1:4:

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

John's authority for this statement derived from the very words of Jesus Who said: (John 5:26)

"For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself."

The significance of this strange claim is perhaps better appreciated in our generation than it was in that ancient day when it was uttered. For the sake of emphasis, we repeat here that our modern researches have taught us that there are but two kinds of life. These we may define as Creator life and creature life. The life of a creature is always imparted. There is no living thing without vital ancestry. As far back as the record of life can be traced, nothing has ever been born that did not come from parent, or seed, or spore. But the life of the Creator can best be defined by the word "inherent." Indeed, this is the exact sense of what Jesus said in these words: "As the Father hath life in himself." A life that is self-existent, not derived from any other source, and eternal, can be ascribed to the Godhead alone. Therefore, it is highly significant that Jesus said He had that same sort of life in Himself. It was the life which was in existence from the beginning of eternity, which actuated the physical body of the Saviour when He walked the earth in the form of a man! No thoughtful student can read these things and fail to understand their import.

One of the most delightful prose poems ever put into human speech is the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah. Out of this incomparable song, we lift this passage, citing verses 15-20:

“Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I Jehovah am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

Go back and read those words again. See the amazing claims, which Jehovah makes for Himself. He is here portrayed as Saviour, Redeemer, Mighty One, and the Light of men. Jehovah states that there will come a time when sun, moon, and stars will be needless, because all men shall walk in the light of His person and being. Was it blasphemy when John the Apostle wrote these words? (John 1:4-9)

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

No, John could not have been guilty of blasphemy, for he had the authority of Christ Himself to ascribe these divine

attributes to his Saviour. It will be remembered that Jesus had said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We cannot blame John for his complete faith in the integrity of Christ's claim, nor can we oppose this statement of John with the theories and opinions of any modern commentator or scholar. The first requisite of a credible witness is that he be present to observe the fact to which he later testifies. All of the New Testament writers ascribe deity to the man Whom they knew. No critic, born nineteen hundred centuries too late to know what he is talking about, has the authority to question the record left by eye-witnesses of these stupendous historical events. The authority of the apostles is supreme when they give evidence concerning the nature of the Christ whom they knew and served. If they assert His deity, their *testimony is final*.

Certainly we cannot question the deity of Jesus without impugning His veracity. The calm manner in which He took to Himself all of the prerogatives of God, attests the truth of His claims. In the twentieth chapter of Exodus, we have the record of a law given to the new nation of Israel by Jehovah, which was that of Legislator. The giving of the law began in these words:

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

With this startling introduction, God addressed certain words to the Hebrew people which were to be changeless and operative as long as they remained the people of God. There was no judge or king who had power to change one word of the law which God Himself had given. Now, note these strange words as recorded in Matthew 5:21, 22, 31, 32:

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment;

and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire . . . It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."

Here is a suggestive situation. In the days of His ministry, Jesus Christ never deviated from a high fidelity and complete obedience to the law as given at Sinai. It can be truthfully said that He, of all humanity, was the only person who ever thoroughly and completely kept that law without a single violation. Indeed, His own statement was that He had come "to fulfill that law." Yet in this Sermon on the Mount, in the section which you have just read, He had the audacity to change the divine law by adding to its demands and its penalties!

His authority for so doing can derive from only one source. In our modern day, we recognize the right of any legislature or legislator to rescind or amend any law which had been previously enacted by the same authority. The Congress of the United States has no power to enact a statute which a future Congress may not cancel or change. Following this principle, we concede the certainty that if God gave the law on Mount Sinai, He had the authority to amend that law on the Mount where the sermon of Jesus was proclaimed. Thus in this instance, at least, our Saviour took to Himself the divine authority of the great Law-Giver. He thus exercised the right of Jehovah to deal as He saw fit with the law which He had previously given to His people.

This mental attitude of Christ toward the law was often reflected in His life and ministry. No portion of the law committed to Moses was ever enforced more strictly, or its violation punished more surely, than the paragraph which dealt with the sanctity of the Sabbath day. The stern requirement of God is summarized in Exodus 20:10, 11:

"But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

This is a clear statement of the reason and purpose behind the establishment of this day of rest and worship. Definitely and with finality God said "It is the sabbath of Jehovah thy God." That is to say, this day belonged to Him exclusively. With what amazement did the Jews hear the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 12:10:

"For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day!"

In that astounding sentence, Jesus claimed to be the Master and Sovereign of the day that belongs exclusively to Jehovah.

It would be hard to find an enlightened theologian who would deny the fact that only God has the power to forgive sins. Certainly the people of Israel conceded this fact, for they remembered such scriptures as Psalm 103:1-3 and Psalm 130:3, 4:

"Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; . . . If thou, Jehovah, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

We cannot gainsay these words. There is forgiveness with God and only from Him can grace and pardon flow. Even we Gentiles can sympathize with the astonishment of the people of Israel when they witnessed the episodes recorded in the ninth chapter of Matthew. How their hearts must have hammered in their breasts when they heard Jesus say to the man who was bedridden with palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; *thy sins are forgiven!*" In high indignation the Scribes said each to the other, "This man blasphemeth." They were justified in this accusation, unless this man was God! Perhaps no single



incident in the life of Christ more thoroughly manifested His personal assurance of His own deity than this simple, quiet, sincere statement: "I forgive your sins."

To summarize the subject briefly and to give in concise form the strongest evidence of the deity of Jesus that the natural mind can receive, we present the Gospel narrative which tells how Jesus intruded into the very holy of holies when He set Himself up as an object of human worship. This is a point which is frequently ignored but the historical record cannot be disputed: *Jesus accepted the worship of man in the days of His flesh.*

The people of Israel understood that the ultimate sin was idolatry. They often disobeyed but never forgot the high demand of their law that they should exalt Jehovah as God and worship at His footstool, for He alone was holy. Indeed, Jesus recognized this principle. In the fourth chapter of Luke, we read the account of His contest with Satan in the wilderness. When the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth, and promised Him sovereignty over them in exchange for His worship, Jesus answered and said, "It is written 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

In the light of this, it is difficult to understand His complacency in the episode recorded in Matthew 28:9, where we read,

"And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him!"

It has been argued that it may have been proper for the apostles to worship Christ on that occasion because He had been raised from the dead and the situation was entirely changed. But if we read with care, we see that Jesus received the worship of men throughout His earthly ministry. This He did before Calvary, and on one occasion, He even went out of His way to invite that worship. This instance is presented in the ninth chapter of John.

You will remember that the account begins with a story of a blind man, one whose eyes had never seen the light of day.

The apostles raised a question concerning the cause of this blindness, conceding that it was the effect of sin. Jesus corrected their harsh and erroneous judgment, explaining that the man had been born that way in order that he might become a testimony to the mighty works of God which should be wrought through him. Whereupon the Saviour made clay, anointed the eyes of the blind man and ordered him to wash in the pool of Siloam. When the man obeyed this strange command, his eyes were opened and perfect sight was given to him.

Naturally the man who had been healed went about testifying to the mighty power of the man Who had given him vision, and he sang His praises with fervent delight. He was giving his testimony in the temple, and this greatly distressed the Pharisees who hated Jesus. These subtle debaters sought to entangle this simple fellow in a theological controversy concerning the nature of Christ. They climaxed their argument with the statement: "Give God the praise; we know that this man Jesus is a sinner." The man whose sight had been restored didn't know enough theology to argue; so like a sensible fellow he contented himself by giving his testimony.

Incidentally, this is the one argument that the enemy cannot answer. This is the one proof of the power of Jesus to which the unbeliever cannot reply. When the Pharisees made their charge against Jesus, (which, by the way, they were unable to sustain in open court when they had Him on trial) the healed man was out of his element. But he quickly recovered the mastery of the situation with these words, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I cannot say. One thing I *know*: that whereas I was blind, now I can see!"

This is the unanswerable argument. The redeemed of the Lord should never cease to say so, for the testimony of an accomplished fact is the finest evidence we can present. The Pharisees were unable to reply to evidence in the living form of a man who had been benefited by Jesus. Therefore they excommunicated him and cast him out of the temple, hoping to silence his lips.

In our day, of course, this would not matter. On more than one occasion I personally have been threatened with denominational discipline and excommunication by the unauthorized bishops who seek dominion in ecclesiastical spheres. Such threats have never affected my conduct in any way. For if one pulpit should be closed to me, ten thousand more are waiting! I began my ministry preaching on the streets, and wherever two thoroughfares cross, leaving room for a soapbox, a pulpit awaits me. If I desire so to do, I can worship, preach, and praise God there on the pavements. Through Jesus Christ we can call upon God wherever and whenever the need or the fancy strikes us.

It was not so, however, before Calvary. To the Jew, the temple was the means of access to God. Therefore, when they cast out the blind man from that temple, they cut him off from the worship of Jehovah. The poor fellow went out, bewildered and amazed at the harshness of the treatment accorded him by ecclesiastical leaders. He wondered what he would do with no means of approach to God. Jesus, knowing what had happened to His witness, sought him out.

When He found him, He said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man who had been blind and whose sight had been restored inquired, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Jesus, Who knew all that was in the heart of man, undoubtedly noticed the emphasis on the word "Lord" in the man's reply, and said to him, "Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee."

Whereupon the delighted fellow cast himself down before Christ and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, I believe." This kindly act of Jesus in this episode demonstrated His full consciousness of His own nature. In effect He is saying to the excommunicated man, "If they will not let you worship God in the temple, worship Him in Me here on this city pavement."

In all of this, Jesus was probably anticipating the future events portrayed in chapters five and seven in the Book of

Revelation. There the Spirit of God showed to the Apostle John a preview of a coming day when multitudes of people, out of every nation, and tribe, and tongue that this world has ever known, shall bow before the throne of the Lamb of God and worship Him. This homage is offered because of a salvation which He bought for them with the shedding of His own blood.

So the Saviour, in the days of His flesh, brought comfort and hope to one humble believer, by allowing him the holy privilege of being one of the first of that eternal company who shall worship Him.

The conclusion of all this mounting mass of evidence is inescapable. The man Jesus Christ, whose Person graces the pages of the New Testament, *was the God Jehovah whose mighty works are written in the earlier portion of the Bible.* Well may we join in the coronation hymn, happy to unite with the angels who fall prostrate at the name of Jesus. He is the only God we can know here and the object of our worship both now and hereafter. The deity of Jesus cannot be disputed by those who accept this clear Biblical statement, namely, Jesus was Jehovah!

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS

**T**HE problem of the origin of God is shrouded in mystery so deep and impenetrable that the mind of man staggers in its very approach to the bewildering subject. The flippant and smart-aleck attitude of modern infidelity never deviates from its established pattern in sneering at this great problem. The common approach to this question is generally stated in words like this: "If God created everything in the beginning, *who created God?*" Of course no man of intelligence would raise such a question, and the wise believer will waste neither breath nor time answering such a palpable quibble. When confronted by this blatant query, you need only answer: "My friend, I will tell you who made God on condition that you will promise not to ask who made *that* fellow! For if I tell you who made the fellow who made God, you will want to know who made him, and we will find ourselves on a mental merry-go-round with no place to get off. We have to postulate something as a point of beginning. *You* evade the issue by erecting a nebulous figment of mental imagining which you call 'nature.' Suppose I should ask you in your own exact words "if nature produced this universe, who made nature?" and we would be entangled in a verbal bout that would not lead to any finality. Since I have to start with *something* that will satisfactorily account for the intelligence manifested in the physical creation, I accept the clear revelation of a God Who is a Person, Who is self-existent and eternal, and Who, hence, had no beginning." There is no legal reason which compels *us* to answer the infidel concerning problems concerning which *he* cannot answer us!

This whole mystery of the person of God and the impossibility of the human mind comprehending Him or His nature, reminds me of an episode which occurred in my ministry almost thirty years ago. I had been engaged by the Zyante Indian Commission to make a survey of the Indian tribes in the northern California mountains, for the purpose of finding a strategic location for the establishment of a mission among them. Among my instructions, I was directed to seek for an Indian of sufficient interest and intelligence who could be trained into a leader for his people. A long way back in the woods I found a man whom I thought would fill these requirements. His name was Will Snow, and he was a forty-year-old babe. That is to say, he had never been out of the mountains where he had been born. He had never seen an electric light, any kind of a power craft, a railroad, or an elevator. The common things of urban life were undreamed of in his simple manner of living.

With the consent of the Commission, I took him down to the city of San Francisco, where I kept him for ten days or two weeks. During that time I made him acquainted with the alleged wonders of so-called civilization. I could fill a volume with the humorous record of that strange trip, but the one thing that I remember most vividly was his experience with the ocean. The largest body of water which this Indian had ever seen was Clear Lake. His people journeyed down to the shores of that lake every year when the blackfish were running, to lay in stores of smoked and dried meat for their winter supply.

When we had been in San Francisco two days, I took him out to Cliff House and let him stand on a site overlooking the Golden Gate. He watched the ocean vessels coming and going and stared away to the far horizon under which the Pacific Ocean disappeared. We walked down a trail to the beach and strolled toward the San Mateo line. As we were walking side by side this bewildered Indian turned to me and asked, "How big is this lake, and what is its name?"

I answered, "It is not a lake, Will; it is an ocean. Its name is Pacific Ocean."

He nodded and asked, "How big is it?"

Of course I was stuck. I couldn't tell him in terms of miles, area, and depth. That would mean as little to him as astronomical figures. So I built up a background of understanding by asking, "You know how big is Clear Lake?"

He nodded and said, "This is bigger."

"Yes," I said, "Can you put in your mind ten Clear Lakes?"

After a moment he said, "Maybe."

"Can you think one hundred Clear Lakes all in one place?"

He shook his head and said, "Too much. You got that much in Pacific?"

I laughed and said, "One hundred Clear Lakes taken out of the Pacific Ocean would be like one drop of water taken out of Clear Lake."

He made the characteristic Indian sign of astonishment and asked, "Who drinks it all?"

Again I laughed and said, "Nobody drinks it, Will; it is salty."

He didn't say that he didn't believe me, but he walked down to the water's edge, stooped down, scooped up a handful and tasted it. He spat it out with a wry face, looked at me as though I were playing a game on him, walked twenty yards up the beach, and tasted another mouthful. He repeated this action four or five times. Still apparently suspicious or unconvinced he walked out in the water until he was knee deep in the surf, and tasted it out there! As he turned to come back to the beach, an incoming wave hit him. When he was finally safe on the sand, bedraggled and soaked, he had found out that the ocean was salty farther out than he cared to go. Of course I had to take him back to the hotel to dry him out, and not one word was said as we rode back to the city.

When our visit was approaching its close, I said to my Indian friend, "Will, tomorrow we go back to the mountains. What would you like to see all over again before you leave?"

Without hesitating he said, "Wanna see the Ocean."

Right after lunch, we started for the beach, and I noticed that Will was carrying a paper-wrapped parcel. I thought nothing of it at the time, presuming it was lunch. He was always hungry as the average Indian generally seems to be, and the only time he didn't have two apples in his pocket was when he had three bananas or four oranges.

Arriving at the beach we sat down for fifteen minutes and watched the surf roll in. Not a word was said until I suggested, "We had better go now. We have to pack and leave for the mountains tomorrow morning."

My Indian rose to his feet, unwrapped his package and revealed a pint jar with a rubber and a screw top. Keeping his eye warily on the incoming waves, he stooped and filled his jar from the shallow water. As he returned, screwing down the lid tightly, I asked him, "Will, what are you going to do with that pint of salt water?"

Solemnly he held it up to the light and said, "When I go back to my people and tell them all the funny things I have seen, maybe they gonna believe, maybe not. But when I tell them about Pacific Ocean, how big, and how salty, they gonna say 'Will Snow, he went away good Indian; come back big liar.'"

I swallowed my laughter long enough to say, "What are you going to do with the jar of water?"

He held it up and said in triumph, "Gonna take it back and make them believe."

I have thought of this incident a thousand times. This simple son of the woods thought that he could get a conception of the Pacific Ocean into the minds of those who had never seen or heard of it, by the display of a pint of salty water! It is true, of course, that the jar was full of Pacific Ocean; but there was an amazing lot of ocean left over.

This is exactly our difficulty when we try to explain the being and nature of God to the finite mind. My little pint mentality is so full of God it can't hold another fact or



thought. But when I have filled that mind with all of God that it can contain, there is still the unfathomable, unlimited expanse of God's being and nature that I have not yet touched. Hence the only thing that a reasoning and reasonable man can do is to accept the revelation that God has made of Himself, taste of His sweetness, experience His grace, and keep himself free from spiritual trespass.

There are some spheres in which it is presumptuous for a man to force his ideas and opinions. Not the least of the kindnesses and graces of God to men, is the fact that He stooped to express Himself in terms that the finite mind could comprehend. Since the natural man is not capable of climbing Godward by so much as one step, the gulf that exists between God and man can only be bridged if God comes all the way down. This He did when He took upon Himself the flesh of a man and walked the earth in human form.

This was the background of the simple statement of Christ, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath made Him plain." This is the literal meaning of that statement "declared Him." To declare is to manifest, or to bring out into the open, with a practical demonstration which results in comprehension. No living human who knows the gospel record can honestly say, "God is beyond the reach of my understanding." All we have to do is accept the God which is Jesus Christ and the full and complete revelation of the heavenly Father will ultimately be made through Him.

So we turn to the record of revelation depicting the nature of God and we find that pre-existence had no beginning and that God has always been in being. This, however, can only be said of God. The angelic orders which surround and serve Him were all created for their holy offices. The very heaven in which He dwells was formed by Him to be His eternal habitation. The myriad stars inside sidereal space, the flaming suns, and their accompanying planets all had a beginning in time according to the plan of God. The earth and all it con-

tains suddenly came into being when it suited the good purposes of His will to call them forth out of nothing. Of God alone can it be said, "He always was."

One of the unanswerable evidences of the deity of Jesus Christ is found in the fact of His pre-existence. The birth of our Saviour in Bethlehem of Judea was not His *origin*. We shall show later that this was His incarnation. His origin is shrouded in that same mystery that baffles us when we inquire into the beginning of God. This is the consistent record of the New Testament statements concerning the man Jesus Christ. Let us remind the reader what we said in a previous chapter, namely, we are not entitled to any conception of Christ which is contrary to the description and evidence in the New Testament.

Turning to the Gospel of John, we find the pre-existence of Jesus stated in John 1:1-4:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

There is no question of the identity of the person to whom John refers under the designation "the Word." John says the Word was in existence with God and that He was God. In his own commentary upon this paragraph, John writes in the first general Epistle, Chapter 1, verses 1-3:

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life: (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Here John identifies the Word as being an incarnation of

the Godhood, the Son of the Father, Who came to earth bearing the name "Jesus Christ."

As a further identification of this pre-existing Word, we have the larger illumination of Revelation 19:13. This chapter of the prophetic Book deals with the coming again of Jesus Christ, and it uses several names commonly ascribed to the Saviour, such as Lamb, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus, and the Word of God. The exact verse which we have cited reads as follows:

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

There can be no question as to how and when this vesture was dipped in blood: we only need to remember that His name is also the Lamb. The Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world had this in common with every lamb of the sacrifice—His efficacy was in the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins. Thus we have in the prologue to the Gospel of John a statement that before the time implied in the first verse of Genesis, Jesus the Son of God, Who is also called the Living Word, was in existence with God, *as God*, sharing His nature and glory from all past time.

Lest it be considered that such a claim to deity springs from the enthusiasm and adoration of the apostles who loved the man Jesus, let us hasten to show that Christ made this claim for Himself. We will read one such instance in John 5:17,18:

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.

For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

There is no way of escaping the significance and exact meaning of this declaration of the Saviour. We should also weigh the suggestive conduct of the people of Israel. Deeply incensed, they sought to slay the man who claimed that He was the veritable equal of God, and had observed the works of God in creation.

We cannot take time to analyze this entire fifth chapter of John, so we pass on quickly to the second assertion of Jesus on this subject, which we find in John 10:32,33:

“Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

Modern scholars may argue, as they frequently do, that Jesus Himself never claimed deity. Certainly the Jews of His day did not so understand His utterances. It was because they did so clearly comprehend His claim that they said, “We stone you for blasphemy: because, being a man, you make yourself to be God!”

Equally definite is the significance of the words of Jesus in John 12:44, 45:

“And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me.”

Adding one avowal to another, the Son of God then stated that His Father had sent Him into the world, and those who saw the visible Son were looking at the Father who sent Him! Every reader is familiar with the fourteenth chapter of John, and the bewilderment of the disciples over the strange teaching of Jesus. It was for that reason that Philip presented his sincere request and received a definite reply. Read again John 14:8, 9:

“Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?”

An honest reader cannot escape the intended conclusion. When Jesus said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”; he certainly avowed His deity in the strongest words that man could use.

Go back and read that paragraph again and then consider this illustration: Suppose I should say to a company or congregation who had been listening to me lecture from night to night, "Would you like to have the President of the United States address you tomorrow night?" They would undoubtedly reply with enthusiasm, "We would." (They might even say that any change would be for the better!) What do you suppose would happen if I were to answer them in these words: "What, have I been speaking to you all these times and you know me not? He that hath seen me hath seen the President of the United States. How sayest thou then, 'Show us the President?'"

What do you suppose the congregation would reply? Probably some deacon would rise and say, "You people hold him and I'll 'phone for the wagon!"

I recently had the great pleasure of shaking hands with Napoleon Bonaparte. At the same time I had the added joy of meeting Alexander the Great and the Duke of Wellington. In shaking hands with these notables, I had to reach through iron bars, and I noticed that they had mattresses on the walls as well as on the beds! Sad as was the mental lapse of these poor mortals, I have never met anyone either inside an asylum or wandering at large, who was so crazy he thought he was God! But here is a man who said to His most intimate followers, "You don't need to ask to see the heavenly Father. Look at Me and you see Him."

When we study the high-priestly prayer of the Saviour, we again meet His avowal of pre-existence. Consider John 17:5:

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

It has been said that even though a man had no high repute for veracity throughout the days of his life, he would be inclined to tell the truth when he faced death and the prospect of meeting God. This does not apply to Jesus, as falsehood was so foreign to the nature of the living Christ that He bore

as one of His names, "Truth." He is not only the Way, and the Life, *but is the Truth*; and no false statement ever came from His lips. This gives added weight to the fact that as He faced death by crucifixion, He addressed His heart in prayer to the heavenly Father. In those very words of communion, He claimed to have existed as God, with God, sharing His glory before the earth was created. If pre-existence pertains to God alone, Jesus Christ was God, and deity is indeed the proper term to apply to His person.

One of the consistent and oft reiterated declarations of the Pauline vocabulary defines Jesus as "the image of God." We find this descriptive sentence in II Corinthians 4:4:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them."

There is a hidden meaning to this dictum which can be best understood in the light of the broader statement in the second chapter of Philippians. A great and tremendous argument has sprung up over the doctrine which is called the "kenosis." Due to the appearance of that word in this paragraph and its translation "emptied," much has been written concerning the humiliation of Jesus when He came in the form of a man. Note Philippians 2:5-11:

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:  
Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,  
But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;  
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.  
Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name:  
That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth,  
And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The major argument has been centered about the exact meaning of the word "emptied." What did Jesus lay aside when He took upon Himself the flesh of a man?

Some say He laid aside His divine nature and was hence purely and exclusively human in the days of His flesh.

Some say He laid aside His divine attributes, and thus was limited by the weakness of a human nature.

Others say that He laid aside only His divine glory, the return of which He prayed for in the seventeenth chapter of John in the scripture before cited.

We shall show in the course of this study that Jesus did *not* lay aside His nature, and forsook none of His attributes when He was incarnated. We cite this paragraph merely to call your attention to the one strange and significant word which is used repeatedly in the scripture. In the Greek text, the word is "morphe" and is the basis for our modern scientific term "morphology." This science deals with the gross bodily structure of the living creature and is in contrast to histology, which is the science of the microscopic structure of the cell. The word "morphe" occurs twice in this Philippian paragraph and is both times translated by the English word "form." The sixth verse says that before Christ came to the earth He existed in the "morphe" or bodily substance of God; that He laid aside and took upon Himself the bodily substance or form of a servant, fashioned in the likeness of human morphology.

We would not cause the reader to stumble by the introduction of this term "bodily substance of God." We use it because there is no other clear expression in human language to convey this exact meaning. The Holy Spirit caused Paul the Apostle to say, "Jesus existed in the morphe of God." Of course we do not know exactly what this means. We are led to understand from revelation that God is a person capable of acts of individuality and sovereignty; we cannot conceive of intelligence apart from personality, nor can we grasp the fact of personality apart from some sort of bodily substance. Our

difficulty here is rooted in the fact that we are wont to conceive of all substance as physical matter. *We fail to grasp the fact that spiritual substance may be as real as physical matter.* The angels, for instance, have bodies formed of some spiritual material which is outside the reach of human understanding.

In the resurrection the believer in Christ receives a body which is literal and real, but which is not made of physical substance. After the resurrection, our Saviour manifested a body composed of translated flesh and bones, which was capable of passing through walls and locked doors into a sealed room. This body was not restricted by the influence of gravity. When it desired to it could exercise sovereignty over different, common, earthly factors. We are so tremendously ignorant about all things beyond the world of the senses that we are only capable of a stumbling approach to a subject which bewilders our darkened human mentality. So we just take what is written, and believe that. Whatever the "form" of God may be, Jesus existed in that "form" before He took upon Himself the "form" of a man.

We do not mean, of course, that God has two arms, two legs, eyes, ears, nose, and a mouth such as we possess. If God had that kind of a body, it would never have been necessary for Him to have been born as a babe in Bethlehem. But we do insist according to the Scripture, that God is not some nebulous gas permeating the ether of space in a pantheistic imminence.

He lives in a literal place called heaven.

He has a throne which He can share with His Son.

He has mobility, intelligence, and sovereign authority; hence God is a person.

So Paul brings to us this revelation from the Holy Spirit which states that the Jesus Who died on the cross for the sins of the world, existed in the substance of God; which visible form He laid aside for the purpose of redemption through His death. This certainly establishes beyond any possible question the pre-existence of Jesus.



This fact is stated with equal clarity in Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;

For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him;

And he is before all things, and in him all things consist.

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

There is a slight difference in the various translations of the word here rendered "creature" or creation." The King James Version of the New Testament text states that Jesus is "the first born of every creature." The American Revised Version says "He is the first born of all creation." An exact rendering of the Greek text would put it in the clear words of the Moffat Translation, "born first before any creation." So with the paragraph of Colossians still clear in your mind, summarize the statements of Jesus made in that amazing presentation.

First, although God is invisible now, Jesus was in His exact image.

Secondly, before any of the creation was formed, Jesus was in existence.

Thirdly, every physical or spiritual entity, together with all substance and structure, were created by Jesus, and were to be used for His own purposes.

Fourthly, He antedates everything that has existence.

Finally, it is He who holds the physical universe together.

This is what we mean when we speak of the pre-existence of Jesus. How well assured are we of salvation and eternal happiness, when our destiny lies in the hands of Him Who created the heavens and the earth! Since He had no beginning and can have no end, the life which is hid with Christ in God is as eternal and enduring as is the nature of God. If Christ

had pre-existence, if He possessed the attributes and powers of God before His incarnation, *He is a wonderful Saviour indeed!*

Suppose we let God have the last word on this subject. The opening chapter of the Hebrew epistle sets forth the pre-eminence of Jesus above all things that are, that have been, or that ever will be. Speaking of the Son of God, this great chapter says in verse 3:

“Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

Even a brief analysis of those stupendous statements is sufficient to cause the heart of the believing person to literally sing with joy. According to the text, Jesus was and is the brightness of God's glory and is the exact presentation of God's person. But more significant is the allegation that the man who purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, did so while he was upholding all things by the word of His power! Quite evidently then, in His self-emptying Jesus did not surrender His complete authority. When did He purge our sins? This was accomplished when Christ in human flesh shed His blood on the cross at Golgotha. *While so doing, He continued to uphold all things by the word of His power!* Having purged our sins, He then returned to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

In this first chapter of the Hebrew epistle, God speaks of two spiritual orders. He addresses the angels and calls them spirits, ministers, a flame of fire. But in the eighth verse when God speaks to the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” So when the heavenly Father speaks to the angels He addresses them as spirits. When He speaks to His Own Son, He addresses Him as Deity. Of course this is only logical, and should be expected. God is Deity, therefore His Son must partake of the same nature with all of its qualities, attributes and authorities. For this reason, God speaks to Jesus in the words which begin in verse ten:

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Let us turn aside from interpretation and human comments and let the Lord Jesus Christ, the object of our study, settle this question with a clear avowal of His own nature and eternal existence. This utterance we find in Revelation 1:8:

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

How happy is the lot of the Christian who understands that his salvation is rooted in the nature of Christ, and that it is therefore as eternal and enduring as is the existence of the Saviour Himself! When you came to the cross to find salvation through the merit and grace of the redeeming Lamb of God, you were not deluded by some imposter whose name and fame shall pass one day from the memory of men. Instead, you came to cast yourself into the capable and strong hands of the God Who not only created the earth, but Who died to be its redeemer. When the heavens and earth that make up the present order shall dissolve with fervent heat and melt away, the soul that is fixed on Jesus Christ will find itself unshakeable, immovable, eternally safe!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AS SEEN IN CHRIST

**P**RESSING on from the study of the pre-existence of Jesus, we do not imply that we have exhausted that subject. The Word of God enumerates many other clear evidences that Christ existed with God before His incarnation, which instances we cannot afford the time to cite. We suggest that you make a complete analytical study of the pre-existence of Christ and summarize these evidences for your own blessing and benefit.

Urged on by the necessity of reaching a conclusion and presenting at least some of all the manifold types of evidence which establish the fact of the deity of Jesus, in this chapter we will note the manner in which Christ demonstrated the attributes that are peculiar to God alone, while He lived an earthly life.

The common English translation of Colossians 2:9 does not do full justice to the idiom of the Greek text. Speaking of Christ this verse says, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The eighth verse of this same chapter identifies the person here suggested by the specified name of Christ. The key word in this text is the Greek word "pleroma," and it is an obscure Koine word which is hard to transliterate. The English editors used the word "fulness" which falls short of the understanding the ancient Greeks derived from this word. Sir William Ramsay and his equally learned colleague, Dr. James Hope Moulton, together with other distinguished archeologists, hold that the word "pleroma" should be properly translated as "attribute." The

idiom of the Koine differs from the Greek translation, so that to transliterate Colossians 2:9, we would read "In the body of Him dwelleth every attribute of the Godhead." The verb "to dwell" is not in the past tense, but in the present tense, as is proper in speaking of Deity. Being beyond the time-space concepts that bound all things human, we cannot speak of God in the sense of past, present or future. Being the same yesterday, today and forever, the Godhead remains Deity in every phase of His manifestation in time. Hence, if the Colossians statement is true and can be taken at its face value, we have here the manifold suggestion that Jesus, in the mysterious emptying of the Philippian record retained the attributes of God and remained God during His entire earthly ministry.

I was lecturing upon this subject one day on a university campus where I spent a week presenting the subject of Christology. At the close of the period a serious-minded lad came to me and said "I think you said more than you meant to when you said that every attribute of God dwelled in Jesus Christ while He walked the earth in the form of man." "Not at all," I answered. "That is exactly what the Scripture maintains." "In that case," he persisted, "would not Jesus have manifested some of these attributes in His earthly life?"

"Didn't he?" I asked.

"Did he?" he insisted.

"No," I said, "you make the case: didn't he manifest any of these attributes?"

"No," was the positive reply.

"You are as wrong," I said, "as one man can be. In his earthly life Jesus Christ manifested not only some of God's attributes, *but while He walked the earth in human flesh He displayed the possession of every known attribute of deity!*"

Before we present the evidence that supports this astounding statement, may we clarify the atmosphere by a few words of definition. One of the great weaknesses of the modern man is his woeful ignorance of his own language. He uses words in

his common conversation, having a very vague idea of the exact connotations of those words. When we say "attributes" we have a broad idea of what the word implies, but how few of us could really give a comprehensive definition of the term. Think your own way through this simple question and decide what you understand by the word "attributes," then let me offer this simple definition: "The attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics of the nature of God which are inseparable from the idea of deity, and which constitute the basis and grounds for His various manifestations to His creatures."

May I point out the importance of certain words in that definition. When we said that these distinguishing characteristics must be inseparable from the idea of God, we have offered a key to the understanding of the Creator. For instance, there are times when truth is spoken and righteous deeds are enacted by almost any man, but we cannot say that truth and righteousness are inseparable from the idea of man. There are many men in the world today to whom truth and righteousness are utterly foreign. Though occasionally manifested in human conduct, these noble characteristics are not inseparable from the idea of humanity. But you cannot separate your conception of God from righteousness and truth. Therefore, they may be denominated as attributes of God.

Again, there are times in which man is moved by charity and pity toward his fellowmen. Alas, there are many more occasions when he is pitiless and unmerciful to his fellow-humans. Therefore, pity and mercy do not constitute the basis and grounds of all human manifestations to each other. But these qualities are always seen in God's dealings with His creatures. We must note that the attributes of God must not only be inseparable from our conception of deity, but they must actually form the reason for all His manifestations toward His creatures.

We call these physical characteristics of God "attributes" because we are compelled to attribute them to God as funda-

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mental qualities or powers of His Being, in order to give rational reasons for certain constant facts in God's self-revelation. Again, we must pause to emphasize that word "constant." The phenomena observed in God's dealing with man are not arbitrary or capricious. The power of God is not affected by circumstances; the will of God is not diverted by opposition. As certainly as water from the highest mountain inexorably works its way to the nearest sea, so the nature of God flows in constant channels, the banks of which are His own revelation of His own Self.

These attributes have objective existence. That is to say they are not mere names which are given to intangible phenomena to aid human conceptions and understandings. They are not the result of man's attempt to account for certain actions which are beyond normal understanding. The attributes of God exist as qualities objectively distinguished from the divine essence and from each other. When we speak of the deity of Jesus it should be almost sufficient to say that Christ was God because all of these attributes of the Godhead were manifested in the man Jesus in His earthly career.

As you search the New Testament, you will find that the Holy Spirit has incorporated this fact in the carefully constructed biography of the Son of God, which is the Gospel record.

Let us begin with the *first* attribute of God, as a simple demonstration of this fact. Once again it is necessary to clarify the issue by asking you to state your conception of that attribute. In a great many educational institutions, including some notable seminaries, I have asked the simple question, "What is the chief attribute of God?" I have never received the proper reply. Nine out of ten people will say "God is love." That is true as far as it goes, but love is the fourth attribute of God, not the first. The tenth person will almost always say, "God's chief attribute is omnipotence." This is a natural reply, but equally erroneous. There is something about the thought of unlimited power which thrills the human heart, but the power is not God's first attribute.

*The chief attribute of God is Holiness!*

In those words we have briefly set out the entire reason for the Gospel as it is preached through Jesus Christ. We shall return to that thought.

We ask you now to define to your own satisfaction the term 'holiness.' Here again is a common word often heard in the daily vocabulary of the average Christian, but do you really understand its meaning?

Holiness can be defined in the simplest terms as "self-affirming purity." This is a thing which no human being now possesses or ever would possess. There are men who have on occasion manifested personal purity, but this impulse to decency generally came from some source or power outside of their own nature. This conduct was maintained only as long as the source of power was available to them. It was sporadic, temporary and all too rare in its appearance. But you cannot separate the two ideas of Almighty God and purity.

There are some things which the human mind is not free even to imagine. You cannot conceive of a triangle with four sides or a square that is made up of five equal sides and five equal corners. There is no such thing as a square circle. Logic does not tolerate certain self-evident impossibilities. Therefore, you cannot conceive of a God who was pure *most* of the time. Also, the purity of God springs from the essence or nature of God Himself. Therefore we say, holiness is the chief attribute of God and is the impelling reason for all of His conduct and revelation toward His creatures. Not only does logic make this demand, it is also the clear, simple statement of the inspired Word.

In Psalms 145, verse 17, it is written "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." You will note that the righteousness and holiness of God are not seen in *some* of His ways and works, but are apparent *in all* that God does.

In the sixth chapter of Isaiah the prophet describes his vision of the Lord God upon His throne. The seraphims which surrounded the seat of God's authority chanted a refrain



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each to the other in these astounding words, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Of no earthly or created being could this be said. There are some orders both angelic and human which reflect the holiness of God, or partake of its benefits by imputation, but no created being possesses a self-affirming purity: this is reserved for the Deity Himself.

Therefore, it is highly significant that in his famed address in the fourth chapter of Acts, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost and reviewing the coming of Jesus, said in verse 27, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."

To this agrees the apostle Paul who in the Hebrew Epistle wrote in chapter 7, verse 26, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

Here is a strange commentary upon the nature and person of Christ. The Old Testament claims that holiness is resident in God alone and that this holiness is constant as part of the nature of God. The New Testament stoutly maintains that this "God-nature," as seen through the possession of holiness, was in the child Jesus who became the High Priest and Redeemer.

There are many figures in the Scripture which maintain this same teaching. In the twelfth chapter of Exodus we have the historical record of the establishing of the passover lamb. Verse five begins with the statement, "Your lamb shall be without blemish." Later, after Christ our passover had been slain for us, the apostle Peter wrote a great commentary upon this fact in chapter one of his first epistle where he said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." You probably know the difference between a blemish and a spot. A blemish is something which is inherently wrong with the

fabric itself. A spot is dirt which has been acquired by contact with that which defiles. Being incarnated by the miracle of the virgin birth, Jesus, the Son of God, was without blemish in His nature. He lived for thirty-three years among men in contact with a world of sin from which, suffering no defilement, He was also spotless. There was no way of estimating how many millions and billions of humans have been born into this earth since the creation of Adam and Eve, but it is safe to maintain with dogmatic assurance that the virgin born Son of God is the only one of whom it could be truthfully said, "He was unblemished and unspotted," in the Scriptural sense of that word.

In other words, in the incarnation Christ retained that self-affirming purity which is holiness, and the life which he lived among men was a practical demonstration of the chief attribute of God. What other living man could have faced his enemies as Jesus did in John 8:46 and challenged them with these words, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"

Would you challenge your enemies that way? Personally I wouldn't trust my friends that far. Some of them are honest enough to start telling what they know. The manner in which His enemies sought to meet His dare is written in Matthew 26, verse 59 and 60, "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none." The inherent purity of Jesus Christ was so perfect that not even perjured witnesses, paid to blacken His character, could prove to the satisfaction of a prejudiced court, one charge against His holiness.

So sure are we that Christ manifested holiness, we will make this offer. We stand prepared to pay one thousand dollars as a cash reward to any person who can prove conclusively that the man Jesus Christ was ever guilty of a selfish deed, a mean or unworthy act, or ever conducted Himself to the harm or hurt of His fellowman. Of course, we know in making that offer, that we are perfectly safe. We might as well have said a billion dollars for such proof, for none can ever be forth-

coming. The Colossian statement that every attribute of God dwelled in the person of Jesus, did not exclude the chief attribute of holiness, and history is a vindication of that broad and startling claim.

The second attribute of God is justice, which may be defined as that principle which affirms the certainty of the punishment of wrongdoing. Justice is given as the second attribute of God because it is the guard and defense of holiness. All sin is an offense against the holiness of God. Therefore, if holiness is to be vindicated and God is to remain supreme, all rebellion against holiness must be ruthlessly stamped out and punished. Just as no orderly nation could survive without courts and penal codes, so the divine governments must be safeguarded with powerful forces. Very often, of course, the legal procedures of human government are diverted from true justice and perverted to political purposes. Therefore, justice is not an attribute of human government. It is not constant or inseparable from the thought of government. By contrast, it is resident in the very nature of God, so that errors of judgment and mistakes in its application are unthinkable in dealing with God. We do not mean that God is just or that He is ruled by justice in His dealings with men. Rather, we mean to say in the strongest possible terms, "God is justice." For this reason, from the very beginning of His dealings with created beings, God has operated through the dictum, "The soul that sins shall surely die." We shall return to this thought in a later paragraph; we merely call to your mind the long record of God's conflict with evil which is engraved alike in Holy Writ and on the page of human conduct.

It may be said that the justice of God is implacable, it never fails, it must and always does operate.

Did Jesus manifest the attribute of justice in His earthly career? Indeed He did, on many occasions! At once there will come to your remembrance the record of a roused and angry Saviour with whip in hand cleansing the temple of God of the filthy and defiling racketeers who made a graft of the temple worship. With darkened brow and flashing eyes, He

thundered out the sternest denunciation that human ears could comprehend. Jesus Christ was justice in direct operation guarding the sanctuary which stood for the holiness of God and the redemption of His people.

The third attribute of God is mercy. By way of definition we state simply that mercy is that eternal principle of God's nature which leads Him to seek the temporal good and eternal welfare of those who have opposed themselves to His will. Very often the purposes of mercy are attained at a cost of infinite sacrifice.

Contrary to the consistent vaporings of modernism which delights in the fable of the evolution of the God idea, the Jehovah of the Old Testament is manifested in all of His works toward men as a God of mercy. As we covered this point in chapter one we merely refresh your mind with this brief reminder. God does not manifest mercy, He is not swayed to the exercise of mercy, but mercy is an attribute of God. Hence we can say that God is mercy.

This characteristic of Deity literally directed the outpouring of the whole life of His Son, Christ our Saviour. A classical illustration of how Jesus manifested this attribute, is the record of the woman taken in adultery. When the stern and harsh guardians of the law demanded that she be stoned, Jesus defended her with the implied countercharge, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." When the self-convicted accusers had silently slunk away, Jesus said, "Woman, where are thine accusers?" Humbled and shamed before His holiness, she said "No man accuseth me, Lord." Debased as she was, she was conscious of the fact that although his own imperfection kept man from filing an indictment against her, the holiness of God was no bar to His charges against her conduct. But because God is mercy, He said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." We notice that Jesus did not say, "Neither do I accuse thee." Recognizing all that was wrong and unclean in her conduct, He Who was mercy, could say "I do not condemn thee."

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The reason for that is found in the fourth attribute of God, which is love. I do not think that it is necessary to define love. It is the source of all that is courageous and kindly in every human relationship. It is not astonishing that the unlearned and careless reader of the Scripture seizes upon the statement of John, "God is love," and wrests that out of its proper setting to make that his entire creed.

Because God is love, the Gospel works. I mean to say that this is the reason for all of God's revelation of Himself to a lost and sinful age.

I believe that most of us have difficulty in clarifying our thinking concerning God and His grace because we have never reduced Christianity to a basic philosophy. Yet, this can be done in terms of such comparative simplicity a child should be able to comprehend it. An understanding of Christianity is resident in a comprehension of these attributes of God.

Let us consider a philosophy of Christianity in a few short and simple sentences. We have said before that the chief attribute of God is holiness. It is a characteristic of holiness that, being purity, it can have no fellowship with sin. If God were unkind enough to take an unsaved, uncleansed, unredeemed sinner into His presence, the very holiness of God would consume and burn that vile wretch with a suffering more fierce than the fires of Hell could ever engender. So, because sin is an offense against divine holiness, justice, which guards holiness, has said, "The soul which sins must surely die."

The word "death" in the Scriptures never means anything more than separation. We say that your body is alive because you are in it. But the minute you are separated from your body, your body is called dead. It is cut off from the source of life, hence becomes inanimate and decays. In exactly that sense, when a soul is separated from God Who is the source of all life, that soul is called dead. Hence, to guard the holiness of God from contact with defilement, divine justice says that the soul that sins must be "separated."

But God is also mercy, and mercy desires to save the guilty sinner. Here we must note that no attribute of God can function in offense to any other attribute. They must all work together in a correlated harmony, functioning as one perfected and completed being. Therefore, as long as a soul is guilty of sin, even though mercy desires to save that soul, justice says, "You cannot. I guard the holiness of God," and mercy cannot operate in opposition to justice.

The crux of the situation is reached when love says to justice, "I think I can solve this impasse. I will provide a substitute that will satisfy justice so that mercy can operate." Here, then, is the mystery and wonder of what we call the Gospel. Certainly no human intelligence ever conceived a philosophy as profound as this. Because God is love, He Himself, Who was offended by the sin of man, incarnated Himself in the flesh of a man and did Himself die to expiate the sins of men.

When God had thus provided Himself as a substitute and sacrifice, divine justice said, "I am satisfied."

Mercy then could operate because love had provided a means by which the sinner and his sins could be separated and dealt with individually.

Hence justice can now guard holiness by ostracizing sin from God's presence, and mercy can save the guilty by bringing the separated sinner into God's presence.

*And all this comes to pass because God is love!*

For this reason we have the unfathomable revelation of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

I cannot understand what men mean when they talk about a *simple* Gospel. The revelation of the meaning of redemption as set forth in the New Testament is so profound and incomprehensible, we must accept it by faith; it is beyond the power of the human mind to grasp. But we can have some dim conception of the magnitude of the work of Christ when we learn that He was Himself the love of God saving the

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world, and that God who loves Him has His every interest bound up in the thing for which He shed His blood.

I came across a rather graphic illustration of this recently in a large city in New York State where I had been speaking to a mass meeting of persons interested in evangelizing military forces. You may know that prior to the assault on Pearl Harbor, the Gideons, through their Hawaiian chapter, had distributed to the men of the Pacific Fleet beautiful little white-bound copies of the New Testament. This work was finished some weeks before the fatal day of battle dropped so unexpectedly from the skies, so that each man of the fleet at least had had an opportunity to become acquainted with the grace of God through this work. One of my friends in Honolulu, Mr. Charles Peitsch, had presented me with one of the Pacific Fleet edition New Testaments, and I had it in my pocket as I was speaking that night. Thinking the crowd would be interested in it, I told them of this work of distribution and displayed the white-bound pocket Testament.

When the meeting was over and I was greeting some friends by the platform, a man tarried to speak to me when everyone else had gone. Rather diffidently he said, "Dr. Rimmer, I also have one of those little white Testaments." He pulled it out of his pocket and handed it to me.

The instant I took hold of it, I saw that it was stained with an ominous brown stain so highly significant that no technician would need to ask the nature of the dye which had colored the cover and the pages.

I looked at him and said, "Oh, oh."

He smiled sadly and said, "Yes, oh, oh. I had a son at Pearl Harbor who was on duty the morning the assault was launched. In the pocket of his blouse he had this pocket Testament. With his crew he worked his piece until he fell to the deck riddled through and through with machine gun bullets. When they notified me of the death of my son they sent me his personal effects, and among them was this bloodstained Testament."

The man took the book back from my hands and very earnestly said, "Dr. Rimmer, this little book is very precious to me. *Its pages are stained with the blood of my son!*"

For a moment I hardly knew what to say, then I smiled at him and said, "Yes, God feels the same way about that Book. He loves the New Testament. Its pages are stained with the blood of His Son!"

The man looked at me quietly for a moment, and then he began to smile. No sacrilege was intended or implied when he said, "*Me and God, huh?*"

I said, "Yes Sir, you have that much in common, a Book whose pages are stained with the blood of both your sons."

This is one of the reasons that we can say that Calvary is effective for the salvation of men. It is the place where separation was made between sin and the sinner.

But you see that a comprehensive philosophy of Christianity is resident in the understanding and correlation of all of the attributes of God.

To proceed with this study, let us note that the fifth attribute of God is truth. I know that it is considered smart by the pseudo-philosopher to echo the inane query of Pilate, "What is truth?" No one who understands the English language would have any difficulty defining truth. We would merely say, "Truth is any conception which coincides with fact." This is inseparable from the idea of God. Therein is resident the assurance of salvation. There are men who under certain circumstances will tell the truth, and all men are presumed to be truthful unless their own interests are served by contrary conduct. But no normal intelligence can conceive of deity telling the truth part of the time and hedging by deceit in other dealings with His creatures. In offering men salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the integrity of God is pledged as an earnest and a guaranty. God's word of honor has been given that all who accept His Son as Saviour and Lord shall never perish. Since the honor of God is bound up in my salvation, I rest in warm, confident possession of a redemption which I can never lose because God is truth!



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It will be noted that these five attributes of God all bear some relation to His moral being. All of the creatures whom God has formed, which possess sovereignty of conduct and understanding, must be dealt with by God on the basis of these five attributes. But because the more commonly recognized attributes of God relate to creation and are seen in the visible manifestation or works of God, they are emphasized in the thinking of men when they attempt to construct a philosophy of deity. But just as the five moral attributes of God were manifested in Jesus Christ in His life and conduct, so also the attributes of God which operate in relation to creation are all seen *in the works* of the man, Jesus Christ.

Some years ago I came across an apparent difficulty in the Scripture which gives a perfect illustration of this. A young lad who had been studying the New Testament asked, "Since the Jews were taught from early infancy to worship none but God and to bow to Him only, why did Nathanael apparently worship Christ the moment they first met?"

I had never thought of this matter and frankly told him so, and suggested that we make a study of it together. I got no light or help on the problem until some years later when I chanced to be in Palestine. You will remember that when they brought Nathanael to Jesus, the Lord said to him, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile!"

Without straining our sense of humor we might frankly admit that a guileless Israelite would indeed be something to behold. Nathanael was quite properly taken aback by the apparent knowledge Jesus displayed of a perfect stranger, one whom he had never seen before. He said to Christ, "What do you know about me? You have not seen me before."

The answer of Jesus so astounded him that at once he bowed before this strange man and said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of God!*"

That answer was phrased in these simple words, "Before they called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

There seems to be no natural explanation for the problem raised by the action of Nathanael until you correlate the

geographical positions of the two persons involved. There was nothing astonishing in the fact that Nathanael was under a fig tree. When figs are ripe that is where any sensible, intelligent man should be. I grew up in a fig growing country, and to my mind there are few fruits on this bountiful earth that can compare with a tree-ripened fig. I remember in my own boyhood days we had two enormous fig trees in our back yard which shaded the whole rear of the house. Many and many a time my friends would say to me, "I saw you yesterday up in the fig tree." Of course they did. The only time I wasn't in that fig tree was when so much of the fig tree was in me that there was no room for either of us in the other! But I never counted it supernatural that my friends saw me in or under that tree.

The people of Palestine understand this mystery. Jesus and Nathanael were separated by a span of seven miles, when Jesus claimed to have recognized this stranger. That might be called keen vision, though it is scarcely within the bounds of possibility. You try to make out the visage of your closest friend at the distance of one mile and see what chance there would be of recognizing a stranger seven miles away. But slim as that possibility is, all natural explanations are ruled out by the fact that a hilltop intervened in the span of that seven miles. Jesus was on one side of this hill and Nathanael on the other. So, when this Jew, who knew the attributes of God, met a man whose eyes could pierce the living granite of an enduring hill and recognize a stranger on the other side, he said, "This is omniscience, omniscience is an attribute of God; hence, this is the Christ." Whereupon he bowed to worship the fact of deity thus displayed by Christ the Prophet and Redeemer.

Certainly Christ claimed omniscience and equally positively He demonstrated it. On one occasion He described the destruction of Jerusalem in terms so graphic that when, thirty-five years later, Titus fulfilled His prediction, the record of the disruption reads like the prophecy of its event.

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It is written of Christ that He needed not that any should tell Him of man, He knew what was in man. Again and again He discerned the unspoken thoughts of His enemies as they sought to debate against Him, and laid bare their motives and secret plans.

He picked up the curtain of time and peered ahead into the future ages, describing events of the past nineteen hundred years and delineating others which have not yet come to pass.

Because He had omniscience, He could stand on a hill with the fallen angel Lucifer, and see all the kingdoms of the earth.

This power of unlimited sight and unrestricted knowledge concerning all things and everything is resident by nature in the person of God.

No man can claim it, nor can any human demonstrate it.

Hence we say that the attribute of omniscience was manifested by Christ.

To show how he possessed the companion attribute of omnipotence would require an exhaustive presentation of the complete Gospel record. One of the great difficulties that men have in their attempts to understand the miracles recorded in the Bible is their insistence upon considering the fact at issue instead of the Person involved. For instance, when Paul asked Felix Agrippa, "Why should it be counted a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?", the king's answer would depend entirely upon which portion of the question was emphasized when Paul asked it.

If he emphasized the raising of the dead, the king would naturally reply, "Why should *not* this be counted a thing incredible? Romans have seen generations of people die, but all stayed dead."

But if Paul emphasized the Person involved and said, "Why should it be counted a thing incredible with you that *God* should raise the dead?", the issue becomes quite different. You cannot use the words "incredible" and "God" in the same sentence and remain logical. Not if the incredibility limits or restricts the powers and operations of God.

Hence it is folly for men to seek explanation of miracles. A miracle is an orderly proceeding on the plane of a law that is higher than our present comprehension. But while there is much natural law that we do not yet know, God, Who is the Author of all law, cannot be restricted in His conduct by our limitations. So, when Jesus said, "All power (omnipotence) is given unto me in heaven and in earth," we have an explanation that is satisfactory when we study the miracles which He performed.

*God wrought them.* Really, that is all we need to know. Never ask concerning a miracle, "Why?" Be content with the word, "Who." Our philosophy of God should be condensed to three words, GOD IS ABLE. There are no qualifications or explanations necessary to enlarge, enhance or develop that philosophy of God. It is sufficient for every crisis of life or thought that can possibly arise or perplex. It is true that there is much in the works of Christ that baffles human understanding. Yet, in the wider sense, Christ did nothing that was contrary to reason, or that did not follow a pattern dimly set forth in the orderly process of nature.

For instance, all wine is made from water. The sun begins the process when it sends forth thermal units which expand surface water into vapor and make it rise as clouds. This vapor later condenses and falls upon the fields in the form of rain. The thirsty roots of the vine reach out and suck up this rain from the soil. In cooperation with the greater miracle of photo-synthesis, which is resident in a mysterious laboratory in the leaves of the plant, the sun, the rain and the vine together create a bunch of grapes. Men gather the crop, extract the juice, fortify it and set it aside to ferment. Or, as in the case of the ancient Greeks and the other races in the time of our Lord, they drink it as sweet grape juice and called it by the common name of wine.

*Here is a miracle of transmutation.* The sun, the rain, the vine and a factor called time, transmuting water into wine. Jesus, Who created the sun, the water, and the vine, and is Himself the master of time, disdained the use of this cumber-

some apparatus and in a few seconds He Himself turned water into wine. This is far less astonishing than the fact that the vine can do it! For to say the least, Christ was possessed of supernal intelligence, while the creatures of botany operate only in obedience to laws which are fixed by that same intelligence.

In like manner, God can supply bread from heaven. In our own case it is in the form of wheat. In the case of Israel, it appeared in the form of manna. With the five thousand who shared the lunch of the tiny lad on the hillside in Palestine, it was a few soda crackers and some tiny sardines.

You see, the problem of miracles is not in the *what* or the *how*, but in the *whom*.

Now then, if all power is given unto Christ, and He manifests that power to the stupefaction of human mentality, there must be some reason for that operation. That reason is apparent when you read the New Testament Scriptures. *Christ wrought miracles to prove that He was God.* Omnipotence is an attribute of deity. In His earthly life—since Christ the man still was God in human form—it was inevitable that He show forth the attributes of His heavenly nature.

I suppose that no idea of the revelation of God is harder for man to apprehend than the thought of omnipresence. I personally feel very much like the little lad in the country who was attending Sunday School for the first time. The lesson that day was from the seventeenth chapter of Acts, and the teacher was speaking upon the thought, "God is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being." She essayed the impossible in trying to bring to childish minds a comprehensive idea of the imminence of God. Frankly, I have always found difficulty in making plain to some person that which I do not clearly comprehend myself; but this teacher had great courage and was dealing with this wide subject.

This little fellow became lost in the demonstration and said rather impatiently, "Hey, wait a minute, lady, that don't

make sense. You're trying to make it sound like God can be in two places at once."

The teacher smiled and said, "That's just what I do mean. He can be in a hundred places at once. He is with us wherever we go."

The little fellow shook his head in puzzlement and said, "He is with which one of us wherever we go? If I go to my house and you go to your house, He can't be with both of us at the same time!"

The teacher insisted, "Oh, but He can. That is because He is God. He can be, and is, everywhere at once."

The little fellow was highly agnostic and persisted in his query, "Do you mean to say that He is here in this Sunday School, now?"

"Yes," said the teacher.

"Then, what are the Methodists doing in their Sunday School without Him?" he asked.

The teacher laughed and said, "Why, He is there too."

Greatly distressed, he said, "You mean that He is everywhere at the same time?"

"That's right," said the teacher.

The little boy said, "While He is here in this church, is He in our barn?"

"Yes," said the teacher, "He is in your barn."

"Is He in our house?"

"Yes, He is in your house."

"Is He in our cellar?"

"Certainly, He is in your cellar," said the teacher; "He is everywhere."

The little fellow laughed in triumph and said, "I knowed there was something fishy about this—we ain't got no cellar!"

I think that typifies the average human inability to grasp the idea of the imminence of God. We say very glibly, He is not limited by the time-space concepts of a physical creation; God is Spirit, and is subject only to spiritual law. And when we say that we frankly concede that we face a mystery too deep

for our own comprehension. But this is a clear, indisputable fact of God's self-revelation; that He is omnipresent.

Jesus certainly claimed this attribute of God when He said, "Wherever two or three of you are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst of you." The missionary in Africa, the Christian in China, the mountaineer in North America and the believer on the pampas of the sister continent of the south can all say at the same instant of time when they meet in the name of Christ, "Our Saviour is here with us." That is imminence in the wider application.

The apprehension of this fact literally changed my ministry. When I was still young in the service I was pastor of a church in Los Angeles, and doing some study in an educational institution at the same time. My days and my nights were busy, and sometimes I think my sermons were woefully unprepared. A most dearly beloved relative by marriage, one whom we called Aunt Fanny, often dropped in to my church services to listen to my sermons. She was a devout and learned Bible student from whom I learned far more than she could have acquired from me. We went through a certain period when the epidemic of flu was abroad in the land, and I had had an amazing number of funerals to interrupt the routine of my week. I had been calling on the sick, keeping up my classroom attendance, burying the dead, and comforting the living. Sunday dawned with the necessity of preaching two sermons, neither of which was more than half prepared.

As I entered my pulpit that Sunday morning, I knew that my congregation would understand. They knew what a terrific week I had gone through and would be very sympathetic, and I thus complacently excused my woeful condition of unpreparedness. But just as we opened the service, Aunt Fanny came through the front door and started down the aisle. At once my conscience smote me and I said to myself, "I just do not have the nerve to preach as poor a sermon as this with that great Bible student sitting there listening in sympathetic criticism." So I turned to my assistant and said, "Al, you keep the meeting going until I get back."

The door of my study opened off the main auditorium, right at the end of the platform. I slipped in and took down the notes of a sermon I had been working on and which I had intended to present a month later. It was only half finished but at that it was far better than the one I had left on the pulpit. I worked desperately to polish that one up while the opening services continued. By hard and fast work I stepped back into the pulpit with a handful of notes, just in time to fit the sermon into the service where it properly belonged.

If I do admit it myself, I did pretty well in that emergency; and I had my reward when Aunt Fanny kissed me at the door and said, "That was a good sermon. It showed considerable thought and study. Of course, it will be a lot better when you do more work on it, as you probably intended to do; but it was good and I enjoyed it."

I beamed with delight at the success of my stratagem as she turned away. But a half hour later, as I was walking home to lunch, old man conscience rose up and smote me hip and thigh with everything he had. He said to me, "You claim to believe that when the people of God gather together Jesus is in their midst. You are perfectly willing to preach an unprepared sermon with Christ in the audience, when you felt it wasn't fit for Aunt Fanny to listen to. Whose ministry are you serving—Aunt Fanny's or Christ's?"

I tell you, my conscience got me so far under the juniper bush that I spent all that afternoon working on my evening sermon! When the service was ready to begin, I played a little game with myself. I turned out the light in my study and pulled my big chair over in front of the door; I blocked the door open and said, "Now, Lord, you sit here in this easy chair where you can both see and hear." That night I preached to that chair. It might sound childish to you, but I played that game for six months. I never entered my pulpit without pulling that chair in front of the door and inviting the Lord to attend the service. I preached to that chair, not to my congregation. It so transformed my ministry that within a



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few weeks I would not have cared if the King of England and the President of the United States and half the potentates of the world had walked in arm-in-arm to attend my morning service. I felt that if my message was good enough to present to Him Who is in the gathering wherever His people meet, no mortal ears could desire more.

I wonder how far that thought would go toward translating Christian theory into victorious living?

Do you practice the presence of Jesus Christ?

Is it an accepted and apprehended fact with you that Christ is with us wherever we go?

To enter into the full possession of this gracious fact would make our lives so pleasing to God men certainly could find no occasion for offense therein.

Add these things together: the five outstanding moral attributes of God, plus the three principal physical characteristics of deity, together with every other essence that makes up the Godhead was manifested by Jesus Christ in the years of His living among men. So the Colossian contention is vindicated—"It pleased God that in the body of Christ should dwell every attribute of the Godhead."

*If it is true that God is the sole, legitimate object of worship, the intelligent Christian will worship Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and honor Him as Master and Lord.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE INCARNATION OF JESUS

**I**F THE DEITY of Jesus is conceded, as it must be on the grounds of substantial evidence as presented in Holy Writ, the natural result of His self-emptying would be an incarnation rather than a birth. No matter what means God may have chosen to manifest Himself to man, the supernatural would become natural in connection with that event. Thus the birth of Jesus becomes the major mystery of biology, transcending in importance and significance even the creation of Adam and Eve. Reason can conceive how that Deity might for His own inscrutable purposes create an intelligent and sovereign creature, but logic staggers at the stupendous implications involved in the revelation *that God became a man* to advance the welfare of men! There are some things that have to be accepted purely on the grounds of evidence or revelation, apart from clarity of understanding. It is not to be expected that God could take an astonishing step such as the incarnation in obedience to natural biological laws. Hence, if there were no supernatural details connected with the coming of the Saviour, we would properly be skeptical concerning His power to save.

*The New Testament contains a connected, documented, and authentic account of those supernatural events which did accompany the birth of the Lord Jesus!*

The first of these we would group under the head of "certain angelic annunciations." The primary announcement signifying that God was moving in an unusual manner to fulfill and accomplish a promised purpose which was made to Zacharias. We shall return to this interesting character later,

as he had an important place in the startling events so soon to transpire. At this point we merely remind the reader that he was a priest, officiating in the temple of God, and that he was a man far advanced in years, but childless. According to the clear details as supplied by the historian Luke, while this priest Zacharias was fulfilling his office in the temple, an angel of the Lord appeared by the right side of the altar. To the astonished priest the angel delivered a message of assurance, namely, that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a child, and that his name should be called John. Instructions were committed to Zacharias as to the raising of the child after the strict requirements of the Nazarites, who were dedicated to God from the instant of birth. The promise was made that the coming babe would be filled with the Holy Ghost from the moment he left his mother's womb, and that he should bring about a great revival in Israel. Furthermore, the angel assured Zacharias that his son, John, was to fulfill the promises of the ancient prophets and would be the forerunner for the coming Messiah. When Zacharias doubted the possibility of a couple who had reached the extreme age of himself and wife ever fulfilling this announcement, the angel pledged his personal honor by saying, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak these things unto thee and to show thee these great tidings."

In other words, the integrity of the messenger and the honor of the God who sent him were both concerned in the literal fulfillment of this promise. As a sign to Zacharias, Gabriel assured him that he should be dumb until the babe was born and named, that all men might know that God's hand was in this matter. So, the first supernatural event in the incarnation would be the appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias and the annunciation of the birth of John.

The second angelic visit was made also by Gabriel to a virgin named Mary. Again the historian Luke assures us that Gabriel was on the definite business of God, under specific orders to bring a certain message concerning the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy.

The third appearance of an angelic messenger is recorded by Matthew, who tells us that Joseph, deeply troubled by the birth of a child which he knew was not his own, was visited in the night by a heavenly messenger who assured him that Jesus was not a body that was biologically conceived in the virgin mother, but was the result of a direct miracle of the Holy Ghost. The purpose of the coming of Jesus was set forth in the statement of this angel, who said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

There may be some dispute as to the nature of the second supernatural witness to the incarnation of God, which would be the star of Bethlehem, long famed in song and story. The naturalist will argue that it was a comet traveling its destined and mathematical course and which just happened to be visible at that time. Others explain the phenomenon on the grounds that it was a nova, and still others say a conjunction of constellations occurred in their natural orbits. Be that as it may, a star of such brilliance did appear in the heavens that certain gifted astronomers were able to follow it to the place where the young child lay.

There can be no such question, however, about the angelic chorus which made its appearance to the shepherds watching in the fields and bringing to them the first definite announcement that Israel received of the birth of Messiah. A great deal of tradition has been draped about the simple fact of the appearance of that chorus, which really only tends to emphasize the basic fact as stated. One of the quaint fancies of the modern day is that the angel chorus *sang* at the birth of Jesus. The Scripture nowhere states that this chorus did any singing. In the drama of the incarnation they were cast in the role occupied by the Greek chorus, who never sang, but who chanted in unison certain words which explained to the audience the obscure points in the drama. So, while Joseph, Mary and Jesus were the principals who occupied the center of the stage of history, the wings were filled with a heavenly host which chanted in unison the now famous phrase con-

cerning "peace on earth" to be ultimately attained by men of goodwill. Accompanying that chorus, we have the fourth appearance of the angel of the annunciation (again presumed to be Gabriel) who spoke to the shepherds a message of good tidings and great joy. This promise was not limited to Israel, but was to be extended to all humanity. It is significant that the exact statement of the angel, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord," follows the statement that the tidings are to be *to all people*. In other words, Christ was not incarnated to be the King of Israel or to sit upon the throne of David, *but He came to be Saviour and Lord*.

It is inconceivable that the hosts of heaven could be unconcerned with an event as important as the salvation of a lost race. Equally certain, the angelic train which attended Jesus in His eternal state would hover near the scene of His incarnation. So we repeat that if and when God did incarnate Himself in human flesh, the supernatural must be naturally expected in connection with that event.

Unquestionably the greatest wonder of the appearing of Jesus was the supernatural conception. Christ had the unique honor of being earth's first and only fatherless babe. The manner of His birth was as unprecedented as it has been unparalleled. It is quite safe to assume that never again will this miracle be repeated as long as human history shall continue. When a man-child was born without the natural biological process of human fatherhood, earth had seen the "new thing," which the prophet Jeremiah had foretold.

The creation of Adam and Eve followed a distinctly different pattern. Adam was created an adult, having neither father nor mother. He came to inhabit a matured body which was formed out of the dust of the earth. In like manner, Eve also was created a woman, so that these two never had been born. But in the case of Jesus, nothing was created. He Himself being eternal, descended to earth to occupy a body which was formed in the womb of a virgin mother, thus testifying to the uniqueness of the life in that new body. So that

the holiest and most astonishing miracle of all Scripture is the event of the virgin birth of the Son of God.

In that statement there is no criticism of normal biological reproduction either implied or intended. Most Christians believe that the noblest human power is reproduction. It is given to man to share in the holy joy of the Creator when he brings into being living creatures in his own image and likeness. This indeed was the purpose of the original creation of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. When the first man and woman came fullformed from the hand of God, a distinct blessing was placed upon them for the purpose of perpetuation. Long before the fall, when man still glowed with the beauty of his pristine innocence, God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and make full the earth."

There is a very sweet Hebrewism which speaks of children as "fruit of the body." In all nature fruit is the end and the purpose of life. Thus the most hallowed relationship that humanity can know is that of a parent to a child. It matters not which parent is considered, as father or mother are equally willing to live and to die for their offspring. Throughout all history men and women have sacrificed themselves and each other for the benefit of their children and have tasted deep joy in so doing.

There is a humorous story which illustrates this principle, one over which we long have chuckled. A group of Midwest women had formed a sewing circle in a small country village, where they met twice a week for friendly conversation and indulgence in good works. They took into their companionship a young bride who had recently moved to their vicinity and who had been married less than a year. The rest of the women all had families, and they more or less adopted the younger newcomer. There was in their group a very elderly woman, sweetened by age and possessed of a charming wisdom, whom everyone called Aunt Martha. She was the arbiter in all disputes and her word was law in every case that she refereed.

It chanced on one afternoon as the women were busily engaged in their sewing, somebody started a discussion as to a woman's highest duty. The question came up, "Does a wife owe more to her husband or to her children?" All of the women present conceded that the mother's highest obligation was to her children, except the young bride who had no children. Most ardently she contended that because of the wedding vows and the love each had for the other, a wife owed everything to her husband first and foremost. As the discussion was waxing warm they saw Aunt Martha turning in at the front gate. Somebody said, "Here comes Aunt Martha; we'll let her settle the argument." The young bride consented on condition that she could ask the question in such a way that Aunt Martha would not be prejudiced.

When Aunt Martha had placidly seated herself and had taken out her sewing bag, the younger woman said in a sprightly manner of unconcern, "Aunt Martha, we were just discussing an interesting question when you came in. We would like to hear your opinion about it."

Aunt Martha smiled and said, "What were you talking about?"

The girl said, "If your house was on fire and you woke up in the middle of the night with the fire so far gone you could save either your husband or your children, which would you rescue?"

Without hesitation Aunt Martha warmly said, "The children, of course, my husband is no relation of mine!"

Perhaps most wives wouldn't go quite that far, but all mothers would feel the strength of Aunt Martha's position. The most hallowed relationship humanity can know is that of a family bound together by the ties of love and mutual faith. So when we say that the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the greatest wonder humanity has ever experienced, we are not minimizing parenthood, but rather exalting the miracle of the incarnation.

In the first section of this book we set forth at length the manner in which the law of Mendel illustrates the fact that

the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is essential to our salvation. No human being could save the race from sin. God could not do it as long as He was isolated in the skies, but when God became man, retaining the power of His deity but assuming the companionship of the flesh, the salvation of sinners was assured. Hence we say this is the most important doctrine in the broad field of Christology.

We recognize the fact that the idea of the virgin birth is a mental stumbling block to the natural man. But what fact of revelation is not obscure to the unenlightened mind? The things of the kingdom of God are made known only to the children of God through the medium of the Spirit of God. Hence it is folly to attempt to convince sinful men of the miracle of the virgin birth. Such men will not concede that God can accomplish beyond their comprehension. There is a strange and blind pride which obscures human understanding. We are so complacently content with the fixed horizons of our own great wisdom that it hurts our conceit to admit that there are some things beyond our understanding. For this reason, modernism seeks to trim off every revelation of God which cannot be fitted into a natural explanation, thus bringing the Christian faith to a unitarian level. Such people deny the miraculous and the supernatural as a matter of course. These words are not written in condemnation but in frank acceptance of a very natural condition. We do not expect fish and birds to comprehend each other any more than we expect animals to understand angels. As long as the mind of a human being is shadowed by sin and bound to the service of Satan, that person must expect to remain in mental darkness. We can only recognize the condition and deal with it accordingly.

For these reasons skeptics advance certain arguments against the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ, none of which are able to stand so much as a cursory examination. The first and the commonest of these spurious arguments in refutation of the incarnation I met again on the floor of a certain presbytery some years gone by. A young man had



appeared before our body for examination leading to licensure and ordination in the ministry. It may not be generally known, but no Presbyterian minister can be ordained until he has passed a rigid examination in theology, and has stated his unqualified acceptance of certain cardinal doctrines as taught in the Word of God and demanded by the discipline of the Presbyterian church. Among other things, he must affirm his faith in the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Jesus, the virgin birth of Christ, His death and His resurrection from the dead. Whenever you meet a Presbyterian minister who does not believe in these cardinal doctrines, you have met a man who is either renegade to his ordination vows, or who lied for the purpose of acquiring his ordination.

Evidently the sponsors of this present candidate were dubious as to his chances of success in standing such an examination. The minister who presented him, himself an Auburn Affirmationist, moved that the young man's credentials of graduation from a recognized seminary be accepted in lieu of an examination and that Presbytery proceed to license him.

At once a protest arose from the floor. The discipline states that such credentials may be accepted in place of an examination as to *educational requirements*; but that an examination in theology is arbitrary. And since the candidate had graduated from a seminary whose modernism bordered on infidelity, the majority of this Presbytery insisted on his examination in theology.

They dealt with the young man in a kindly spirit of brotherly consideration, but the farther the examination went the more apparent it became that the young man was not qualified to be a minister of the Gospel. He did not believe in an infallible Book, accepting only certain portions of the New Testament as credible and rejecting the Old Testament almost completely. He believed that salvation was purely a matter of education and had no place in his vocabulary for the word "regeneration."

To clarify this point, I asked him if he would please explain what he meant by salvation. This was his answer, "When a person, through long study, comes to understand all that the death of Christ on the Cross meant for men, he is then a Christian."

I said quite simply, "That makes it hard on me. I have been a Christian a quarter of a century and I still do not know all that the death of Christ includes and implies!"

Sweetly and blandly the young man replied, "Some people learn faster than others!"

There was no answer to that, I had to admit that he had me there!

Questioned as to the virgin birth, the young man stated flatly that he did not believe in it. As to the resurrection, he had a nebulous idea of a spiritual resurrection but, as a matter of course, did not believe in the physical fact.

When the examination was concluded, the examining committee refused to recommend him for licensure and ordination, and a bitter argument ensued on the floor of Presbytery. One brother, advanced in years and more advanced in skepticism, charged that this was a deliberate plan to embarrass this young man because it was known that he did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. This minister, (an active pastor at the time) went so far as to say, "There are many in this Presbytery who do not believe in that particular fable. I myself am one who does not accept it."

I asked the brother, "How then did you become a Presbyterian minister?"

His answer was, "I did accept it in a general way when I was much younger, but have since become educated and no longer hold my previous belief."

Once again I asked, "Do you mind telling us just why you do not believe in the virgin birth?"

"Not at all," he said. "I don't believe in that doctrine because it is only found on two pages of the New Testament; Matthew and Luke are the only ones who ever mention it.

In all the writings of Paul he never introduced the question of the virgin birth. Peter never mentions it in his writings and Jesus was utterly ignorant of any such suggestion. You never find it in a single sentence or statement uttered by Jesus Himself."

"Then tell us," I asked, "what *do* you teach and preach?"

"The Sermon on the Mount," was his instant rejoinder, "that's enough Gospel for anyone."

"Not for me," I answered, "because I don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount!"

If I dropped a bomb in the company, it could not have created more excitement. Somewhat bewildered, this brother asked, "What do you mean when you say that you don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount?"

I answered, "I don't believe that Jesus Christ ever uttered the words that you call the Sermon on the Mount."

Greatly astonished, he said, "Whyever not?"

"Because," I said, "it only occurs on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only men who ever mention it. Paul never talked of the Sermon on the Mount; Peter says nothing about it. James, John and Jude are equally ignorant of it. Now, following your line of reason, *if Matthew and Luke lied about the virgin birth, why should I believe them concerning the Sermon on the Mount?*"

Needless to say, the only result of this discussion was an increase in the uproar. But thus, graphically, we set before you a principle which you do well to contemplate. Who has the wit and wisdom, the insight and spiritual authority to decide which part of the New Testament text is historical and which part is incredible? It seems to me to be a case of all or nothing. If Matthew and Luke are credible historians when they record the event of the crucifixion, or record the Sermon on the Mount, it is crass and arbitrary skepticism to reject their evidence on other points which assail your personal prejudices.

Furthermore, it is not true that Paul never mentioned the virgin birth of Christ. In the fourteen Pauline epistles, the in-

spired apostle calls Jesus the Son of God scores of times. Never once does Paul refer to Joseph, the husband of Mary! May I suggest a humorous illustration of this principle. Read any of the Pauline epistles, substituting the name of Joseph as the father of Jesus wherever Paul names God as His progenitor. Such a technique, for instance, would make chaos of the Roman epistle. Paul would thus begin his dedication to the Romans:

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of JOSEPH, concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of JOSEPH with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;”

Read the entire first chapter that way and see how much help the Scripture is to those who need grace and salvation. Beloved and hallowed passages of this Roman epistle are turned into errant nonsense, *if Joseph was the father of Jesus*. If you do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the next time you are in trouble and you cite Romans 8:28, remember to put it this way:

“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love JOSEPH, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Or, when deep trouble comes upon you and you again seek the consolation of this exalted chapter, begin your reading with verse 31. Remembering now that you do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and that Paul never mentioned this miracle, be careful to read in this fashion:

“What shall we then say to these things? If JOSEPH be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of JOSEPH’S elect? It is JOSEPH that justifieth.”

There is no need to go farther with such arrant nonsense as this, but these few illustrations will serve to show the folly of wresting the Scripture. Paul and Peter, James and John, Mark and Jude, together with every other writer of the divine Book, do mention the virgin birth of Christ. You will find it specifically stated in such terms as I have here suggested, at least thirty-five times outside of the four Gospels. Hence, our skeptical friends are wrong in their contention that Matthew and Luke are the only ones who set forth the teaching of the virgin birth of Jesus.

I hasten to assure you that even if that were so, I would still believe in this doctrine. Matthew and Luke did not write their personal conclusions or opinions. Like all other writers of the Scripture, they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If any one writer of the New Testament passages stood by himself in a clear-cut statement of fact, I would stand upon the record of that one witness. The integrity of the divine Author is behind His emmanuenses, and the insult of unbelief is not directed against Matthew and Luke, but against the Holy Ghost who inspired them to write.

In addition to this, we cannot lose sight of the fact that logic and reason demand a miracle in connection with the incarnation of God. No unprejudiced, open-minded person who is capable of the evaluation of evidence would give more than passing thought to this first argument of infidelity; namely, that Matthew and Luke are the only New Testament writers who mention the doctrine.

The second objection advanced against the fact of the virgin birth is equally spurious. This is the assertion that it is a fable, as proved by the prevalence of such stories so consistently met with in heathen myths in far antiquity. As far back as the times of the Chaldeans there were fables of men who were half God and half human. The folklore of the Greeks, and the mythology of the Romans, abound in such quaint tales. The skeptic says that the Jewish people, surrounded by such fables, invented one of their own to conform to the thinking of their contemporaries; hence, the virgin birth of

Jesus Christ is a Hebrew myth conforming to the pattern of such tales in all ancient systems of worship.

The refutation of this childish argument is self-apparent. The first point is that the Jews could not have invented the myth of the virgin birth *because they still do not believe in it!* Indeed, this is the one great obstacle in the Hebrew mind to the acceptance of the Christian revelation. Their ideas of God as a Spirit are so circumscribed and unyielding they cannot concede the freedom of God to operate outside the limits of rabbinical instructions. More than any other Christian premise, the Jewish religion rejects the story of the virgin birth.

One need not be deeply advanced in the long and bitter history of the Hebrew people to recognize the fact that they are not particularly concerned with conforming to the opinions and beliefs of their neighbors. They are known in all history as an arbitrary and stiff-necked people who will suffer tortures rather than surrender the tiniest item of their faith, and who will die rather than embrace a belief that seems contrary to the interpretations of their law. Hence the argument that the Jews were anxious to conform to contemporary heathen accounts and to adjust their religion to such demands is unscholarly and unhistoric.

The more important refutation of this argument, however, lies in the very manner in which it is stated. It is true that all ancient religions did possess a number of stories of demi-gods who had, on occasion, visited mankind for his alleged benefit and blessing. The explanation of this fact is found in the first promise that was made concerning the virgin birth of Jesus. This takes us back to the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve were standing in the shadow of expulsion therefrom. After the sin and the subsequent fall of man, divine justice, to safeguard holiness, pronounced a curse upon all who had any connection with that sin of rebellion. The man, the woman, and the very earth were to participate in the punishment of that curse which, however, was primarily

directed against Satan. *Before* God pronounced the doom of punishment upon the sinning couple, to Satan he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel."

There is an exact and strange significance in those words "seed of the woman." It has often been pointed out by capable biologists that mammalian "seed" is always in the masculine. It is for this reason that a child bears his father's name and not his mother's. For this reason, inheritance and descent are reckoned through the male line. Therefore, if a human person occurs on the earth who is "seed" of the mother instead of the father, every basic conception of biology is overthrown. It is quite evident that Adam and Eve understood this in a dim sense of the word, for when Cain was born, Eve gave to this child that name, which translated means, "gotten," or "acquired." Her statement was "I have gotten the man, even Jehovah."

So the first promise of a redeemer from the effects and consequence of sin was made when but two people were alive upon the face of the earth. As their race multiplied and was spread widely over that section of the earth, they carried this promise with them. Each generation passed on to the following the holy hope that some day the seed of a woman would appear to be the redeemer of the race. As time fled by and His coming was delayed, the impatient hearts of longing man invented these myths, saying that He *had* come. To the skilled ethnologist the universality of belief in basic myths held by widely isolated peoples, is clear evidence of some historic fact as a premise for that widespread belief. In this case, the premise is an original revelation.

To the parents of all humanity, a great promise was made. Spreading from father to son over multiplied generations, as men journeyed from place to place they carried the tradition in a garbled form. Hence, to clarify the record the prophets of Israel were divinely inspired to restate the premise of the

virgin birth, as they did from time to time. But the universality of belief in the idea clearly argues a primitive revelation, *and sustains the fact of the virgin birth instead of mitigating against it!*

The third general objection is one which we hear largely in educational circles. We are glibly told that this is the student's objection to the Christian faith, in that it implies belief in a biological miracle; and the student mind does not believe in miracles. Incidentally, let us point out that this is not true. When we find this argument advanced by students, *they are invariably quoting the faculty!* It is, then, a faculty objection rather than a student argument. In the course of time a student body becomes a mental echo of the general trend of faculty thinking. Hence, skepticism on a campus is nothing but the reflection of the attitude of mind of the instructors. Students *do* believe in miracles in some form or other. No man can account for the appearance of humanity, apart from the miraculous.

May I illustrate that statement with this stark choice which faces every thinking, reasoning person. There are but two theories to account for the presence of man on the planet Earth. One of these, the Mosaic theory of creation, demands belief in one miracle, namely, the specific, fiat creation of Adam and Eve. Again we define a miracle as "an orderly proceeding on the plane of a law higher than our present comprehension." If we accept the fact of creation, we concede that once God operated with an expression of His sovereignty to set in motion a system of reproduction that has never varied in human history. To this premise there is one single exception, and that exception is the virgin birth of Christ. This means, then, that we frankly concede a miracle to start the generation of the race called human.

The only other alternate theory is that of organic evolution. To accept the theory of creation, we must have faith enough to believe in *one* miracle. To accept the dogma of organic evolution, we must have the stupendous credulity



which will enable us to believe in millions, aye, even billions of miracles! To make that plain, let us remind the reader that evolution does not offer any intelligent account for the *origin* of life. It begins with life already here and postulates a weird and fantastic process of transmutation from one sort of life to another. The study of biology is a fairly exact science. It is only in the interpretation of the facts observed that biologists cease to be scientific. Among the observed phenomena which recur with such frequency as to be accepted biological laws, there is the strange fixity of species. Between every two species there is a line of demarcation that is fixed, impassable, and unalterable. The crossing of that line to produce subsequent and higher species by evolution, would be an act of transmutation. *This has never been observed* in the process of occurring, nor has it been demonstrated by acceptable evidence *to have occurred* in any past time.

It is true that within the limits of every species there is a tendency toward mutation, or variation. This, however, is not organic evolution. That would imply transmutation, and the subsequent rise of new species from simpler underlying forms.

Wassman has demonstrated that if it were possible for one species to transmute to another, it would require a minimum of seventeen hundred mutants or variants for the transmutation of any species into the next higher. Since it is generally *conceded that the vital life period of earth's history, embracing all geological time, has witnessed a probable maximum of one hundred twenty-five million species*, to account for the appearance of man by organic evolution we would have to multiply that number by the mutants required for each transmutation. This would give us 212,500,000,000 *miracles* which we would have to accept to have an intelligent belief in the theory of evolution! Every transmutation would be a violation of natural law. Each one would be a miracle, in that it transgressed the line of demarcation that safeguards a species and keeps it within its fixed, predestined, and divinely determined

limits. I fail to see how the natural man can scoff at the faith of a Christian who believes in one miracle of creation, when the unbeliever accepts multiplied millions of miracles to justify his violation of every known law of biology and every evidence of paleontology, and to cling to the exploded myth of evolution.

Hence it is folly to say that students cannot believe in a biological miracle. The birth of every normal babe is miraculous, to the extent that it is not comprehended within known human law. In my own researches in embryology, I have dealt largely with and have elsewhere written of the mysteries of the mitotic process. In an exact sense of the word, mitosis is always a miracle. It, too, is an orderly proceeding on the plane of a law higher than our present comprehension.

Some time ago I was speaking to one of the greatest medical authorities in my wide acquaintance, the well known Dr. Addison Bernizer, of Charlotte, North Carolina. In the course of the conversation I asked this eminent physician if he believed in the virgin birth of Christ. With specific, earnest emphasis, he said, "Certainly I believe in the virgin birth of Christ. After thirty years of medical practice I find the normal birth of an average child a mystery so profound that my human mind can give no adequate explanation for it. Long ago I decided that until I could thoroughly comprehend the amazing wonder of natural birth, I would have to accept the greater wonder of the incarnation of Jesus Christ purely on the grounds of faith and the statement of evidence inherent in the record of His coming."

Any man of science whose decision was untrammelled by prejudice and wilful skepticism could properly echo that sentiment.

In the study of human reproduction, we note that when the somatic count of chromosomes is halved to the reproductive count and the process of mitosis begins, every embryologist faces an orderly proceeding for which no living authority can give an intelligent explanation. So students in the sciences

deal with miracles with every turn of the focusing screw of their compound microscopes!

Miracles are no stumbling block to God or to those who know Him. Hence, the Scripture boldly and clearly records two biological miracles. They are both recorded and summarized in I Corinthians 15:45 where we read:

“And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

Careless readers hence speak of Jesus as “the second Adam.” This is neither specific nor exact. Jesus is never called the *second* Adam, but is always referred to as the *last* Adam. If there had been a first and a second, there could be a third, a fourth, a tenth, a thousandth, a millionth; but the exact phrase, “the first Adam and the last Adam” speaks of a process which began and terminated with finality.

The first Adam was a biological miracle, in that he had neither father nor mother. But from Adam to Christ no human graced this earth through any other process than that of generation or natural reproduction. Then, when the fulness of the time had come and God was ready to redeem the promise made to Adam and Eve and the seed of the woman was about to appear, another miracle was performed. The last Adam came into the earth with a mother, but with no human father. So then, without equivocation or apology, the Word of God answers the faculty objection which is only reflected in the skepticism of the student, by acknowledging the miraculous.

There were two miracles—Adam and Jesus—and both of them speak of specific creation!

The fifth and final common argument against the credibility of the virgin birth is the mis-statement often heard that the genealogies of Jesus in the New Testament definitely name Joseph as the father of Jesus.

It is astonishing to see that lengthy pamphlets and semi-learned arguments have been written by professional atheists to set forth proof of this alleged fact. Nothing could be

farther from the truth. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke do not connect Joseph with the birth of Jesus. In the genealogy of Matthew, for instance, the writer departs from his fixed phraseology to call attention to *the lack of relationship* between Jesus and Joseph, and to thus denote the peculiarity of Jesus' birth. Beginning with Abraham, Matthew uses the verb "begat" as follows:

"Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; . . ."

and continues the use of this verb to Jacob, who was the father of Joseph. But, in verse 16 of the first chapter of Matthew we read:

"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

So, after using the word "begat" thirty-nine consecutive times, Matthew uses a different phrase to account for the coming of the Saviour.

In all that long record of normal human birth, not once did Matthew fail to use the term "begat." But when he came to the relationship between Joseph and our Lord, Matthew violates his own vocabulary to definitely state that Joseph and Jesus were not related, except that Joseph was the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

In normal language that would mean that Joseph was the step-father of the child, Jesus. That being so, who was his father?

Luke also follows this same precise and scientific accuracy in the genealogy he presents in his third chapter. Matthew started with Abraham and brought that genealogy down to the days of Jesus. Luke began with the time of Christ and worked his way back to Adam, who was formed by the hand of God. In beginning his record of this long line of human reproduction, Luke says, "And Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being (*as was supposed*) the son of Joseph, which was of Heli." The critic very conveniently deletes those three

words "as was supposed," and thus, by wresting the text, claims that Luke clearly stated that Jesus was the son of Joseph. To do this, however, the critic must ignore, repudiate and deny all the preceding record of Luke, namely, chapters one and two and the first twenty-two verses of chapter three. Indeed, the very verse which precedes the statement that Jesus was supposed to be the son of Joseph, states the refutation in these words:

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

Infidelity, however, can only progress by ignoring, warping, or misrepresenting the fact at issue. Hence this is no embarrassment to the critic. But a child who is capable of reading the clear statement of the Scripture would be able to refute the argument that the genealogies, as given in Matthew and Luke, definitely named Joseph as the father of Jesus.

In fact, as far as I know, there are only three occasions in the New Testament record where Jesus is ever called the son of Joseph. The first reference is found in John 1:45 where Philip went after Nathaneal and said unto him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph." This first occasion is a clear illustration of the danger of a new convert telling more than he knows to be a fact. Philip had been a follower of Jesus less than twenty-four hours! Philip had not yet had time to learn the facts of the incarnation, and to him Jesus was merely a prophet, one who had been foretold by the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, out of his ignorance and untutored, childish belief, he did call Jesus the son of Joseph.

The second occasion is recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke. On one of His return visits to Nazareth, the city where He had grown to manhood, Jesus was greeted with such unbelief as made it impossible for Him to work miracles acceptably. While there these unbelievers called Him Joseph's son.

The third occasion follows this general pattern, as the story is given in the sixth chapter of John. The Christ-rejecting murderers, who later conspired to demand His life of the Roman court, cried out against His teachings of deity. They sought to refute His own testimony that He came from heaven, by saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he said, he came down from heaven?"

It might be significant to put those three cases together and remind the modern Christian who does not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, of the questionable company in which He finds Himself. The only people in the lifetime of Christ who ascribed the parentage of Jesus to a man named Joseph were one ignorant believer and a group of wilful, rebellious, Christ-rejecting unbelievers. That would be rather tough company in which to be found, and I prefer to take my stand with all the writers of Holy Writ, and share their belief in the doctrine of the virgin birth.

This gives rise to the query often heard, "If it is true that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, why then do we have two genealogies, and how can you account for the discrepancies between these two?"

In fact it has been argued that the gross and apparent discrepancies in the two genealogies refute the accepted theories of inspiration, in that they form contradictions in the record. The apparent discrepancy is found first in the introduction of Joseph's genealogy by Matthew. This writer begins with Abraham, and shows that Joseph was a descendant of David through Solomon and Rehoboam. Matthew states that Jacob thus descended from David and was the father of Joseph. Now then, if Joseph is not the father of Jesus, why did Matthew bother to give his life of descent? Once again we find that to understand *any* Scripture you must consult *all* Scripture.

When we look to the ancient prophecies and the history of Israel, we find that Matthew gave Joseph's genealogy *to prove*

*that Joseph could not have been the father of the Messiah!* In the eleventh verse of the first chapter of Matthew, we read, "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon." The name Josias is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Coniah." Concerning this man Coniah, or Jechonias, there is a grim passage in Old Testament writings. Coniah led the children of Israel into idolatry. You will remember that he was the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and was in power in the days when Nebuchadnezzar carried away the last of Israel into the captivity of Babylon. Because of his sin in leading Israel into idolatry, God pronounced upon Coniah a curse, as is recorded in the close of the twenty-second chapter of Jeremiah, in these words:

"Oh earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus said the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

This prophecy, of course, was known to Matthew, who was versed in all of the Messianic Scriptures. Now, according to this fiat of God, no descendant of Coniah can occupy the Davidic throne and fulfill the Davidic covenant. Yet, of Jesus, the angel Gabriel said to His mother, Mary, "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever."

This angelic prophecy could never be fulfilled without violating an immutable decree of God, if Jesus were the son of Joseph and, hence, a descendant of Coniah!

It is for this reason Matthew includes the genealogy in his record. He wants to show that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and therefore there was no legal bar to His claim to being the Messiah.

Luke, on the other hand, gives the genealogy of Jesus through His mother, Mary. Matthew states that Joseph's father was named Jacob. A discrepancy has been imagined because Luke begins by saying Joseph was "of Heli." Note

that the Greek text does not say "son of Heli," and the proper reading is "son-in-law." Heli was the father of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus. Messiah must have a Davidic ancestry. Hence Luke traces the descent of Jesus' mother back to David, through the branch of Nathan, the son of David, on whose line there was no curse and no bar to the Davidic throne.

There is, therefore, no conflict, no contradiction, and no ground for the general claim of error. These arguments spring from the ignorance of the objector, and his lack of knowledge of the text and history of the entire Scripture. It is safe to say that no argument can be advanced, concluded, or schemed against the doctrine of the virgin birth, which can stand the light of historical and intelligent investigation.

We have thus dealt with the negative phase of the question to clarify the atmosphere before presenting the positive proof of the fact alleged. There is no evidence against the Scripture doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. Let us now look to the abundant evidence which supports the fact at issue.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

**T**O INVESTIGATE the proof offered in substantiation of a fact that is affirmed, several different lines of inquiry must be followed. But when the evidence derives from the testimony and conduct of reasoning creatures, the best avenue of approach is to consider the psychology involved in their conduct.

Let us first establish beyond controversy that a fact is alleged, and then proceed to its demonstration.

The clear record of the historical documents called the New Testament, written by accredited witnesses who participated in the events of which they write, is the best evidence that intelligence could demand, accept, or receive. The most concise statement of the incarnation of Jesus is recorded by one of these writers in the Gospel of Luke, beginning with the twenty-sixth verse of this first chapter. To refresh your mind, we set before you here the simple, brief, condensed and clear account in Luke's own words:

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,  
To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

It is impossible to read these words and come to any other conclusion than that Jesus was born before Joseph and Mary were married.

The narrator thus specifically states in language that admits of no other interpretation, that the mother of Jesus was a virgin, engaged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph.

To this statement of Luke, the record of Matthew agrees in complete detail. Matthew's testimony to this event is put in these simple words:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."

It is true that Matthew speaks of Joseph as a "husband," and that the angel refers to Mary as a "wife," but this can be consistently accounted for under the Hebrew law of betrothal, which we shall consider a few paragraphs hence. Note now that Matthew also states that His mother Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, but that before this marriage was consummated, she was discovered to be with child *by the action of the Holy Ghost*.

The testimony of these two writers coinciding upon this fact, can be boiled down to this basis:

An angel appeared to a young unmarried woman by the name of Mary, who was engaged to a man named Joseph. The angel saluted her with a gracious benediction, on the ground that she was to become the mother of a Saviour whose name should be called Jesus. The angel further specified that he should be called the Son of the Highest, thus testifying that He derived his incarnation as well as his origin, from Almighty God. When Mary questioned the biological possibility of an unmarried virgin maiden becoming the mother of a child, the angel specifically stated that the miracle would come about by a direct operation of power from the Holy Ghost, and that for this reason the holy thing which should result from this miracle wrought by God, would properly be called the Son of God.

The statement that "nothing is impossible with God," is certainly not open to dispute or debate from those who know anything about the omnipotence which is an attribute of the Deity.

With this thought clearly before us, let us examine into the psychology of the affair. It is impossible to say too much about the psychology of the virgin birth, as motives, as well as conduct, must be considered to properly evaluate this evidence. The Hebrew law of betrothal constituted a binding, legal contract between the parties concerned. In ancient Israel when a man desired to marry, his parents made the arrange-

ments with the parents of the girl. After an agreement was reached, a contract was signed which constituted a statement of intent and the pair were then legally betrothed. Since this was a stringent contract which neither party could break except for the cause of adultery, couples officially engaged were referred to as husband and wife; but the law demanded that a year must elapse between the signing of the contract and the actual marriage ceremony. During that year the girl dwelt with her parents and the man with his, and they never met except under the eye of an accredited chaperon.

So, when the evidence states that Jesus was born while Mary and Joseph were still espoused, it is clear that the birth occurred during that year that the contract of engagement must run.

This contract could be voided only for adultery, in which case the stern law of Israel applied. Every possibility was covered in the series of enactments both Levitical and rabbinical which safeguarded the chastity and honor of the Chosen People. This law stated that if a virgin engaged to be married to a man were discovered to be with child, the man should denounce her before the Council. The officiating priest must then conduct an examination, direct the search for evidence in confirmation, and pronounce the sentence of judgment. The offended lover was to cast the first stone in the subsequent execution, in which all of the community were forced to join.

The exact wording of the basic law in this case was as follows: "If a virgin espoused to a man is found to be with child, he shall denounce her before the council, and they shall stone her with stones till she die; and thus shall ye put out sin from among the people."

Now apply this rigid law to the conduct of Mary, in the light of our knowledge of psychologic reactions. Here is an engaged woman not yet married, who discovers that she is to become a mother. She knows the law, that if this fact becomes known she will be denounced, tried, condemned and executed. Aside from the legal penalty involved, natural womanly modesty would cause her to conceal the fact of her pregnancy.

How did Mary go about hiding this fact? As soon as she was certain that the angel's promise was true, she hastened to her cousin Elizabeth and publicized her condition!

Who was Elizabeth? Why, she was the wife of the officiating priest Zacharias. He, in turn, was the official who would have to conduct the examination and pronounce the sentence of condemnation.

I do not hold with the general theory that no woman can keep a secret; but I do know that it is rare indeed that a woman even desires to keep one from her husband, especially an interesting bit of family gossip like this. Is this the action of a guilty woman? Mary, the unwed, knowing she is to be a mother, runs to the fountainhead of law and judgment to proudly brag of this fact.

The science of psychology (which deals with human reactions) would scorn the very suggestion of guilt in connection with such open unashamed conduct.

Still considering the psychology of the virgin birth, we are reminded of the law of Israel concerning the place in their society of illegitimate offspring. This law is covered in the twenty-third chapter of Deuteronomy, and was bolstered and fortified with numerous rabbinical interpretations. This law stated that an illegitimate child could not become a member of the congregation of Israel. That means that it was cut off from public worship, or service in the temple. The next statement of the law was that it required ten generations to purify the line of an illegitimate offspring, but that his descendants were forever cut off from the priesthood, or the service of God.

Remember that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to be the Saviour of men, and that the Hebrew epistle is built upon the fact of the high-priestly office of Jesus Christ.

In the days of His flesh, although He knew the law, He stood in the synagogue to read the Word of God and to teach the people as One having divine authority. Indeed, the teaching ministry of God has earned for Him the universal name of "The Great Teacher." Although He taught only of God and man's duty toward Him, He lived under the law of which He

Himself was the Author, in perfect obedience to its every demand.

If Christ were not the virgin born Son of God, then we must cross out every written word of His utterance, cast aside the Hebrew epistle, and search for another priest. For He certainly was born before His mother was wed and according to Deuteronomy 23, is thus excluded with all of His descendants from the service of God!

Of equal importance in studying the psychology of this matter is the character of the couple involved. Recall again Matthew's plain story, which is recounted in amazing language. This dramatic episode is depicted in words so delicate as to offer offense to none, and yet is told so plainly it admits of no misunderstanding.

Consider first the mother. She was a virgin with all the connotations that that word implies. Also, she was a maiden of Israel, one who had been reared in a pious home. It is quite evident that she was steeped in the Messianic hope and was deeply learned in the Word of God. We are not guessing or theorizing when we make such statements; they can be abundantly substantiated by analysis of that psalm of Mary, which is called the Magnificat.

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of Messiah, without thought or preliminary preparation she opened her mouth and began to speak. Let those who consider that Mary was a wanton, note her instant reaction to the statement that she was about to become the mother of the expected Redeemer. She begins with the startling words, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Is that the natural innate cry of a guilty heart?

This psalm consists of eleven verses in the New Testament record, but in those eleven verses Mary cites from memory twenty-three separate Old Testament Scripture passages which, in their original form, consist of twenty-six verses. Weaving them into one of the most magnificent utterances ever to fall from human lips, she testified to the fact that, since the mouth

speaks out of the fullness of the heart, her mind was saturated with the Word of God.

It is proper at this point to pay some attention to Joseph. He certainly has a right to be heard. So much honor has been paid to Mary that the character of Joseph has been somewhat neglected in the study of these events. He must have been a most unusual man! Certainly, in picking a step-father for His Son, Jesus, God did not choose at random. Joseph was a righteous man. He also was learned in the Scriptures, and under ordinary circumstances did obey the law of God, even at the cost of personal happiness. The nobility of Joseph's character is testified by his amazing consideration. Even in our days and times, it would be very difficult to find a man who had every reason to believe that he had been foully dealt with, who would conduct himself with such restraint and kindness as Joseph displayed. In spite of the fact that he, being human, naturally concluded that he had been basely betrayed by the woman he loved, he desired to save her from scandal and from certain death.

It is evident that he was by nature restrained and temperate. Instead of flying into justified indignation and hastening to obey the law in accusation of his sweetheart, he spent days and nights in prayer and meditation upon his perplexing problem. He was trying to figure out some way to break the marriage contract without denouncing the woman whom he presumed to be guilty of adultery.

Certainly the conduct of Joseph cries aloud in the strongest terms his complete separation from the act and fact of the conception of the child Jesus. His devout fidelity to the law would not permit him to condone the situation; his love for Mary made him desire to save her from condemnation and death. While he was in this attitude of despair and bewilderment, the heavenly message was given to him, testifying to the miracle by which a virgin woman was to bear this child. Because he, too, believed God, he hastened at once to make special preparations for a legal ceremony. But to safeguard any misconceptions, the historian here records that though

the ceremony was then concluded, *the marriage was not consummated* until after the birth of Jesus.

Remember now that we are considering only the psychology of this matter. In the light of your knowledge of that peculiar science, I would like to have your answer to this question. Is it reasonable to presume that so godly a couple as this would be the parents of an illegitimate child? Or, perhaps I should say, would such pious and godly people naturally be illegitimate parents?

Still pressing our inquiry into the psychology of the matter, let us turn our thought for a moment to the conduct of Mary at Calvary. The sad and tragic history of man contains many dark and somber pages, but no single record of human suffering can compare with that black hour when the Lord Jesus died for the sins of the world. Surrounded by a railing and jeering rabble, all of whom thirsted for His blood, He died untended and alone. The little company of friends who stood in the vicinity of Golgotha were so far away they could offer little comfort, and no help, to Him. Perhaps the most tragic group ever assembled at an execution is described in those words that tell of the little band of faithful women who stood afar off beholding, among which band was His mother, Mary.

Informed early of the fact of her son's arrest, Mary had followed Him as closely as she could press in all of the events of His trial and condemnation. She saw Him spat upon, buffeted, beaten and jeered. She saw him scourged, mocked, and crowned with thorns. Her heart broke when He staggered under the weight of the heavy cross, and her flesh also cringed when the lash fell upon His. After His torture and condemnation, Mary followed along as closely as the guard would permit, to the place of execution. When they arrived at Calvary, this mother stood there and watched while they spread her son out upon a wooden cross and spiked Him to its beams with iron nails. As those cruel spikes pierced His palms, undoubtedly she remembered them as they were in babyhood, patting her cheek as she cuddled and caressed the child Jesus.



Every memory of His boyhood flooded her mind when they held Him up against the sky to die.

Why did they treat Him so?

Let the record speak.

Caiaphas, who conducted His trial, condensed the indictment into these few words, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because being a man, He said He was the Son of God."

Never lose sight of this in all your studies of Christology. They crucified Jesus Christ for just one offense, namely, *He claimed that God was His father*. This constituted blasphemy under the law of Israel, and by that law, if His claims were not true, He well deserved to die.

Among the mob who surrounded that cross, *Mary knew the truth of the matter* above and beyond any other person. If Jesus were not the Son of God, she becomes the most despicable parody on womanhood that degrades the pages of history. I do not mean so much in connection with the fact of the birth of Jesus, although that would be bad enough.

Joseph says, "This is not my child."

The critic says, "He is not virgin born."

Then the only other conclusion is that He was the nameless fruit of his mother's sin, and she was a drab of the gutter.

But, far worse is the fact that if this were so, *the mother stood with her mouth shut and allowed a son to be tortured and slain to save her own reputation!*

No psychologist will concede the possibility of such conduct. Perhaps it is poor policy for a man to write on the psychology of motherhood. Men can know little of this deep subject, for no man has ever been a mother. And yet men *can* speak upon this theme, for most men remember a mother. We all agree with the basic philosophy of Kipling's famed poem, "Mother o' Mine." We also know that if we were hanged on the highest hill or drowned in the deepest sea, there would be one whose love and compassion would follow us to the bitter end.

In the light of this certainty, we can distil one unadulterated fact from all past human history. No mother would have stood in silence, as Mary did, to save her own reputation, if her son was being tortured and slain in defense of a lie she could refute.

Beyond question, Mary could have stopped the crucifixion at any point. Before the Sanhedrin, or in the Roman Court, she could have stepped out and said, "I will name this man's father." That would have blasted the claim of Jesus to deity, would have forced Him to retract His contention, and thus His life would have been spared.

The only explanation of the silence of Mary is that Jesus died for a fact clearly stated. *He was the Son of God.* Joseph or no other man had any remote connection with the birth of the man Jesus. It was an incarnation, if the proofs of psychology can be accepted.

Finally, in this connection, we have the testimony of the prophet Simeon and the prophetess Anna. Eight days after the birth of Jesus, He was carried by His parents, according to the law, to be dedicated in the temple. Being the first-born, He must be presented to God and a sacrifice of the turtle doves or young pigeons must be made.

At that time there dwelt in Jerusalem a man whose name was Simeon. He was noted for his piety and devoutness, and for the fact that the Holy Ghost rested upon him in the ministry of the things of God. The Holy Ghost had revealed to this man that he should not die until he had first seen the Christ of God. On the day of the presentation of Jesus, Simeon was led by the Holy Ghost into the temple, and when Christ was presented in obedience to this ceremony, Simeon took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." His paean of praise went far beyond anything a devout Jew might be expected to express, for he said that this child should be a light to lighten the Gentiles and should become the glory of the people of Israel. Then Simeon, still filled with the Holy Ghost, turned and blessed Mary, the mother, and Joseph the step-father. It is quite evident that

the Holy Ghost must have slipped here, if Jesus was not the virgin born Son of God!

I mean no disrespect in the exact wording of that statement, for the Spirit of God had inspired the writing of the law which condemned the illegitimate child and barred him from presentation in the temple. Yet, here the Holy Ghost, through the prophet Simeon, brings a specific blessing upon the guilty man and woman, if the virgin birth of Christ is a myth.

At the same time, in the service of the temple, there was an elderly widow who dwelled there serving God both day and night. When she saw the child Jesus in the company of Mary and Joseph, this prophetess also gave glory and honor to God, recognizing that now was born the One Who should some day be the Redeemer of all Israel.

The summary of these things is an inescapable conclusion that in the light of psychology at least the virgin birth of Christ is an attested fact. To question it is to admit a prejudice which can be rooted only in ignorance, as there is no evidence to refute the sober, clear, concise history which the Gospel presents.

We do not mean to intimate that all evidence of the virgin birth is thus inductive or psychologic in nature. There is abundant and positive proof to support the fact alleged, the base of which evidence would be resident in the positive promises of God.

We have already introduced the significance of the primal revelation and promise in Genesis 3:15. Reverting to that to further develop its importance, let us remember that the promised Seed, who is to derive life from the woman instead of the man, was destined to suffer under Satan and to conquer him in the end. That is to say, though the Devil should bruise the heel of the Seed, the Seed should crush the head of Satan. It is extremely significant thus to read in Hebrews 2:14:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Now, add to this the words of I John 3:8:

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

This Seed, Who was to come in human flesh in order that He might destroy the devil who has the power of death, is identified by John as the Son of God:—He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

Of course, that destruction is not yet complete, but that fact is clearly dealt with in Romans 16:20. Here Paul salutes the church with the great, comforting, and war-like promise—“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!” The final stroke of doom does not come upon the enemy of men until the church of Christ, which is His body, is complete, and can share in that ultimate triumph.

So, when God promised to a sinful race a redeeming Seed coming through a woman, identified as the Son of God and the destroyer of Satan, we are limited to the one man, Jesus, in searching for one who can fit in that picture.

No inquiry of this nature could progress far without considering the great and most outstanding prophecy of this event recorded in the entire Old Testament. This, of course, would be Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet writes:

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

We all understand that the word “Immanuel” means “God is with us.” Here is a clear-cut prophecy concerning the coming of the Redeemer, which has been a great embarrassment to every enemy of Christianity and every foe of the Saviour Himself. It is the fashion to argue that the word “virgin” in the Hebrew text merely means a young woman, and has nothing to do with chastity. This is a deliberate falsification or, at best, a mis-statement of fact.

What sign would there be to a nation in a young woman becoming a mother? That has happened so many millions of times in past history no man can estimate their number. This

birth is to be one that will startle the world, and give evidence of the fulfillment of a covenant of God! Also, it shall result in a person so holy, men shall look at him and say, "God walks among us."

Nor will it do to say that this promise of a coming Son, who was to be a sign, was made to King Ahaz and was fulfilled in his day. This is the common refutation of modernism, and is based upon a following verse which says,

"For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

No intelligent and honest student of Scripture would have to seek far to find the explanation of this apparent difficulty. The commonest law of interpretation is that every text shall be studied in the light of its context. Hence, we go to the opening verses of the seventh chapter of Isaiah and get the historical background and setting for this prophecy. We thus remember that in the days of Ahaz, who was king of Judah, the king of Syria and the king of Israel formed a military alliance to exterminate Judah, and then laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz, whose capital was the fortified city of Jerusalem, was deeply concerned and stirred. He knew that he could not prevail against the combined might of Syria and Israel, and, in deep distress, he walked the paths of the city meditating upon his plight.

To answer his prayers, God sent the prophet Isaiah to him with a message. The Lord instructed Isaiah to take with him his infant son, Shear-jashub, and meet the king by the upper pool. Here Isaiah intercepted Ahaz, and told him to be of comfort and courage: that God would be his help and his defense. Seeing the disbelief on the face of the king, Isaiah continued by saying, "The Lord also instructed me to say, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above."

But the despondent king replied, "I will not ask, neither will I test the Lord."

Now, note the impasse. God had sent a message to Ahaz which the king is reluctant to obey. To help his faith, God then offered a sign which the king said he would not accept. Therefore, the prophet turned from Ahaz and spoke to the entire nation of Judah saying:

“Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign.”

To whom now is Isaiah speaking? To Ahaz? No. Ahaz has said, “I will not take a sign.” Therefore, the prophet interpolates a message to the entire nation, saying, “The Lord will give *you* a sign.” Then he uttered the significant promise of a virgin born Redeemer.

At once Isaiah turned back to the problem of Ahaz. Remember that he had been instructed to take with him his own toddling son, Shear-jashub, who at that time was about one and one-half years of age. You see, *there are two children* in the seventh chapter of Isaiah, one named Immanuel, the other named Shear-jashub. Placing his hand upon the head of his own tiny son, Isaiah then said to Ahaz, “Before *this* child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.”

History certainly vindicated that astonishing prediction of the prophet Isaiah. Before his eighteen-months-old son had reached the age of the conscious knowledge of the difference between right and wrong, Syria and Israel had been overrun by the Assyrian conqueror, and the domain of Ahaz was thus saved.

*But not for more than seven hundred years was the other prophecy fulfilled!*

It is quite evident that we have a disagreement between authorities here, for Matthew, in writing about the birth of Jesus, specifically said, “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is ‘God with us.’” It seems to be a matter of a choice of

authorities. Matthew said that the birth of Jesus was a complete fulfillment of the specific prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The infidel says there is no connection between the two. I think I would be pardoned if I accepted Matthew, an eye-witness, who had personal knowledge of the facts involved, as a better source of evidence than any modern scholar who was born nineteen hundred years too late to know what he was talking about.

There is another definite and conclusive prophecy of the virgin birth which I have never heard an infidel attempt to refute. This is the famed passage in Jeremiah 31:22. This chapter deals with a prophecy of Israel's restoration and the subsequent rejoicing of the nation. It goes on to a promise of the coming of Christ and the new covenant that will be made with the people of God after His coming. In announcing the advent of the Redeemer Jeremiah states:

"How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man."

That this is a message to the entire Hebrew race is evidenced by the prophet's phrase "backsliding daughter." Frequently in Old Testament utterances the Jews are thus denominated. But the promise that by a specific creation a new event shall transpire, one which earth had never before witnessed, is a definite statement of the coming of the Saviour. His coming shall necessitate a specific creation, *for a woman shall produce a man*. Certainly this would be a unique and unprecedented phenomenon; that a mother should be the father of her own babe!

This is the significance, however, of Jeremiah's strange and perplexing prophecy. It can only be understood and interpreted in the light of later history. God redeemed this promise when Jesus was born in accordance with this prophecy.

There is a strange tendency upon the part of many modern writers, to draw proof of the probability of the virgin birth of our Lord from various fields of biology. Direct cell-division, as in the case of certain protozoa, or the phenomenon of

partheno-genesis, so often seen in insect reproduction, are cited as parallel cases proving the virgin birth of Jesus to be scientifically credible. All of this is beside the point, and such arguments are most unfortunate, to say the least.

The simple fact of the matter is that the birth of Jesus Christ was a miracle: and there is no comparable occurrence in nature. It has pleased the Creator to establish many quaint and fascinating methods by which the various orders of living creatures reproduce their kind, but none of them are of the same nature as the method of the incarnation of Christ. Nowhere in the natural order does the Holy spirit "overshadow" the insects which operate by parthenogenesis, for instance, and in the case of a queen bee, the action and help of the male bee is necessary to begin the process.

We weaken our case when we attempt to bolster it with such far-fetched illustrations. The evidences which support the fact of our Lord's remarkable advent need no help from outside sources, they are sufficient in themselves! It is far wiser to simply state the case, admit that the virgin birth of Jesus was a miracle, and rest upon the clear word of God.

We have then, as positive proof of the virgin birth of Jesus:  
 The definite, direct and specific promises of God;  
 The supernatural events which accompanied the birth of Jesus;  
 The clear testimony of the angel Gabriel;  
 The unmistakable statements of Matthew and Luke;  
 The psychology of the parties involved;  
 The conduct of Mary at Calvary,  
 And the claims of Jesus Himself!

What evidence can be produced at this late and remote time in history that will warrant our rejection of so weighty and credible a list of evidence?

Let the critic answer.

We know of none.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer of man, can be accounted for solely on the grounds of an incarnation, which implies the virgin birth.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE GOD-MAN

**T**HUS we come to the consideration of one of the most unfathomable mysteries which ever confronted the human mind. This is the problem of the two natures of Jesus Christ.

In this present study, which of necessity must be both simple and concise, we should deal with the reality of each nature, as well as with its perfection. Thus, when we approach the study of the humanity of Jesus, we are forced to concede its actuality.

Through innumerable revelations of Himself, made by His intimates and derived from His own utterances, we deem it proper to speak of "Jesus Christ the man." In fact He so called Himself with consistent regularity, as is recorded twenty-seven times in the Gospel of Matthew alone. This biographer states that Jesus referred to Himself as "the Son of man." This name was derived from the Old Testament text, and was an appellation which the God of Israel used to designate certain of his prophets. Hence Jesus, in His prophetic office, would be quite likely to assume this name.

The most common occurrence of this high designation is found in the prophecy of Ezekiel, beginning with the second chapter. When this notable priest was commissioned as a prophet, we have God speaking to Ezekiel in these words:

"Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee."

"Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that have rebelled against me."

"Moreover he said unto me, Son of man eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel."

"Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me."

"But thou, oh Son of man, behold they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house."

It is highly significant that in addressing Ezekiel as "son of man," God emphasizes the fact that he was divinely called and commissioned to go to the children of men as God's specified representative. In so going he was to exercise no originality, but was just to utter the words which God gave him to speak. These words were to be a warning of judgment to come, if immediate grace and forgiveness were not accepted on God's own terms.

This prophet was to suffer persecution, arrest, imprisonment and pain, under all of which he was to remain dumb, allowing human conduct to constitute the basis of its own judgment in the wrong done against him. Eighty-two times in this one prophecy, Ezekiel is thus denominated the "son of man." Since his ministry thus anticipated with an amazing exactitude the later ministry of Christ, it is no wonder that Jesus adopted the name to Himself. He taught an equally rebellious Israel in His day concerning the highway that would lead to salvation, if they would walk therein. The meaning of the name is literally, "a commissioned prophet," and is highly significant on the lips of Jesus in the light of many New Testament passages.

In the third chapter of the Ephesian epistle, Paul specifically states that the Christian Gospel was made known unto men in New Testament times by a definite revelation from God, just as in other ages certain facts of God were revealed unto the sons of men. Thus God's will was made known to the race through His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. So

then, all of the prophets who did the work and the will of God, could properly take the name "Son of man." Collectively they are called in New Testament writing, "the sons of men." These are they who received the revealed will and word of God and passed them on to men. But it must be one living in human flesh, and representing God to men, who could be properly called, "Son of man."

Thus Jesus testified to the reality of His human nature, when He used this term designating a commissioned prophet as a personal description of Himself.

All who knew Jesus bore equally definite testimony to the reality of His humanity. John the Baptist, in announcing the coming of the Lamb of God, said "This is he of whom he said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me and he was before me." At the same time, the Baptist testifies that He was also the Son of God, but puts his emphasis in the first instance upon the humanity of Jesus, calling Him a man!

In Peter's famed sermon on Pentecost he also addressed these words to the nation:

"Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

In the following verses Peter hastens to announce also the pre-existence and deity of this "man," but he does not scorn to use the term that denominates humanity in speaking of Jesus.

In like manner the Apostle Paul, writing to his beloved son Timothy, speaks of the one acceptable channel of approach to God in these words:

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all."

Of course the apostle later presses on to the higher conclusion that Jesus Christ is both God and Saviour, and calls Him specifically by the names which pertain to deity, for he also

emphasizes the fact that Jesus Christ had a humanity which was definite and real.

This is further evidenced when we recognize that Jesus possessed the two essential elements of a human being. He had a material body and a rational soul. I am not attempting to clarify the inscrutable, I am merely accepting a fact of revelation which gives us great comfort and hope and enhances our certainty of salvation. It strengthens our faith when we remember that Jesus Christ is a high priest who can be touched with understanding of our infirmity, because He Himself passed through every vicissitude of human experience. He knew the weight and burden of a body of flesh, which must have been an added weariness to a spirit that had functioned from eternity in the form and substance of God. The keen operation of His mentality, in addition to His responses to human need, showed Him to be a reasoning being, and marked the depth and expanse of the greatness of His soul.

He was moved by the common principles, and exercised all of the powers, that are normal to humanity. He tasted of every tragedy that the average human being is called upon to undergo, and He knew every joy that is within the scope of human possibility to experience.

For instance, to show in a practical manner that Jesus Christ possessed a normal human nature, we read in Matthew 4:2 that when He had fasted forty days and nights He was desperately hungry. So then, the human nature of Jesus knew the weakness and suffering that comes from lack of food. No hungry human who takes upon his lips the ancient prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread," is speaking to a God who is devoid of understanding of that basic cry.

In John 4:7 we read that as He journeyed the dusty roads of Palestine His body experienced a great and overpowering weariness. Although they were within a few hundred yards of Sychar, He sat on the curb of the well to rest and recover His strength, while His more hearty disciples pressed on to the village in pursuit of food. Tired by the long journey, and

worn by the heat of the day, the human Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "I thirst, give me to drink." Prophetic, perhaps, were these words; and once again a very human and suffering Saviour cried from Calvary's tree—"I thirst."

On that occasion He could not go on from that basic and universal human need to offer to men the water of life; He had to be content to suffer there in the agony of thirst, that His blood might be the fountain that should alleviate all future human suffering.

Because He was distinctively human, Jesus was also under the need of sleep. Perhaps the saddest words that ever came from His lips, were spoken when Jesus stood in the gathering dusk and said,

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head."

Many were the weary nights that He wrapped Himself in His mantle and lay on the hospitable ground under the canopy of kindly stars to refresh His wearied body.

Jesus Christ manifested also the very human tendency of love for His own kind. Sometimes He fell in love at first sight, as in the case of the young man in the tenth chapter of Mark. Talking to this rich young inquirer, Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him." On other times the love that Jesus manifested in a human sense came from years of fellowship and companionable association. Thus we read in John 11:5, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Here was a home which had undoubtedly entertained Him often. Whenever His program permitted, He turned to the shelter of that abode in Bethany, and refreshed His spirit with the companionship and communion of other human beings, whom He had learned to love.

The natural human instinct of compassion was depicted in the career of Jesus. In Matthew 9:36 we read, "But when He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion on them, because they faltered, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd."

Even more significant, perhaps, is the fact that Jesus was capable of manifesting anger, and on more than one occasion was moved by this strong force. Reporting how His enemies sought to charge Him with violation of the law, because He healed a suffering human on the Sabbath day, Mark states,

"And when He had looked round about on them with anger being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He said unto the man, stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

The classical example of the manner in which Jesus could be moved by anger, is unquestionably recorded in the episode of the cleansing of the temple. With flashing eyes and stern words of denunciation springing from His lips, He plied a whip with an arm made muscular by a score of years in a carpenter's shop. Men fled in terror, both from His whip and from His denunciation, unable to face the anger which they knew to be justified because of their misconduct.

And thus we read that Jesus as a man, feared, groaned, was made perfect through suffering, wept tears of bitterness and anguish and, more than anything else, frequently had recourse to prayer. Every principle that actuates humanity was His motive at some time or another, except selfishness and sin; and He exercised every power that is normal to the human being.

We do wrong when we minimize the manhood of the Master, in order to exalt the deity of Christ. There is room and place for both of these great principles, which can be correlated with the aid of Scripture and some spiritual understanding.

The man Jesus was subject to certain laws of human development. In the bewildering passage of Luke 2:52, the statement is made that He grew both in body and in spirit. We can understand the bodily growth of a babe that came by a supernatural conception, but it will ever remain a profound mystery to the clouded human intellect that Jesus grew also in spirit. The spirit which inhabited His earthly body must

have been derived from His basic nature and the most intelligent and enlightened student of Holy Writ confesses himself baffled before this enigma. But the Word of God further states that Jesus, while growing, also learned. In the same passage in Luke He learned wisdom; in Hebrews 5:8, He learned obedience. This statement brings us once more to a point where we are faced squarely with a confessed limitation of the finite mind in its attempt to grasp the infinite. We can only presume that for the purposes of redemption, and in order that He might be able afterward to say that He had shared every experience of humanity, the human Jesus went through a very normal development.

This process, however, was divinely accelerated to such a point that at the age of twelve He knew more of the things of God than the learned leaders of Judaism.

Every earth-bound mortal who finds himself in the deep and bitter experience of temptation can take comfort from the human Jesus. It is said of Him in Hebrews 2:18 "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." This principle is applied to the mediatorial work of Christ. Note Hebrews 4:15, 16, where the Spirit of God says,

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Again the fifth chapter of Hebrews tells the weary and oppressed that Jesus can have compassion on the ignorant, can reasonably bear with them who slip in the way, for that He Himself felt the pressure of infirmity bearing upon Him. This is the exact significance of the second verse of that chapter, which continues to deal with the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

It is a startling thought, indeed, that Deity would deliberately subject Himself to a cycle of life in a body which could

suffer, withstand temptation and taste of all the deep despair which characterizes man's battle against the powers of the Devil.

This humanity of Christ was also illustrated in the fact that as a son, He was made perfect through this very suffering. In Hebrews 2:9, 10, we have this mysterious and perplexing statement:

"But we see Jesus who for a little was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Jesus Christ, who is the forerunner of all who are saved, has entered into Heaven in His priestly character; seated at the right hand of God, He holds out an encouraging hand to every tempted human, saying, "I also lived in a body of flesh; endured every kind and degree of temptation that mortal man can feel. Because I trusted in a Heavenly Father and spent my life following His will, I prevailed, I conquered, I ascended. That same course of victory is open to you who battle against evil in My Name and by My power."

We can thus dimly sense a little of the underlying reason for the humanity of Jesus; a fact which no intelligent Bible student would seek to set aside. It was demonstrated in the face of all history when Christ endured physical death in agony and shame. Volumes have been written about the suffering Saviour, but no book has ever said more than Luke said in this one short and simple verse,

"And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Jesus Christ knew the salty taste of pain. He had a body whose every nerve was racked with an anguish which parched His



throat and dried His lips, so that He cried out from the depths of His suffering, "I thirst!"

The spirit of modern man cannot endure an inquiry into the anguish of Jesus which lays bare all of its ghastly details. We can only say that Deity does not die and is not subject to pain, but God brought Himself exquisitely near to the entire human race when He Himself suffered a physical death in torment indescribable, that He might be the companion of all who would thereafter walk through the dark valley of its grizzly shadow.

So we say, as to the human nature of Jesus, it was real!

That reality cannot be questioned if we remain true to the evidence.

There remains, then, only the consideration of its perfection. There is no other word which would suit a descriptive statement of the humanity of Christ. We use the word "perfect" with all of its common connotations and in accordance with your understanding of that term. Perfection is so rare that our modern proverb, "No man is perfect," is accepted as axiomatic. This, however, is not quite true—the man Jesus Christ was perfect. This was inevitable in view of the fact that His body was supernaturally conceived.

Following the evidence presented by Matthew and Luke, and the statements illuminating the miracle which we read in the epistles of the New Testament, we can understand how the Son of God could rise above the limitations of the flesh and a human nature, and live a life that was perfect and sinless in all things.

This perfection is manifest in the manner in which Jesus was free from the inherited depravity and from actual sin. That He was thus sinless is shown by every evidence, both actual and inductive, which can be derived from the New Testament text.

In the first place, although He advocated a holy, unswerving obedience to the divine law, Jesus never offered sacrifice for Himself. Indeed, He could not! He who came to be the Lamb

of God needed no lamb. The lamb of the sacrifice was offered to cover the sins of the worshipper and must itself be unspotted and unblemished. If, therefore, a lamb needed a lamb to make it acceptable to God, there would be neither beginning or ending to the cycle of confusion ensuing. No other person who lived within the circle of the law of Moses could ever say, "He needed to offer no sacrifice for sin." But this man could, although he was born a Jew and lived a Jewish life under a Jewish law in a Jewish land. To the end of His days, He never offered sacrifice for sin.

It is equally interesting to note that Jesus never prayed for forgiveness. He often sought the face and the presence of His Father in holy communion, but when He prayed, He talked to God as an equal and a fellow. To the disciples Jesus gave the admonition: "When ye pray, say, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." These words He never uttered for Himself. He owed no debts—either moral, spiritual or physical. None need pray for forgiveness unless their conduct is offensive toward God and violates His holiness.

Such action can certainly not be charged against the human Jesus, which evidences beyond question that His humanity, though real, was perfect.

It is equally startling to note that Jesus taught the necessity of regeneration for all except Himself. In John 3:7 the Saviour used the strongest, most imperative word in the vocabulary of His day when He said, "Ye must be born again." Jesus did not recommend regeneration as an admirable experience or a commendable experiment. He didn't say—"you ought to be"—"you should"—or, "you would like it." He used the conclusive finality of the word "must" when He talked of regeneration for every human on the face of this earth.

The imperative necessity of regeneration applied with equal force to the eleven faithful apostles and the base and treacherous Judas. Mary, the mother of Christ, together with all of the noble, courageous and loving band of women who at-

tended Him in His lifetime, watched His death and conducted His burial, equally needed regeneration.

But Jesus Christ was never born again, nor was He under the necessity of this means of permanent redemption from sin. That which is imparted to the Christian by regeneration, was inherent in Jesus by nature. This naturally resulted in perfection, regardless of the form or substance in which Jesus was clothed at any cycle of His experience. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Hence, while human, He was the perfection of humanity, as He was perfect in all things pertaining to His career.

So conscious was Jesus of His human perfection, that when He stood surrounded by His enemies He boldly challenged them to produce proof of any error in belief or conduct of which He had ever been guilty. This is a startling act, when we remember that His teachings went contrary to the accepted trend of rabbinical interpretations. Again and again the tyrannical hierarchy of Israel charged Him with violating the law of Moses. On each such occasion He cited the law and showed Himself to be the only one of the group who fully comprehended its intentions and its applications. His life was an open one and nothing that He did was done in secret. He shouted His criticisms and comments from the housetops. The very hills re-echoed His astonishing teachings. Shrewd doctors of the law studied His every word and deed under the keenest scrutiny that hate could provide, hoping to find legal accusation against Him. No other life that ever lived could have withstood that microscopic examination, but Jesus Christ emerged from the crucible of that survey with reputation untarnished and character unblemished. Truly, the humanity of Christ was as perfect as it was real.

The life of Jesus depicted an ideal that has never since been achieved. There have been holy and godly men who have astonished the world with the unselfish plane of sacrificial living which they achieved by following the example of Jesus, but none has yet come up to the ideal set by His conduct.

Nineteen centuries of more or less constant progress have lifted the levels of living among civilized people by many notable degrees, yet after those long years the life of Christ is still recognized as the perfect moral pattern for all ages and all races. Even the godliest of the saints of Christ who live today cannot walk the highway of holiness which He daily trod. The humanity of Jesus was perfect.

This can probably be explained by the fact that He possessed a human nature that apparently found its personality through union with a divine nature. Thus, perfection was the inevitable result. We do not mean to say that there was confusion between, or amalgamation of, the two natures of Jesus; we admit (as the Westminster Confession maintains) that the two natures of Christ were not converted into one. It was inevitable, however, that since Jesus did have the nature of God, both before and while He temporarily possessed the nature of man, the force, and strength, and power, of His eternal Being should have been reflected through the natural life that He lived.

It is difficult to find words to express that which is confessedly incomprehensible to the human intelligence. When we talk about the second nature of Jesus, it sounds as though we are exalting one above the other. It is equally confusing to say, "The other nature of Christ." Therefore in presenting any study of the two natures, the simplest way out of the dilemma is to say, we turn now to a survey of the second portion of the subject. For as certainly as Jesus had a human nature, which was real and perfect, so also He manifested and displayed deity in a parallel existence.

There are many men who are gifted with various talents which they exercise in close co-operation. There are men who live two lives, one open and the other concealed from the sight of their fellowmen. The two talents may not be exercised simultaneously, and two lives may not be lived identically. Christ rose above every limitation of time and sense and did possess two natures which were manifested and

exhibited simultaneously. In a previous chapter, we have covered the field of the reality and perfection of the deity of Jesus, so now we merely remind ourselves that Jesus in His earthly life possessed and advertised a knowledge of His own deity. We repeat here the classical illustration which is found in John 14:7-11:

“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.”

If Christ could thus say, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” He must have been actuated by a keen sense of this phase of His nature, and also supremely conscious of His identity as God.

Throughout all of His ministry the man Jesus exercised, manifested and displayed divine powers and prerogatives. As creation's Lord, He commanded nature and twisted the forces of earth, sky and sea into obedience to His commands. Thus He exercised the powers of God.

While He walked the earth in flesh He accepted the worship of men, in some cases inviting that homage. In so doing, He usurped the prerogative of God.

This was possible only to One Who had a serene sense of His own supernal person and who felt that God was not only in Him, but that He Himself was God.

So we conclude this thought by stating that the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus had two natures. Each one was un-

altered in essence and possessed its normal attributes and powers. At the same time the Word of God insists with equal clarity that Jesus was a single undivided person and asserts that in Him these two natures were vitally and inseparably united. But since this union of the two natures was accomplished without conversion or weakening of either, Jesus Christ cannot be spoken of as God and man. The only proper descriptive title history can apply to the man Jesus Christ, is to call Him the God-man.

In all of His teaching and ministry, Jesus never speaks of Himself in the plural, as did God in the creation of man. He makes no differentiation of "I" and "thou" in the conversations concerning Himself and God, but recognizes a unity of personality existing between the Father and the Son. He assures us that God became flesh, instead of saying that God came in the flesh. Thus, single personality resulted that was inseparable from the fact of deity, yet manifested in a perfect humanity. All the attributes and powers of both the natures of Christ are ascribed to the one Jesus. And the works and dignity of the unique Saviour are ascribed to either of the natures, or both. Hence we face a paradox:

The God-man existed  
before Abraham:

But was born of a woman  
in the reign of Augustus:

The Jesus Who wept, hungered,  
suffered and died:

Is the same yesterday, today  
and forever.

A divine Saviour redeemed us from sin on Calvary:  
The human Jesus is with His followers to the end.

Put all of this together and it adds up to this significant sum: The value and the efficacy of Calvary are rooted in the fact that Jesus was not a Man-of-God, but was the God-man.

Somewhat bewildered by this presentation, you would probably like to ask the writer, "Do you comprehend this mystery?" I would answer the question with a simple and direct, "No."

It is for this reason that I believe it. I accept and worship a Jesus whom I do not understand, for this is His greatest evidence of Godhood. It is axiomatic that no container will hold anything beyond its capacity. I need a God whom I can worship and serve, who is greater than my mentality. If I could understand God, He would then be no bigger than my intellect, which is far too puny for me to worship. Hence the classical statement prevails: "If we could understand God, we wouldn't need God." It is largely because God is far above and beyond the grasp of any human reason that I am convinced of His reality and supernal power. I lose myself in the immensity of a sufficient Saviour, Who is so much greater than I that I can with confidence and trust cast myself upon His mercy and grace.

So I thus accept the Jesus of the New Testament, Who is the Christ of history, the Son of God and the sufficient Saviour of men.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MAGNIFICENT PROPHET

**M**ANY poetic names are ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures. Many divine attributes are attributed to Jesus and every holy office is conferred upon Him.

In the full revelation of God to man, which is made through God the Son, three specific offices are apportioned to Christ, all of them synchronizing to produce the final, complete and effective salvation. In the orderly operation of these offices, man is redeemed, the earth and all physical creation is released from the bondage of sin, and God is exalted, in that His Will becomes supreme in every sphere of existence.

These three offices, commonly set forth in the Scripture as being the channels of Christ's work for lost men, denominate Him to be prophet, priest and king. They are set forth in that exact order because the prophet must do his work before the priest can function, just as the priest must be a forerunner in preparation for the reign of the king. So the prophet prepares the heart of man for the office that the priest shall perform, and the priestly office, in turn, makes men fitted to be citizens in the kingdom over which Jesus shall reign.

As in all of the works of God prophecy is limited to deity, hence prophecy is always the voice of God. Satan has made many attempts to counterfeit the miracle which God has continually wrought in His dealings with men, but all efforts to prophesy, apart from the Spirit of God, have been deceitful and have ended in failure. The words of a prophet are never his own. With a unanimity that is convincing, these men who were the spokesmen for the Almighty, disclaimed originality. The utterances of prophets are never the production of their own thoughts or desires, nor do they express the



considered and orderly opinions of men who derive their conclusions from observations of current events. The prophet always quotes from a higher source, often speaking quite contrary to his own beliefs and desires. Generally he is so opposed to the current pattern of thought in his own generation that he risks his very life in speaking.

Classical illustrations of this principle will be seen in such experiences as were endured by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who suffered bondage, persecution and ostracism for refusing to conform to the current assertion of their age. These men thus had a foretaste of the bitter cup which Jesus drained to the dregs. Having aroused the animosity of the leaders of their nation and being martyred because of their fidelity to God, the prophets of old were also fore-runners of the apostles, who also earned death by insisting on uttering the words of Jesus, which opposed the teachings of men. So prophets and apostles shared with Christ the penalty of obedience to God and His word.

It is significant that the theme of all prophecy is Messiah and His coming Kingdom. The prophets of Old Testament times only touched upon Gentile nations and their affairs as these had some bearing upon the history and economy of Israel. In turn, they spoke to Israel only of God's will for her, warning her of punishment for disobedience, assuring her of the coming of her Redeemer, and promising her restoration upon repentance.

Old Testament prophecy climaxed with the writings of Malachi. After Malachi there came no prophet until the days of John the Baptist. To this strange character it was given to be the greatest of all forerunners, as he could point directly to Jesus Christ, Who fulfilled all prophecy.

From Moses to Malachi, every prophetic finger was pointing to the distant day when One should come. The holy pleasure which all prophets must have coveted was given to John, namely, that of seeing the prophecy fulfilled. John could lay hands upon the fleshly accomplishment of two thousand years

of prophetic utterances and say, "This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It is significant that Malachi spoke of the coming of John. In the first verse of his third chapter, this man, who was the last of the Old Testament forerunners of Messiah, definitely said:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, . . ."

Thus, the last Old Testament prophet speaks of the first New Testament prophet who, in turn, directs his every interest and attention to Him Who is the sum of all prophecy and Himself the greatest of all prophets.

Leaving that thought for a later development, let us remind the reader that the prophet was not a mere fore-teller of future events. It is true that much of the work of prophecy was concerned with unveiling histories and scenes not yet formed in the womb of time, and it is also true that the ability to foretell was one of the tests of the properly and divinely commissioned prophet, but this was incidental to the major purpose of the ordination of a prophet. Above all else, he was an inspired interpreter and revealer of God's will to men. Primarily, the prophet was a teacher. He was God's representative to God. God's will and purposes must be made known to humanity in a form that human intelligence could apprehend. Hence capable instructors were trained by the Holy Spirit to receive and pass on certain revelations which involved God's plan, to those who comprehended these prophetic utterances. In every age, God has had some such means of communication between Himself and His creatures.

All prophets in Old Testament times were teachers, and all of those who made God known to the world were honored by the title, "Prophet." For this reason, when Abimelech, misled by the faint-heartedness of Abraham, appropriated Sarah to himself, God's spirit warned this Semitic king of the danger of his trespass against another man's wife. And in the dream through which God spoke to this monarch, He said, as we read in Genesis 20:7:

"Now therefore restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet: and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live."

This is the first mention of the office in Old Testament writings, and opens up a vista of the dignity and power of that office. Being a prophet, Abraham could pray for one who needed restoration and thus assure him of forgiveness and continued life.

According to Psalm 105, verse 15, all of the patriarchs were prophets. Concerning the care that God exercised over Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Psalmist said,

"He suffered no man to do them wrong, yea he reproveth kings for their sakes saying, Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm."

This teaching ministry continued through men chosen for that purpose until the Old Testament type of prophecy climaxed in John the Baptist. Of him, Jesus said that he was more than a prophet, he was the messenger whom Malachi had foretold. The Saviour also stated that that type of prophecy would end with the ministry of John. Note His exact words from Matthew 11:10 to 13:

"For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."

The New Testament teachers, while sometimes denominated prophets, had a totally different mission to perform, and operated under another ministry. In I Corinthians 12:28 the order in which the servants of the church are to be appreciated is set forth in this significant manner:

First, apostles;  
Secondly, prophets;  
Thirdly, teachers.

After that, in honor and dignity, come those who can work miracles, then those who have the gift of healing; those who are gifted in helping the weak, those who are fitted to govern and last, and least of all, those who have the ability to speak with divers tongues.

The difference between the prophet and the teacher is a fine one, and requires considerable study before it can be made clear. The teacher is the one who, by earnest study, comprehends the doctrines of the Word of God and has skill and ability in instructing others. This gift, by the way, is never separated in Holy Writ from the pastoral office. The New Testament prophet, however, is one who has spiritual insight into the deep and hidden things of the Word and can bring them forth in plain, comprehensive terms; making them discernible to others who lack this gift of insight. Hence, the Ephesian epistle says that the church of Jesus Christ is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Some of these apostles were also prophets in the sense that the New Testament used that word. A classical illustration would be the claim of Paul in Ephesians 3:3, 4 where the apostle states:

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the ministry as I wrote a little while ago in a few words;  
Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”

Returning then to the Old Testament type of prophet, God did foretell that the last and greatest of such prophets would one day appear. He would be authorized by divine unction, bringing with him a salvation that should be made available to men who would be obedient to that prophetic revelation. The words in which this promise is incorporated, were uttered by Moses in these significant verses:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

You will note that this prophet, like all who came before him, will disclaim originality. He will not be an original teacher, but will bring a revelation from God. This is apparent when God says of this coming prophet, "And I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." This was the authority for the statement of Jesus, "The words which I speak are not mine; they are the words of the Father which sent me." The Mosaic prophecy also contains the equally important statement that any human being who will not hearken unto God's words which the coming prophet shall speak, will answer to God for this offense.

It is self-apparent that *Jesus is that prophet whom Moses foretold*. In the first place the Mosaic statement was that he shall be a prophet "like unto me." The experience of Jesus paralleled in a strange fashion the personal history of Moses. I marvel that the people of Israel, who know the Old Testament text, can consider the life of Moses and be blind to the fact that Jesus is their expected fulfillment of God's promises to them.

Both Moses and Jesus were born when Israel was in bondage. In the days of Moses the nation was enslaved to Egypt;

in the days of Jesus they lived on their knees by the sufferance of the military might of Rome.

When Moses was born, his life was in dire jeopardy, as Pharaoh had commanded the death of all male children. In a strange harmony to this experience, Herod ordered that every male child under two years of age should die, in the hope that he would thus exterminate the King, whose coming threatened his reign.

The life of the baby Moses was spared when he was adopted by the royal family of Egypt. Jesus was also preserved alive when His father and mother fled with Him to that same land of Egypt.

Moses left the court of Egypt to offer himself a saviour to his people; even as the Scriptures state of Christ—"out of Egypt have I called my Son."

When Moses offered to fight the battles of his people they cast him out, saying, "Who made thee to be a prince and ruler over us?" The rejected leader lived from thence on ostracized from his people in a far country. How plainly we see in that experience the forecasting of the time when Christ, offering Himself a Redeemer of Israel, would be rejected and slain, ascending to that "far country" to await the time when their eyes will be opened to their need of Him.

And just as Moses came back, armed with the miracle working power of God, to redeem Israel from physical bondage, so Jesus will return to save Israel from spiritual blindness and their rejection of God.

Certainly He is the prophet like unto Moses, in that He has the authority of God in every word that He speaks.

Solemnly God says to the earth today, through the pages and paragraphs of the New Testament scripture, "The words which my prophet would speak are my words, and if ye heed them not, I will require it of you."

With this thought in mind, let us note that the prophet of old commonly operated through three methods: teaching, predicting and miracle-working. The first of these methods is illustrated in II Chronicles 15:3 where we read:

"Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law."

There was chaos, anarchy and civil war in the land where God was not known to the people.

A classical instance of the predictions uttered by prophets, is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Here the Spirit of God looks through the eyes of Isaiah to a day some seven centuries later, when the Man of Sorrows should become acquainted with grief, as He expired for the expiation of the sins of men.

All of the prophets who taught and foretold were given occasional power to work miracles which should be to Israel the sign of the prophet's commission. Such an historical instance is recorded in II Kings, the sixth chapter. After Elijah had been translated to heaven by means of the whirlwind, the cloak of teaching authority was promised to Elisha. As Elijah and Elisha journeyed to the place where his translation was to occur, they tarried for a brief time at Bethel, there a group of the sons of the prophets greeted them, warning that Elijah was soon to be taken away into heaven. Fifty of these men journeyed with the two prophets to watch the translation from a safe distance. Afterwards, when the authority had descended upon Elisha, he organized the sons of the prophets into a school for study of the things of the Spirit of God.

Evidently, the student body grew with enormous rapidity, for the younger men came to the prophet one day complaining that the place where they were dwelling was too small. With his consent and accompanied by Elisha they all journeyed down to the river bank to cut timbers to build themselves a new dormitory. As one man was whacking away, not knowing that the head always comes off a borrowed axe, he was distressed to see the valuable tool fly away and fall in a deep spot of the river. When he ran to tell his master of his misfortune, Elisha calmly strode to the place, cut down and cast in a small stick, and the iron axe-head floated to the top, where they easily put forth a hand and took it up.

There is no natural explanation for this miracle. The ingenuity of man can strain every conceivable mental device

and wrest the words out of their natural meaning, but we cannot evade nor avoid the clear impression that something happened there which was contrary to the normal operation of known natural law. This is no wonder to those who know God. Simply, in all cases where miracles are performed, they constitute God's signature, and testify to His cooperation in the occurrence.

They also act as credentials for the person who performs the miracle.

Now note how in all of these three spheres of the prophet's operation, Jesus Christ was supreme. He certainly was a teacher such as the world never before had known. Consider these Scriptures: (Matthew 4:23)

"And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

Here the three methods of the prophetic function coincide in the one single text. He taught a strange and new doctrine to the people of Galilee, which He called "the Gospel of the Kingdom." Therein He revealed to them the plans of God concerning the salvation of the earth, and taught them the new revelation—that God loved sinners. In so doing, He foretold the coming kingdom and authenticated His right to make these utterances, as a prophet, by many miracles of healing.

But the first statement in this short verse is that Jesus Christ was a teacher, entering into the synagogues with authority and confidence.

Note also Matthew 5, which chapter begins with these words:

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,"

From here on Matthew records the words of that lesson which Jesus taught. We call it the Sermon on the Mount, but it is far more than a sermon. The word "preach" is not mentioned



in the text itself; rather the word "taught" is used. The so-called Sermon on the Mount literally constitutes a textbook of God's will for men, and Christ's dealings with and for them. If a man could really apprehend that course of instruction and translate those teachings into daily living, every blessing and grace that the soul could taste would be His, as a natural result.

In this case, Jesus taught a lesson, or wrote a textbook, so vast, far-reaching and profound in its depths, that men today still find new meanings in these phrases.

This is in exact accord with the statement of Matthew 7:29, "For He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."

Of course He did!

Here was a man who derived nothing from human opinion and who built none of His conclusions upon the teachings of other men. He came as The Prophet whose mission was to utter the very words that God had given to Him. For that reason there was weight and power in His words, which manifested themselves in a serene, unshakeable authority which no other teacher ever possessed.

At the close of His public ministry, Jesus still considered Himself the supreme teacher. In Matthew 26:55 He reminded the arresting band of the dignity of His position when He said:

"Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me."

The authority of Christ as a teacher was recognized in His day even by those who did not receive Him as a personal Lord. This is evidenced when in the third chapter of John a member of the Sanhedrin approached Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

All of the Gospel writers lay great emphasis upon the teaching ministry and authority of Christ, and each of them

emphasizes His power and authority in purveying such instruction. They also recount the impact of His teachings upon the rabble who heard, and tell us that such men stared at each other in wonder and said, "Never man spake like this!" Even at this distant age, men of the widest learning, even though they have not accepted the Saviour as a personal Redeemer, delight to honor Him by calling Him, "The Great Teacher."

He should have been!

He was the custodian of the greatest message and the deepest lessons humanity ever contemplated. He came from heaven divinely commissioned of God to instruct the earth in all things needful for man's salvation; He qualifies under this definition as a prophet.

Turning our thought to the second method by which the prophet fulfilled his commission, we see Jesus as an unparalleled predictor. That He did often prophesy coming events is clearly stated in the Gospel records, as for example, Matthew 16:21. It would be very natural for Matthew to record this event because, having heard the prophecy, he lived to see its fulfillment. Note again these words:

"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that he must go into Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

This prophecy He repeated some months later when He said, according to Matthew 20:18:

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again."

It is not given to the natural man to know the time, the place, nor the manner of His death. I rather fear that if most of us knew the exact time and place where our death was to occur, we would be far distant from the place at that particular time. Unless, of course, we knew with the certainty that Jesus

showed that our death would endure but for three days. Most of us, wearied with the labor and burden of living, might look forward with some pleasure to a three-day nap, if we were certain that we would arise strengthened, refreshed, with a life that was henceforth enduring.

So this Prophet who foretold His own demise, specifying the time, the place and the manner thereof, could look beyond the grave and predict an event concerned with Himself after He had died. Certainly no prophet could do more than that!

Going beyond His own personal interests, Christ the Prophet gave an amazing demonstration of His powers of predicting in what we commonly call, "The Olivet Discourse."

If we took just one sentence out of that great prophecy and read these words:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

we would have an instance of the prophetic functioning in that one illustration. When Jesus uttered these words, the might of Rome had clamped iron manacles upon the province of Judea, and a rebellion against this awful power was utterly unthinkable under those circumstances. Yet Jesus could clearly envision those days in the near future when "Titus, the House-breaker," would invest the city and bring the horrors of ancient siege upon the inhabitants thereof.

This Olivet discourse had intrigued the wonder of all students of Scripture from the times of the church fathers until the present hour. The utterance was called forth in reply to three questions which were asked by His disciples when Jesus made an apparently casual forecast. Sitting upon the slope of Mount Olivet, they were surveying the grandeur of the temple and its building, when Jesus said with startling suddenness:

"See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Sometime later the disciples asked Him a three-fold question, saying "Tell us (1) when shall these things be, and (2) what

shall be the sign of Thy coming, and (3) of the end of the age?" Note those three questions and keep them clearly in mind when you read the Olivet discourse. The answer to the three-fold query is woven into one complete account by the historian Matthew, and it requires considerable discernment to correlate each portion of the answer to the proper division of the three-fold question.

Some of these predictions have to do with the destruction of Jerusalem; others are prophetic descriptions of the signs that shall accompany the coming again of Jesus. The balance of the prophecy has to do with the physical catastrophe of the end of this age and the preparation for the new world that shall be.

It is a principle pertaining to the interpretation of all prophecy, that a prophecy can only be accredited after its fulfillment. Hence we will ignore for the moment the predictions of Jesus concerning His return and the end of the age, since these events have not yet come to pass. But the fulfillment of His prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem are written for all men to read. As long as that record stands there can be no contradiction of the simple statement that Christ was the greatest of all prophets, predicting events with clarity and definite certainty and having history vindicate His claim.

As to the third and highly important consideration, the working of miracles to authenticate His claims, Jesus was certainly supreme among prophets. We would establish this point by simply saying, "We cite the Gospel according to John." I think most readers are familiar with the fact that the common word for miracle does not occur in the Greek text of the entire Gospel of John, and yet this writer describes more miracles wrought by Jesus than do the synoptic historians. The Greek word translated "miracle" in our English version of the Gospel of John, could be translated perhaps more clearly by the word "sign." However, this is purely incidental, as the miracles were wrought for signs, and the signs must consist of miracles. So thoroughly established was the principle

that the prophet should work miracles to establish his credentials, that the Jews plainly said to Jesus, "What sign showest thou that we may believe?"

Jesus Christ inaugurated His ministry by a miraculous work, which was a sign to the people. The first eleven verses of the second chapter of John bring us the account of a wedding in Cana of Galilee. When the unexpected arrival of thirteen additional guests put an embarrassing strain upon the punch bowl, the mother of Jesus, who seemed to have been an informal hostess at the celebration, turned to her great Son for help. In obedience to His command, water turned into wine. The account concludes, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on Him."

I used the common translation of the King James Version retaining the word "miracles" in place of the more literal word "signs," because this reading is familiar to the modern age; but the significant word in the text is "beginning." This word implies a continuing process. You cannot use the word legitimately to describe or define a single or consummated event which occurred once and was never repeated. The word "beginning," means that something started, continued and carried on to a later consummation. This verse also tells the purpose of miracles and defines their result. Miracles, or signs, were wrought by the prophet Jesus "to show forth His glory," and resulted in men believing in Him!

John used the right word when he said, "This *beginning* of miracles did Jesus." As you read through the Gospel of John note how many times he records these signs and wonders which men call miracles, which were enacted by the prophet Jesus.

In John 4:46-54 the inspired writer describes the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum.

In the first sixteen verses of chapter 5, the eyewitness, John, tells of the healing at the pool of Bethesda.

In the next chapter, verses 1 to 16, the historian tells of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with the lunch of

the young lad, and adds the engrossing detail of the twelve baskets of super-abundance which were left over from the five small soda crackers and the few sardines.

In this same chapter, verses 16 to 21, John, who was there when it happened, told how the prophet walked upon the water, manifesting in this sign His power over the elements that make up the deep.

He then comes in chapter 9 to tell of the healing of the blind man who had never seen the light of day until Christ gave him sight.

If we were limited to just one of the many signs and wonders wrought by the Saviour to establish His right to the office of prophet, I think we would do well to center our attention in the eleventh chapter of John. No person who ever has been saddened by the rude visitation of death in his own home, can fail to thrill with sympathy and understanding to the greatest drama ever recorded in human writings and which was enacted in the little home at Bethany. Of the many intimates who surrounded the Saviour none were more beloved by Jesus than Lazarus and his two sisters. While the Prophet was absent on a teaching mission, Lazarus sickened and died. Although removed by three days journey, Christ knew the situation and told His disciples at the instant of Lazarus' death. Making a leisurely journey back into Judea in spite of the danger of a popular uprising against Him, the Prophet came to the broken home and was greeted by the sorrowing sisters. Martha said to the Saviour,

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She said unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the

Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Thus Jesus seized upon the sorrow and heartache of that bereaved couple to give to the whole world forever, while time shall be, the most astounding, clear-cut and soul-stirring promise the race ever had. Other teachers *had hoped* that there might be a life after death. Other leaders had looked forward to the possibility of learning more about another world when they left this one. But this teacher, who was the prophet from the other world, was the first to state with assurance that those who believed in Him and accepted His message, were utterly immune to death. Having left this incomparable promise in the record for all men to read, Jesus then went forth to the grave of the dead Lazarus and by His spoken command, raised him from the dead.

A host of witnesses saw this miracle. They also saw the completion wherewith the power of God always works. Though Lazarus had been dead three days, and his body had already begun to melt away in the process of dissolution, when the dead man walked forth from his tomb, his cheeks were red with the flush of health, his step was firm and assured, and his eyes flashed with intelligence and understanding.

In all history no comparable miracle attested the commission of any prophet whom God had appointed; but Jesus continued this manifestation of power to the very end of His contact with men.

After He died and was raised from the dead, He met some of His disciples on the shores of the sea of Galilee. There the risen Christ repeated the miracle of the miraculous draught of fishes. When Peter saw this work re-enacted, he cried out with conviction and certainty, "It is the Lord!"

Thus Jesus emerges from an analytical examination as the most magnificent of all the prophets who have been the servants and mouthpieces of God. Doing all that other prophets had done (and doing it better) He went beyond the accomplishments which the Holy Ghost had wrought in other men. He made a revelation of God which established Him as the supreme teacher.

He predicted the growth of Gentile world powers, the collapse of Gentile world dominion, the return of Israel to Palestine, the last great war, His own return, the resurrection of the just and the subsequent thousand year reign: and all history will yet pour itself into the mold formed by His words.

As there were three methods through which the prophetic office functioned, so there were three phases to the work of Christ the Prophet. The first of these was His preparatory ministry in the enlightening of man before the Advent. The most precise and comprehensive way in which we can cover this thought is to say that *all preliminary knowledge of God in any age came through Christ*. The New Testament states that revelations concerning God were made in olden times by men in whom the spirit of Christ did function. Remembering that Jehovah is the preincarnate name of Jesus, and that Jehovah was always the mediator between Heaven and the denizens of earth, you at once see how all past prophecy must be accredited to Jesus.

Through Adam He taught the first of our kind, when He walked and talked in the garden.

To Adam He prophesied the certainty of disaster if the dicta of God were violated.

In Adam He wrought his first miracles with humanity; first when He created him from the dust of the earth and, secondly, when He redeemed him by the blood of a lamb.

So, from Adam to John, such knowledge of God as alleviated the darkness of man's fallen state, came through the preparatory ministry of Christ, the magnificent prophet.

The second phase of His work was the earthly ministry during the incarnation. While it is true that in His life He was led by the Holy Spirit, as were the Old Testament prophets, He had the sources of all knowledge within Himself. Again and again the prophets of old could say, in the words of Ezekiel, "The word of God came unto me saying, Son of man take up a burden"; after which the prophet would deliver the message that God's spirit had sent to him. But never did Jesus Christ say "the word of God came to Me!"



*He was the Word of God!*

Thus, in this instance, His magnificence is manifest by His supremacy *as* the Word, over those who merely *received* the words of God.

The third phase of the prophetic ministry of Jesus consists of the guiding and teaching of His church since His ascension into Heaven. This ministry, of course, is conducted through the New Testament apostles and ministers in fulfillment of the promises made by Jesus, as recorded by John and Luke in their gospels, and in the Book of the Acts. He promised that when the Holy Spirit came to the earth, He would teach His followers everything they needed to know, but which they were incapable of comprehending until His resurrection gave to them a basis of understanding.

The ministry of the apostles is significant in that it shows how they developed the germinal ideas given to them by Jesus, and continued to receive fresh revelations from Him after His ascension. To illustrate this astonishing thought, read Galatians 1:11, 12, where the apostle Paul, who had never met Jesus in the days of His flesh wrote,

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Thus Paul, who never had shared the earthly ministry of Christ was, nevertheless, in such close fellowship with the Holy Ghost, that he could receive revelations concerning the Gospel from Jesus, and thus transmit them to men.

To climax your thought concerning the magnificence of Jesus the Prophet, note how He surpassed every grace, message and gift distributed through those who had preached Him. In so doing, He made God known to man, and revealed Him as no other ever had done.

Moses revealed God to Israel, who had forgotten the very name of their Creator.

Isaiah revealed God to Israel, who had lost the sense of His holiness.

Hosea revealed God to Israel when they had abandoned the knowledge of His love.

Jeremiah revealed God to Israel when they knew not His judgment on idolatry and sin.

Jesus Christ paralleled each of these great and matchless ministries before He transcended them by going on to the one thing which no prophet could do.

In John 17:6, Christ claimed to have completed the work of Moses when He said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world."

Jesus completed the work of Isaiah when He said in John 17:11 "Holy Father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me."

Jesus completed the work of Hosea when He said in John 3:16 "God so loved the world . . ."

Jesus completed the work of Jeremiah when He said in John 4:23 "But the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Having done all this, He then pressed on to the ultimate climax and conclusion. He revealed a new idea and a new attribute of God, when He taught His disciples in these incomparable words,

"When ye pray, say, Father."

To complete the magnificence of the prophetic office, the work of Jesus will end with the final and complete revelation of the Father to His saints in glory. When the body of Christ is completed by the regeneration of the last one who is to be saved by faith, the trump shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living saints shall be translated to meet Christ in the air!

In that form, He shall Himself present His church to His Father and shall present His Father unveiled to His church, so that we see God and know Him as He is.

Magnificent, indeed, is that prophet who can fulfill all prophecy and bring God within the sphere of human comprehension.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EFFECTIVE PRIEST

**I**N APPROACHING a study of the second office ascribed to Jesus Christ, we again find it necessary to crystallize our thinking by some words of definition.

Generally, in the Old Testament revelation, the offices of prophet and priest are so radically different that they never coincide in the one person. The prophet acted as God's representative to men, revealing God's will, making His wishes known to His followers and teaching humans their duty to God.

The priest, on the other hand, was a person divinely appointed to transact with God on man's behalf. Thus, the priest is man's representative with God, commissioned to this holy office by God.

Exactly as every sovereign government retains the right to designate the ambassador from some foreign country who is acceptable to the home government, even so God has the last word in deciding who shall represent men at His court. Therefore, the priest must be divinely designated before he can fulfill his office and become the intercessor with God on man's behalf.

You will notice that I did not use the word mediator, but rather suggested that the priest was appointed to "transact" with God. According to the clear statement of the New Testament Scripture, there is but one mediator between God and man . . . He being Christ Jesus Himself.

There is a difference between mediation and intercession, and the human priest was limited to this latter function.

The office implied two duties, the first being to offer sacrifice, and the second, to make intercession. In the orderly practice of the principle of atonement whereby, through the death of one, benefit and forgiveness could come to another, certain rules and procedures had to be followed to safeguard the custom from abuse. Not every man could effectively offer sacrifice. Certain men were commissioned to that office, which authority derived from God. But those who were thus appointed exercised the second duty, which was intercession. In the light of the Christian procedure so familiar to us, it is difficult to understand why a sinner who desires to turn away from his sin and find restitution with God, would need one to act in his behalf. The principle involved, however, was concerned with the offended holiness of God. Until Jesus Christ expiated sin and provided one eternal propitiation for its consequences, it was necessary that one capable of approaching the throne of Holiness should prepare the way for the guilty to approach. The principle is still continued in its heavenly application in that Christ, our High Priest, still lives to make intercession for us. But because we have this Priest, we need no other and can come boldly into His presence, making our wants known.

All of this is implied in the significant phrase, "one mediator." Our High Priest now does more than intercede—He literally mediates. It is the grossest folly to ignore the love of Jesus Christ, detract from His power and insult His willingness to remain the Saviour, by insisting that we need an intercessor between us and our mediator. If I need some other person to intercede with Jesus so that He will mediate with God on my behalf, it logically follows that my case would be strengthened if I knew one who could intercede with the intercessor, who would use influence with the mediator. Before I had gone far in the practice of this philosophy, I would have such an unlimited string of mediators between me and God, my interests would probably disappear by attrition as they passed through these innumerable channels.

But because Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture, and now sitteth on the right hand of God to make intercession for me, I can come directly to my Saviour, Who is the Son of God. He being seated on the right hand of God, sharing the Father's throne, needs but turn His head to plead my case with God, who is the great Judge of all.

In response to the intercessory work of His Son, the Judge becomes my Father and we deal in the love and sympathy of a family relationship with all of my wants and requirements. My weaknesses are understood; I am strengthened by this close contact with God my Saviour, and my hope of salvation rests in the fact that I have but *one* mediator between me and God.

But before Christ died to be our mediator, it was necessary that an order of men be commissioned to guard the way of approach to God, that it might not be defiled by careless, indifferent use.

To consider the background of the priesthood, let us note the example provided by God's choice of Aaron to be the first high priest of Israel. To begin with, Aaron was divinely appointed. He seems to have been chosen primarily because of his natural ability, according to Exodus 4:14. You will remember the amazing events of the third and fourth chapters of Exodus, where Moses was called to be the redeemer of Israel. When God spoke to Moses, having attracted his attention by means of the blazing bush, He commissioned Moses to be the liberator of the enslaved tribes. Moses demurred, basing his refusal upon the ground that he was not an eloquent man, unable to make an acceptable speech to a public gathering.

It is somewhat amusing to note how many people in our generation are reluctant to serve God because of their embarrassment on this same point. They all think that their excuse is fresh, unique and original, never knowing that almost four thousand years ago a man refused the call of God on the grounds that he was not a fluent speaker.

Whereupon God said that He would give Moses a spokesman in the person of his brother, Aaron. There seems to be an error here because of the fact that Aaron was the older brother. In all the family polity and conduct of public affairs in olden times, seniority ruled. The first born son had the pre-eminence in all things. So closely was the rule of primogeniture obeyed that a younger son could only become possessed of dignity or honor with the consent of his elder brother. Since Aaron was three years older than Moses, it follows that he should have been the leader and Moses the spokesman. But in every age God does seem to work with men according to their natural ability. All of the gifts and talents that any human possesses are derived from God, Who giveth to all individually as He Himself sees fit. So, the first priest was accredited by God and ordained to fulfill an office for which he had apparently been born, as a distinct recognition of a natural gift.

When we turn to the fourth chapter of Exodus, we find from verses twelve to fifteen that Aaron was afterwards set apart by special orders and consecrated through certain ceremonies. There was a two-fold purpose in this public acknowledgment of Aaron's divine call. The first was to impress upon the newly elected priest the sanctity of his office, and the holiness of the powers thus delegated to him. The second purpose was to impress upon the people, whose representative he should be with God, the high and holy privilege that was theirs in having a personal ambassador in the court of heaven.

The third outstanding principle in the commission of Aaron was the direct manner in which he was appointed to perform the sacrifices. In Leviticus 1:5-9, the first office of the priest is impressively emphasized with certain rigid, unchanging rules concerning the manner in which the blood should be shed for the purging of sin. The Aaronic order of the priesthood was thus distinguished by becoming the only group in all Israel fitted to fulfill the primary office of the priesthood and shed blood for the remission of sin.

Next, we note how the duties of the priesthood were rigidly defined. The first nine chapters of Leviticus deal with the laws of offerings and sacrifice, dividing all of the broad field of human trespass and failure into sections, each one requiring a different type of redemptive sacrifice.

All of this now being concluded by special divine commandments, the ninth chapter of Leviticus tells how the priesthood was formally initiated. At once we see one of the many reasons why Jesus was never named a priest after the order of Aaron. As Aaron and his sons stood on the threshold of their entrance into the greatest calling that ever dignified the service of man in the years before Christ, they also had to make a sin offering for themselves, and a burnt offering to cover their own trespass and failures. This being done, they then had to sacrifice a peace offering to establish harmony between themselves and God before they were fitted to enter into His service. But Jesus Christ, being come a high priest of good things that are yet to be, needed no sin offerings for Himself; and being at eternal peace with God, His Father, was beyond and above these personal ceremonies. More of that we shall see later, we just emphasize this significant fact—the priest who stood between God and man, bringing men into God's presence and making God's grace and kindness known to man, himself needed a mediator to cover his shortcomings with the God in Whose presence he served.

It is significant that God has safeguarded the priesthood in every past age by discouraging originality in its service. Thus the tenth chapter of Leviticus carries the strange story of Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron who thought they ought to "pep up" the service of the tabernacle and introduce a few original ideas. To give the congregation added thrill and perhaps to show the older men how this thing should be done, they appeared before God with strange fire and unauthorized rites, which the Scripture says God had not commanded them to perform. A fire leaped out upon them and devoured them; thus, instantly, the hand of God was stretched out by punishing violation of the rules of this priesthood.

On another occasion deliberate rebellion against the priesthood was punished in a similar dramatic manner. It would be wise at this point if you would stop and read the sixteenth chapter of Numbers, particularly verses twenty-eight to thirty-five, to help you in your study of that chapter. The theme of this chapter is

### THE HISTORY OF SPIRITUAL REBELLION

- I. The rebellion of Korah: vs. 1-3.
  - (1) The ring-leaders named. vs. 1.
  - (2) Famous followers and associates. vs. 2.
  - (3) Their motive: envy of Moses and Aaron: coupled with spiritual pride. vs. 3.
- II. The forbearance of Moses. vs. 4-11.
  - (1) A great man's first reaction. vs. 4.
  - (2) His stern warning to the rebels. vs. 5.
  - (3) The proposed test. vs. 6-7.
  - (4) The grave warning and charitable plea of Moses. vs. 8-11.
- III. The stubborn rejection of a gracious plea: vs. 12-14.
  - (1) The rejection of conciliation. vs. 12.
  - (2) The reason for rebellion reiterated: malice and envy of Moses. vs. 13-14.
- IV. Moses demands that the issue be settled: vs. 15-19.
  - (1) The righteous wrath of Moses. vs. 15.
  - (2) The test established. vs. 16-18.
  - (3) The challenge accepted. vs. 19.
- V. The intervention of God: vs. 20, 21.  
Judgment and Justice prepare to operate.
- VI. The intercession of Moses and Aaron. vs. 22.
- VII. Rebellion punished. vs. 23-26.
  - (1) Separation of guilty from the innocent. vs. 23-27.
  - (2) The act of God: a two-fold purpose
    - a) —To vindicate His servants. vs. 28-30.
    - b) —To destroy the wicked. vs. 31-35.



VIII. The memorial erected to safeguard the priesthood. vs. 36-40.

IX. Rebellion resumed. vs. 41.

X. The inevitable result. vs. 42.

- (1) God observes and condemns the sin. vs. 42-45.
- (2) Moses and Aaron again intercede. vs. 46-48.
- (3) The frightful cost of rebellion. vs. 49-50.

The priesthood thus jealously guarded by God was afterward confirmed by a miracle which occurred in the sight of all Israel. The seventeenth chapter of Numbers continues the story of what happened after the rebellion of Korah and the two hundred fifty accomplices. The dissidents among the horde remained recalcitrant and returned on the following day to charge Moses and Aaron with mass murder in the destruction of the two hundred fifty. Instead of being angered by the vicious and unjust charges, Moses and Aaron hastened to the tabernacle to plead for God's mercy upon these men who were so hard of heart that even judgment did not avail to affect their rebellion.

Once more, however, justice acted, and before atonement had been made for this continued rebellion, most of the rebels were slain. For in that day, as in every day since, "the wages of sin is death," and wrongdoing cannot be condoned by a God of justice.

So, to settle this issue, the seventeenth chapter of Numbers tells of the strange device that God commanded to demonstrate once and for all the divine commission of the Aaronic priesthood. All candidates and aspirants to the office of the priest were instructed to bring their staves and lay them before God in the tabernacle at the close of that day. The staff that each man carried in the wilderness wanderings was a formidable weapon, and a credible help to a weary man. It was used somewhat in the fashion of an alpenstock in modern mountain climbing, and was often used as a two-handed cane or crutch upon which a tired man could lean. It was a most handy

weapon of defense when used against any enemy, man or beast. These staves were made from any handy material, but, of course, each man sought for the hardest and toughest wood, knowing that his life might some day depend upon his staff. It chanced that Aaron's staff had been made from the limb of a dead almond tree. It had been seasoned over the years, trimmed and shaped to his own individual grasp and was as dead as wood could become. Together with the other candidates for the priesthood, Aaron laid his staff among the rest and departed. In the early morning they all returned to the tabernacle to reclaim their staves. To the astonished gaze of the entire company, Aaron's rod contained green leaves, buds, blossoms and ripened fruit. In the twelve hours of the night, the power of God had caused a dead limb to fulfill the complete twelve-months cycle of a living tree, producing leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. Thus a two-fold lesson was taught to Israel. First, that Aaron's call to the priesthood was authentic in that it was established by this miracle. Secondly, that all the power of the priesthood derived from God, Who was thus able to bring life from that which was dead.

In this extensive demonstration we have sought to illustrate an eternal principle that never has been changed.

If you have a Priest today, He must be one Who has been divinely appointed, primarily because of natural ability.

Your Priest also had to be set apart by special orders and through certain ceremonies.

He alone can be appointed to make sacrifice for you and His duties also are clearly defined.

At some specific point in actual history, His Priesthood was officially begun.

He follows His orders, which are predetermined in the ancient councils of God; rebellion against His authority means death for you.

You may know that you have such a Priest if His calling has been confirmed by a miracle.

*Apply each of these tests to the person and work of Jesus Christ, and you will find that He has failed in none!*

We come then to the second phase of the study. The first was that the priest must be divinely appointed. The second, that he is commissioned to transact with God on man's behalf.

Again continuing our study of the Aaronic priesthood, we see how the work of Jesus was foreshadowed even in this order of which He was not a part. In the thirteenth chapter of Exodus, we have the place and manner appointed in the establishment of the altar, which is told of in the first ten verses. Nowhere else could the particular service of atonement be transacted as long as that altar was in existence. Twice daily incense must be burned upon that altar; and once a year the sin offering should be made there that atonement might be made for sins which the people had committed in the year that was past.

Having thus shown that the primary duty of the priest was to apply sacrifice in such fashion as to procure vicarious atonement, the sixth chapter of Numbers, verses 23 to 27 logically follows with the statement that the priest is now prepared to bless and capable of blessing the people. The gracious benediction which Almighty God gave by direct command to His priests in that day is still used by the Christian world, because of the dignity and grace of its sonorous passages. But Aaron could not say to the men of old—

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,  
and give thee peace,”

until he had first shed the blood of atonement to cover the sins of the people. But following atonement, it was right and proper that the blessing of God should be expected, and this blessing was given to the priest to administer to those who had come to deserve it through no work or merit of their own. You see, it has always been an eternal principle that the

blessings of God may not be earned: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," said Paul, "but by His own grace He saved us." Thus every blessing that comes to those who are perfected by the blood of Christ comes because of the blood of that Lamb. And blessing always follows the establishment of a right relationship with God.

Having thus transacted with God and received a blessing for the people, the priest goes on to his next power—that of interceding for sinners. We have already considered this principle in Numbers 16:22 where Aaron and Moses, though greatly distressed personally by the uprising of the people, yet found the greatness of heart and the grace of spirit to fall on their faces and intercede for those who had done this wrong.

While recognizing that Jesus' priesthood was not after the order of Aaron, we nevertheless note that the higher priesthood of Jesus, which embraced all lesser orders, again paralleled this historical precedent. It was upon an altar, predetermined as to geographical site and fore-ordained as to time, that the Son of God offered Himself as a Lamb to secure expiation of sin. Having so done, He has then brought the blessing of salvation with all of its benefits, to offer to all men everywhere. Even while dying a death of violence and pain, He interceded for sinners. The human ear never heard words of magnanimity that equalled the passionate plea of the dying Jesus—"Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Lest we be accused of fanciful interpretations, let us remind you that the entire epistle to the Hebrews is written upon the theme, "Jesus Christ, our High Priest." There used to be considerable argument about the authorship of this book. Happily, this has been settled by the recent discovery of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, which have established beyond question the traditional view that Paul the Apostle wrote the Hebrew epistle. Five times in that letter, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as Priest, and twelve times designates Him as "The High Priest." Every form and ceremony of the Aaronic priesthood, pointed to the coming of the great High Priest, even Jesus

Christ. The heart of the epistle is the ninth chapter. The climax of the priestly office in Israel came on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest went through certain ceremonies of cleansing and purification. Garbing himself in clean linen garments of snowy whiteness and taking in his hand a brazen bowl containing the blood of a new sacrifice, the high priest went behind the veil of the tabernacle, or temple, and entered into the holy of holies where the Schechinah glory of God dwelt above the mercy seat. Interceding for the sins of the people, the high priest left the blood upon the mercy seat and retired back through the veil. No other person could enter the holy of holies except the high priest, and he could do so but once a year. His approach to the mercy seat was guarded by the most rigid procedure and by the most inviolable rules that ever surrounded a holy office.

This ninth chapter of Hebrews uses this ancient custom to teach us that the Holy Ghost was thus demonstrating that the way into the holiness of God's presence had never been opened to man through the ceremonies of Israel. The balance of the chapter then sweeps on to the illuminating statement that Jesus Christ came to earth to become a high priest of "good things" yet in the future which should be acquired through His body instead of through physical buildings. By His own blood He accomplished what all the blood of animal sacrifices had never been able to perform. With His own blood He entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven, and made of Himself a sacrifice on God's mercy seat, which bought for His followers an eternal redemption. Never again shall a high priest enter behind any veil to perform any offering for the sins of any people and obtain any result by this conduct. All the breath that mankind could blow on ashes dead and cold could kindle no spark therein. Jesus Christ has fulfilled every figure of the priesthood; and He remains today the only intercessor between God and man who has power to prevail with God on man's behalf.

The Hebrew epistle demonstrates the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus over that of any order of priest the world

has ever known or can know. This idea is developed most extensively in the seventh chapter of Hebrews, although it has been previously suggested by a broad introduction of the idea in chapter five. It is a progressive argument, stating first that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to that of Aaron and that the priesthood of the Son of God, while after the order of Melchisedec, is vastly superior to him and his services.

Jesus *cannot* be a priest after the order of Aaron. Christ was born out of the tribe of Judah, which produced kings and not priests. Only from the tribe of Levi could the priestly line derive. Let us remember that as we come to a later study of this thought. But Melchisedec was king of Salem and priest of the one High God. Therefore, Jesus can fittingly minister after the order of Melchisedec, He being the King of Heaven and the Son of the One High God.

Again we note that the Aaronic order provided priests for Israel only. We should never lose sight of the fact that all of *the blessings and promises that God made through Moses* were for the Jews alone. Since there is nothing in the law of Israel for the Gentile nations, they in turn, have never been under that law which was given specifically to the Jew. Hence, the priest of the Aaronic order never ministered for Gentiles. If a man born outside of the tribes of Israel desired the benefits of the priesthood, he had to become a proselyte to Judaism and become adopted into the tribes before the priesthood could function for him. But Melchisedec, a Gentile, was the universal priest. He was divinely appointed to transact for all men everywhere, regardless of race, condition or color.

Note also that the Aaronic priesthood was temporary. It was to endure only for the span of the reign of the Mosaic system. The people of Israel have no priests today. A poor substitution called "Rabbis" occupy the place which the priests once possessed. The law of Moses being done away in the cross of Christ, the Aaronic priesthood, of necessity, passed away with it. But Melchisedec represented an eternal priesthood. There is no record of its historic beginning, it

functions eternally through Jesus Christ, the last priest of that order.

Profound mystery has long enshrouded this man Melchisedec, and speculation has woven an obscuring mark of tradition around this fascinating character. There is a difficult and ambiguous passage in the Hebrew epistle which is one of the hardest sentences in the Greek manuscript to properly translate. In speaking of Melchisedec, this passage, as we read it in common translation of the King James Version, states that Melchisedec was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the son of God, abideth a high priest forever."

In transliterating this verse into a more common English vernacular translation, we must first note that the word "descent" literally means pedigree,—or genealogy. I believe that the marginal reading of your Bible will show that point. Holding this thought in mind, we will make an historical survey that will lead us to establish the authority for a transliteration which should clear up this difficulty. Many amazing, ingenuous and interesting books have been written about Melchisedec, the most of which we now learn are not founded on fact.

Some writers have presumed that since he had no father nor mother, he must have been an angel.

Others have said that since he was a universal priest, he must have been a theophany of Jehovah, even going so far in their imaginative interpretations as to identify him with the angel of Jehovah of the Old Testament text.

Others have said that since he lives forever, he must have been God Himself!

We are indebted to Dr. A. A. Sayce, famed archeologist of the British Museum, for final illumination upon this subject. While working among Hittite sources, Dr. Sayce uncovered the historical facts of the background that taught us the truth concerning Melchisedec. His city of Salem was the ancient seat of the eternal religion called monotheism. We must remember

that God has not left Himself without witness in any age, and that from the time of Adam to the present hour, there has been a remnant of humanity who remembered His Name and kept alive His worship on this earth. It is true that that remnant has fluctuated in size. In the days of Noah, it had shrunk to the pitiful company of eight, while in our day it is probably safe to state that more people believe in the one true Holy God than ever worshipped Him in any previous generation.

In the ancient world the worship of the one God has always centered in the one city. In the days of Melchisedec the city was called Salem. Later races called it Jeri-Salem and this, in turn, gave way to the present name, Jerusalem. It has never been a big city but it has wielded more influence upon the history of the earth than any other city ever founded by the hands of man. Battles have raged about it, armies have plowed across it, it has been destroyed and desolated again and again, but for some strange reason it always arises like a phoenix from its own ashes to become more revered and to exercise a wider influence after each resurrection.

In its early history, we now know it was a city inhabited entirely by priests and their families. They had a strange economy and a more peculiar polity. It is difficult to describe their form of government, as it was unique. We might call it a despotic democracy, or say that the ruler was a benevolent despot. Our difficulty is that we have no parallel type of government. Salem was ruled by a king whose authority was absolute. In every case, the king was also the high priest of the monotheistic faith. These king-priests kept alive the worship of God, and taught His name to many of the ancient races.

When a king in Salem died, democracy functioned. All adults, men and women, gathered to vote for a successor to the throne. After this election, democracy retired into the background and the king ruled without check upon his wisdom or power. In electing a new king, the priestly families of Salem followed two inviolable laws. The first of these was:



the candidate must be characterized by piety. The godliest man in the community was the most logical candidate for the throne. It sounds quaint in modern ears to say that politicians had precedence in exact proportion of their godliness and religious fervor, but we warned you in the beginning of this paragraph that Salem was unique!

The second rule that must be observed had to do with genealogy. No man could be a candidate for the throne in Salem who was related by birth or by marriage to any royal family, living or dead. The people of Salem were so anxious and determined that they would never have a traditional and hereditary dynasty fastened upon them that they adopted this rigid rule. If the man's pedigree was tainted by relationship to royalty, he could not be king nor high priest in Salem.

Now correlate these facts to the ambiguous and admittedly difficult passage of the seventh chapter of Hebrews. The plain implication of the text is that the king of Salem was not king by inheritance; he received his throne neither from father nor mother, because he was without royal pedigree. His office of priest and king had neither beginning nor end: he established no dynasty. But one, and one only "Melchisedec" ever graced the throne in Salem. Like the eternal Son of God, he had an abiding priesthood that never passed away. Hence the reference "without beginning and without end" refers to his dynasty, not to his physical life.

There is an amazing sense of satisfaction and a blessed feeling of stability that comes to him whose priest is not temporary, but eternal. We who bask in the strong defense of the High Priest, Jesus Christ, occupy a position which angels might well envy. Our priest cannot be displaced by death, *He has died once, but lives again.*

Our High Priest is in no danger of neglecting the sacrifice which keeps us fit for the Holy Presence of God. *Once and forever He sacrificed Himself.*

Our High Priest is not one who by His own failure or fault made forfeit the right of entering God's presence to intercede

in our behalf. He is the holy and sinless Son of God; He shares that presence and from it *He can never be cast out.*

Therefore, as long as Jesus Christ our High Priest lives, we live. No system of religion, no method of the practice of faith can convey the comfort and assurance, or transmit the strength or power that comes to the Christian who rests in the finished work of Jesus Christ, and approaches God through Him Who is our High Priest.

Hence Paul writes the Hebrew epistle to tell the people of Israel that all of their forms and ceremonies are void and dead, and their priesthood has passed away. They too are limited to such help as they will accept from Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man.

It is a self-evident fact that Israel has no priest today. Rabbis, of course, are not to be confused with priests, nor could they ever qualify as such. In the first place, to be an acceptable priest according to the law of Moses and the direct commands of God, the candidate must prove by genealogy that he is of the tribe of Levi. No living Hebrew can prove today from what tribe his ancestry came. Since the year A. D. 70, when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, these records have all been lost, and no Rabbi has the remotest idea from what tribe his ancestry sprung. Unless the genealogical records of ancient Israel are preserved somewhere and may later be discovered, there is no hope that a new priestly order can be erected in Israel, in accordance with their own law.

*Why is it then that Israel has no priest?*

*Because Israel has a priest.*

Although Jesus Christ was born after the flesh from the tribe of Judah and the family of David, He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. So far does this order exceed the Aaronic priesthood, that Abraham, the father of all Israel, was proud to pay tithes and offer spiritual homage to the great Melchisedec. Therefore, any Jew should be equally willing to offer homage to Him Who superseded Melchisedec and Who carries on His type of priesthood into eternity.

Again we note that Rabbis are not priests, for priests had as their first duty the offering of the daily sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of atonement. There are no lambs slain on the altars of Israel today. No turtle doves are offered in the ceremony of redemption, when the first-born grace Hebrew families. The scapegoat is forgotten by them, and the ashes of a red heifer have not sprinkled the unclean. For, lo, these scores of generations the only blood ever shed in the ceremonies of modern Israel, is that of a cock.

It is a quaint and significant coincidence that in New Testament texts, the cock stands for the rejection of Jesus. It was the crowing of this bird which signalled the three-fold denial of Messiah by Peter in the day of Israel's rejection.

Why does Israel no longer have a lamb?

*Because they have a lamb!*

The Lamb of God Who took away the sin of the world died for Jew and Gentile alike. He made of His blood one eternal, complete and efficacious offering, which makes it unnecessary that a lesser gift shall ever be offered to propitiate the holiness of God.

The priests of Israel always served without salary. I am sure this excludes Rabbis from inclusion in that holy office!

Thus we see a strange historical anomaly. Israel, who for long was the depository of monotheism, lives in rebellion against the very God whose name she kept alive for thirty-five hundred years. She has no land, she has no government, she has no priest, she has no sacrifice, and she will never possess any of these until she turns in repentance and faith to the great High Priest, the Lamb of God, Who will give her back her land, but who will remain her Priest forever.

We must not fail to note, however, in exalting the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, that there is also an earthly priesthood which serves under the Lord Jesus, and which was specifically established by Him. I do not refer to the false claims of an ordained priesthood resting upon dubious tradition, which is not established by history, and which is clearly

contradicted by the plain statements of the Word of God. It is amazing to note how many people in our modern and enlightened age still consider the Apostle Peter to be the "rock" upon which the church of Christ is founded. By them Peter is presumed to have been the first of a new order of priests, the successors of which are alone able to transact with God in man's behalf. Such people have apparently missed the writings of Peter himself. In the first general epistle which came from the pen of this great and holy apostle, Peter himself deals with the question of the "stone" upon which the church of Christ is founded. In the second chapter of I Peter, he writes that all of us who have tasted of the grace of the Lord, have come to a living stone rejected of men but chosen of God, and hence precious. Having established the fact that *Jesus Christ is Himself that stone*, Peter then says to those who believe in Jesus:

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Note the significance of that. Peter says that he is not the stone which is the foundation of the church of Christ—Jesus is that Stone! Peter says that he is no man's priest, but that every believer in Christ becomes his own priest, making his own spiritual sacrifices to God directly through Jesus Christ.

In the ninth verse of this same chapter, Peter introduces this same thought when he says,

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Priests do not need a priest to act on their behalf. All believers in Jesus Christ, those who have been purchased by His blood, have become a royal priesthood. The entire generation which springs from Jesus is ordained to this priesthood, each for himself!

In case you think Peter may have exceeded his authority, read the words of the apostle John, from verses five and six in the first chapter of the Revelation. His startling statement is put in these exact words:

“Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God forever.”

Thus John the Apostle joins with Peter the Apostle to instruct all believers in Jesus Christ;—that having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, they need no priest between them and their Redeemer. Each man is a priest and can transact for himself through Jesus the One Mediator, directly with God.

This is the testimony also of the heavenly host as witnessed by John in the fifth chapter of the Revelation. Here the inspired apostle, borne up by the Holy Spirit, saw the saints in heaven and heard their heavenly song. John records that song in the ninth verse of this fifth chapter of Revelation, thus admitting us to the scene that he saw. These are the words of John:

“And they sung a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Here, then, is abundant verification of the bold and startling teaching advanced by Peter and John, the apostles of Jesus. The saints in heaven who have achieved their close position through the shed blood of Christ, *acknowledged that all of like faith with them are priests unto God*, and shall some day reign with Him upon this earth.

That priesthood is an unending possession, for in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, after the Spirit of God showed John the resurrection of the justified who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, he described in the sixth

verse the condition of those who were privileged to participate in that first resurrection. This is his description of them:

“But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Hence we are bold to state that even though Christ is our High Priest, the only Mediator that is now or ever will be required between God and man, we nevertheless are each of us ordained to the high and holy office of priest, *to transact with God on our own behalf*. This, of course, becomes possible because our transactions are conducted through Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

When we realize that Christ died and rose from the dead that He might present His blood on the mercy seat of God to buy salvation for us, our hearts indeed thrill with an amazing hope. But when we enter into the blessed fact that He then sat on the right hand of God, sharing His throne; and there became our advocate and High Priest with the Heavenly Father we thrill with an unshakable assurance. Well may those who have Christ for a High Priest, echo the ancient words—“Hallelujah, what a Saviour!”

## CHAPTER X

### THE ETERNAL KING

**O**F THE three offices of the Son of God, the last that He shall occupy in the completion of His ministry toward man is that of King.

From the time the first prophet of Israel dipped his pen in the ink of inspiration to write of the unfolding of the complete plan of God, every prophetic utterance has been directed to a coming "day." All Scripture may be likened to a lamp that gathers divergent rays of light and focuses them in illumination upon one significant point. Necessarily, the narrower the point of focus, the more brilliant the illumination. Hence, when we say that the prophecy covering more than four thousand years of time all coincide on a period called, "A Day," we must expect brilliance, clarity and brightness from such illumination.

That day is not only the theme of the Old Testament prophets, but it also forms the major melody in the song of the New Testament passages, just as the fruit of every Old Testament suggestion ripens in the New Testament revelation.

If the prophets of the older order stood alone in their writing of a coming "day," and if Jesus in all of His teachings said nothing to authenticate their utterances, the skeptic might be pardoned his critical attitude. The fact of revelation, however, is contrary to this possibility. In all of His teachings, the Lord Jesus emphasized the utterances of the prophets and added to their descriptions of that coming "day." Inspired by His example and being further directed by the Holy Spirit, each of the New Testament writers continued this flow of prophecy concerning that "day" when God's dealings with

men should climax in the establishment of the perfect earthly government.

This progressive revelation of an event yet to be witnessed is cumulative. As each prophet in turn received a picture of that future event, additional details were entrusted to him. This new material he added to the outline received from his predecessors and passed on an enhanced description of a coming kingdom to those who came after him. The picture of the reign of Christ, which the combined Scripture offers, is as though a mighty portrait had been painted by a score of masters. One man sketched in the outline, determining only the shape of the face; the next man added the salient features, establishing in this manner a suggestion of nationality. Others, in turn, drew in the details which lifted the portrait from a flat outline to a living representation of what seemed to be a living face.

Thus the "day of the Lord" grows from a mere mention to an outline, and passes from that to the splendor of a full revelation.

The cumulative revelation of the kingship of Jesus ends with the panorama of the Patmos vision, which finishes the portrait and sketches with brilliant illumination the minor details of that "day" when it shall finally dawn.

It is not too much to say that the office of Christ as King, and the drama of His coronation, constitute the focal point of history. Every major event of Scripture seems connected either directly or indirectly with that great and coming "day." Without straining the suggestion of types and figures, we can say with conservative certainty, that certain events in the history of the patriarchs were prophetic of the climax of all history. We know that this is so because the New Testament plainly links these events as prediction and fulfillment.

For instance, in the days of Noah, when sin and uncleanness possessed the earth, man had degenerated to such a separation from God that every imagination of the human heart was evil without exception in the sight of God. Since no govern-



ment can exist by the toleration of rebellion against its sovereignty, God can permit outrage against holiness to reach a certain level, but cannot tolerate a violation beyond that point. When organized sin rises to the place where it can challenge the moral sovereignty of God, the stroke of judgment can no longer be withheld. But we can never forget that every purpose of God is merciful. The chastisement of the guilty is to awaken their consciences and to arouse in them a sense of need. Being thus aroused, it is the hope of God that they will turn to Him for mercy and pardon, and thus find salvation. So in every judgment wherewith God has cleansed the earth, a way of escape has ever been provided for those who would exercise their sovereign choice, and use that means of redemption.

In the days of Noah the specific means of providential delivery was a boat. Because of His own foreknowledge, God *knew the number of refugees from wrath who would avail themselves of this salvation.* And when He handed to Noah the exact, detailed specifications for the building of the ark, adequate provision had been made for all who would repent. It doesn't matter, in establishing this principle, whether the redeemed remnant numbered eight or eight million. The ark was there, available to all humanity. Those who perished outside of its sealed doors, did so only after the Spirit of God had exhausted every means of persuasion which He *could* use, without violating the moral sovereignty of the individual.

In exactly that same sense of the word, the Apostle Peter warns our age of a degeneration of religion that shall climax in worldwide apostasy. We do not expect the skeptical interpretations of our modern seminaries to concede this point. To them Peter was grossly ignorant, having had the misfortune to live in a dark age, when modern education was not available to enlightened men. Peter would probably reply that he *was* limited in his knowledge of coming events to such things as he had learned from the lips of Jesus; or had become possessed of by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit! Confessedly, he

could not compete with our modern instructors, who were educated on the campuses of Germany, under the brilliant Welhausen and the other mighty founders of modernistic interpretation. So this type of argument would be instantly rejected by men who are wise above that which is written. I presume that this would be no surprise to God, Who has suffered this scholarly repudiation of His revelations in every age in which He has dealt with man. Our modern skeptics are no smarter than those who perished outside the ark.

As Peter is careful to speak in words that admit of no misinterpretation, he tells us that in the days of the coming again of the Son of man, it is when infidelity has reached so frightful a crest that the true faith seems to have almost disappeared, that Jesus will come again. Just prior to His coming a flood of judgment shall be poured out upon the earth, when the fiery wrath of God is unleashed against all manner of iniquity. In that day, said Peter, only those who find refuge in the ark which is Christ, shall be redeemed from that devastating judgment. Thus Peter makes the ark to point to the time when the King shall come to fulfill all the covenants that remain, after the work of Calvary was completed.

To those who do not accept the authority of Peter, we can only offer the suggestion that Peter, in turn, also depended upon authority. There is nothing original or unique in Peter's figure which makes the flood and the ark point to the return of Jesus. Christ Himself used this specific type to tell listeners of His day that He was destined to visit earth twice more. You will remember the words that Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the coming again of the Son of man." He then reminded His listeners in graphic terms of the Scriptures that they long had known—how the ark waited in vain for men to enter; the careless and sinful laughed and sang, they drank and they wed, they played, they worked, and they rested; until the first heavy rain began to fall. As the water rose about them, they remembered the ark and turned to the place where it had rested. Their decision, however, was made too late.

There are more than a score of such references in the parables and teachings of Christ. With a sadness that undergirded the joy of the glory of His return, He painted with somber and bitter colorings the fate of those who waited to accept Him until the day of mercy was past. Thus He tells of the foolish virgins, standing *outside* a sealed door with darkened lamps in their hands; upon their ears there fall the solemn words of doom. "Too late!"

The Saviour also used the grisly fate of Sodom as a forewarning of judgment to precede and accompany His return. He warned the cities that had rejected His testimony that even though Sodom and Gomorrah had been physically destroyed, leaving only the pitifully small remnant of redeemed to continue the memory of those terrible days, it would be even worse for the cities of Palestine in the day when He came again.

If it is true, as Jesus said, that His witness which was wasted in those cities, would have saved Sodom had it been expended there, how much more guilty is this enlightened and evangelized generation when it rejects the clear statements of Christ, and turns away from Him as a means of salvation!

Thus we are assured that the plagues of Egypt, which judged the land of bondage at the time of the Peoples' redemption, will all be repeated in the plagues listed in the Book of Revelation.

The Israel which sang a psalm of deliverance by the Red Sea, have their melodies echoed in the song of the larger Israel by that greater sea which John envisioned.

Certainly, in the narrative which climaxes with the return of Christ, the glories of Israel are found in the framework and structure. The worship of God has ever centered in a city called Jerusalem. This was the capital city of Israel, the place where David and Solomon reigned. In exactly that same manner, when the King returns Who is to reign over the entire earth for God, there shall be a new Jerusalem erected; there

shall be no Jew therein and the word "Gentile" will never be heard. But God, in the form of His Son, will reign from that city over a regenerated earth, in which the very animals are changed and converted into objects of love and friendship!

It is not too much to say that all nations of the earth furnish their share of this preview. And when the record is complete, earth will have no nations. All men shall dwell in that amity and brotherhood which comes to contented citizens who owe allegiance to the same sovereign and, hence, are bound together by the same patriotic ties.

This day, which the Scripture portrays, is called the "Day of the Lord." It will be consummated when Jesus Christ returns to the earth which cast Him out, to be crowned as King. It is the coronation day of Messiah Jesus, as well as the day of the judgment of the Christ-rejecting earth.

We have seen Him as a prophet, and we find that in this office, He is supreme and complete.

We have looked upon Him as a Priest, and we find that He is efficacious to transact between God and man.

Now we see Him in His final and eternal state. He Who was the Redeemer of men, Who is our Mediator now, will continue from that hour of His return throughout all the ages that are yet to be, as *Jesus Christ the King*.

This is the only permanent government to which God can give His consent.

If one were asked to define history in a single sentence, he would be wise to say, "History is an unbroken record of the failure of human government." Almost any form of government would be perfect, if the *governors* possessed perfection. The tragedy of human failure is resident in the fact that no government can be more perfect than the administrators thereof. For this reason men long ago recognized the impossibility of perfect government through monarchies. I do not mean to imply that kings are necessarily bad. Indeed, the grisly page of past events is often lightened by the transient appearance of kings who were good and godly, and who lived

for the benefit of their people. Such men, however, were followed inevitably by others who were characterized by selfishness and greed, and such bright spots are short and infrequent. Many monarchs who thought and planned for the benefit of their country, have seen their work frustrated and brought to naught because of the character of advisors and administrators through whom they had to deal. I would be perfectly content to live in an unlimited monarchy if both the king, his counsellors, and all of his officials were perfect, unselfish and holy. But because these three ideals have never been accomplished by a man, there is no hope that a human monarch could establish a kingdom that would be satisfactory to every individual within that realm; a government that would never change for the worse.

Under the press of certain circumstances in days gone by, tyrants were unquestionably necessary. The word tyranny did not originally connote oppression, but meant strength and plenary sovereignty. Many of the tyrants of old began their reign in benevolent form. They were gladly received by the people whom they redeemed from oppression and slavery. But in every case, such a reign degenerated rapidly, until the yoke of the tyrant was heavier upon his subjects than the chains from which he had loosed them.

We speak in our present age of democracies as though they were something completely new. That is not quite so. Both Greece and Rome knew democratic and republican sway. Every form of government that political philosophers can conceive has been tried in the past; and found wanting. It is even so in the modern world. The evils of a democracy are unquestionably fewer and easier to bear than the tyranny and suppression possible under other forms of government. Yet that man would be blinded indeed to conditions as they are, who said that democracy had given the earth a perfect government in our day and time.

One of the oddest and most contradictory forms of dominion that history records is the reign of a dictator. I do not know

of a single exception to the modern condition, namely, that dictatorships have always been established for benevolent purposes. Most of us can remember something of the condition of Italy before the rise of Fascism. The streets of her cities were crowded with beggars who lined the sidewalk in such droves that it was often necessary for the passing tourist to walk in the street. Visitors to Italy came away disgusted and aggrieved, worn out by the plea of beggars on every hand. The populace eked out a poverty-stricken existence through labor that was hard, and under conditions that were bleak.

When Mussolini battled his way to power, he changed all this. He improved the international relations of Italy with other countries, built up a foreign credit, and established factories throughout certain sections of his own land that brought a flood of prosperity to the sunny kingdom. As his prestige increased, he drove the beggars off the streets, put some of them to gainful employment, and erected sanctuaries and hospitals for those who could not work. A fervor of admiration for Mussolini swept over Italy, and the populace conferred upon him the familiar name, "Bountiful Benito." No country in modern times ever underwent as astonishing a transformation as did Italy in the first six years of Mussolini's dictatorship. Every great rock on the countryside, every fence and barn along the highway, bore the painted inscription: "Viva Duce," as the happiness of the people sought for expression. Whenever he rode abroad cheering multitudes thronged the way, and beyond question he was the most popular man in Europe in his day. Every Italian to whom we talked, in all parts of Italy, was loud and sincere in his praises of the great dictator.

Contrast his golden period with the drabness of his lot at the moment this is written. His empire scattered, his armies defeated; an ally who is a worse foe than his declared and legal enemies ever could be, possesses the reins of authority, himself dethroned and arrested!

We saw the dictatorship of Mussolini pass through every phase which is common to the collapse of that type of government.

What has here been written of Italy, would apply with equal force to Germany, and with greater pertinence to Russia. Scripturally intelligent men have given up hope of erecting a perfect state of government through imperfect administrators. This is inevitable for two reasons: the first is that the earth is in a state of rebellion. Men forget the significance of the statement of Jesus—"All power is given *unto me* in heaven *and* in earth." Our Lord possesses the authority to delegate certain of His powers to chosen representatives, but no man has any authority either human or divine, to acquire for himself the power that belongs to Jesus Christ. Of all the instincts that sway men, and of all the glittering guerdons that attract them, none is more alluring than power. Men get drunk on power quicker and more often than they do on wine. Rare indeed in the history of human government is the person who could become possessed of unlimited power and remain normal, sane and serene in its use. Always the possessor of power abuses it and diverts it from its natural end.

Power is conferred upon the creatures of God for the single purpose of making them capable of serving Him. When it is diverted to some other course or object, it becomes a curse to its possessor and inevitably destroys him.

The classical example is seen in the experience of Lucifer, the arch rebel, the chief enemy of God, and the malignant foe of man. It is folly to dogmatize about the details of Lucifer's experience, as the Scriptures shed only occasional light upon the episodes of his career. We can state with assurance, however, because God has made this much plain, that this archangel was at one time elevated to such a place of power he was the most influential servant in the realm of God. So great was his authority, it bred in his mind a vicious ambition which moved him to attempt to usurp the government of the universe itself. He said in his heart, "I will ascend to the

crest of the mount of the congregation of God; I will put my throne above that of the Creator; I will be the equal of the most high God."

Hurled from his high place by judgment upon this rebellion, Satan has been used of God to demonstrate an eternal principle. No creature can violate and abuse delegated power and not suffer therefor. But because of the malignancy of his nature, it has ever been Satan's technique to tempt and destroy such humans as possess power, by inducing them to excesses in its use. It is a tragic fact that few men can bear power with dignity and balance. They forget God when they feel strong in their own might.

So as long as the earth is in rebellion, and a usurper possesses the center of earthly power, it is pure folly to talk of a perfect form of human government.

The second reason that this is so, is a grisly fact called sinful nature. If it were not so tragic, it would be comical to watch the great thinkers and political philosophers of the earth tinkering with everything which is *not* the cause of our present failure! The collapse of government is not resident in inadequate codes of law. From the days of Hammurabi to the present hour, men have sought to better their condition by making laws more stringent and all-embracing. If the time spent in concocting law and the money expended in printing it, could have been diverted in one generation to the evangelization of the lost, it would have gone far to spread the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men. Perfect laws cannot be drawn up by imperfect lawmakers! Even if they could, they would have to be administered by venal law-enforcers. Perfect laws interpreted and applied by imperfect courts would not redeem the world from its present tragic state.

It is equally fallacious to argue that our present trouble stems from a wrong system of government. We are on the threshold of new attempts to erect super governmental bodies, under the mistaken theory that anything which is big enough must work. With no attempt to change human nature,



and utterly ignoring nationalistic ambitions, we are about to embark again on a "League of Notions" that is designated to become a more colossal "flop" than was the late lamented League of recent memories. But it is not systems of government which are wrong in earth's present cycle.

Nor is it the set-up of social forces. In this sphere also we have seen every conceivable philosophy applied, from governmental paternalism to sheer communism. We have watched socialism have its day and break upon the rock of human greed. It is not true that all men are born free and equal. Some men are born under the tyranny of conditions which determine their maximum achievements for the balance of their days. Men are not born equal in the possession of gifts, and talents, and capabilities. Not all men can design new machines. Some have to build them. Not all men can paint matchless scenes, some have to buy them and support the painter.

If, by some miracle not presently comprehended, it were possible to divide the wealth of the world so that every living soul had an equal share of earth's present treasure, within ten years I would again be as poor as I am today, and Rockefeller and Morgan would have re-achieved their present status. It is folly for men to hope to save the world by changing economic conditions, and tinkering with details. As well might a surgeon hope to cure a cancer by treating the headache which is one of its symptoms.

The thing that needs changing in this dark world is the sinful heart of man. Out of this dread fountain there stems all that is wrong in human relations. God has filled this earth with every good and perfect thing that man can need. He has provided it in such abundance that there is more than plenty for all. It is the selfishness and lust of the hearts of the few which result in hunger on the part of the many. There is beauty and grace in the entire creation, but the perverted heart of man twists these gifts of God into objects of lust and indulgence, violating the very purpose of creation.

The builders of the New World each are erecting their gossamer structures upon a rotten foundation. Share the wealth, and in a few years the few will have it all back again.

Revise political trends and give power to the oppressed, and they quickly become the oppressors!

The only hope for the world in the future is to change the nature of its inhabitants!

There are many today who talk about the indispensable man. They say that the only cure for war and distress is for one man, possessing brains and genius for a perfect rule, to be given power to dominate all races.

To that principle we agree.

The hope of the world is in a world ruler, but that One must be *omnipotent!*

The people of God who believe the Scriptures and who know the completion of the magnificence of Jesus, have this hope to sustain their courage:—*that Man is on the way!* The day will dawn when such a King will arise, for Jesus is coming again. It is not in vain that men in all ages have dreamed of that time when the earth will have peace, happiness and prosperity for a long, unbroken span. Those who read the Scripture with faith and understanding know the length of that promised reign. For a thousand years, a Son of David will reign from a throne in Jerusalem. In His day and time war shall cease, and contentment shall be the lot of all who are privileged to share the prosperity and blessing of that golden millenium.

Search the pages of history, read the dreams of philosophy, choose from systems of economy the highest and best principles of each, mold these into one philosophy of government; and you are still far short of the perfection of the reign of that promised King who is the Son of God!

Jesus is destined to reign for almost innumerable reasons. There is a matchless description of this coming King encompassed in this brief paragraph:

“. . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; which no man hath seen or can see: to Whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.”

Note from this description that He is called the blessed and only Potentate. I have frequently been moved to admiration of the unconscious honesty of the long succession of monarchs who have reigned in Great Britain. Upon their seal or somewhere around the crest, on the foundations of their throne, or upon the coin of their realm, they have never failed to engrave these words, “By the grace of God, king.” Whether the sentiment is expressed consciously or unconsciously, it is the acme of truth. A human being, seated in a place of dominion, is there by the grace of God. The very breath which keeps him alive for the span of his reign, he draws by the sufferance of God. The food that he eats, the water he drinks, and the clothing that garbs his royal form, these he receives from the hand of God as certainly as does the humblest beggar of his realm. At any moment that it pleases the Almighty, He can unseat earth’s most powerful ruler and raise a humble unknown peasant in his stead. Men reign by the grace of God.

But Jesus Christ is inherently royal.

Power was not conferred upon Him; it is His by nature. His sway cannot be interrupted by death—He met death once and put it under His feet. No man fears a conquered foe who has been robbed of all its power. Far less need Christ the King contemplate the possibility of failure through death.

For He Who at present shares the throne of God, is destined to have one of His own. Indeed, this is the exact promise God made to Jesus when He said to His Son:

“Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet.”

So the first statement in our text is that Jesus, in His royal aspect, differs from every earthly monarch, in that He is the

blessed and only Potentate and possesses royal power by nature.

The second difference that the text emphasized is in His complete supremacy. The exact wording of the Scripture says,

"All other monarchs shall some day do homage to him."

In His day He shall show who is the King of kings and demonstrate who is the Lord of lords!

Such names speak of universal dominion. So vast is this earth, it must be divided into continents for man's convenience. Such wide spheres as continents are still too extensive for man to handle, so we divide the continents into countries, and people them with various races and nations. No human being could prevail to reign over the entire planet. But when Christ enters into His office as King, all other reigning sovereigns shall prostrate themselves before Him and surrender their dominions.

At the same time He shall not give up His sway over heaven, for Christ is a Potentate of sufficient ability to center the universe in Himself. So the text says, "He is the blessed and only potentate." Because He is Himself a blessing, He is the source of all blessing to others.

Thus the magnificence of Jesus, when He appears as King, will dawn upon those who receive from Him every good and perfect thing that the wisdom of God is capable of conceiving for mankind.

Perhaps the most significant phrase in that text depicts King Jesus as a monarch Who alone hath immortality. Immortality may be conferred on others from one who previously possessed it, but Jesus Christ alone has it to give. It may be *received* by regeneration, but it is in Christ *by nature*. Immortality is Jesus' own essential divine essence. Happy are those who are subject to such a king!

Then the text produces a paradox. It states that He dwells in unapproachable splendor. He is surrounded by a light which no man can approach. Light is His habitation. Therefore hath no man seen Him at any time, and no man can see

Him. Are we then to expect a king who shall forever remain invisible?

This cannot be, for parallel Scriptures state that Jesus shall come back to the earth in a visible and bodily form. As the eyes of men saw Him departing from the Mount of Olives so also shall human vision apprehend His return. Such phrases at this, "They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced," and "Every eye shall behold Him," clearly teach that the return of Jesus and His subsequent reign will partake of a reality apprehendable by the function of human vision. How then can we understand this paradox? Perhaps by applying the illustration that is suggested in its very structure.

Our life today is derived from the sun. If the hand of God should blot out this glowing orb, within days life would disappear from the planet earth. But no man has approached the light of the sun. While it is the source of life, to draw near it is inevitable death.

It is equally true that no man can see the sun. You say, "I have seen it often," but if you stop and think you will admit that you only saw *its light*, and only a tiny portion of a very small fraction of that! If you take one long look at the sun and really see it, you will never use your eyes again. No man can see the sun, and human flesh cannot bear its rays in close proximity.

In exactly that same sense, this paradox of Jesus may be comprehended. He Who is the Sun of Righteousness, at present lights the world. Being enshrouded in glory and sharing the seat of God in heaven, Jesus is at present too effulgent for near approach. But when He comes again, being manifested in His Kingly office, wearing the body which arose from the grave, and which was seen and felt by men, He can be approached by all who form part of His court and domain. No earthly king can smile with the bright glory of the countenance of Him Who is the blessed and only Potentate.

He is indeed the King to Whom monarchs shall submit and the Lord Whom all other lords shall serve.

We do not mean to imply that the royalty of Jesus depends upon His return. He is a king now—howbeit a king in exile.

A usurper is temporarily seated upon His throne. This world does not belong by right to Satan, and some day its legal Lord will wrest it from the hand and power of its temporary ruler. It is only because of the grace of God that Jesus has not already returned, to assume His rightful place as the Son of David in the royal city of Jerusalem. He delays His coming until the Holy Spirit shall have had sufficient time to make an offer of mercy and grace to all who shall have the intelligence to accept Christ as Saviour, that they may afterward share in the glory of His reign.

In the meantime, He is home in His own country, sharing His Father's throne, and busily preparing for His return with a conquering army of invincible might. So vast is the unlimited power of Jesus, and so magnificent is He in the application of that power, that He still has time to care for all His loyal earthly adherents while His Kingdom is being gathered and prepared.

So while we speak of our advocate in heaven, we occupy an enviable position.

If a British citizen desired to plead a case before his king and could choose any advocate in the realm, I am sure that that citizen would be content to rest his case in the hands of the heir-apparent. We who are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven possess that priceless privilege. When we go to God our Father, we merely state our case to Christ, Who is the Crown Prince; and He transacts our business with God.

Thus, you see, the three offices of Jesus coincide, overlap, and merge, in the office of the Advocate. He is the Prophet who makes God's will known to men; He is the Priest who is divinely commissioned to transact with God on man's behalf, and He is also the King whose power is unlimited, and whose will cannot be opposed.

If there is anything stated in the Scripture with clarity and certainty, it is this which Paul calls, "The Blessed Hope." *Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth to rule and to reign.*

The planet which cast Him out will yet see His triumph when He, in turn, casts out Satan, and fulfills the promises that every prophet has made from Moses to Malachi.

You may remember, in the tragic but fascinating history of the bonny land of Scotland, how many noble and courageous efforts were made to bring the beloved Prince Charlie back across the sea. Men of genius and heroism performed prodigies of valor to set their own prince back upon his usurped throne; but every attempt ended in failure, because they depended upon the strength and power of the flesh. The coming of Christ in His own day and time cannot be delayed nor prevented for any such reason. When Isaiah told of the return of Jesus he said:

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. **THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS WILL PERFORM THIS.**"

Thus, the return of Jesus does not depend upon the arm of the flesh. We are not destined to wait until the church shall convert the heathen and the entire world shall enter the formal fold of Christendom, before Jesus can reign. At His own time and at the hour that God Himself shall determine, Jesus shall ride forth from heaven with Michael to lead His armies. He comes smiting the wicked with the sword of the Lord, blasting His enemies with His very breath, and none can withstand or hinder Him. Rest assured that when God's hour strikes, Jesus will return. Then, a happy, regenerated earth will receive her King.

**IN HIS DAY:** Judah shall be saved and Israel shall return to her promised land:

**IN HIS DAY:** War and strife shall cease, sin and want shall be no more;

- IN HIS DAY: Sorrow and pain will be unknown;  
IN HIS DAY: The heathen will all be converted, no man shall dwell in ignorance of God;  
IN HIS DAY: Nature will again unfold the splendors that characterized Eden;  
IN HIS DAY: The very beasts of the earth shall dwell together in amity and peace;  
IN HIS DAY: The knowledge of the love of God shall lave the earth;  
IN HIS DAY: Our long and ardent prayer, "Thy kingdom come," will be answered at last.

Perhaps no song of the church has greater power to stir the spirit and thrill the heart than the one which reminds us:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Thus the magnificence of Jesus in His final unveiling will flood the earth in the last fulfillment of God's promised blessings to men.

AMEN.