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THE GLORY OF CHRIST

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THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME

George Goodman

“That in all things he might have the preeminence”—Colossians 1:18.

THAT the Name of Jesus is the widest known, the best loved, indeed the outstanding name in the world, not even the bitterest opponent can deny. Its praises are sung without ceasing day and night. From every quarter of the globe ascend songs of gladness from the lips of those whose lives have been lightened with the knowledge of that Name.

It is in very fact the “name which is above every name” (Phi 2:9). The press never stops printing books and tracts of which He is the theme; poets sing His praise in sacred poetry and in solemn hymns; artists find inspiration in the incidents of His life and death for their greatest masterpieces; daily, tens of thousands of teachers and preachers go forth, often asking no reward, to proclaim His name and speak of His dying love. Martyrs triumphed in the flames or endured patiently in dungeons, and unnumbered hosts have suffered the loss of all things for love of His Name, desiring only the privilege of spending and being spent for His sake. There is no sphere of human life or activity in which His Name is not the one of greatest influence and power for righteousness and goodness.

Even science must confess Him as the One Who taught it to love truth and hate hypocrisy and superstition, to judge righteous judgment, for on these does all true science depend.

It is a tremendous claim that in *all* things He must have the preeminence, but the wonderful truth is that it must be accorded to Him. Nothing noble, beautiful, or worthy in the world exists that must not ascribe to Him the first place in influence and power.

He is the outstanding figure in history; the greatest person in the world of men; He is, to use His own words, which express better than any others this exalted claim, “the light of the world.”

Where is any rival? Who will come forward to dispute the fact that even now in this sin-troubled world that rejects Christ’s claim, He is the first, the Preeminent One?

But His preeminence is something far greater than all this. True, His place of influence in the world is assured as the first and the highest, but there are glories far beyond this in which He stands out pre-eminent and alone.

1. The Dignity of His Person

As John Bunyan wrote: “This One hath not His fellow,” for though He is spoken of as “God’s fellow” (Zec 13:7) and also is not ashamed to call His people brethren, yet none can claim, as He, to be both God and man.

This was the outstanding wonder of all God’s purposes, His greatest work, the great mystery of godliness, that He who was Himself God should be manifested in flesh, should be found in fashion as a man.

There have been great men in the world who have won fame and renown and whose names are honoured and beloved; but all must give way to Him who is more than man—the Lord, the heir of all things, the creator and upholder of the universe.

2. His Sinless Life and Perfect Character

He must be accorded preeminence in this also, that in a world of sinners He alone was without sin. The holiest of the sons of men have been the first to acknowledge their sinfulness and how far short they fall of the glory of God, for “there is no man that sinneth not,” and “in many things we offend all” except one, and He stands out pre-eminent in holiness and sinless purity.

Though meek and lowly in heart, He never confessed to sin nor apologized for failure. He only could face His fellow-men and say: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?”

His character was perfect in all virtue. We do not think of Him as we do of other men, as being distinguished for some particular quality. He had all in perfect balance.

If a circular disc be painted with the colours of the rainbow in equal proportions, when it is spun round it will appear white, for the rainbow is but a pure white light split by a prism into its component hues. So in Christ all the virtues are in such perfect proportion that as seen in Him none stands out above others; all are merged in perfect white—the beauty of holiness.

3. The Nobility of His Death

Many men have died noble deaths, have laid down their lives gloriously, and their memory is precious to us; but which of them will we place in comparison with the solemn scene on Calvary?

There was in that death something with which no other could compare. It was a substitutionary sacrifice for sin, such as only a sinless victim could offer. Unlike other men who came into the world to live, the Lord Jesus came to die, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. His life was incidental to His death. That dark scene was ever before Him, and when the hour was come He voluntarily laid down His life, no man taking it from Him, except in so far as they fulfilled the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

It was not the love of it, though that was great, or the patient endurance of the physical torture, or the example of suffering wrongfully, or the tenderness of the seven utterances on the Cross, that gave it its preeminence. It was the sacrificial character that did so. "Christ died for our sins." None other could have done this. His death, the just for the unjust to bring us to God, gives Him in this also the unchallengeable preeminence.

Mahomet is sometimes quoted as a rival to Christ in his influence on men. Let us contrast the death of each.

Mahomet died in a warlike camp, while he was making preparation for an unprovoked attack on a tribe which had done him no wrong, but upon which he had resolved to force his religion at the point of the sword. Ere his bloodthirsty purpose could be carried out he died in the arms of one of his many wives, with the noise of battle preparation in his ears.

Now let us turn our eyes to Calvary and hear the gracious words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," as thus the Son of God prayed for those who slew Him.

4. The Glory of His Resurrection

In this He has the preeminence, as the first who has risen triumphant over death and the grave. There are seven cases recorded in the Bible of those who were called back from death; but only for a season—they died again, death would not yield up its claim.

But the Lord Jesus is the first begotten from the dead, for it was not possible that He should be holden of death. He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

Now is Christ risen and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.

5. The Purity of His Teaching

There have been moralists and teachers in the world, but never one whose doctrine was perfect. Amidst much that was good there was much of falsehood, a great deal that was mere theory, often false sentiment and untrustworthy exaggeration. Each can be heard only in part; to none can a whole obedience be rendered.

But the Lord Jesus stands out pre-eminent in this, that no word He ever spoke can be challenged as untrue, or false in sentiment, or weak in expression, or unreliable as a guide in life. Authority is stamped on every word.

Grace and truth in perfect balance are found in all He said and did. Search those words such as never man spake and you will find nothing light or careless; nothing sentimental or foolish; nothing uncertain or hesitating; nothing proud or puffed up; in bold denunciation of evil nothing cruel or unfair; in gracious words to the sinful, no excuse for or palliation of sin.

The beauty of the words is unequalled in all literature; the convicting power of them is absent from other writings. What comfort for the weary; what hope for the sinful; what wise counsel for the direction of life; what solemn warning to the rebel; what promises for the seeker; what assurance for the believer; what prospects for the future! Search the myriad books of the world and see if any can hold a candle to this pre-eminent of all teachers.

6. The Wonder of His Salvation

It was said of Him at His birth, "He shall save his people from their sins." What a unique and outstanding claim! Did any man ever propose to save another from his sins? It cannot be done. In this, then, He must have the preeminence.

Yet the claim is true. Thousands of millions since the angel spoke those words to Mary have testified of Him that He has saved them from their sins. Well might the prophet of old ask, "Where is any other that can save you?"

Mothers would willingly die if by so doing they could recall a prodigal son to the path of purity. Fathers would gladly pay their last penny if salvation could thereby be purchased for a wayward child.

Only one has ever been able to say to the believer, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

How hopeless would this sin-stricken world be if there were no Saviour for sinners! But there is one, and only one. It is He who has in this, as in all else, the preeminence.

He Himself put forward this extraordinary claim in unmistakable terms, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me."

What other could bid his fellow-men, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? On the lips of any other that would be outrageous nonsense.

And such a word as this, who else dare utter it?—“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

Yet one stood among us who uttered these words in all sincerity and gentleness. We must ascribe to Him the preeminence.

7. His Glory as Head of the Church

When He walked this earth in humiliation, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He said, “I will build my church.” He foretold its course, a stormy, persecuted one, hated of all men, yet overcoming and spreading to all parts of the earth, until an innumerable company that no man can number should be gathered out of every tribe and kindred and nation, forming an invisible spiritual organism of which He Himself would be the unseen yet living head; in which the Holy Spirit whom He would send from the Father should abide as in a temple, sanctifying and guiding it in its course in the world.

This He has brought about, so that something unknown before in the history of the world has appeared. A company of redeemed and saved people, unlimited by nationality or language, having a common life, confessing His name, and walking in love and good works—yet persecuted and downtrodden, but triumphing over all in His name.

In this, as in all else, He has the preeminence.

From Seventy Lessons in Teaching and Preaching Christ.



“All ministries, therefore, must be subjected to this test—if they do not glorify Christ, they are not of the Holy Spirit.”—*C.H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)*

“Come and take Christ, and you have found God. No man believes in Christ and remains without the favor of God.”—*C.H. Spurgeon*

HIS GLORY AS THE SON OF GOD

Lehman Strauss (1911-1997)

“What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?”—Matthew 22:42.

THE unvarnished fact was that even the doctors did not know whose son he was. I shall never forget the incident. The court room was jammed full of interested spectators, sympathizers, and curiosity seekers. At the front of the large, square room sat the lawyers, half facing a stern and serious jury. All eyes were fixed upon a pretty, young girl of twenty-two. She held in her arms a chubby, curly-haired baby boy just four months old. As she sat in the witness stand to testify, she said: “In behalf of my child.” The judge was kind and sympathetic. He knew that someone was the father of the child. Turning to the sobbing and much-ashamed young mother, he assured her: “Your child shall have both a name and sufficient support, and it is the business of this court and jury to bring this about. However, an important question must be satisfactorily settled in our minds—“Whose son is he?””

Whose Son Is He?

I do not know whether or not the brilliant judge had ever read the Bible. I only know that the quest of judge and jury was used of God to turn my thinking toward that blessed book. I too started out that day upon a quest, for I remember how our Lord had said to the Pharisees: “What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?” (Mat 22:42). Always it

had been my belief, from childhood, that Jesus was the Son of God. I believe it still. But the judge's question sent me to God's Word to grasp the facts, organize them, and then see if I could arrive at a logical conclusion. Since I had always insisted in my mind that a skeptic had no right to doubt or deny spiritual realities until he followed through with his theory of skepticism to its logical end, I now was challenged with the fact that I had no right to declare my faith in Christ until I went through to its logical end and saw where it brought me. This I have done, not fully of course, for we shall never know Him fully until we see Him and are like Him. But I have studied and searched in order to understand more about the majestic theme: "The sonship of Jesus."

I have concluded that many things in this topsy-turvy world do not make sense. Man has taken it upon himself to run the universe without God, and the result has been this present, whimsical, unorganized, jumbled, and senseless environment in which we find ourselves. But my mind is at rest and my soul is satisfied in regard to the claims of Christ. I am now ready to declare more emphatically than ever that Jesus is all that the scriptures represent Him to be, the second person of the holy trinity, God incarnate, who is to be worshipped and obeyed by all men.

Isaiah said: "Unto us a son is given." But whose son is He? This statement of the prophet introduces us at once to one of the most exalted themes applied to Jesus, namely, His sonship. Upon this great doctrine all the interrelated doctrines of biblical Christianity stand or fall. If for any reason we have an unsound, distorted view of the sonship of Jesus, we stand in danger of being banished from the presence of God.

Jesus is "The Son of God." Here is a divine title that reveals the uniqueness of His person, particularly since it has to do with Christ's deity. Immediately we see that there must be some marked distinction between Christ as the Son of God and ourselves as sons of God. By the self-designation of our Lord as "The Son of God," He meant that God was His Father in the sense in which God is the Father of none other. Let us make no mistake about this. Nowhere in the realm of science, philosophy, or theology can we discover or soundly reason a natural relationship between God and men such as that which exists between God and Christ.

Jesus Himself taught His unique sonship when referring to God as "Father." He never said "our Father" when speaking to others except once. The one occasion where He used this term is in the prayer which He taught His disciples. Their request was: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luk 11:1), and Jesus replied: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father" (Mat 6:9). Of course this is not "The Lord's Prayer," as it is called by many; but it is a prayer pattern given expressly for the disciples. In it they were taught to pray for forgiveness, something which our Lord never needed. For this reason the prayer can find no application to His sinless life. When He spoke to other men of their relationship to God, He did say: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mat 6:14-15).

Speaking of little children, Christ said: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father" (Mat 18:10). To encourage believing prayer among His followers, He promised: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat 18:19). In answer to Peter's inquiry on forgiveness, Jesus said to forgive a sinning brother "until seventy times seven"; and then He added: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you" (Mat 18:35). Here Christ is holding conversation with the most intimate of friends and followers. Yet He does not include them in His unique relationship as the "Son of God."

This divine title was used by others whenever they acknowledged the dignity of Christ's person or His essential deity.

When the devil tempted our Lord, he made his attack against the divine side of His nature saying: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," and "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down" (Mat 4:3, 6). The demons, having full knowledge of our Lord, cried: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?" (Mat 8:29). Christ's first meeting with Nathanael provoked a demonstration of divine omniscience, and brought from Nathanael the confession: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (Joh 1:49). A knowledge and a confession of the great truth that Jesus is the Son of God is one of the prerequisites to any man's becoming a Son of God. The Ethiopian eunuch confessed: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Act 8:37).

Dr. Loraine Boettner has said: "In theological language the terms 'Father' and 'Son' carry with them not our occidental ideas of, on the one hand, source of being and superiority, and on the other, subordination and dependence, but rather the Semitic and oriental ideas of likeness or sameness of nature and equality of being. It is, of course, the Semitic consciousness that underlies the phraseology of Scripture, and wherever the Scriptures call Christ the 'Son of God' they assert His true and proper deity. The title signifies a unique relationship that cannot be predicated of nor shared with any creature. As any merely human son is like his father in his essential nature, that is, possessed of humanity, so Christ, the Son of God, was like His Father in His essential nature, that is, possessed of deity. The Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit, are coeternal and coequal in power and glory, and partake of the same nature or substance."

Every claim of Jesus Christ, including the confessions of other men, that He was the Son of God is a remarkable expression that shows the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son. His title of Son of God is not based upon His virgin birth. He did not become the Son of God by virtue of His birth in the manger of Bethlehem, but He was Son of God by inherent right in eternity past. When Isaiah said: "Unto us a son is given," he was not referring merely to the nativity, for the birth at Bethlehem was a fulfillment of the prophet's preceding statement, "Unto us a child is born." The Son was given before the foundation of the world, and it was He of whom the disciples bore witness when they said: "We believe that thou camest forth from God" (Joh 16:30). There is no support in favor of the doctrine that the divine relationship between the Father and the Son had its beginning at the incarnation.

In John 3:16 we read: "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." Here the term "only begotten" does not have reference to the human generation of Christ, but it does speak of that unique relationship in which the Son stands distinct in personality as the Son, yet coequal and coeternal with the Father. Elsewhere the Father testified to the eternity of the Son when He said "unto the Son...Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb 1:8). It is through the eternal Son that God hath spoken unto us in these last days (Heb 1:2). Not through one who became His Son has He spoken to the world, but through "One whose relationship to Him as Son stands in antecedent existence both to creation and to His incarnation" (W. E. Vine). There was never a time when this relationship between the Father and the Son had a beginning. The title of this chapter might well be "The *Eternal* Sonship of Christ."

Jesus is the son of Mary also. The crowds in the synagogues marveled and were astonished at the wisdom and the mighty works displayed by "the carpenter, the son of Mary" (Mar 6:3). And were they not justified in their inquiry, for was He not the son of Mary? The writer believes with all his heart that our Lord is just as much the son of Mary in His humanity as He is the eternal Son of God in His deity. The body of Jesus was not merely an "appearance," as some would have us believe; but it was just as real as the body of any other person. He was very God of very God and very man of very man, a combination of the divine and the human, both of which were needed in order to redeem us. Christ needed to be God in order to give efficacy to His death; and He needed to be man, partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren, in order to offer His body for a sacrifice on the accursed tree.

The use of the word "conceive" (sullambano) when used in reference to Elisabeth is the same as that which is applied to Mary. Luke tells us it was after the announcement of the angel to Zacharias that his wife Elisabeth was to bear a son, that "Elisabeth conceived" (Luk 1:24). Then the angel visited Mary and said: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS" (Luk 1:31). In other words, writes Dr. Thiessen: "Mary's conception was as true a conception as was Elisabeth's." However, there is one observable difference. When Elisabeth conceived, she had Zacharias as a husband; but when Mary conceived, she had no husband, for the angel assured Joseph: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Mat 1:20). When Jesus Christ was born, He took from Mary His human nature, not Mary's fallen human nature, but human nature apart from sin. If there is any moral mystery in a sinful woman giving birth to a sinless child, we have a satisfactory solution to it in the way that God intervened. God had said through His servant: "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luk 1:35).

"Overshadow" means to *encase, envelope, imprison*. So Mary was shut in (or *hedged about*) by the power of the Highest so that the child was not influenced by Mary's sinful nature. "Therefore also *that holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Jesus was the son of Mary but not the son of Joseph. His humanity is confined to the virgin mother. If, conversely, our Lord Jesus Christ were not born of a virgin, then His father is not known, and the only logical conclusion is that He was an illegitimate child. Of all such the law says: "A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD" (Deu 23:2). If Jesus were not conceived of the Holy Ghost, then He is cursed with the stigma of illegitimacy, and of necessity He would have had to be kept out of the Temple at Jerusalem and the synagogue at Nazareth. But we know that "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read" (Luk 4:16). Certainly if the Jewish fathers thought for one moment that Christ was an illegitimate child, they never would have permitted Him to read publicly from the prophecy of Isaiah. The conception of Jesus Christ was nothing short of a divine miracle, for He had no earthly father.

In a brief article on "*The Virgin Birth of Christ*," Captain Henry W. Uffelin says: "This was further proved in the demonstration by the rabble crowd who demanded His death outside the judgment hall when they were asked what was to be done with Jesus, and they cried, 'crucify Him!' He was put to death because in the archives in the Temple at Jerusalem, there was the record of His birth; proof, unmistakably, that He was the rightful heir and legal claimant to the throne of David. On Joseph's side He had no legal right to the throne, because Joseph's line was cut off due to king Jehoiakim's sin in cutting up, destroying, and burning God's Word in a fire on the hearth (Jer 36). He did have

the right to the throne, however, on His mother's side, since she was a princess in the house of Nathan. He, therefore, was Israel's rightful king. The record stood! Here is the king, the record cannot be altered or destroyed. Therefore, they crucified the king. This was a direct proof of the virgin birth of our Lord, and places the question beyond debate."

Christ is called the son of David. Matthew commences his record of the Gospel by giving us the title of the genealogy of Jesus Christ—"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mat 1:1). Here is a relationship between Christ and David that is distinctly stated to be one of sonship. This means that He has a royal connection with Hebrew people, and that He is the true heir to the throne of David. There can be no shadows cast upon this fact. The Virgin Mary was a descendant of David through the house of Nathan, and the Messiah of Israel was to be born of a virgin, one who must be a descendant of David. But lest someone should challenge our Lord's right to the throne on the ground that the virgin had to be the wife of a man who had an unchallenged right to the throne, Matthew shows that Joseph is a descendant of David, and therefore Jesus has a legal right to occupy that throne.

When David was king over Israel, the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to communicate to David the divine covenant: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel...And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2Sa 7:8, 16).

We know that after the death of David, Solomon ascended the throne and reigned over Israel. It was a reign of peace and prosperity, the Temple being built during that time. The wisdom of Solomon spread far and wide so that it looked for awhile as though his kingdom might be the everlasting kingdom about which God had spoken to David. But the story of Solomon is one of decline and final disaster. The very truths for which the Temple stood were contradicted by Solomon in his folly. Soon after his death, the kingdom of Solomon reaped the bitter fruit that he had sown, and David's kingdom, which was to be an everlasting kingdom according to God, was a total failure in David's son after the flesh.

More than one hundred years after Solomon's death, there arose a mighty prophet in Israel. He was Isaiah, the son of Amoz. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Isaiah prophesied of an everlasting kingdom, the same kingdom which the Lord had promised David: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 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 for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa 9:6-7). Under no condition could this have been Solomon's kingdom, for Solomon had died and his body was in the grave when Isaiah spoke these words. Furthermore, Solomon's kingdom had disintegrated. The prophet was looking down the corridors of time to the day when the Son of David, "a greater than Solomon" (Mat 12:42), even our Lord Jesus Christ, would occupy the throne of His father David. Of Solomon we read: "The king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold" (2Ch 9:17), but it toppled. Of Jesus we read: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb 1:8).

Christ, the son of David came, and offered the kingdom to His people, but with unbelieving hearts they rejected it. Those who believed on Him were few in number. We call His public offer at Jerusalem "the triumphal entry," but there was no triumph in that march to the Holy City. Among the multitudes that went before and followed Jesus that day, some shouted: "Hosanna to the son of David" (Mat 21:9). But there was no triumph in that entry, only a pathetic entry that ended in crucifixion. The Son of David was here, but He was rejected of men. But one day David's Son will come again. Then the rejected King, the King of kings and Lord of lords will occupy the throne and His enemies shall be made His footstool. In that day shall be fulfilled the promise of the angel Gabriel to Mary: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luk 1:32).

Christ is called the son of Abraham. The Abrahamic sonship differs from the Davidic sonship in that, while the Davidic sonship is restricted to David's house and David's people, the Abrahamic sonship extends to "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). When God made His covenant with Abram, He said: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 12:1-3). Let us give our attention to the last clause of this promise, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." We might ask ourselves the question: "When have all families of the earth been blessed in Abraham?" Surely Abraham did not see the fulfillment of this promise in his day, nor in Isaac's day. In fact neither the patriarchs nor the prophets witnessed a universal blessing in Abraham.

How, then, are all families of the earth to be blessed in Abraham? This is the unfulfilled aspect of the Abrahamic covenant. Some questions remain. Is the present program of God in calling out from among Jews and Gentiles a people for His Name the complete fulfillment of the covenant? Was the promise to Abraham conditional or unconditional? The latter question can be answered briefly. A careful reading of those passages which deal with the Abrahamic covenant will reveal that the promises were unconditional. The covenant is called “everlasting” (Gen 17:7, 19). God ratified it by an oath (Gen 15:7-21), and it was given the rite of circumcision as an outward and visible symbol. It is one of the gracious, unconditional promises of God. As regards the first question, we must answer negatively that God’s present program in calling out the Church from among Jew and Gentile is not the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Gospel is being carried to the uttermost part of the earth, but we are not witnessing the universal acceptance of Jesus Christ. Through His death our Lord Jesus Christ reached out in grace to all families of the earth. But every family of the earth has not been blessed through Him.

Christ is the promised seed, the ground and means of spiritual blessing to the world (Gal 3:16), but the fulfillment of the promise awaits His coming again. The families of the earth have not acknowledged the sacrificial death of Abraham’s son as an atonement for their sins, but when He comes back to earth, it will be as the blesser of every family in the earth. All who oppose Him He will smite, and as David’s son He will rule with a rod of iron. Then, after His enemies have been destroyed, all will be blessed by Abraham’s seed, the Son of God.

Another title ascribed to Christ, one which He used frequently when speaking of Himself, was the Son of man. Whatever else our Lord meant when He used this title, certainly He was thinking of His manhood, and certainly He sought to draw attention to the fact that He possessed real humanity. But we are not to suppose that the designation of the title ‘Son of man’ is confined to His human nature. There is more than the human connotation here. Furthermore, it was not at His birth as the virgin’s son that He was made the Son of man.

It appears quite clear from the teaching of certain scriptures that Christ possessed an essential glory as the Son of man which is different from the humanity He possessed at His birth. Jesus Himself taught this when speaking to Nicodemus. He was referring to Himself when He spoke of Him “That came down from heaven, even the Son of man” (Joh 3:13), and later when He asked: “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?” (Joh 6:62). The martyr Stephen’s vision of earthly things grew dim in his dying moments; but as he looked steadfastly toward heaven he saw the heavens opened, “and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Act 7:56). Who was this ‘Son of man’? He was the same heavenly character whom Daniel saw in the night vision and wrote: “Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him” (Dan 7:13-14). The Son of man was in heaven before His human birth, for it was He who descended out of heaven, and ascended to heaven after His Resurrection from the grave. As Sir Robert Anderson has said, “It was not His human birth that constituted Him the Son of man. That birth, indeed, was the fulfillment of the promise which the name implied; but the ‘Son of man’, He declared explicitly, descended out of heaven.” The virgin birth was merely a stage in the fulfillment of Christ’s mission as the ‘Son of man’.

A minister in the Christian Reformed Church writes: “The name ‘Son of man’ has its origin in the heavenlies. It harks back to that supersensitive region where the council of redemption met. The name finds its origin in that great conference and in the subject about which it met. Redemption strategy was determined upon. And since the proposed program of salvation for mortal men required incarnation of deity it had to be determined upon which of the three persons this task logically devolved. And for it the Son was indicated. Not the Father, nor the Spirit, but the Son was to be made after the fashion of men. He was to become very man, become such by assuming human nature, by becoming ‘Son of man’ in a word. And that appellation became the exclusive property of the Son henceforth. This gives us the necessary background to any fair evaluation of the name ‘Son of man.’”

Now we wait for this same Jesus to come again—Jesus, Son of God, Son of Mary, Son of Abraham, Son of David, and the Son of man. “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Mat 16:27-28).

From *The Second Person*.

HIS GLORY AS THE SON OF MAN

Arthur Pink (1886-1952)

The Condescension of Christ

For the sake of accuracy, a distinction should be drawn between the condescension and the humiliation of Christ, though most writers confound them. This distinction is made by the Holy Spirit (Phi 2:7-8). First, He “made himself of no reputation”; second, He “humbled himself.” The condescension of God the Son consisted in His assuming our nature, the Word becoming flesh. His humiliation lay in the consequent abasement and sufferings He endured in our nature. The assumption of human nature was not, of itself, a part of Christ’s humiliation, for He still retained it in His glorious exaltation. But for God the Son to take into union with Himself a created nature, animated dust, was an act of infinite condescension.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phi 2:6-9).

These verses trace the path of the Mediator from highest glory to deepest humiliation, and back again to His supreme honor. What a wondrous path was His! And how terrible that this divine description of His path should have become the battleground of theological contention. At few points has the awful depravity of man’s heart been more horribly displayed than by the blasphemies vented upon these verses.

A glance at the context (Phi 2:1-5) at once shows the practical design of the apostle was to exhort Christians to spiritual fellowship among themselves—to be like-minded, to love one another, to be humble and lowly, to esteem others better than themselves. To enforce this, the example of our Lord is proposed in the verses we now consider. We are to have the same mind in us that was in Him; the mind, spirit, habit, of self-abnegation, the mind of self-sacrifice, and of obedience to God. We must humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God, if we are to be exalted by Him in due time (1Pe 5:6). To set before us the example of Christ in its most vivid colors, the Holy Spirit takes us back to the position which our Mediator occupied in eternity. He shows us that supreme dignity and glory was His, then reminds us of those unfathomable depths of condescension and humiliation into which He descended for our sakes.

“*Who being in the form of God.*” First of all, this affirms the absolute deity of the Son, for no mere creature, no matter how high in the scale of being, could ever be “in the form of God.” Three words are used concerning the Son’s relation to the Godhead. First, He subsists in the “form” of God, seen in Him alone. Second, He is “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15), which expression tells of His manifestation of God to us (cf. 2Co 4:6). Third, He is the “brightness of his glory and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3), or more exactly, the “effulgency¹ of His glory and the exact Expression of His substance” (Bagster Interlinear). These perhaps combine both concepts suggested by form and image, namely, that the whole nature of God is in Christ and that by Him, God is declared and expressed to us.

“*Who being,*” or subsisting; it is hardly correct to speak of a divine person “existing.” He is self-existent; He always was in “the form of God.” “Form” (the Greek word is only found elsewhere in the N. T. in Phi 2:7, Mar 16:12) is what is apparent. “The form of God” is an expression which seems to denote His visible glory, His displayed majesty, His manifested sovereignty. From eternity the Son was clothed with all the insignia of deity, adorned with all divine splendor. “The Word was God” (Joh 1:1).

“*Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*” Almost every word in this verse has been the occasion of contention. But we have sufficient confidence in the superintending providence of God to be satisfied the translators of our authorized version were preserved from any serious mistake on a subject so vitally important. As the first clause of our verse refers to an objective delineation of the divine dignity of the Son, so this second clause affirms His subjective consciousness. The word “thought” is used (here in the aorist tense) to indicate a definite point in time past. The word rendered “robbery” denotes not the spoil or prize, but the act of taking the spoil. The Son did not reckon equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit an act of usurping.

“*Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*” This is only a negative way to say that Christ considered equality with God as what justly and essentially belonged to Him. It was His by indisputable right. Christ esteemed such equality as no invasion of another’s prerogative, but regarded Himself as being entitled to all divine honors. Be-

¹ effulgency—outshining

cause He held the rank of one of the three coeternal, coessential, and coglorious persons of the Godhead, the Son reckoned His full and perfect equality with the other two was His unchallengeable portion. In Verse 6 is no doubt a latent reference to Satan's fall. He, though "the anointed cherub" (Eze 28:14), was infinitely below God, yet he grasped at equality with Him. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High" (Isa 14:14).

However the Greek word for "robbery" is translated, it is evident the emphatic term of this clause is "equal." For if it signifies a real and proper equality, then the proof for the absolute deity of the Saviour is irrefutable. How, then, is the exact significance of this term to be determined? Not by having recourse to Homer, nor any other heathen writer, but by discovering the meaning of its cognate. If we can fix the precise rendering of the adjective, then we may be sure of the adverb. The adjective is found in several passages (Mat 20:12; Luk 6:34; Joh 5:18; Act 11:17; Rev 21:6). In each passage the reference is not to a likeness only, but to a real and proper equality! Thus the force of this clause is parallel with, "I and my Father are one" (Joh 10:30).

"My Father is greater than I" (Joh 14:28) must not be allowed to negate John 10:30. There are no contradictions in Holy Writ. Each of these passages may be given its full force without there being any conflict between them. The simple way to discover their perfect consistency is to remember that Scripture exhibits our Saviour in two chief characters: as God the Son, the second person of the Trinity; and as mediator, the God-man, the Word become flesh. In the former, He is described as possessing all the perfections of deity; in the latter, as the Servant of the Godhead. Speaking of Himself according to His essential being, He could unqualifiedly say, "I and my Father are one,"—one in essence or nature. Speaking of Himself according to His mediatorial office, He could say, "My Father is greater than I," not essentially, but economically.

Each expression used (Phi 2:6) is expressly designed by the Holy Spirit to magnify the divine dignity of Christ's person. He is the possessor of a glory equal with God's, with an unquestioned right to that glory, deeming it no robbery to challenge it. His glory is not an accidental or phenomenal one, but a substantial and essential one, subsisting in the very "form of God." Between what is infinite and what is finite; what is eternal and what is temporal; He who is the creator and what is the creature; it is utterly impossible there should be any equality. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One" (Isa 40:25), is God's own challenge. Thus, for any creature to deem himself "equal with God" would be the highest robbery and supremest blasphemy.

"But made himself of no reputation." The meaning of the words is explained in those which immediately follow. So far was the Son from tenaciously insisting upon His personal rights as a member of the blessed Trinity, He voluntarily relinquished them. He willingly set aside the magnificent distinctions of the creator, to appear in the form of a creature, yes, in the likeness of a fallen man. He abdicated His position of supremacy, and entered one of servitude. Though equal in majesty and glory with God, He joyfully resigned Himself to the Father's will (Joh 6:38). Incomparable condescension was this. He who was by inherent right in the form of God, suffered His glory to be eclipsed, His honor to be laid in the dust, and Himself to be humbled to a most shameful death.

"And took upon him the form of a servant." In so doing, He did not cease to be all that He was before, but He assumed something He had not been previously. There was no change in His divine nature, but the uniting to His divine person of a human nature. "He who is God, can no more be not God, than he who is not God, can be God" (John Owen). None of Christ's divine attributes were relinquished, for they are as inseparable from His person as heat is from fire, or weight from substance. But His majestic glory was, for a season, obscured by the interposing veil of human flesh. Nor is this statement negated by John 1:14—"we beheld His glory" (explained by Mat 16:17), in contrast from the unregenerate masses before whom He appeared as "a root out of a dry ground," having "no form nor comeliness" (Isa 53:2).

It was God Himself who was "manifest in the flesh" (1Ti 3:16). The One born in Bethlehem's manger was "The mighty God" (Isa 9:6), and heralded as, "Christ the Lord" (Luk 2:11). Let there be no uncertainty on this point. Had He been "emptied" of any of His personal excellency, had His divine attributes been laid aside, then His satisfaction or sacrifice would not have possessed infinite value. The glory of His person was not in the slightest degree diminished when He became incarnate, though it was (in measure) concealed by the lowly form of the servant He assumed. Christ was still "equal with God" when He descended to earth. It was "The Lord of glory" (1Co 2:8) whom men crucified.

"And took upon him the form of a servant." That was the great condescension, yet is it not possible for us to fully grasp the infinity of the Son's stoop. If God "humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" (Psa 113:6) how much more so to actually become "flesh" and be amongst the most lowly. He entered into an office which placed Him below God (Joh 14:28; 1Co 11:3). He was, for a season, "made lower than the angels" (Heb 2:7); He was "made under the law" (Gal 4:4). He was made lower than the ordinary condition of man, for He was "a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Psa 22:6).

What point all this gives to, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phi 2:5). How earnestly the Christian needs to seek grace to be content with the lowest place God and men assign him; to be ready to perform the meanest service; to be and do anything which brings glory to God.

The Humanity of Christ

It has truly been said: “Right views concerning Christ are indispensable to a right faith, and a right faith is indispensable to salvation. To stumble at the foundation, is, concerning faith, to make shipwreck altogether; for as Immanuel, God with us, is the grand object of faith, to err in views of His eternal deity, or to err in views of His sacred humanity, is alike destructive. There are points of truth which are not fundamental, though erroneous views on any one point must lead to God-dishonoring consequences in strict proportion to its importance and magnitude; but there are certain foundation truths to err concerning which is to insure for the erroneous and the unbelieving, the blackness of darkness forever” (J. C. Philpot, 1859).

To know Christ as God, to know Him as man, to know Him as God-man, and this by a divine revelation of His person, is indeed to have eternal life in our hearts. Nor can He be known in any other way than by divine and special revelation. “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me” (Gal 1:15-16). An imaginary conception of His person may be obtained by diligently studying the Scriptures, but a vital knowledge of Him must be communicated from on high (Mat 16:17). A theoretical and theological knowledge of Christ is what the natural man may acquire, but a saving, soul-transforming view of Him (2Co 3:18) is only given by the Spirit to the regenerate (1Jo 5:20).

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phi 2:7). The first clause (and the preceding verse) was before us in the preceding section. The two expressions we consider here balance with (and thus serve to explain) those in verse 6. The last clause of verse 7 is an exegesis of the one immediately preceding. “Made in the likeness of men” refers to the human nature Christ assumed. The “form of a servant” denotes the position or state which He entered. So, “equal with God” refers to the divine nature, the “form of God” signifies His manifested glory in His position of Lord over all.

The humanity of Christ was unique. History supplies no analogy, nor can His humanity be illustrated by anything in nature. It is incomparable, not only to our fallen human nature, but also to unfallen Adam’s. The Lord Jesus was born into circumstances totally different from those in which Adam first found himself, but the sins and griefs of His people were on Him from the first. His humanity was produced neither by natural generation (as is ours), nor by special creation, as was Adam’s. The humanity of Christ was, under the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, supernaturally “conceived” (Isa 7:14) of the virgin. It was “prepared” of God (Heb 10:5); yet “made of a woman” (Gal 4:4).

The uniqueness of Christ’s humanity also appears in that it never had a separate existence of its own. The eternal Son assumed (at the moment of Mary’s conception) a human nature, but not a human person. This important distinction calls for careful consideration. By a “person” is meant an intelligent being subsisting by himself. The second person of the Trinity assumed a human nature and gave it subsistence by union with His divine personality. It would have been a human person, if it had not been united to the Son of God. But being united to Him, it cannot be called a person, because it never subsisted by itself, as other men do. Hence the force of “that holy thing which shall be born of thee” (Luk 1:35). It was not possible for a divine person to assume another person, subsisting of itself, into union with Himself. For two persons, remaining two, to become one person, is a contradiction. “A body hast thou prepared me” (Heb 10:5). The “me” denotes the divine Person, the “body,” the nature He took unto Himself.

The humanity of Christ was real. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same... Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb 2:14, 17). He assumed a complete human nature, spirit, soul, and body. Christ did not bring His human nature from heaven (as some have strangely and erroneously concluded from 1Co 15:47), but it was composed of the very substance of His mother. In clothing Himself with flesh and blood, Christ also clothed Himself with human feelings, so He did not differ from His brethren, sin only excepted.

“While we always contend that Christ is God, let us never lose the conviction He is most certainly a man. He is not God humanized, nor a human deified; but, as to His Godhead, pure Godhead, equal and coeternal with the Father; as to His manhood, perfect manhood, made in all respects like the rest of mankind, sin alone excepted. His humanity is real, for He was born. He lay in the virgin’s womb, and in due time was born. The gate by which we enter our first life he passed through also. He was not created, nor transformed, but His humanity was begotten and born. As He was born, so in the circumstances of His birth, he is completely human. He was as weak and feeble as any other babe. He is not even royal, but human. Those born in marble halls of old were wrapped in

purple garments, and were thought by the common people to be a superior race. But this Babe was wrapped in swaddling clothes and had a manger for a cradle, so that the true humanity of His being would come out.

“As He grows up, the very growth shows how completely human He is. He does not spring into full manhood at once, but He grows in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. When he reaches man’s estate, He gets the common stamp of manhood upon His brow. ‘In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread’ is the common heritage of us all, and He receives no better. The carpenter’s shop must witness to the toils of a Saviour, and when He becomes the preacher and the prophet, still we read such significant words as these—‘Jesus, being weary sat thus on the well.’ We find Him needing to betake Himself to rest in sleep. He slumbers at the stern of the vessel when it is tossed in the midst of the tempest. Brethren, if sorrow be the mark of real manhood, and ‘man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward,’ certainly Jesus Christ has the truest evidence of being a man. If to hunger and to thirst be signs that He was no shadow, and His manhood no fiction, you have these. If to associate with His fellow-men, and eat and drink as they did, will be proof to your mind that He was none other than a man, you see Him sitting at a feast one day, at another time He graces a marriage supper, and on another occasion He is hungry and ‘hath not where to lay his head’” (C. H. Spurgeon, 1834-1892).

They who deny Christ’s derivation of real humanity through His mother undermine the atonement. His very fraternity (Heb 2:11), as our Kinsman-Redeemer, depended on the fact that He obtained His humanity from Mary. Without this He would neither possess the natural nor the legal union with His people, which must lie at the foundation of His representative character as the “last Adam.” To be our Goel (Redeemer), His humanity could neither be brought from heaven nor immediately created by God, but must be derived, as ours was, from a human mother. But with this difference: His humanity never existed in Adam’s covenant to entail guilt or taint.

The humanity of Christ was holy. Intrinsically so, because it was “of the Holy Ghost” (Mat 1:20); absolutely so, because it was taken into union with God, the Holy One. This fact is expressly affirmed in Luke 1:35, “that holy thing,” which is contrasted with, “but we are all as an unclean thing” (Isa 64:6), and that because we are “shapen in iniquity” and conceived “in sin” (Psa 51:5). Though Christ truly became partaker of our nature, yet He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26). For this reason He could say, “For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (Joh 14:30). There was nothing in His pure humanity which could respond to sin or Satan. It was truly remarkable when man was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26). But bow in wonderment and worship at the amazing condescension of God being made in the image of man! How this manifests the greatness of His love and the riches of His grace! It was for His people and their salvation that the eternal Son assumed human nature and abased Himself even to death. He drew a veil over His glory that He might remove our reproach. Surely, pride must be forever renounced by the followers of such a Saviour.

Inasmuch as “the man Christ Jesus” (1Ti 2:5) lived in this world for thirty-three years, He has left “an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1Pe 2:21). He “did no sin,” nor should we (1Pe 2:22). “Neither was guile found in his mouth,” nor should it be in ours (1Pe 2:22). “When he was reviled, He reviled not again,” nor must His followers. He was weary in body, but not in well-doing. He suffered hunger and thirst, yet never murmured. He “pleased not himself” (Ro 15:3), nor must we (2Co 5:15). He always did those things which pleased the Father (Joh 8:29). This too must ever be our aim (2Co 5:9).

The Person of Christ

We enter with fear and trembling upon this high and holy subject. Christ’s name is called “Wonderful” (Isa 9:6), and even the angels of God are commanded to worship Him (Heb 1:6). There is no salvation apart from a true knowledge of Him (Joh 17:3). “Whosoever denieth the Son [either His true Godhead, or His true and holy humanity]...hath not the Father” (1Jo 2:23). They are thrice-blessed to whom the Spirit of Truth communicates a supernatural revelation of the being of Christ (Mat 16:17). It will lead them in the only path of wisdom and joy, for in Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3) until they are taken to be where He is and behold His supernal glory forever (Joh 17:24). An increasing apprehension of the Truth concerning the person of Christ should be our constant aim.

“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1Ti 3:16). In view of such a divine declaration as this, it is both useless and impious for any man to attempt an explanation of the wondrous and unique person of the Lord Jesus. He cannot be fully comprehended by any finite intelligence. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Mat 11:27). Nevertheless, it is our privilege to grow “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2Pe 3:18). So too it is the duty of His servants to hold up the person of the God-man as revealed in Holy Scriptures, as well as to warn against errors which cloud His glory.

The one born in Bethlehem’s manger was “the mighty God” (Isa 9:6), “Emmanuel” (Mat 1:23), “the great God and our Saviour” (Ti 2:13). He is also the true man, with a spirit, a soul and a body, for these are essential to hu-

man nature. None could be real man without all three. Nevertheless, the humanity of Christ (that holy thing, Luk 1:35) is not a distinct person, separate from His Godhead, for it never had a separate existence before taken into union with His deity. He is the God-man, yet “one Lord” (Eph 4:5). As such He was born, lived here in this world, died, rose again, ascended to heaven, and will continue thus for all eternity. As such He is entirely unique, and the object of lasting wonder to all holy beings.

The person of Christ is a composite one. Two separate natures are united in one peerless person; but they are not fused into each other, instead, they remain distinct and different. The human nature is not divine, nor has it been, intrinsically, deified, for it possesses none of the attributes of God. The humanity of Christ, absolutely and separately considered, is neither omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. On the other hand, His deity is not a creature, and has none of the properties which pertain to such. Taking to Himself a human nature did not effect any change in His divine being. It was a divine person who wedded to Himself a holy humanity, and though His essential glory was partly veiled, yet it never ceased to be, nor did His divine attributes cease to function. As the God-man, Christ is the “one mediator” (1Ti 2:5). He alone was fitted to stand between God and men and effect a reconciliation between them.

It needs to be maintained that the two natures are united in the one person of Christ, but that each retains its separate properties, just as the soul and body of men do, though united. Thus, in His divine nature, Christ has nothing in common with us—nothing finite, derived or dependent. But in His human nature, He was made in all things like to His brethren, sin excepted. In that nature He was born in time, and did not exist from all eternity. He increased in knowledge and other endowments. In the one nature He had a comprehensive knowledge of all things; in the other, He knew nothing but by communication or derivation. In the one nature He had an infinite and sovereign will; in the other, He had a creature will. Though not opposed to the divine will, its conformity to it was of the same kind with that in perfect creatures.

The necessity for the two natures in the one person of our Saviour is self-evident. It was fitting that the mediator should be both God and man, that He might partake of the nature of both parties and be a middle person between them, filling up the distance and bringing them near to each other. Only thus was He able to communicate His benefits to us; and only thus could He discharge our obligations. As Witsius, the Dutch theologian (1690) pointed out: “None but God could restore us to true liberty. If any creature could redeem us we should be the peculiar property of that creature: but it is a manifest contradiction to be free and yet at the same time be the servant of any creature. So too none but God could give us eternal life: hence the two are joined together—‘The true God, and eternal life’ (1Jo 5:20).”

It was equally necessary that the mediator be man. He was to enter our law-place, be subject to the law, keep it, and merit by keeping it. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal 4:4). Note the order. He must first be “made of a woman,” before He could be “made under the law.” But more, He had to endure the curse of the law and suffer its penalty. He was to be “made sin” for His people, and the wages of sin is death. But that was impossible to Him until He took upon Him a nature capable of mortality. “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” (Heb 2:14).

Thus, the person of the God-man is unique. His birth had no precedent and His existence no analogy. He cannot be explained by referring Him to a class, nor can He be illustrated by an example. The scriptures, while fully revealing all the elements of His person, yet never present in one formula an exhaustive definition of that person, nor a connected statement of the elements which constitute it and their mutual relationships. The “mystery” is indeed great. How is it possible that the same person should be at the same time infinite and finite, omnipotent and helpless? He altogether transcends our understanding. How can two complete spirits coalesce in one person? How can two consciousnesses, two understandings, two memories, two wills, constitute one person? No one can explain it. Nor are we called upon to do so. Both natures act in concert in one person. All the attributes and acts of both natures are referred to one person. The same person who gave His life for the sheep, possessed glory with the Father before the world was!

This amazing personality does not center in His humanity, nor is it a compound one originated by the power of the Holy Spirit when He brought those two natures together in the womb of the virgin Mary. It was not by adding manhood to Godhead that His personality was formed. The Trinity is eternal and unchangeable. A new person is not substituted for the second member of the Trinity; neither is a fourth added. The person of Christ is just the eternal Word, who in time, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the instrument of the virgin’s womb, took a human nature (not at that time a man, but the seed of Abraham) into personal union with Himself. The person is

eternal and divine; His humanity was introduced into it. The center of His personality is always in the eternal and personal Word, or Son of God.

Though no analogy exists by which we may illustrate the mysterious person of Christ, there is a most remarkable type in Exodus 3:2-6. The “flame of fire” in the midst of the “bush,” was an emblem of the presence of God indwelling the man Christ Jesus. Observe that the one who appeared there to Moses is termed, first, “the angel of the LORD,” which declares the relation of Christ to the Father, namely, the angel (messenger) of the covenant. But secondly, this angel said unto Moses, “I am the God of Abraham,” that is what He was absolutely in Himself. The fire—emblem of Him who is a “consuming fire”—placed itself in a bush (a thing of the earth), where it burned, yet the bush was not consumed. A remarkable foreshadowing this was of the “fulness of the Godhead,” dwelling in Christ (Col 2:9). That this is the meaning of the type is clear, when we read of “The good will of him that dwelt in the bush” (Deu 33:16).

The great mystery of the Trinity is that one Spirit should subsist eternally as three distinct persons: the mystery of the person of Christ is that two separate spirits (divine and human) should constitute but one person. The moment we deny the unity of His person we enter the bogs of error. Christ is the God-man. The humanity of Christ was not absorbed by His deity, but preserves its own characteristics. Scripture does not hesitate to say, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luk 2:52). Christ is both infinite and finite, self-sufficient and dependent at the same time, because His Person embraces two different natures, the divine and the human.

In the incarnation the second person of the Trinity established a personal union between Himself and a human spirit, soul, and body. His two natures remained and remain distinct, and their properties or active powers are inseparable from each nature respectively.

The union between them is not mechanical, as that between oxygen and nitrogen in our air; neither is it chemical, as between oxygen and hydrogen when water is formed; neither is it organic, as that subsisting between our hearts and brains; but it is a union more intimate, more profound, and more mysterious than any of these. It is personal. If we cannot understand the nature of the simpler unions, why should we complain because we cannot understand the nature of the most profound of all unions? (A. A. Hodge, to whom we are also indebted for a number of other thoughts in this article).

*“Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
O tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there.
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it has found repose in Thee.”*

The Subsistence of Christ

The ground we now tread upon is quite unknown even to the majority of God’s people (so great has been the spiritual and theological deterioration of the last century)—though it was familiar to the better-taught saints of the Puritans’ times and of those who followed. That the Son of God is coequal with the Father and the Spirit, and that nearly 2,000 years ago the Word became flesh and was made in the likeness of men, is still held firmly (and will be) by all truly regenerated souls. That it is the union of the divine and human natures in His wondrous person which fits Him for His mediatorial office, is also apprehended more or less clearly. But that is about as far as the light of nearly all Christians can take them. That the God-man subsisted in heaven before the world was is a blessed truth which has been lost to the last few generations.

A thoughtful reader who ponders a verse such as John 6:62 must surely be puzzled. “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” Mark it well that our Redeemer there spoke of Himself not as the Son before He became incarnate. But ignorant as we may be of this precious truth, Old Testament saints were instructed therein, as evident from Psalm 80, where Asaph prays, “Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself” (v.17). Yes, the man Christ Jesus, taken into union with Himself by the second person of the Trinity, subsisted before the Father from all eternity, and was the object of the Old Testament saints’ faith.

When first presented, the last statement appears to be mysticism run wild, or downright heresy. It would be if we had said that the soul and body of the Son of man had any existence before He was born at Bethlehem. But this is not what Scripture teaches. What the written word affirms is that the mediator (Christ in His two natures) had a real subsistence before God from all eternity. First, He was “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1Pe 1:20). He was chosen by God to be the Head of the whole election of grace (see Isa 42:1). But more; it

was not only purposed by God that the mediator (the man Christ Jesus wedded to the eternal Word—Joh 1:1, 14) should have an historical existence when the “fulness of time” (Gal 4:4) had arrived, but He had an actual subsistence before Him long before that. But how could this be?

In seeking the answer, it will help us to contemplate something which, though not strictly analogous, on a lower plane serves to illustrate the principle. Hebrews 11:1 records that “faith is the substance of things hoped for.” The Greek word for “substance” more properly signifies “a real subsistence.” It is opposed to what is only an image of the imagination, it is the antithesis of fantasy. Faith gives a real subsistence in the mind and heart of things which are yet to be, so that they are enjoyed now and their power is experienced in the soul. Faith lays hold of the things God has promised so that they become actually present.

If faith possesses the power to add reality to what as yet has no historical actuality; if faith can enjoy in the present that whose existence is yet future, how much more was God able to give the mediator a covenant subsistence endless ages before He was born. In consequence, Christ was the Son of man in heaven, secretly before God, before He became the Son of Man openly in this world. As Christ declared of His Father in the language of prophecy, “In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: in his quiver hath he hid me” (Isa 49:2). Note that the verses which follow refer to the everlasting covenant. The “quiver” of God is a fine expression to denote the secrecy and security in which the purpose of God was concealed.

Many passages speak of this wondrous subject. Perhaps the clearest, and the one with the most detail, is Proverbs 8. The term “wisdom” (v.12) is one of the names of Christ (see 1Co 1:24). That “wisdom” has reference to a person is clear (v. 17), and to a divine person (v.15). The whole passage (vv. 13-36) has Christ in view, but in what character has not been clearly discerned. While it is evident that what is said (vv. 15-16, 32-36) could only apply to a divine person, it should be equally plain that some of the terms (vv. 23-24 ff.) cannot be predicated of the Son of God. Contemplated only as coeternal and coequal with the Father, it could not be said that Christ was ever “brought forth.”

From all the terms used in Proverbs 8:13-36, it should be apparent that some are impossible to understand of Christ’s deity (separately considered), as others of them cannot be of His humanity only. But the difficulties disappear once we see that the whole passage contemplates the Mediator, the God-man in His two natures. The man Christ Jesus, as united to the second person of the Godhead, was “possessed” (v.22), by the Triune God from all eternity. Let us note some things about this marvelous passage:

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (v. 22). The speaker is the Mediator, who had a covenant subsistence before God ere the universe came into being. The man Christ Jesus, taken into union with the eternal Son, was “the beginning” of the Triune God’s way.

It is difficult to speak of eternal matters as first, second, and third, yet God set them forth in the Scriptures for us, and it is permissible to use such distinctions to aid our understanding. The first act or counsel of God had respect to the man Christ Jesus. He was appointed to be not only the head of His church, but also the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15). The predestination of the man Christ Jesus unto the grace of divine union and glory was the first of God’s decrees: “in the head [Gr.] of the book” it was written of him (Heb 10:7; cf. Isa 42:1; Rev 13:8).

The person of the God-man mediator was the foundation of all the divine counsels (cf. Eph 3:11; 1:9-10). He was ordained to be the cornerstone, on which all creation was to rest. As such, the Triune Jehovah “possessed” or “embraced” Him as a treasury in which all the divine counsels were laid up, as an efficient agent for the execution of all His works. As such, He is both “the wisdom of God” and “the power of God” executively, being a perfect vehicle through which to express Himself. As such, He was “the beginning” of God’s way. The “way” of God, signifies the outworking of His eternal decrees, the accomplishing of His purposes by wise and holy dispensations (cf. Isa 55:8-9).

“I was set up from everlasting” (v. 23). This could not be spoken of the Son Himself, for as God He was not capable of being “set up.” Yet how could He be set up as the God-man mediator? By mediatorial settlement, by covenant-constitution, by divine subsistence before the mind of God. From the womb of eternity, in the “counsel of peace” (Zec 6:13), before all worlds, Jesus Christ was in His official character “set up.” Before God planned to create any creature, He first set up Christ as the great archetype and original. There was an order in God’s counsels as well as creation, and Christ has “the preeminence” in all things.

The Hebrew verb for “set up” is “anointed,” and should have been so translated. The reference is to the appointing and investing of Christ with the mediatorial office, which was done in the everlasting covenant. All the glory our Lord possesses as mediator was then granted to Him, on the condition of His obedience and sufferings. Therefore when He finished His work He prayed, “Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Joh 17:5). The glory which is there expressly in view is that exalted place which had been given to Him as the Head of all creation. In the timeless transactions of the everlasting covenant, in the

unique honor which had been accorded Him as the “Beginning” of God’s “way,” the “firstborn of all creation,” He had this glory. For the open manifestation of it He now prayed—answered at His ascension.

“When there were no depths, I was brought forth” (v. 24). “Brought forth” out of the womb of God’s decrees; “brought forth” into covenant subsistence before the divine mind; “brought forth” as the image of the invisible God; “brought forth” as the man Christ Jesus, after whose likeness Adam was created. Though Adam was the first man by open manifestation on earth, Christ had the priority as He secretly subsisted in heaven. Adam was created in the image and after the likeness of Christ as He actually, but secretly, subsisted in the person of the Son of God, who, in the fulness of time, was born openly.

“Then I was by him, as one brought up with him” (v. 30). Genesis says that the Hebrew verb here is connected with one which means “to prop, stay, sustain,” and hence “such as one may safely lean on.” It is rendered “nurse” in Ruth 4:16 and 2 Samuel 4:4. As men commit their children to a nurse to cherish and train, so God committed His counsels to Christ. The Hebrew word for “brought up” also signifies a “master-builder” (RV). Christ took the fabric of the universe upon Himself, to contrive the framing of it with the most exquisite skill. It is akin to the Hebrew word “amen,” which has the same letters as the verb to which Gesenius refers, only with different vowel points. How blessedly it describes Him who could be relied upon to carry out the Father’s purpose!

“And I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (v 30).

It is not absolutely the mutual eternal delight of the Father and the Son, arising from the perfection of the same divine excellency in each person that is intended. But respect is plainly had unto the counsels of God concerning the salvation of mankind by Him who is His “wisdom” and “power” unto that end. The counsel of “peace” was between Jehovah and the Branch (Zec 6:12-13), or the Father and the Son as He was to become incarnate. For therein was He “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1Pe 1:20) namely, to be a saviour and deliverer, by whom all the counsels of God were to be accomplished, and this by His own will and concurrence with the Father. And such a foundation was laid of the salvation of the church in those counsels of God, as transacted between the Father and the Son, that it is said (Ti 1:2), “eternal life” was “promised before the world began” (John Owen, 1616-1683).

From *Gleanings in the Godhead*.

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THE DEITY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE CHRIST OF GOD

L.R. Shelton, Jr. (1923-2003)

THIS message entitled *The Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God*, I firmly believe to be very timely. For I do not know of any time in the history of the Christian church when the foundations of our faith are being attacked as they are today. False cults, false teachers, and false preachers who are driven and possessed by Satan, are tearing away at the foundation truths on which we base our assurance of salvation: of forgiveness of sin, of deliverance from the wrath of God, of our preservation to the end, and of our entrance into the blessings of heaven prepared for us by our blessed triune God before the foundation of the world.

In Psalm 11:3 the Psalmist asked, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” My friend, the answer to that question is that we can pray to our living God; we can trust in Him, and continue to hope in His mercies, grace, and love; we can continue to sing and give praise unto Him, for *He changes not*; we can continue to preach and teach the unsearchable riches of Christ and stand fast in the faith once for all delivered unto the saints; and we can adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, especially in holy and godly living.

Now, the one foundation of divine truth that we hold dear in our faith, and the one which is most essential to our abiding hope and peace, is the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. It is this divine truth that has been attacked by all false cults, false teachers, and false preachers. They do this because, to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as being God manifested in the flesh, means that they must also acknowledge that they are sinners—totally depraved, hopeless in themselves—and that only by Christ’s precious shed blood and righteousness can they be saved, forgiven, and made suitable for heaven. This they will not acknowledge, because they still cling to their own righteousness, hoping to reach the higher life, the heavenly life, by the works of their own hands. They say, “We will not have this Man to rule over us,” so they try to make Him a mere creature like themselves, hoping thereby to do away with His authority and their bowing to Him as Lord of their lives.

These false cults, false teachers, and false preachers tell us that because the Bible speaks of Jesus of Nazareth as being God’s Son, then surely He cannot be equal to the Father, for He was begotten of the Father. They reason, that if He has been begotten, then He is not eternal; thus He cannot at the same time be the eternal Son and the begotten Son. But they fail to understand that the Father begat the Son in eternal generation; therefore, the Father cannot in any sense exist before the Son in eternal generation. In John 10:30 our Lord said, “I and my Father are one.” This word “one” is in the neuter gender, which refers to one substance; it is not in the masculine gender, which would refer to one person. Thus, the relation of Christ to the Father is an unanswerable argument for Christ’s deity: He is a person equal with the Father. He is the second person of the blessed Godhead, the Son of God; and as Colossians 2:9 tells us, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

In Bible language, the terms “Father” and “Son” carry with them, not our ideas of source of being and superiority or subordination and dependence, but rather the Semitic and oriental idea of likeness or sameness of nature and equality of being. Now it is the Semitic consciousness that underlies the phraseology of Scripture, and wherever the scriptures call Christ the “Son of God,” they assert His true and proper deity. The title signifies a unique relationship that cannot be said about nor shared with any creature. As any human son is like his father in his essential nature, that is, possessed of humanity; so Christ, the Son of God, is like His Father in His essential nature, that is, possessed of Deity. The Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit, are coeternal and coequal in power and glory, and partake of the same nature or substance.

Listen to Hebrews 1:3-6, as the writer there portrays the glory of the Son of God in eternity and in time: “Who being the brightness of his [God the Father’s] glory, and the express image of his [God the Father’s] person.” All of this declares His preexistent and eternal being. “Being made so much better than the angels...When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world.” This affirms His manhood in time. He always had sonship as God, but “by inheritance” He obtained it as man; thus, the Lord Jesus Who was eternally with the Father, was brought forth in time.

This same truth is set forth in 2 Timothy 1:9 in these words: God “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Here was the Son’s eternal state as God; and to deny His eternal sonship is to deny the eternity of our election, for our eternal election depends, as shown in this verse, upon His eternal sonship. Then, verse 10 reads, “But [God] is now made manifest by the appearing of our saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” Here we have His manhood in time, as the only begotten of the Father.

Now we could continue giving scripture after scripture to support this truth, but we must go on to another truth that bears out as greatly as any other the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God: It is the testimony that the scriptures give of the divine attributes spoken both of the Father and of the Son. First, let us ask, “Is the Father eternal?” Scripture states that the son is eternal. We find in Micah 5:2 that the city of Bethlehem was the predicted birthplace into our world, of one “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” This was quoted as referring to Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew 2:4-6. He was from everlasting, for He is the eternal Son.

In John 1:1-2, 14, we read, “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...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Four great facts are presented in these verses: (1) When the Word was—“In the beginning” (2) Where the Word was—“with God” (3) Who the Word was—“God” (4) the Word, the eternal Son of God, became God manifested in the flesh to show forth the glory of the Father. Therefore, He is eternal with the Father; and as 1 John 2:23 and John 5:23 tell us, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father,” and “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” Therefore, he who denies the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, is not saved! He has no hope of eternal salvation, for the scriptures declare plainly that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Act 4:12); and only God can save a poor, hell-deserving sinner.

Again, is the Father omnipresent? Then also is the son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, omnipresent—everywhere at one time, filling all the universe. The Christ of God said in Matthew 18:20, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” He said, “There am I,” not, “There will I be.” He is referring to His divine presence at all times, in all places, even though two or three of His people be met together in ten thousand places upon the earth at one time! Another blessed scripture that bears this out is John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Jesus of Nazareth, as the begotten Son of God, even as He was speaking, was both on earth and in the bosom of the Father in heaven. How? He is God, therefore omnipresent, capable of being in all places at one time.

While we are looking at John 1:18, there is another blessed truth brought out here that proves the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. Look at the word “son.” The Greek uses two words for “son”; one refers to dignity of position, and the other to relationship by birth. Listen now! The second of these, relationship by birth, is never used with reference to our Lord Jesus in His relationship to the Father. The Greek word for “son,” in every verse of Scripture where it is used as referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, refers to His dignity of person and authority; therefore He is coequal with the Father and worthy of our worship, praise, obedience, and adoration.

Proceeding with these thoughts of His divine attributes then, I ask, “Is the Father immutable (unchangeable)?” So is the Son, for Hebrews 13:8 reads, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”; therefore, He changes not, and for this I lift up my heart in praise.

Again, is the Father almighty? Then so is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. Creation demands omnipotence, so we read in John 1:3, “All things were made by him”; and “By him all things consist” (Col 1:17); and “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3). Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth, could say in Matthew 28:18, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” You see, He is one with the Father as almighty; He is the Almighty God.

Is the Father infinitely good and holy, as set forth in Matthew 19:17, “There is none good but one, that is God”; and in 1 Samuel 2:2, “There is none holy as the LORD [Jehovah]”? Then Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, is set forth as being infinitely good and holy. In John 10:11, He Himself said, “I am the good shepherd.” And in Acts 3:14, Hebrews 7:26, and in John 1:14, He is called “the Holy One and the Just,” the One Who knew no sin, Who is without sin and without spot, “holy, harmless, and undefiled”; Jesus Christ the righteous, in Whom is no sin, “full of grace and truth.” Yes, He is the Almighty God, and we, as His blood-bought sons and daughters, cry like Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” because He is worthy of our worship, love, praise, and adoration.

Dear friend, have you bowed your knees before Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords? Psalm 2:12 tells us to “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” He and He alone, is the hope of every sinner from paradise lost to paradise regained. He was the Lord of glory Who cheered the heart of saintly Enoch. He was the living redeemer on Whom Job rested his hopes of immortality. He was the Shiloh of Jacob’s dying hours. He was the angel of the burning bush Who promised to lead Moses all the days of His life. He was the captain of the hosts of the armies of God Who went before Joshua in conquering the promised land. He was the child endowed with a name of lustrous deity, as seen by Isaiah, for His Name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” He is the Lord our Righteousness, as anticipated by Jeremiah. He was the Messiah announced by Daniel, Who should be cut off, not for Himself, but for all His people. And, praise His Name, He is the Sun of righteousness of Whom Malachi wrote, Who would bring healing in His wings. Oh how blessed is this gracious and wonderful Lord, before Whom we bow in love and praise!

Again I must say that we have in no way exhausted all the scriptures about the blessed truths of this subject; but we have plainly showed from scripture that the Bible declares Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, to be God manifested in the flesh, and therefore we must obey Him, believe Him, worship Him, follow Him, and give ourselves wholly and completely to Him in worship, praise, adoration, and love, for He is God blessed for ever (Rom 9:5).

It is my heart’s cry that in these messages on *The Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God*, He would be exalted before the eyes of our souls, received into our understanding, loved with all of our affections, and that our wills would embrace Him in all of His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Dear friend, to know the Lord Jesus Christ is to love Him. To love Him is to follow Him and abide with Him forever in that living union of salvation. For you see, in salvation we are brought into that living, loving, and lasting union with Him and by faith know Him to be our head, our husband, our lover, and our friend. We find in Him a preciousness, for unto him who believes, He, Christ our Lord, is precious—precious in His life, precious in His death, precious in His resurrection, precious in His ascension into heaven, precious in His intercession within the veil as our interceding High Priest, and precious as we wait for our Lord from glory in His second coming.

To the true believer, the Lord Jesus Christ is our life, our hope, and our peace. I say, for the scriptures say, He is All and in All. Listen! We see in His blood shed for us at Calvary’s cross a cleansing from every sin. We see in His

imputed righteousness a justification before God that leaves us perfect in His sight. We see in His redemption a complete deliverance from sin, Satan, the world, and the very presence of sin, and that for ever. We see in His resurrection a conquering of death, hell, and the grave, and an entrance into heavenly glory for every blood-bought child of God.

So if the Lord Jesus Christ is not God, as the false prophets and teachers tell us today, then you and I have no hope of heavenly life; we have no hope of sins forgiven; we have no hope of deliverance from sin, from ourselves, or from this present evil world. Therefore, like countless millions, we're shut up to nothing but confusion, sorrow, suffering, hell, and the fate of life with all its cruelty.

But as we have seen, Jesus of Nazareth is GOD manifested in the flesh, and He brings sinners back to God in reconciliation by His blood-shedding at the cross. Therefore, having proved this from Scripture, we will not waver in our belief and proclamation that He is indeed the very Christ of God. Thus, those who know Him, those who have Him, have a hope that grows brighter even unto the perfect day. We are not left to "the cruelty of fate," as men call it, but walk in that blessed hope of the children of God.

I say it one more time: To deny the deity of Christ is to deny God's word plainly. To deny the deity of Christ is to deny the only way of salvation; for none can be saved apart from living faith in the living Christ, the living God manifested in the flesh. The Bible says, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1Jo 2:22-23). Then Revelation 21:8 tells us: "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Therefore, let every man be a liar who does not believe in the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, for God's Word is true, and God is true, for He has set His seal upon the works of Himself in the Person of His Son.

So continuing this precious subject of *The Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God*, let us look together at our Lord's words in Matthew 4:10, where He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. In answer to Satan's proposition that he would give Christ the kingdoms of this world if only He would worship him, our Lord said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"; and yet He Himself received worship and honour while He was on earth, and surely since He has gone into heaven. Therefore if He be not GOD, then all who have worshipped Him and are worshipping Him today are idolaters; and we are told, as God's children, to "flee idolatry" (1Co 10:14).

But being God manifested in the flesh, our Lord received worship and honour, heard the prayers and cries of those who called upon His Name, and never rebuked any for coming to Him with their affections and petitions. He did not rebuke the ruler (Mat 9:18) when he came and worshipped Him, asking healing for his daughter. He did not rebuke His disciples for worshipping Him (Mat 14:33) when they had seen His power in quieting the stormy seas. He did not rebuke the women who came to the grave after His resurrection for falling down at His feet in worship and praise for His deliverance from the tomb (Mat 28:9; Luk 24:52). And I ask, Why? Because He was God manifested in the flesh, and therefore worthy of our worship and praise. In fact, Jesus of Nazareth, Who was God manifested in the flesh, encouraged men to worship and honour Him. Listen to John 5:23! "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And then He went so far in the last portion of that verse as to say, "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." How plain could any scripture be? Here our Lord was saying, "I the Son, am equal to the Father; we are one; I came to manifest the Father, and if you will not worship and honour Me, then it is proof that you do not know the Father and have not worshipped God the Father in spirit and in truth." Also He said, "He that is of God heareth God's words" (Joh 8:47).

Another scripture that is very plain on this subject is in Acts 7. Here we find the martyr Stephen giving the truest adoration to the Son of God.

"Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they [of the council] cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him...And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep (vv. 55-60)."

In quoting the words of Psalms 31:5, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth," Stephen prayed not to God the Father alone, nor to the Father through Christ, but to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, worshipping Him with his last breath as very God, the Eternal God. Oh, what greater proof do we need than this: that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be worshipped, honoured, and adored as God, very God, God manifested in the flesh!

Let us now look at another line of thought. Prayer, or calling upon the name of the Lord, is everywhere encouraged in the Word of God. Psalm 145:18 reads, “The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.” Then, in the New Testament, we read in Acts 2:21, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved”; and “follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2Ti 2:22). These scriptures, showing us that we are commanded to pray and to call upon the name of our Lord Jesus, could be multiplied, but there is one in particular which shows that the name of Him Whom we are to call upon is Jesus Christ our Lord, Who is God—“to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Co 1:2).

Let us note the setting: The apostle is writing to God’s children, called saints. They are in the act of spiritual worship. They are worshipping Jesus Christ our Lord. They are not just a few in number, but all saints everywhere are calling unto the same person. Think of it: all saints in every place are calling upon the name of Jesus Christ! Just think, if He were just a man, how many could He listen to at one time and know what they were saying? How could He feel sympathy for each of them, help them, answer them, and give them His undivided attention? If just one person were pouring out his heart to you, and then a second one came, then a third, how could you give your undivided attention to all of them? Then add twenty or fifty more—what would happen? You would give up in despair, trying to keep all their varied interests from becoming entangled! You would say, “All of this is beyond the power of one man.” And you are right.

But remember the words of 1 Corinthians 1:2 “Saints...in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” They are bringing unto Him matters of importance, pouring into His ears the deepest secrets of their hearts, crying for mercy, confessing their sins, supplicating for grace in their crises, asking for help in time of trouble. Some are praising Him; some are giving thanks to Him; some are adoring Him, but He hears them all. He comprehends all they say; He answers all of their requests. And remember, as Revelation 5:11 tells us, the worshippers are “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” They are numbers without number, and yet He hears them all. Oh my friend, if a single cry of distress was disregarded, or a single note of praise unheard, then that act of homage would be vain and futile, and would be an appeal to an incompetent deity. But no prayer is lost. There is no confusion, no entanglement, no weariness, no telling us to come back later because He is dealing with someone else. No, because He Himself has invited us to come, and all in every place who call upon His name are daily proving the truth of His divine proclamation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat 11:28).

All of this proves that Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, is not mere man or the highest of God’s creations, but is God Himself, Who knows all, sees all, and is everywhere present at the same time. Our God can hear the cry of all of His millions of people at one time and answer them all according to His divine pleasure and grace. I say, this is gracious and comforting; this is precious, to know this Christ Who is our Great High Priest and hears and answers us, though millions more of His blood-bought people around the world are crying unto Him at the same time!

Then, before we close, I must take you to the scenes of the Revelation which picture the redeemed ones in heaven. What do we find there? Read Revelation chapters 5, 7, 15, 19, 21, 22 which picture them worshipping the Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, the eternal Son of God, Who is God over all, blessed for ever. Then if anyone objects to the fact that in many places it says that the Lamb was not spoken of as being on the throne but at God’s right hand, let him turn to Revelation 22:3 and see that when Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, has finished the work of the kingdom and has delivered it up to God (1Co 15:24-28), then shall God be all in all and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the new heaven, and all of God’s children shall serve Him. You see, in eternity we will never see God in His essence as Spirit (1Ti 6:14-16), but we shall see Him in His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, the Lamb, God manifested in the flesh; and we shall forever adore Him, praise Him, worship Him, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. Oh dear friend, do you know this Christ of God in that living, loving, lasting union of salvation? I say again, to know Him is to love Him and to follow Him.

I will close with the last scripture that for ever shuts the mouths of those who claim that the Son of God is not God, very God. Listen to 1 John 5:20: “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE.” Amen, and Amen!

From *The Deity of Christ*—Chapters 2 & 4; Available in booklet form from Chapel Library.

L.R. Shelton, Jr. (1923-2003) was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he later became associate pastor in his father’s Baptist church. While he did not have the opportunity to attend college or seminary, as a young man he devoured the writings of Spurgeon, Pink, the Puritans, and Lloyd-Jones. In 1970 he began a Gospel outreach in Litchfield, Minnesota. There he developed a

God-given burden to share classic Christian literature from prior centuries freely worldwide. In 1978 the small ministry moved to Pensacola, Florida, where Mount Zion Bible Church was founded.

THE GLORY OF HIM WHO IS ALL AND IN ALL

John Arndt (1555-1621)

“With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”—Isaiah 12:3.

As our distemper is exceedingly great, mortal, damnable, and out of the power of any creature to remove; therefore it is needful that we should have a remedy proportioned to the disease; a high, a divine, an everlasting, remedy and help, entirely derived from the pure mercy of God. As our original disease was caused by the wrath, hatred, and envy of the devil (Gen 3:1), so God, in tender compassion, was moved to heal the mortal wound of our sin by his infinite mercy. And as Satan had used his utmost endeavors and subtlety, in order to infect, slay, and condemn us, God was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to give us his beloved Son, in order to restore us to that life, happiness, and salvation, which we had lost. Hence he has made the precious blood of Christ to be the grand restorative of our nature, and the cleanser from all the contagion of sin. He hath given us his quickening flesh, to be our bread of life; his holy wounds, as a sovereign balsam to heal our wounded condition; and his precious death, to be an abolition of our death, both temporal and eternal (1Jo 1:7; Act 20:28; Joh 6:32 ff; Isa 53:5; 25:8).

But so disabled, so weak, and undone, is fallen man, that he cannot so much as apply this precious medicine even when it is freely offered: so little health, so much weakness is there in him. Nay, we even, by nature, strive against our cure, and reject the remedy which should help us.—Wherefore, O Lord, unless thou shouldst draw me after thee (SoS 1:4), and, as a faithful physician, administer to me what thou hast ordered, the best prescriptions will avail me nothing. Take me, therefore, entirely into thine own hands, and trust me not to myself. If I be left to myself, the eternal ruin of my soul will be my lot. Therefore “turn thou me, and I shall be turned: heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; for thou art my praise” (Jer 31:18; 17:14). As long as thou keepest back thy mercy, and hidest thy face from my sorrow, I shall remain in a diseased condition (Psa 30:3). Whilst thou forbearst to quicken me, I am tied down by the chains of death. Therefore I cry with David, “I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God. Thou art my help, and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying” (Psa 70:5).

O blessed Lord! shall not thy mercy be strong enough to raise a sick soul from her languishing illness? a soul that is not able to raise herself? Wilt thou not condescend to come to me, since it is not possible that I should come to thee? Didst thou not love me, even before I had so much as a thought of loving thee again? Thy mercy is so prevailing and so strong, that it has even overcome thyself. Was it not mercy that nailed thee to the cross, and gave thee up to death? What is so strong as to encounter and conquer thee, if it be not the strength of thy own mercy? What has might sufficient to apprehend thee, and to bind and conduct thee to death, but thy love only, wherewith thou hast loved and quickened us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins? (Eph 2:1). For thou wouldst thyself undergo the pangs of death, rather than suffer us to be forever bound over to death and eternal damnation!

Thy mercy, O Lord, has made thee all our own, and put a title to all thy merits into our hands. When thou becamest a tender infant, it was wholly for our sakes, unto whom thou art “born a child” (Isa 9:6). When thou wast made an offering for our sins, and when thou wast slain as an innocent lamb on the cross, it was to give up thyself unto us, and freely to impart unto us all things beside. O excellent gift of God! A good wholly appropriated to us, even our own peculiar good and treasure!

Behold! Beloved Christian, the wisdom of God! God has by means of this everlasting good made himself our own property, that he might thereby in return make us his own. For having purchased us “with a price,” we are no longer our own, but his who hath bought us (1Co 6:19-20). For whosoever receives so excellent a gift, receives also the Giver himself, from whom it proceeds. And again, whosoever possesses any good as his own, he makes it his own to all intents and purposes, and to the best advantage he can. Thus, likewise, is Christ become thy own and proper good. Thou canst apply him in such manner, as to obtain by him everlasting life and salvation.

Christ is become the true medicine of thy soul, to restore thee—thy meat and thy drink, to refresh thee—thy fountain of life, to quench thy thirst—thy light, in darkness—thy joy, in sadness—thine advocate, against thine accusers—wisdom, against thy folly—righteousness, against thy sin—sanctification, against thy unworthiness—redemption, against thy bondage—the mercy-seat, against the judgment-seat—the throne of grace, against thy condemnation—thy absolution, against thy fearful sentence—thy peace and rest, against an evil conscience—thy victory, against all thine enemies—thy champion, against all thy persecutors—the bridegroom of thy soul, against all rivals—thy mediator, against the wrath of God—thy propitiation, against all thy trespasses—thy strength, against thy weakness—thy way, against thy wandering—thy truth, against lying and vanity—thy life, against death. He is thy counsel, when thou hast none to advise thee—thy power, in the midst of thine infirmities—thy Everlasting Father, when thou art forsaken and fatherless—thy Prince of Peace, against the adversary—thy ransom, against thy debt—thy crown of glory, against thy reproach—thy teacher, against thine ignorance—thy Judge, against thine oppressor—thy King, to destroy the kingdom of Satan—thine everlasting High Priest, to intercede for thee.

Consider now, O Christian, what an excellent gift the Lord Jesus Christ is. Let it be thy daily prayer and supplication to make a true saving use of all those heavenly benefits, and to improve all the offices of Christ to the end for which they are designed. If he be thy Medicine (Mat 9:12), fear not but thou shalt be healed: since he is thy Bread (Joh 6:51), thy soul shall be filled. Is he to thee a Fountain of Life (Isa 12:3), then truly thou shalt thirst no more. Is he to thee a Light (Joh 8:12), then thou shalt remain no longer in darkness. Is he thy Joy (Luk 2:10), what then shall afflict thee? Is he the Advocate (1Jo 2:1) that pleads thy cause, what adversary shall cast thee? Is he thy Truth, who shall deceive thee? Is he thy Way? who shall make thee to err? Is he thy Life (Joh 14:6), who shall slay thee? Is he thy Wisdom, who shall seduce thee? Is he thy Righteousness, who shall condemn thee? Is he thy Sanctification, who shall reject thee? Is he thy Redemption, who shall imprison thee? (1Co 1:30). Is he thy Peace (Eph 2:14), who can disturb thee? Is he thy Mercy-Seat (Rom 3:25), who can arraign thee? Is he thy Throne of Grace (Heb 4:16), who can give sentence against thee? Is he thy Discharge and Absolution (Col 2:14), who then dares impeach thee? Is he the Champion and the Captain of thy salvation (Heb 2:10), who shall be able to stand against thee? Is he thy Bridegroom (Joh 3:29), who then shall snatch thee from him? Is he thy Ransom (1Ti 2:6), who will arrest thee? Is he thy Crown of Glory (Heb 2:7), who then shall reproach thee? Is he thy Master (Joh 13:13), and Teacher, who then shall correct thee? If he be thy Judge (2Th 1:9), who shall oppress thee? If he be thy Propitiation (1Jo 2:2), who shall accuse thee? If he be thy Mediator (1Ti 2:5), who shall set God against thee? If he be thy Advocate (1Jo 2:1), who shall prosecute thee? Is he thy Immanuel (Isa 7:14), who shall be against thee? Is he thy King (Joh 12:15), who shall expel thee out of his kingdom? Is he thy High Priest (Heb 7:25), who can refuse his intercession and sacrifice? Is he thy Saviour (Mat. 1:21), who shall destroy thee?

How canst thou have a more excellent, a more valuable present? It is a present of greater worth than thou thyself, than all mankind, and all the world besides. It is a present that infinitely surpasses all the sins, miseries, and calamities of the whole world. Christ hereby is all our own, both as to his divine and his human nature. It was by sin we had forfeited the richest of all treasures, the sovereign good, even God himself: and it is by Christ, that all is made up again, and God himself given to us as our property. And for this reason, Christ is called Immanuel (Isa 7:14), (which being interpreted is, God with us), that in him we might have both God and a brother.

Consider now, O Christian! what an immense, what an infinite good thou hast in Christ thy Redeemer, and to what spiritual benefits thou art entitled by him. If people were but better acquainted with the sources of this heavenly comfort, then no cross, no affliction, would seem any longer insupportable to them; because Christ would be all in all, and by his presence alleviate the miseries of this life. Christ himself is ours not only as a crucified Christ, but also as he is glorified, together with all the majesty that resides in him. “All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1Co 3:21-23).

Alas! Poor, miserable, accursed, and condemned sinners, that we by nature all are! How came we to be favored and honored with so high and inestimable a gift? For thou, O Lord Jesus, art to us—Jehovah our Righteousness—a Mediator between God and man—our everlasting Priest—the Christ of God—a Lamb without spot—our propitiatory oblation—the fulfillment of the law—the Desire of the patriarchs—the Inspirer of the prophets—the Master of the apostles—the teacher of the evangelists—the light of the confessors—the crown of the martyrs—the Praise of all the saints—the resurrection of the dead—the firstborn from the dead—the glory of the blessed—the consolation of the mourners—the righteousness of sinners—the hope of the afflicted—the refuge of the miserable—the entertainer of strangers—the fellow-traveler of pilgrims—the way of them that were mistaken—the help to them who were forsaken—the strength of the weak—the health of the sick—the protector of the simple—the reward of the just—the flaming fire of charity—the Author of faith—the anchor of hope—the flower of humili-

ty—the rose of meekness—the root of all the virtues—the exemplar of patience—the enkindler of devotion—the increase of prayer—the tree of health—the fountain of blessedness—the bread of life—the Head of the church—the bridegroom of the soul—the precious pearl—the rock of salvation—the living stone—the heir of all things—the redemption of the world—the triumphant Conqueror of Hell—the Prince of Peace—the mighty lion of Judah—the father of the world to come—the guide to our heavenly country—the sun of righteousness—the morning star—the inextinguishable light of the celestial Jerusalem—the brightness of the everlasting glory—the unspotted mirror—the splendor of the divine majesty—the image of the paternal goodness—the treasure of wisdom—the abyss of eternity—the beginning without beginning—the Word upholding all things—the life quickening all things—the light enlightening all things—the truth judging all things—the counsel moderating all things—the rule directing all things—the love sustaining all things—the whole comprehension of all that is good.

This is the great and infinite gift, which God has so freely bestowed upon mortal men.

From *True Christianity*—Book II Chapter I.

Jonathan Arndt (1555-1621): Lutheran pastor; stressed repentance, sanctification, the work of Christ in the heart, and intimate fellowship and union with God; born in Anhalt, Germany.



Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is given to us by our heavenly Father as our help against the damnable and deadly poison of original sin, and the pernicious fruits thereof, as well as a protector against all the calamities and evils both of the body and the soul.—*John Arndt*