

# Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 273

## JESUS CHRIST Is LORD

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*Jesus Christ is Lord, to the  
glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 2:10

### Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,  
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,  
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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## JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

# 273

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# JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)**

*And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.—Philippians 2:11*

**J**ESUS Christ is to be at the very center of our lives and at the very center of our thoughts. Let us not misunderstand a statement like this. We are reminded here that it is not enough to believe in God or to have a thesis,<sup>1</sup> nor is it enough to say [that] we believe in a Supreme Being and that we recognize the Person of God. That is not the particular thing that makes us Christian. As the result of all that has taken place, Paul tells us, God Himself has appointed Christ to be the center, and therefore we must say with Martin Luther<sup>2</sup> that we know of no other God save Jesus Christ. He is the only way in which we can know God, and therefore He is to be central. And our thinking about God and all our relationship to God must be in terms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the exhortation is that we should all bow the knee to Him.

Let us observe as the learned authorities all very rightly point out in this connection: there has surely been no greater travesty<sup>3</sup> of Scripture anywhere than the way in which certain sections of the Christian Church have interpreted this to mean that every time the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned we should bow our heads, an act that is regarded by them as a mark of exceptional devotion. But how far short that falls of what we are told in the text! We are to bow the *knee*, not merely bow the head! Paul says, in effect, that we are to surrender ourselves—to make obeisance.<sup>4</sup> This is an act of acknowledgment, of giving ourselves. We are to bow the knee to Him because He is Lord, and, according to the apostle here, God has given Him such a name that the whole universe—beings in heaven, in earth, and under the earth—are thus made subject unto Him, and are to acknowledge Him, and every tongue everywhere will confess “that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

There is no contradiction here between worshipping God and

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<sup>1</sup> thesis – stated proposition; assertion.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther (1483-1546) – German leader of the Protestant Reformation.

<sup>3</sup> travesty – false, absurd, or distorted representation of something.

<sup>4</sup> make obeisance – bow down, expressing submission and obedience.

worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to worship God *by* worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. You will remember how on several occasions in His own earthly ministry our Lord Himself made exactly the same point. He said: "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (Joh 5:23). Thus, in His teaching, this is made perfectly clear and beyond peradventure,<sup>5</sup> exactly as we have it here repeated by the Apostle Paul. It is impossible truly to worship God, bow the knee to Him, and live the life He would have us live, except in and through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now there is the great starting point. You see, Paul puts Him here in the center of the universe; He is at the center of life, and if He is not there in our lives and experience, then, according to our gospel, not only are we not Christian, but our worship of God is valueless. God has appointed Him, God has exalted Him, and God is calling upon us all to bow the knee to Him, to surrender to Him, to acknowledge Him, and to confess Him with the whole of our life.

Let us therefore try, just briefly, to analyze what this confession means. First of all, let us look at it as regards His Person—the confession we are called upon to make about the Person of Jesus Christ. And here the terms themselves really say everything that can be said. We are told that "Jesus Christ is Lord." That is the confession, and you notice how carefully the apostle uses the terms. When he gives this great description of the incarnation in verses 6-8, he points out to us how that man, the one Who was called Jesus, was none other than God in the flesh. While still in the form of God, He took the form of a servant. He did not hold on to His divine prerogatives,<sup>6</sup> but considered others: He saw their need, and so He humbled Himself, not ceasing to be God but taking on human nature and appearing in the likeness of man; and "in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth.

Now the apostle directs attention to that Person, and he puts it here in this wonderful way in the tenth verse. It is at the name of Jesus that every knee should bow; it is the same Jesus Who was here on earth, Who is now in the glorified state. In other words, Paul is here again emphasizing the glorious nature of the Person. We must not forget that the eternal Son of God became man, took on Himself humanity and was known as Jesus. We must always remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we worship and confess, is the very Person Who walked

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<sup>5</sup> **peradventure** – beyond doubt that something is the case.

<sup>6</sup> **prerogatives** – exclusive privileges or rights.

the face of this earth. Let us never lose Him in His teaching; let us never lose sight of Him in any philosophy that can be elaborated from Him and from His teaching. God forbid that we should ever turn Him into a mere collection of ideas and thoughts. No, Paul holds us to the Person by bringing in the word *Jesus*, that Person Whom we can read about in the pages of the four Gospels.

But then we have the next word: Christ—Jesus Christ—which means, of course, that He was peculiarly and specially the one Who was anointed by God and set apart to do a certain work. He is the Messiah, which means “anointed one.” Whenever anyone or anything was anointed in the Old Testament, it meant that he was set apart for some particular purpose. The High Priest and the other priests were anointed because they were set apart to carry out those specific functions of worshipping God in the manner He had indicated. Now here is Christ, supreme above all others, Who was anointed or set apart to do this special work about which Paul has already told us. He set Himself apart, and He was set apart by God to perform that work that He alone could do. As we have seen, He humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant; He went still further and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That was the thing that He was set apart for.

He came into this world, in other words, not merely to give us His incomparable teaching or to provide us with an example, perfect and glorious though it is; the work He came to do was to taste death for every man. That is why He went to the cross; that is why there was the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane before He went to die. It was this, ultimately, that God had called upon Him to do; it was the only way by which man could be delivered...And there on the cross, He became a sin offering. At one and the same time, He was the priest and the offering, for He offered Himself and His own shed blood to God the Father as the expiation<sup>7</sup> for sin. Jesus Christ—not merely the peasant of Galilee or the Teacher and Instructor; not merely the Exemplar,<sup>8</sup> but over and above that, this Anointed One, this Priest, this everything—the Christ, the Messiah, the Deliverer, the one Who makes an atonement and opens the way of salvation.

So, what you confess is that Jesus Christ is Lord, which, of course, simply means that Jesus Christ is God. The word translated here as *Lord* is the word that is so often used by God of Himself in the Old

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<sup>7</sup> **expiation** – removal or covering the guilt of sin.

<sup>8</sup> **exemplar** – one that is worthy of imitation.

Testament. You remember that the Jews avoided the pronouncement of the name of God; they regarded it as so holy and sacred that they very rarely used it. They adopted various symbols to express the idea, and one of the common words they used instead of using the name *Je-hovah* was this word *Lord*. So that when they spoke of "the Lord," they meant God; and when Paul says that the Christian confession is that Jesus Christ is Lord, he means God, the supreme, one with the Father, Who has been set in this position of sovereignty in the whole of God's economy. Every knee should bow at the name of Jesus because He is Lord, He is God. And that is the tremendous and startling statement that the apostle here makes with respect to the Person. And that, of course, is the thing which we remind ourselves of now, before we go any further.

We can, perhaps, consider it best of all by looking at it in the form of a question. What is Jesus Christ to us? Where does He come into our scheme of things? What do we believe concerning Him? Have we bowed the knee to Him, have we surrendered to Him, do we make this confession concerning Him? Do we say that Jesus of Nazareth, that man Who walked about the face of this earth, is Lord, the anointed of God, the one Who was set apart to bear the sins of man, including our own? Do we say that it is there alone, in that death, that we find salvation and all that it means, and by which we are reconciled to God? Do we confess that to us He is God and that we worship Him to the glory of God the Father? That is the confession.

Am I returning to this too frequently? I wonder if that is possible! My plea is that I find it everywhere in the New Testament and that there has surely never been a greater need for this reemphasis than there is at the present time. How easy it is to turn the New Testament into a philosophy or a set of rules and regulations and a scheme for life and living, a general outlook. No, the central point everywhere, the whole emphasis here, is that it is my personal relationship with Him that matters. I do not accept the Christian philosophy primarily; I accept *Him*. I believe on *Him*, I bow my knee to *Him*, the Person. I make a statement about the individual: Jesus Christ is Lord, He is my Lord. It is a personal relationship and a personal confession. And that is the primary thing in the whole Christian position—our relationship to *Him*. There is no true knowledge of God apart from *Him*, and to know *Him* is to know God. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Joh 14:9)—that is it. The centrality of Christ.

That, then, is the Person. Let us now consider what Paul has to tell us about His present position. He not only directs attention to the glory

of the Person but tells us some amazing things about the present position of this Person, and I think we will all agree that there is no greater consolation to be found anywhere than we find here. There is nothing so good and comforting, as we face life, than to realize the present position of this glorious Person Whom we confess to be God. The first thing we are told about Him is that He has already triumphed. You notice how Paul puts it: He “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.” But that is not the end. The next word is “Wherefore”—don’t you see the whole of the gospel there? Don’t you see things happening? Don’t you see the sun peeping through amidst the darkness? Wherefore! It does not end with the humiliation of the cross and the shame and the agony of it all: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.” We are reminded here that Christ has already triumphed.

Let us look at it like this. He came into this world in which you and I live, and it was exactly the same then as it is now. The world is a place dominated by the god of this world, Satan, or the devil. It is a place of sin, and of evil, a place of foulness and of everything that is inimical to God and opposed to His holy law; a sinful world, ruled and controlled and governed by sin; a world which, because of that, is a place of sorrow, of grief, and of unhappiness. Nothing is so characteristic of it as death and the grave. That is the world into which He came, a world that fought and strove against Him, even as it does against us. Now what Paul asserts is that He humbled Himself, He came into that world, and all the forces of evil and sin and hell arrayed themselves against Him. You remember how the author of the epistle to the Hebrews put it—he “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). This means that there has never been anyone in this world who has been so tempted as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Satan met Him in person. It is clear from the teaching of the Bible that Satan does not always meet us in person. He has his underlings,<sup>9</sup> principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and all the others in that evil spiritual hierarchy, which are more than sufficient to attack us. But in the case of the Son of God, Satan appeared in all his might and was able to offer Him the kingdoms of this world and all their legions. Never was anyone tried and tempted as He was. He came into it, He humbled Himself, and He faced it all; it did its

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<sup>9</sup> **underlings** – persons lower in status or rank.

worst and its utmost against Him. But what the apostle tells us is that though His deliverance of us did involve the shame and death of the cross, nevertheless even there He was spoiling the principalities and powers and was triumphing over them. Paul says, “Wherefore God hath highly exalted him.” He has conquered sin and Satan and death and the grave; He has been highly exalted, and a name has been given to Him that is above every name. It is because of what He has done, it is a consequence of His incarnation and humiliation and especially of His death upon the cross. He, by doing that, has redeemed the universe and God has placed Him in control. What a glorious thought to have in our minds as we face life in this world! Sin is still there, and we shall be tempted, we shall be tried; Satan in his various ways will attack us, but oh, I beseech you, look above it to Him Who is there glorified and exalted because He has conquered. That is the Person we confess, the one Who has already triumphed over all, the last enemy included; He has already risen and has vanquished death and the grave. Satan, having tried Him to the uttermost, has been repelled; he has been robbed of his power, he has received a mortal wound, and the day is coming when he shall be finally destroyed. Wherefore, God hath also highly exalted the Lord—He has triumphed!

From *The Life of Joy: Philippians 1 and 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 150-159; [www.bakerbookhouse.com](http://www.bakerbookhouse.com).

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**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981):** Welsh expository preacher and author; born in Cardiff, Wales, UK.



Wheresoever true wisdom and judgment is, there Christ hath set up His government because where wisdom is, it directs us not only to understand, but to order our ways aright. Where Christ by His Spirit teaches as a prophet, He likewise as a king by His Spirit subdueth the heart to obedience of what is taught. This is the teaching that is promised of God, when not only the brain, but the heart itself, is taught, when men do not only know what they should do, but are taught the very doing of it. They are not only taught that they should love, fear, and obey, but they are taught love itself and fear and obedience itself. Christ sets up His chair in the very heart and alters the frame of [it] and makes His subjects good together with teaching them to be good. Other princes can make good laws, but they “cannot write them in their people’s hearts” (Jer 32:40). This is Christ’s prerogative: He infuseth into His subjects His own Spirit. Upon Him there doth not only rest “the spirit of wisdom and understanding,” but likewise the spirit of “the fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2). The knowledge that we have of Him from Himself is transforming knowledge (2Co 3:18). The same Spirit that enlighteneth the mind inspirereth gracious inclinations into the will and affections, and infuseth strength into the whole man.

—Richard Sibbes

# JESUS IS LORD OF ALL

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*Preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all).—Acts 10:36*

**I** have a claim that ought to be urged wherever the gospel is preached: “He is Lord of all.” This means, first, that Jesus Christ Who died on Calvary is in the mediatorial<sup>1</sup> kingdom which His Father has given Him—Lord of all mankind. He is Lord not of the Jew only, but also of the Gentile; not of one race and nation, but of all the tribes of Adam born. He is Lord of all.

Remember that text, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Joh 17:2). The great object of Christ’s mediatorial kingdom is the salvation of the elect; but to compass<sup>2</sup> that grand result, power is given to Christ over all flesh, that is over all mankind; and this last truth is the reason why we are enabled honestly to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. Because Christ has power over all flesh, we preach the gospel to all flesh. Because He is Lord of all, we are permitted to preach the gospel to all and say to all who come within its hearing, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev 22:17).

Sons of men, the Son of God is King over you. You are not ruled today so much by the iron scepter of an absolute God as by the silver scepter of the Mediator,<sup>3</sup> Jesus Christ. You are under His government today. You may hate Him, you may rail against Him, but “I will declare the decree” (Psa 23:7), says the psalmist, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psa 2:6). The heathen rage, the princes take counsel together, but the Lord hath made Jesus Christ the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and under His reign we dwell. This is a most gladsome truth, for thus we live under the reign of sovereign mercy,

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<sup>1</sup> **mediatorial kingdom** – kingdom that Christ presently rules as Mediator (see footnote 3).

<sup>2</sup> **compass** – accomplish; obtain.

<sup>3</sup> **Mediator** – *literally*: “one who goes between”; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto Whom He did from all Eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (*Second London Baptist Confession*, 8.1) See also Free Grace Broadcaster 183, *Christ the Mediator*; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

under the reign of the incarnate God, Emmanuel, God with us (Mat 1:23). Look, O sinner! You needed a Mediator between you and God, and Jesus stands in that place. You want no Mediator between you and Christ; approach Him as you now are, and His gracious heart will gladly receive you. You cannot come to God as king except through a Mediator, but you must deal with Christ and may deal with Him now. Come to Him. You want no one to introduce you. Come just as you are. Oh, may His blessed Spirit sweetly incline you to come, and “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little” (Psa 2:12).

The text, by declaring the reigning power of the Lord Jesus, shows us most encouragingly the most solid of reasons for yielding to Him our trust and obedience. If He be Lord of all, if all things be put under Him, then I may with safety rely upon Him. This is the Man, the exalted Man, Whom we unseen adore, of Whom it is written, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Psa 8:6-8). Now, the apostle rightly enough says, “But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour” (Heb 2:8). He is reigning on high in heaven, and it is ordained that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (see Phi 2:10-11). Oh, then trust Him, for all power is His. He is exalted on high to give repentance<sup>4</sup> and remission of sins. All His power is linked with mercy. Grace perfumes all His attributes.

Because Jesus is Lord, I pray you, my fellowmen, to yield Him reverence and serve Him. Obey Him, for He is your liege<sup>5</sup> Lord and sovereign. It ought to be easier to obey Him because He is numbered with the human race. The old history that we learned when we were children told us that the Welsh could not bear the yoke of an English king. They wanted to have a prince born in their own country; and, therefore, their English conqueror brought before them his own son, born in their own principality, and they accepted him as Prince of Wales. God reigneth over us, but that we may love His reign, He has anointed His own Son

<sup>4</sup> **repentance** – “Repentance to life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sins, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it to God, with full purpose to strive after new obedience.” (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 70; See FGB 203, *Repentance*, both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

<sup>5</sup> **liege Lord** – Christ as a superior or sovereign to whom we owe our allegiance.

our own Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus the infinite deigned<sup>6</sup> to be an infant; He Who sustains all things was laid upon a woman's breast. There is no man more a man than Jesus, and yet in no respect is He other than equal with God. Let us then accept the rule of Jesus. This is the ladder that Jacob saw, the bottom of which rests on the earth, near to you (Gen 28:10-15)—your feeble feet may reach it; but the top doth reach to heaven. Between earth and heaven, between man and God, there is a ladder that never can be broken by which sinners may ascend to the glory of God. O love Him then! With all your hearts, cherish the name and honor of the incarnate God, Immanuel. Because He is so unspeakably glorious and gracious, serve Him with joy and gladness.

Be it also known that Jesus the Savior must be received as Lord in the souls of those whom He redeems. You must obey Him if you trust Him or else your trust will be mere hypocrisy. If we trust a physician we follow his prescriptions; if we trust a guide, we follow his directions; and if we fully rely on Jesus, we obey His gracious commands. The faith that saves is a faith that produces a change of life and subdues the soul to obedience to the Lord. Be not deceived: where Jesus comes He comes to reign. Without submission to His will and Word, you are without the safety of His atonement. The ship is saved from the rock because it obeys the pilot's hand as he moves the helm; if it were untrue to the steerage, it would perish with the best of helmsmen on board. It is most just that He Who bought us, sought us, found us, saved us, and preserves us should have our loving allegiance, and so assuredly it must be, or no peace can be established between us and God. Let us welcome His sway,<sup>7</sup> and pray Him to exert His power. Be this our daily prayer.

And lastly, let me say, I do not put this to you as a matter of choice as to whether you will or not submit to the will of God and seek reconciliation with Him. Neither do I speak with bated breath<sup>8</sup> when, as a herald, I hereby proclaim Jesus to be both Lord and God; but in the name of Him that liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death—I say, in His name, I demand of you that you obey Him and receive Him as the Christ of God. Yield yourselves to Him Who is Lord of all. Do you refuse the summons that I give you now as His officer tonight? Then take heed what you do, for as the Lord liveth, you shall answer for this in the great day of His appearing. “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see

<sup>6</sup> deigned – descended to the level of one considered inferior.

<sup>7</sup> sway – authority and power.

<sup>8</sup> bated breath – speak while holding one's breath in fear or suspense.

him" (Rev 1:7), and they also which crucified Him, and you who despise Him must be judged by Him. If you reject Him you shall nevertheless see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and dead. I say again, then, I come not to you to flatter and deceive you; I come not to plead with you as though my Lord and Master were on equal terms with you. He summons you to surrender, He bids you throw down your arms and accept His mercy. He is not afraid of your opposition, neither does He need your friendship. It is His grace that leads Him to invite you to peace. He condescends to treat thus with you whom He might have sent into hell with one word of His lips years ago. If you refuse Him, you shall answer for it. On your heads shall be your own blood, and in that day when heaven and earth shall pass away like a scroll, you without a shelter, you without an advocate, you without an excuse, shall be banished from His presence to endure the wrath of God. The Lord grant of His mercy that not one of you may stand out against Him, but this night, ere another sun rises, may there be peace established on a sure footing between you and God, for Christ is our peace (Eph 2:14). May you take Him, trust Him, and be reconciled to God; and to God shall be the glory forever and forever. Amen and Amen.

From a sermon delivered on Lord's Day evening, September 18, 1870,  
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

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**Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892):** Influential English Baptist preacher; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England, UK.



Let me tell thee (and this is the gladdest note that is in my heart tonight), let me tell thee it will be altogether to thine advantage to be at peace with God. It will be for thy present happiness; it will be for thy eternal welfare. A soul at war with God is also opposed to its own best interests, but a heart that has yielded to divine love, that has cast down its weapons, that has closed in with divine mercy, is a soul at peace, at rest, a soul that is ready for joy on earth, and for bliss unspeakable above. Were there no hereafter, it is profitable even for this present life to have God for our friend; but when we think of the eternal future, even the most superficial consideration suffices to convince us of the urgent necessity of being reconciled to God. Be wise and consider then, take advice and do that which will be most gainful to thee—namely, seek peace, and yield to Christ Who is Lord of all. Meanwhile, my heart's desire

and prayer for thee is that thou mayest be saved; and to that end, may the

Holy Ghost visit thee, soften thy heart, guide thy judgment, and

direct thy will, so that Jesus may henceforth be thine,

and be thy peace.—*C. H. Spurgeon*

# DIVINE WORKS REVEALING CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

**L**ET us pass to a consideration of...divine works attributed to Christ, and such as no mere creature could perform.

**The work of creation belongs to Him.** “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col 1:16-17). If then He is the Creator, He must be God. The glory of creation is given to Him by the redeemed in heaven. They “cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev 4:10-11). What a thought is this—that the great Creator of all things once trod, in human form, the world of His own creating! For “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (Joh 1:10). And so is He the author of the new spiritual creation. He spoke, and there was life, light, and order in the soul, where before there was death, darkness, and derangement.<sup>1</sup> Let us give Him the glory of both creations, the natural and the spiritual.

**Another divine work as truly belonging to Christ is providence.** Thus, He says, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat 28:18). “He is Lord of all” (Act 10:36). “Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom 14:9).

Christ is “above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:20-21). “Upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3). “By him [Christ] all things consist [are held together]” (Col 1:17). “The prince of the kings of the earth” (Rev 1:5). Thus, it is clear that Jesus is the God of providence. The government of all worlds and of all creatures, according to the prediction of prophecy, is upon His shoulders. Is this thought not full of rich comfort and consolation to the experienced believer? Jesus is the God of providence. All your steps, dear reader, if you are His, are ordered and

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<sup>1</sup> **derangement** – disorder.

directed by Him—by Him Who is God in your nature, by Him Who loved you unto the death, by Him Who is your Elder Brother, your Prophet, Priest, and King. Oh, how tranquilizing to the soul, in the hour of its deepest sorrow and bereavement,<sup>2</sup> to know that it is sheltered in the hollow of those very hands that were once pierced for us! That Christ has blended with His mediatorial<sup>3</sup> character His providential government! That the Redeemer Who died to save is the God Who lives to sway the scepter! It has been well remarked that Providence was intended to be the handmaid to grace, but that grace only can unfold the steps of Providence. It is only the experimental<sup>4</sup> believer who can clearly discern the movements of an invisible hand in all the affairs and incidents of life. He has learned to acknowledge the Lord in all his ways, and to commit to His disposal all his steps. And He Who thus guides and governs is the Mediator—the Christ Who obeyed, suffered, and died in our behalf. Oh, consoling thought! Christian reader, ponder this! What are your present circumstances? Are you persecuted for Jesus' sake? Listen to His own cheering words: "Marvel not...if the world hate you," for "ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (1Jo 3:13; Joh 15:18). "In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Joh 16:33). Are you in circumstances of need? What does He say? "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is life not more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?...But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat 6:25-26, 33). Are you perplexed to know the path of duty?—longing to know the way the Lord would have you walk? This is His promise: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee...Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass...The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psa 50:15; 37:5, 23). Are you sore pressed by temptation? See how the Holy Spirit would lead you to the sympathy and tenderness of Jesus: "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved<sup>5</sup> him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in

<sup>2</sup> bereavement – being deprived of anything, especially the death of a loved one.

<sup>3</sup> mediatorial – referring to Christ's role as our Mediator—Prophet, Priest, and King.

<sup>4</sup> experimental – experiential; sensitive to the Holy Spirit's direction from God's Word.

<sup>5</sup> behoved – was necessary for.

things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour<sup>6</sup> them that are tempted...For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 2:16-18; 4:15-16). Are you oppressed by present or anticipated trials? Hearken again to His dear voice: "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (Joh 14:1). Whatever may be the dark and gloomy aspect of things around you, yet Jesus does all things well; and all things, however adverse and apparently severe, yet all things are working for your present and ultimate good.

**The last divine work belonging to Christ to which we allude is *judging the world*.** This, the most skeptical will acknowledge, peculiarly belongs to God. In Ecclesiastes 12:14, we read, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Now it is most clear that Christ shall be the Judge. For so we read, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing...The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Rom 14:10; 1Ti 4:1; Joh 5:22). Could this office be filled and this power exercised by a mere creature? Are not omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence indispensable<sup>7</sup> to qualify the Judge of all for the high office? We have shown that Christ is fully invested with all these qualifications—that He is fully qualified to sit in judgment at His second coming upon the beings whom He created. The Redeemer of men then will be the Judge of men. He Who once appeared in the mild and gentle character of a Savior will then appear in the glorious form of a judge.

Men will not then question His Godhead. Men will not then dispute His deity; but to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. What a transporting<sup>8</sup> thought this is to the believer in Jesus: his Savior shall be his Judge! In the face of Him Who shall sit upon the great white throne, before Him all nations gathered for judgment, he will recognize a Friend, a Brother, a Redeemer, an Advocate.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> succour – help.

<sup>7</sup> indispensable – absolutely necessary.

<sup>8</sup> transporting – causing ecstasy or powerful emotion.

<sup>9</sup> advocate – one who pleads the cause of another.

Dear reader, [do] you have an Advocate with the Father? What is your foundation in view of that solemn day? You may be a professor<sup>10</sup> of Christ, but is His blood and righteousness at the root of that profession? As a poor, empty, condemned sinner, are you building—disclaiming<sup>11</sup> all merit, all self-righteousness, all works—upon a crucified Savior? What do you know of the broken heart, of the contrite<sup>12</sup> spirit? What do you know of the precious blood of Christ? Oh, examine yourself, be affectionately entreated; for in the day when Christ shall judge the world in righteousness, all mere outward profession, all notional<sup>13</sup> religion will wither away; and if you are found destitute of a better righteousness than your own, even the finished righteousness of Christ, how appalling will be the consequences!

**We have now arrived at the last source of argument in proof of our Lord's absolute deity:** the *divine worship* that belongs to Him. We feel this to be strong ground. It will be acknowledged that one end of revelation<sup>14</sup> was to expel from the world polytheism and idolatry by teaching that God, and God only, was to receive the adoration and worship of men. Now if it can be shown by a reference to the simple declaration of God's Word that the Lord Jesus received and encouraged the adoration and worship due only to proper deity, then most triumphantly shall we have established this glorious doctrine of the gospel, that *Christ is God*. The reader will bear in mind that solemn command of Jehovah, recorded in Exodus 20:3: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Let him then turn to Hebrews 1:6: "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." What can be more conclusive? Here, in ushering into the world His only begotten Son, the Father claims for Him the adoration and worship belonging exclusively to deity.

Would He have so contradicted Himself, trampled upon His own law, had not Christ been co-equal with Himself? Never! Yet further: if Christ had been a mere man, why did He not check<sup>15</sup> those people who presented to Him divine homage,<sup>16</sup> when He was on earth? We find that Paul and Barnabas refused the worship that was offered to them as divine. When Cornelius would have worshiped Peter, he said, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Act 10:26). And when John, in the

<sup>10</sup> professor – one who professes faith in Christ.

<sup>11</sup> disclaiming – rejecting.

<sup>12</sup> contrite – crushed or broken in spirit by a sense of sin.

<sup>13</sup> notional – imaginary; existing only in thought.

<sup>14</sup> end of revelation – purpose and goal of God's Word for revealing Christ.

<sup>15</sup> check – stop sharply and suddenly.

<sup>16</sup> divine homage – allegiance and honor of which God is worthy.

Apocalypse, mistook<sup>17</sup> [an angel] for a divine being and would have worshiped him, the angel immediately abjured<sup>18</sup> the homage and said, “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant...worship God” (Rev 19:10). And yet Jesus refused not but rather encouraged divine homage when He tabernacled in the flesh. “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luk 5:8), was the exclamation of Peter when he caught a sudden glimpse of the Godhead of Jesus, reminding us of an equivalent expression of the prophet Isaiah: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone...for mine eyes have seen the...LORD of hosts” (Isa 6:5). And what was the last act of the disciples as they saw the sacred form of their Lord ascending and lessening from their view? It was a solemn act of worship; we read that “they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luk 24:52).

From *The Works of Octavius Winslow* (Kindle Locations 64414-64482),  
Monergism Books, Kindle Edition.

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**Octavius Winslow (1808-1878):** Prominent evangelical pastor and author; born in Pentonville, England, UK.



Listen now! Everywhere in the New Testament where the two titles of our Lord occur, that is, Lord and Savior, they are always in this order, which shows us that the Scriptures give our Lord Jesus His rightful place in the salvation of sinners as Lord of the individual's life and the Savior of his never dying soul. You see, when God saves a sinner, that sinner receives the eternal Son of God in all His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. In His office as Prophet to teach us, He is the Christ, the Anointed of God. In His office as Priest to die for us and to mediate for us, He is Jesus, the Son of Man. In His office as King to rule over us, He is the Lord to Whom has been given the power to give eternal life to as many as believe on His name (Joh 17:2-4).—L. R. Shelton, Jr.

Let us mark what a striking picture our Lord draws of the religion of the man who not only hears Christ's sayings but does Christ's will (Luk 6:47-48). He compares him to one who “built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock.” Such a man's religion may cost him much. Like the house built on a rock, it may entail pain, labor, and self-denial. To lay aside pride and self-righteousness, to crucify the rebellious flesh, to put on the mind of Christ, to take up the cross daily, to count all things but loss for Christ's sake—all this may be hard work. But, like the house built on the rock, such religion will stand. The streams of affliction may beat violently upon it, and the floods of persecution dash fiercely against it, but it will not give way. The Christianity which combines good profession and good practice is a building that will not fall.

—John Charles Ryle

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<sup>17</sup> **mistook** – incorrectly identified.

<sup>18</sup> **abjured** – completely rejected.

# THE CRUCIFIED LORD OF GLORY

John Flavel (c. 1630-1691)

*Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.—1 Corinthians 2:8*

**D**OCTRINE: *That Christ crucified is the Lord of glory.* Great and excellent is the glory of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures everywhere proclaim His glory: yes, we may observe a notable *climax*, or *gradation*,<sup>1</sup> in those Scriptures that speak of His glory. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of Him, calls Him *glorious*: “In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious” (Isa 4:2). John, speaking of His glory, rises a step higher, and ascribeth to Him a “glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father” (Joh 1:14), i.e., a glory meet for and becoming<sup>2</sup> the Son of God: proper to Him and incommunicable<sup>3</sup> to any other.

The apostle James rises yet higher and doth not only call Him glorious, or glorious as the only begotten of the Father, but *the glory*—glory in the abstract: “My brethren,” saith he, “have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory, with respect of persons” (Jam 2:1). For the word *Lord*, which is in our translation [of the Bible], is a supplement: Christ is glory itself, yes, the glory emphatically so styled, the glory of heaven, the glory of Sion, the glory of our souls forever! The author to the Hebrews goes yet higher and calls Him not simply *the glory*, but “the brightness of the Father’s glory” (Heb 1:3), as though he should say, “the radiance, sparkling, or beaming forth of His Father’s glory; the very splendor or *refulgence*<sup>4</sup> of divine glory.” O what a glorious Lord is our Lord Jesus Christ! The bright, sparkling diamond of heaven Who shines in glory there, above the glory of angels and saints, as the glory of the sun excels the lesser, twinkling stars. When He appeared to Paul, “I saw,” saith he, “a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me” (Act 26:13). The glory of Christ must necessarily be unspeakable, Who reflects glory upon all that are with Him (Joh 17:24) and stamps glory upon all that belong to Him. His works on earth were *glorious works* (Luk 13:17); the purchased liberty of His

<sup>1</sup> **gradation** – increasing stages that reach a climax.

<sup>2</sup> **meet for...becoming** – appropriate and fitting for.

<sup>3</sup> **incommunicable** – not able to be given.

<sup>4</sup> **refulgence** – radiance; brilliance.

people, a glorious liberty (Rom 8:21); the church, His mystical body, a glorious church (Eph 5:27); the gospel that reveals Him is a glorious gospel (1Ti 1:11).

But more particularly, let us consider the glory of Christ as it is distinguished either into His (1) *essential* or (2) *mediatorial* glory.

**First, the *essential* glory of Christ, which He hath as God from everlasting.** [It] is unspeakable and inconceivable glory: For saith the apostle, "...Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phi 2:6), i.e., He has a peerage<sup>5</sup> or equality with His Father in glory: "I and my Father are one" (Joh 10:30). And again, "All things that the Father hath are mine" (Joh 16:15)—the same name, the same nature, the same essential properties, the same will, and the same glory.

**Secondly, the *mediatorial* glory of Christ is exceeding great.** This is proper to Him, as the Head of the church, which He hath purchased with His own blood. Of this glory the apostle speaks: "Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name" (Phi 2:9-10)—exalted above all exaltation. Now the mediatorial glory of our Lord Jesus Christ consisteth either (1) in the fulness of grace inherent in Him, or (2) in the dignity and authority put upon Him.

**First, in the fulness of grace inherent in Him:** The humanity of Christ is filled with grace as the sun with light: "Full of grace and truth" (Joh 1:14). Never was any creature filled by the Spirit of grace as the man Christ Jesus is filled: for "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (Joh 3:34). By reason of this fulness of grace inherent in Him, He is "fairer than the children of men" (Psa 45:2), excelling all the saints in spiritual luster and gracious excellencies.

**Secondly, in the dignity and authority put upon Him.** He is crowned King in Zion; all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him (Mat 28:18). He is a lawgiver to the church (Jam 4:12). All acts of worship are to be performed in His name: prayer, preaching, censures,<sup>6</sup> sacraments—all to be administered in His name. Church officers are commissioned by Him (Eph 4:11). The judgment of the world in the Great Day will be administered by Him: "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Mat 25:31).

To conclude, Jesus Christ shall have glory and honor ascribed to

<sup>5</sup> **peerage** – rank or status of being an equal.

<sup>6</sup> **censures** – church discipline.

Him for evermore by angels and saints upon the account of His mediatorial work. This some divines call His *passive* glory, the glory which He is said to *receive* from His redeemed ones. “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev 5:8-9). And thus, you see that our Lord Jesus Christ is upon all accounts the *Lord of glory*. The uses follow.

*Inference 1. How wonderful was the love of Christ, the Lord of glory, to be so abased and humbled as He was for us, vile and sinful dust?* It is astonishing to conceive that ever Jesus Christ should strip Himself of His robes of glory to clothe Himself with the mean garment of our flesh: Oh, what a stoop did He make in His incarnation for us! If the most magnificent monarch upon earth had been degraded into a toad; if the sun in the heavens had been turned into a wandering atom; if the most glorious angel in heaven had been transformed even into a fly; it had been nothing to the abasement of the Lord of glory. This act is celebrated everywhere in Scripture as the great mystery, the astonishing wonder of the whole world (2Ti 3:16; Phi 2:8; Rom 8:3). The Lord of glory looked not like Himself when He came in the habit of a man: “We hid, as it were our faces from him” (Isa 53:3). Nay, rather like a worm than a man: “A reproach of men, and despised of the people” (Psa 22:6). The birds of the air and beasts of the earth were provided better accommodations than the Lord of glory (Mat 8:20). Oh, stupendous abasement! Oh, love unspeakable! “Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich” (2Co 8:9). He put off the crown of glory to put on the crown of thorns: “The lower He humbled Himself for me, the dearer He shall be to me,” said Bernard.<sup>7</sup>

*How transcendently glorious is the advancement of believers by their union with the Lord of glory?* This also is an admirable and astonishing mystery. It is the highest dignity of which our *nature* is capable to be *hypostatically*<sup>8</sup> united; and the greatest glory of which our *persons* are capable is to be *mystically* united to this Lord of glory—to be bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Oh, what is this! Christian, dost thou know and believe all this, and thy heart not burn within thee in love to Christ? Oh! Then,

<sup>7</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) – French monastic reformer and theologian.

<sup>8</sup> *hypostatically* – human nature taken into union with Christ by the Holy Spirit.

what a heart hast thou? What art thou by nature, but sinful dust, a loathsome sinner, viler than the vilest creature, cast out to the loathing of thy person in the day of thy nativity! Oh, that ever the Lord of glory should unite Himself to such a lump of vileness, to take such a wretch into His very bosom! Be astonished at this, O heavens and earth! This is the great mystery that the angels stooped down to look into. Such an honor as this could never have entered the heart of man. It would have seemed a rude blasphemy in us, once to have thought or spoken of such a thing, had not Christ made first the motion thereof; yet how long didst thou make this Lord of glory wait upon thy undetermined will before He gained thy consent? Might He not justly have spurned thee into hell on thy first refusal and never have made thee another such offer? Wilt thou not say, "Lord, what am I, and what is my father's house, that so great a King should stoop so far beneath Himself to such a worm as I am! That strength should unite itself to weakness, infinite glory to such baseness! Oh, grace, grace, forever to be admired!"

**Is Jesus Christ the Lord of glory? Then let no man count himself dishonored by suffering the vilest indignities for His sake:** The Lord of glory puts glory upon the very suffering you undergo in this world for Him. "Moses esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb 11:26). He cast a kingdom at His heels to be crowned with reproaches for the name of Christ. The *diadem*<sup>9</sup> of Egypt was not half so glorious as self-denial for Christ. This Lord of glory freely degraded Himself for thee; wilt thou stand hesitating with Him upon terms? It is certainly your honor to be dishonored for Christ (Act 5:41). "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phi 1:29). The gift of suffering is there matched with the gift of faith; it is given as an *honorarium*, a badge of honor to suffer for the Lord of glory. As all have not the honor to wear the crown of glory in heaven, so few have the honor to wear the chain of Christ upon earth..."My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jam 1:2), i.e., trials by sufferings. David thought it an honor to be vile for God, and that is a true observation that disgrace itself is glorious when endured for the Lord of glory.

**Is Christ the Lord of glory? How glorious, then, shall the saints one day be when they shall be made like this glorious Lord and partake of His glory in heaven?** "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them" (Joh 17:22). Yes, the vile bodies of believers shall be made like to the glorious body of Christ (Phi 3:21). What glory then will be communicated

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<sup>9</sup> **diadem** – royal crown.

to their souls? True, His essential glory is incommunicable;<sup>10</sup> but there is a glory that Christ will communicate to His people. When He comes to judge the world, He will "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2Th 1:10). Thus, He seemeth to account His social glory, which shall result from His saints, a great part of His own glory. As we now have fellowship with Him in His sufferings, so we shall have a fellowship or communion with Him in His glory. When He shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory; then the poorest believer shall be more glorious than Solomon in all His royalty. It was a pious saying of Luther that he had rather be "a Christian *clown*, than a pagan *emperor*." The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor, though he lives next door to a graceless nobleman; but it doth not yet appear what they shall be. The day will come, it certainly will come, for the Lord hath spoken it, when they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father...

If Christ be the Lord of glory, *how careful should all be who profess Him, that they do not dishonor Jesus Christ, Whose name is called upon by them?* Christ is a glory to you; be not you a shame and dishonor to Him. How careful had Christians need to be to draw every line and action of their lives exactly! The more glorious Christ is, the more wary<sup>11</sup> and watchful ye need to be. How lovely would Jesus Christ appear to the world if the lives of Christians did adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things! Remember, you represent the Lord of glory to the world; it is not your honor only, but the honor of Christ that is engaged and concerned in your actions. Oh, let not the carelessness or scandal of your life make Jesus Christ ashamed to be called your Lord. When Israel had grievously revolted from God, He bids Moses rise and get down from thence; for (saith He) "*thy people* which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves" (Deu 9:12) as if the Lord were ashamed to own them for His people any longer. It was a cutting question, apt to startle the consciences of these loose professors; "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (Jam 2:7). Your duty is to adorn the gospel by your conversations<sup>12</sup> (Ti 2:10). The words signify to deck, trim, or adorn<sup>13</sup> the gospel, to make it trim, neat, and lovely to the eyes of beholders. When there is such a beautiful harmony and lovely proportion between Christ's doctrine and your practices, as there is in the works of creation, wherein the comeliness

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<sup>10</sup> **incommunicable** – unshared.

<sup>11</sup> **wary** – cautious.

<sup>12</sup> **conversations** – behavior, habits, principles

<sup>13</sup> **deck, trim, adorn** – decorate, dress up, make beautiful.

and elegance of the world much consists (for to this the apostle's word here alludes),<sup>14</sup> then do we walk suitably to the Lord of glory.

*What delight should Christians take in their daily [fellowship] with Jesus Christ in the way of duty?* Your [fellowship] in prayer, hearing, and meditation are with the Lord of glory...When you are called to the duties of communion with Christ, you are called to the greatest honor, dignified with the noblest privilege creatures are capable of in this world. Had you but a sense of that honor God puts upon you by this means, you would not need so much pressing and striving to bring a dead and backward heart into the special presence of Jesus Christ. When He saith, "Seek ye my face," your hearts would echo to His calls, "Thy face, Lord, will [we] seek" (Psa 27:8). But alas! The glory of Christ is much hid and veiled by ignorance and unbelief from the eyes of His own people! It is but seldom the best of saints, by the eye of faith, do see the King in His glory.

*If Christ be so glorious, how should believers long to be with Him and behold Him in His glory above?* Most men need patience to *die*; a believer needs patience to *live*. Paul thought it well worth enduring the pangs of death to get a sight of Jesus Christ in His glory. Saith the apostle, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2Th 3:5), intimating that the saints have great need of patience, to enable them to endure the state of distance and separation from Christ, so long as they must endure it in this world. "*The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. Even so, come Lord Jesus* (Rev 22:17, 20)!

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory!

From *The Whole Works of the Reverend John Flavel*, Vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; Dublin: W. Baynes and Son; Waugh and Innes; M. Keene, 1820), 236-242.

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**John Flavel (c. 1630-1691):** English Presbyterian minister; born at Bromagrove, Worcester, England, UK.



The truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is the central and the most stupendous fact in the history of redemption. It stands out as the unique event in all history. This truth concerning Him is the biggest and most astounding event of all.—*D. M. Lloyd-Jones*

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<sup>14</sup> **alludes** — In Titus 2:10, Paul's Greek word for *adorn* is the verb *kosmeo* (arrange, prepare, embellish with honor), related to *kosmos* (the world as an orderly, beautiful, and elegant arrangement).

# KING OF KINGS & LORD OF LORDS<sup>1</sup>

John Newton (1725-1807)

*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,  
KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.—Revelation 19:16*

**T**HE description of the administration and glory of the Redeemer's kingdom, in defiance of all opposition, concludes the second part of the *Messiah*.<sup>2</sup> Three different passages from [the book of Revelation] are selected to form a grand chorus, of which His title in this verse is the close—a title that has been sometimes vainly usurped by proud worms of the earth. Eastern monarchs, in particular, have [assumed] to style themselves as king of kings and lord of lords. In the scriptural language, men, whether high or low, rich or poor, one with another, are compared to worms and potsherds<sup>3</sup> of the earth; but they are by nature so strongly infected by pride that they cannot invent titles of honor answerable to the idea they have of their own importance without entrenching upon the divine prerogative.<sup>4</sup> Thus sovereignty, majesty, holiness, grace, and other attributes that properly belong to God alone are parceled<sup>5</sup> out among the *great*. But let the great and the mighty know that, wherein they speak proudly, *Messiah is above them...*

**I. How He is represented as wearing His title.** It is written, or inscribed, upon His vesture<sup>6</sup> dipped in blood and upon His thigh.

**1. This name, being written upon His “vesture,” denotes the manifestation and the ground of His authority.** It is written upon His outer garment to be read, known, and acknowledged by all beholders. And it is upon His bloody garment, upon the vesture stained with His own blood and the blood of His enemies, which intimates to us that His government is founded upon the success of His great undertaking. In the passage from whence this verse is selected, there are three names attributed to Messiah. He has a name that no one knows but Himself (Rev 19:12), agreeably to what He declared when upon earth: “No man”—no one—neither man nor angel, “knoweth the Son, but the

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<sup>1</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE** – This article has been edited more than usual for modern readers.

<sup>2</sup> ***Messiah*** – George Frideric Handel's 1741 musical composition.

<sup>3</sup> **potsherds** – fragments of broken pottery.

<sup>4</sup> **divine prerogative** – privilege that belongs to God alone.

<sup>5</sup> **parceled** – divided into portions and then distributed.

<sup>6</sup> **vesture** – cloak; robe.

“Father” (Mat 11:27); this refers to “his eternal power and Godhead” (Rom 1:20). A second name, “The Word of God” (Rev 19:13), denotes the mystery of the divine personality. The name in my text imports His glory as the Mediator<sup>7</sup> between God and man in our nature, which, when He resumed it from the grave, became the seat of all power and authority. [That] power we are now taught to consider, not merely as the power of God, to Whom it essentially belongs, but as the power of God exercised in and by that Man Who died upon the cross for our sins. In consequence of His obedience unto death, He received “a name which is above every name” (Phi 2:9). His own people read this inscription by the eye of faith in the present life, and it inspires them with confidence and joy under the many tribulations they pass through in the course of their profession.<sup>8</sup> Hereafter, it shall be openly known and read by all men. Every eye shall see it, and every heart must either bow or break before them.

**2. It is written upon His “thigh.”** The thigh is the emblem of power and is the part of the body on which the sword is girded (Psa 45:3). By this emblem we are taught that He will assuredly maintain and exercise the right that He has acquired. As He has a just claim to the title, He will act accordingly. Many titles among men are merely titular;<sup>9</sup> the king of Great Britain is styled likewise king of France, though he has neither authority nor possessions in that kingdom. But the name that Messiah bears is full of life, truth, and influence. He is styled “King of kings, and Lord of lords” because He really is so; because He actually rules and reigns over them and does according to His own pleasure “in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,” with an absolute and uncontrollable sway,<sup>10</sup> so that “none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:35).

**II. THE TITLE ITSELF IS “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”** He is “the prince of the kings of the earth” (Rev 1:5). Too many of them “imagine a vain thing.” They “take counsel together” and “set themselves” against Him, “saying, Let us break their bands asunder.” But He “sitteth in the heavens” and “shall have them in derision” (Psa 2:1-4). He has His hook in their nose and His bridle in their lips (2Ki 19:28; Isa 37:29); and the result of all their contrivances<sup>11</sup> is neither more nor less than the accomplishment of His will.

<sup>7</sup> **Mediator** – one who intervenes between two parties to bring reconciliation; a go-between.

<sup>8</sup> **profession** – declaration of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> **titular** – in name or title only without any authority.

<sup>10</sup> **sway** – rule; control.

<sup>11</sup> **contrivances** – plans and schemes.

**1. The rage they discover<sup>12</sup> and the resistance they make cannot weaken this truth but rather render it more evident.** If it is asked, Why does He permit them to resist? We may give an answer in point from the case of Pharaoh: he resisted, and he perished. He was often warned and rebuked, but he still hardened his neck and continued stubborn under repeated judgments until at length he was destroyed without remedy. Thus, the God of Israel was more magnified, and the people of Israel were more honored in the view of the surrounding nations as they were brought from Egypt with a high hand and with a stretched-out arm, and Pharaoh and his armies were overthrown in the Red Sea. The nature of the case would not have admitted this if Pharaoh had made no opposition to their departure. Yet the obstinacy<sup>13</sup> of Pharaoh was properly his own. It is true, we are assured that God hardened his heart; but we are not thereby warranted to suppose that God is the author of the sin, which He hates and forbids. It is written again, that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jam 1:13), and the Scripture is to be interpreted consistently with itself...

**2. The kings of the earth are continually disturbing the world with their schemes of ambition.** They expect to carry everything before them and have seldom any higher end in view than the gratification of their own passions. But in all they do, they are but servants of this great King and Lord; they fulfil His purposes as the instruments He employs to inflict prescribed punishment upon transgressors against Him, or to open a way for the spread of His gospel. Thus, under the Old Testament dispensation (for He was King from everlasting), the successes of Sennacherib (2Ki 18:13) and Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:1), and the exaltation of Cyrus (2Ch 36:22), were entirely owing to their being employed by Him as an axe or a saw in the hand of the workman (Isa 10:15). And they acted under a limited commission, beyond which they could not go. They had one thing in view: [God] had another; and when His design was accomplished, we hear of them no more...It is well known, with respect to that great event, the Reformation<sup>14</sup> from Popery in the sixteenth century, and especially in our own land, that many of the principal persons who contributed to its establishment hated it in their hearts. But their ambition, appetites, and worldly policy engaged them in such measures as the King of kings overruled to produce consequences that they neither intended nor could foresee; and which, when

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<sup>12</sup> discover – reveal.

<sup>13</sup> obstinacy – stubborn hardness of heart.

<sup>14</sup> Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) – 16<sup>th</sup> century religious movement that began as an attempt to reform Roman Catholicism and resulted in the formation of Protestantism.

they did understand, they would have prevented if they could; but it was too late...

**3. That He is King of kings and Governor among the nations is further evident from the preservation of His people.** For the world is against them, and they have no protector but Him. The wrath of man, like the waves of the sea, has bounds prescribed to it that it cannot pass. As far as He is pleased to overrule it to His own praise, He will permit it to operate; but the remainder, that is not subservient<sup>15</sup> to the accomplishment of His purpose, He will restrain (Psa 76:10). But He works so secretly, though powerfully, by the agency of second causes that only they who are enlightened by His Word and Spirit can perceive His interference.

He permitted Ahithophel to give that counsel to Absalom which, though wicked, was, in the political sense of the word, prudent; that is, it was the probable method of putting David into the power of his rebellious son. David had prayed that the Lord would turn Ahithophel's counsel "into foolishness" (2Sa 15:31). Had the Lord instantly deprived Ahithophel of his reason, this prayer would have been more visibly, but not more effectually answered, than by the counter-advice of Hushai, which, though rash and extravagant, being suited to gratify the vanity and folly of Absalom, rendered the other unsuccessful (2Sa 17:14).

Sometimes the enemies of His church divide and wrangle among themselves, and then one party, to mortify and oppose the other, will protect those whom otherwise they wish to destroy. Thus, Paul escaped from the malice of the Jewish council by the sudden disagreement that arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees (Act 23:7), though they came together equally determined to destroy him. At other times, kings and statesmen act so inconsistently with their professed aims, and take steps so directly calculated to prevent what they wish to obtain, or to bring upon themselves what they mean to avoid, that we can only say, they are infatuated.<sup>16</sup> A very small compliance seemed likely to have secured the affection of the twelve tribes to Rehoboam. We are ready to wonder that he could not be prevailed on to speak mildly to the people for one day, with a view to engaging them to be his servants forever. But when we read that "the cause was from the LORD" (1Ki 12:15), and that in this way His purpose of separating the kingdoms of Israel and Judah was effected, the wonder ceases. Very observable, likewise, was the coincidence of circumstances that preserved the Jews in Persia

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<sup>15</sup> **subservient** – serving as a means to a goal; instrumental.

<sup>16</sup> **infatuated** – made utterly foolish.

from the destructive designs of their adversary Haman. If the king had slept that night, as usual, or if his attendants had read to him in any book but the chronicle of the empire, or in any part of that chronicle but the very passage in which the service of Mordecai had been recorded (Est 6:1-2), humanly speaking, Haman would have carried his point.<sup>17</sup> In this manner, by a combination of circumstances, each of them, if considered one-by-one, apparently trivial—and all of them conditional with respect to any human foresight or prevention—the Lord often pours contempt upon the wise and the mighty, and defeats their deepest laid and best concerted schemes in the moment when they promise themselves success.

Many salutary and comfortable inferences<sup>18</sup> may be drawn from the consideration of this subject...We have need to be reminded of what we already know.

**1. It should inspire us with confidence.** If the Lord of hosts, the Lord of lords, be for us, what weapon or counsel can prosper against us? However dark and threatening appearances may be, we need not tremble for the ark of God (1Sa 4:13). The things concerning His church are in safe hands. The cause so dear to us is still more dear to Him. He has power to support it when it is opposed and grace to revive it when it is drooping. It has often been brought low, but never has been, never shall be, forsaken. When He will work, none can hinder. Nor do you need to fear for yourself if you have committed yourself and your all to Him. “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Mat 10:30). There is a hedge of protection around you which no one can break through without His permission (Job 1:10); nor will He permit you to be touched, except when He designs to make a temporary and seeming evil conducive to your real and permanent advantage.

**2. It should affect us with an admiring and thankful sense of His condescension.**<sup>19</sup> Lord, “what is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psa 8:4). He “humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven” (Psa 113:6). But He stoops still lower...His eye is always upon His people, His ear open to their prayers. Not a sigh or a falling tear escapes His notice. He pities them as a father pities his children; He proportions their trials to their strength, or their strength to their trials, and so adjusts His dealing with them to their state, so that they never suffer unnecessarily nor in vain.

<sup>17</sup> **Haman...carried his point** – Haman would have accomplished his wicked plot to destroy all Jews throughout Ahasuerus’ kingdom.

<sup>18</sup> **salutary...inferences** – beneficial and comforting conclusions reached by reasoning.

<sup>19</sup> **descension** – graciously acting toward those who are unworthy.

**3. How great is the dignity and privilege of true believers...**Believers are more frequently despised than envied in this world. But they may congratulate one another. The King of kings is their friend. They have honors and pleasures that the world knows nothing of. Their titles are high; they are the sons and the daughters of the Lord Almighty (2Co 6:18). Their possessions are great, for all things are theirs (1Co 3:21). They are assured of what is best for them in this life and of eternal life hereafter. They are now nearly related to the King of kings and shall ere long be acknowledged and owned by Him before assembled worlds.<sup>20</sup> They who now account the proud happy will be astonished and confounded when they shall see the righteous, whom they once undervalued, “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat 13:43).

**4. We may lastly infer the extreme folly and danger of those who persist in their rebellion and opposition against this King of kings and Lord of lords.** Though He exercises much patience and longsuffering towards them for a season, the hour is approaching when His wrath will burn like fire. It is written and must be fulfilled: “the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psa 9:17). Oh, the solemnities of that great Day, when the frame of nature shall be dissolved, when the Judge shall appear, the books be opened, and all mankind shall be summoned to His tribunal! Will you not yet tremble and bow before Him, ye careless ones, while He is seated upon a throne of grace, and while the door of mercy stands open? Once more I call, I warn, I charge you to repent and believe the gospel (Mar 1:15). If today you will hear His voice, it is not yet too late. But who can answer for tomorrow? Perhaps this night your soul may be required of you (Luk 12:20). Are you prepared for the summons? If not, seize the present opportunity. Attend to the one thing needful. Seek His face, so that your soul may live. If not, remember that you are warned: your blood will be upon your own head. We have delivered our message, and if you finally reject it, you must answer for yourselves to Him Whose message it is.

From *The Works of John Newton*, Vol. 4 (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1824), 425-434; in the public domain.

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**John Newton (1725-1807):** Anglican minister; evangelical preacher and author of many hymns including *Amazing Grace*; born in Wapping, London, England, UK.



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<sup>20</sup> before assembled worlds – in the presence of all in the Day of Judgment.

# CHRIST THE LORD EXALTED

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

**L**ET us now ascend in spirit with Jesus and contemplate the glory of His exaltation.<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures of truth clearly affirm that His ascension into heaven was His introduction to a condition of preeminent dignity, power, and glory. Two quotations will be sufficient in proof of this.

Thus the apostle speaks of the working of God's "mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph 1:19-23). Again, in another place, passing from a most affecting<sup>2</sup> description of the humiliation of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> the same apostle proceeds to draw aside, as it were, the veil of His exalted and glorified state: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phi 2:9-11). How forcible and expressive are these declarations of the high position in heaven to which the Son of God was advanced!

**In the first place, He entered fully and manifestly into the glory of His deity.** We may not for a moment suppose that His exaltation added anything to His essential Godhead. This could necessarily undergo no change. His humiliation could not take from, nor His exaltation add to it. We can suppose the sun pouring light upon a stagnant pool and yet

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<sup>1</sup> **exaltation of Christ** – Christ's exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day (1Co 15:4), in ascending up into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Mar 16:19), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (Act 17:31). (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 27); available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>2</sup> **affecting** – touching the emotions; moving.

<sup>3</sup> **humiliation of Christ** – Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition (Luk 2:7), made under the law (Gal 4:4), undergoing the miseries of this life (Isa 53:3), the wrath of God (Mat 27:46), and the cursed death of the cross; (Phi 2:8) in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time (Mat 12:40). (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 26); available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

remain as essentially [spotlessly clean] as though its beams had but played upon the surface of the most pure and polished lake. Now what was the revelation of Jesus but the pouring down of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness upon a sin-accursed and sorrow-stricken world? Yet the contact of our Lord with this vast mass of pollution and iniquity was no [harm] to His essential and personal holiness and dignity. His beams of light and glory extracted and absorbed no poison from this stagnant pool, but rather—oh, sovereign virtue of His grace!—exerted so divine, so cleansing, and so purifying an influence, that myriads<sup>4</sup> once sunk beneath its pollutions have emerged cleansed, sanctified, and saved. Now the exaltation of Jesus was the full, clear, and manifest revealing of His deity. He entered the glory of His Godhead, so long suspended and eclipsed. He was reinstated in His original dignity and reinvested with His former glory. Oh, how magnificently glorious did the beams of that Sun now shine, which but a little before had set in darkness and in blood! Yes, our Emmanuel entered fully into His divine glory when He entered heaven! There it had been from everlasting; there it existed during the period of His humiliation; and there, as a robe of dazzling light, it awaited to invest<sup>5</sup> Him the moment He should pass within the veil of the heavenly sanctuary and enter the portal of the celestial and eternal palace.

**Then came the coronation!** Then the enthronement! Oh, what hal-lowed imagination can form an adequate conception of that scene? What tongue [can] describe the splendor of that moment? Attended by a celestial retinue,<sup>6</sup> each angel's harp strung and tuned for a higher strain of melody than that which broke in the stillness of night upon the plains of Bethlehem, He passed within the golden portal. File on file of adoring spirits<sup>7</sup> lined the path that conducted Him to His throne. Then rose the loud acclaim of welcome, as ten thousand times ten thousand struck their golden harps, louder than seven thunders rolling and reverberating along the dome of heaven. Falling prostrate upon their faces, all the celestial host, cherubim and seraphim, and “spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb 12:23), would worship at His feet, while every hand would be extended to place the crown upon His head, and every tongue assist to swell the coronation anthem: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev 5:12). Oh, let us catch their

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<sup>4</sup> myriads – countless numbers.

<sup>5</sup> invest – clothe.

<sup>6</sup> celestial retinue – group of heavenly servants and assistants.

<sup>7</sup> file on file – innumerable lines of spiritual, worshiping beings.

thrilling note and echo back their lofty song: “All hail the power of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall, Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all! Let every kindred, every tribe, On this terrestrial ball, To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all! Oh, that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall. We’ll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!”<sup>8</sup>

**This exaltation would also include the full induction of the Redeemer into His mediatorial glory.** This had but in a measure developed itself on earth. Our blessed Lord lived in great obscurity as to His personal glory when below. How partially was He recognized as Prophet, Priest, and King; how small a portion of His dignity, majesty, and power was visible! It was perfectly [in agreement] with the whole economy of His kingdom that it should be so. That kingdom was purely *spiritual*: its nature, its laws, its subjects, its progress, and its ultimate and certain triumph, purely and perfectly from heaven, spiritual and divine. By the early demonstration of this truth, our Lord sought to rebuke the lofty ambition, earthly hopes, and visionary expectations of the proud and haughty nation [Israel], who, [priding] themselves upon their national election [by] God, their miraculous history, their early conquests and former greatness, and sighing for release from the Roman yoke, were dreaming of the pomp, and glory, and conquest of a temporal Messiah.

**Now it was proper that even the spiritual glory of our Lord...should be but partially and cautiously developed.** Too full a [revelation] of His glory and too great a demonstration of His power might have but strengthened the expectation and fostered the views that He sought so earnestly, and yet so gently, to correct. Even His church, in consequence of the limited bestowment of the Spirit, was not yet prepared for a full disclosure of His personal and official greatness. Therefore, He said to His disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (Joh 16:12). His entrance into heaven was the signal for the full development of His mediatorial power and glory. This was the promise of His Father, and this the reward of His death. “I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psa 2:6). “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Heb 1:8). “I appoint unto you,” says Christ, “a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me” (Luk 22:29). “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed...He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall

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<sup>8</sup> “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” – hymn of praise to Jesus Christ as Lord by Edward Perronet (1726-1792); the fourth verse above added by John Rippon (1751-1836).

be satisfied" (Isa 53:10-11). Thus, His exaltation at the right hand of the Father was His full induction into the mediatorial kingdom. Now was He exalted "heir of all things" (Heb 1:2); now were all things put "under his feet" (Psa 8:6; Heb 2:8); now "all power...in heaven and in earth" was given to Him (Mat 28:18); and from that moment that He touched the crown, grasped the scepter, and the government was placed upon His shoulder, His truth was to advance and His kingdom widen with ever-growing power, until, supplanting all error and subduing all kingdoms, He was to reign "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1Ti 6:15).

**But we have yet to consider an essential and, to the church of God, a most blessed part of the Redeemer's exaltation—the glory into which His human nature entered on His ascension into heaven.** The divine and the human nature, once united, were united forever. Now there was an honoring, but not a glorifying, of our humanity when the Son of God assumed it. Its union with the deity, its fulness of the Spirit, its spotless holiness, its deep knowledge of and intimate fellowship with God—conspired to invest it with a dignity and honor such as no creature had ever before or ever shall again attain.

But not until its ascension into heaven was it glorified. Oh, through what humiliation it did, what indignity it did endure when below! What sinless weaknesses, imperfections, and frailties clung to it! It hungered, it thirsted, it labored, it sorrowed, it wept, it suffered, it bled, it died! The poor man's scorn, the rich man's ridicule—what indignities it did endure—it was scourged, it was bruised, it was mocked, it was smitten, it was spat upon, it was nailed to the tree, it was pierced, it was slain! Oh, what eye but that of faith can, through all this degradation, behold the person of the incarnate God? But now "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb 2:9).

Even after His resurrection, it must be acknowledged that a change approximating to that state of glory had already passed over Him. So spiritualized was He that, when they saw Him, His disciples knew Him not. What, then, must be the glory that encircles Him now that He has passed within His kingdom and is exalted at the right hand of God, "far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph 4:10)!

John, during his banishment in Patmos, was favored with a view of His glorified humanity and thus describes its dazzling appearance: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to

the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev 1:12-18). Sublime description of the "glory and honor" that now crown the exalted humanity of our adorable Redeemer! Did the awe-stricken and prostrate evangelist entertain any doubt of the glorious Person Who thus appeared to him? That doubt must all have vanished the moment he felt the "right hand" of Jesus laid upon him, and heard His own familiar voice saying unto him, "Fear not." Oh, what a [physical] evidence and what a near view did he now have of the exalted and glorified humanity of his Lord! At that instant, he saw Him to be divine, and he felt Him to be human! Yes, the very tabernacle of flesh in which He dwelt, the identical robe of humanity that He wore, He carried up with Him into heaven and sat down with it upon the throne. There it is, highly exalted! There it is, above angels and higher than saints, in close affinity and eternal union with [the] Godhead. There it is, bathing itself in the "fulness of joy," and drinking deeply of the satisfying "pleasures" that are at God's right hand forevermore (Psa 16:11). Oh, what must be the holy delight that the human soul of Jesus now experiences! Sin presses upon it no more. Sorrow beclouds it no more. The hidings of God's face distress it no more. Infirmity clings to it no more. It exults in the beams of God's unveiled glory; and it swims in the ocean of His [indescribable] love. If the vision upon the Mount Tabor was so glorious; if the splendors then encircling the form that yet had not passed through the scenes of the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, were so overpowering; if the attractions of that spot were so great, and the ecstasy of that moment was so ravishing—what, oh, what must be the glory, the joy, the bliss of heaven, where we shall no longer see Him "through a glass, darkly," but "as he is," and "face to face" (1Co 13:12; 1Jo 3:2; 1Co 13:12)!

From *Works of Octavius Winslow*, Monergism Books, Kindle Edition  
(Kindle Locations 62501-62582).



In the very first days of the church, no one was received into church membership without making the confession, at all costs, that Jesus is Lord.—*Lloyd-Jones*

# THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH: ONE LORD

**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)**

*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.—Ephesians 4:5*

**T**HE apostle is...concerned to emphasize the unity of the church. The doctrine of the Person of the Son is put before us in order that it may lead us to maintain “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (v. 3). The apostle introduces this great doctrine in but two words, *one Lord*. Generally, he does not state it quite as simply as that. In 1 Corinthians 8, verse 6, he has “one Lord Jesus Christ.” Surely he uses this brief form here to emphasize his point about the unity. The Lord Jesus Christ in and of Himself leads to unity and always produces unity; so one of the best ways in which we can see and understand this biblical doctrine of the unity of the church and preserve it is to keep our eyes steadfastly on the doctrine of the Person of the Son of God. Such is the argument, and we now proceed to consider how it works.

**First, there is the uniqueness of our Lord's Person.** “One Lord” means that there is only one who can really and truly be described as “the Lord.” We should always keep our eye on this title as we read the New Testament. “It is the Lord,” said the Apostle John to the Apostle Peter when they saw Him standing on the seashore after a vain night’s fishing (Joh 21:7). There has never been anyone like Him; there never will be. There had never been anyone like Him in the world before He came, and there will never be another like Him until He comes again. He stands entirely alone in all the glory of His absolute uniqueness. Our business as Christians is to be ever looking at Him and considering Him—Jesus of Nazareth. As you look at Him, you seem to be looking only at a man. And He was a man. He belonged to time, He was in time, He was in the world.

And yet, in a sense, to speak thus is already wrong. Our statements about Him must never be made separately and alone. When you look at Him you are not only looking at a man, you are looking at the same time at God the eternal Son; you are looking at “the Lord of glory.” We must always think and speak of Him in the same manner as the Scriptures do. Take, for instance, the statement at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners

spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." It continues: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb 1:1-3). Such is the One at Whom we are looking: the brightness of the glory of God, and the "express image," the full *effulgence*,<sup>1</sup> of God's essential glory.

The Bible's claim, and it must ever be ours, is that the incarnation of the Son of God is a unique event in history. It had never happened before; it will never happen again. Once and forever! This is the staggering truth, baffling to the understanding, which we believe. It is the essence of our faith. Paul writes concerning Him: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God [did not count his equality with God as something to be clutched at, and to be held on to], but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phi 2:6-10). "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," says the Apostle John in his Gospel (Joh 1:14). This is *the* unique event of all history—"one Lord." The only one! The apostle tells the Corinthians in his First Epistle to them that this is a great mystery, a mystery hidden from the foundation of the world but then revealed (2:7). What makes us Christian is that we have been given a measure of understanding of this "hidden mystery," the incarnation of the Son of God. "One Lord"—the only One at Whom you can look and say, the God-man, the "theanthropos"<sup>2</sup>—two natures in one Person.

What are the implications or what are we to deduce from this emphasis on the "one Lord"? The apostle is using the expression in the interests of his appeal to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It works out in the following manner: ***Christ, and He alone, is Christianity.*** ***"Christianity is Christ."*** It is not a collection of ideas; it is not a collection of thoughts or philosophies; it is not a mere matter of teaching. Primarily Christianity is the Lord Himself and our relationship to Him. Teachings and thoughts and philosophies vary, and they therefore tend to divide. But here it is a question of personal relationship, the knowledge of a Person, and of being in a given relationship to this Person. The argument is that, as the Person is one, so the relationship must be one. There is only one Lord, therefore there is this essential unity in all who belong to Him and in all who are truly related to Him. The great danger threatening the life of the church is ever that of forgetting the Person of the Lord Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> **effulgence** – bright shining; radiance.

<sup>2</sup> **theanthropos** – from the Greek *theos* (God) and *anthrōpos* (man) = God-man.

Christ, of concealing Him and hiding Him behind various things. There are certain essential doctrines, but we must never allow even these to come between us and Him. They are simply derived from Him and are meant to lead us back to Him. Much of the trouble in the church throughout the centuries has been due to the fact that people have forgotten the Lord Himself. We are such frail creatures, and so fallible, that we tend to go to extremes in one direction or another. But all of us are guilty in respect of the fact that the Person Himself is lost sight of, and that other things are given prominence and come between us and Him, Who is "one Lord."

*A second deduction that we must draw is that because there is only one Lord, He cannot be divided.* This is the argument that this Apostle Paul uses in writing to the Corinthians in the first chapter of his first Epistle. "I am being informed," he says in effect, "that there are divisions among you at Corinth. I am told that one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another says, 'I am of Apollos,' and another says, 'I am of Cephas.'" He then asks his question: "Is Christ divided?" He is asking them whether they realize the consequence of forming parties, and of thus aligning themselves behind certain men and certain names. He tells them that they are trying to divide Christ, and that this cannot be done because He is One. There is only one Lord, and He is indivisible.

This is the high doctrine of the two natures in one Person. The two natures are so joined together in Him that they cannot be divided. As we read the history of the church and note the various heresies that have arisen, we find that it has generally been because Christian people have forgotten "one Lord." In a sense they have been making a multiplicity of Lords. Quite early in the Christian Church, there were those who taught that the two natures in the one Person were fused into one and were no longer distinguishable. There were some, however, who went to the other extreme and who said there were two Persons—God and Man; not two natures in one Person, but two Persons, Christ as God, Christ as man. These heresies are still taught in the modern church. Sincere men in their desire to emphasize the two aspects of our Lord's Person go too far. They preach of Jesus Christ as God and Jesus Christ as man in isolation from each other. We must never do that. Jesus Christ is always the God-Man: so, we must be very careful and wary about saying that He did certain things as God, and other things as a man. No! He is the God-Man, indivisible. Christ cannot be divided in any sense. Thank God for this. He is always the same, He always will be the same. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb 13:8)...This is the greatest

comfort of the saint. Jesus Christ is one, the Lord is one, there is only One, and He is always, ever, eternally the same.

*Let us always draw these deductions: Christianity is Christ, this One Lord.* He makes it. Without Him there is no Christianity. He is essential to it. In this respect it is unlike all other teachings. Other teachings can be divorced from their propagators<sup>3</sup>—for example, Buddhism from Buddha; it would not make any vital difference. But in Christianity our Lord is everything. It all results from this amazing, unique fact of the Incarnation and of what He has done.

*Another inevitable deduction is that we cannot believe in parts of Him.* We either believe in Him or else we do not believe in Him. We cannot divide Him in that respect either. Once more the apostle expresses this very explicitly in the first chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians which is the best commentary on this matter: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (v. 30). He—Christ the Lord, the one indivisible Lord—is “made” all that to us. Therefore, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe in the whole of Him and to believe everything that is in Him. We cannot say—we must not say—that we have believed in Him for righteousness but not yet for sanctification, not yet for redemption, or that at one point we have only taken Him for our justification, and that later it is possible for us to take Him for our sanctification. That would be to divide Christ. We take the whole of Christ; there is no alternative.

This doctrine leads to a most important question. Is it right to form movements round different aspects of His work, and to separate them and to divide them from the whole? Is it right to have a movement which teaches justification only, another which emphasizes sanctification only, another His Second Coming only? We do not “take” His teaching only; it is by Him that we are saved, and He is one, and He is indivisible. Christ cannot be divided—“one Lord.” We must be very careful to start with this great doctrine of the one Lord, and to remember also that He is made the same to all believers. He is not one thing to one, and another thing to another. There are not many Christs, there is only one; and if I believe in Him, I am in the same position as all others who believe in Him. “One Lord”—therefore one church.

**The second great principle that we must emphasize is the uniqueness of His work.** This follows, of course, from the uniqueness of His Person. And we must look at it; and we should be looking at it

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<sup>3</sup> **propagators** – persons who spread an idea from place to place.

constantly. We can never take these truths for granted; we can never assume that we know them. We must always remind ourselves of them, because if we do not, says the apostle, there will soon be a division, there will be some sort of schism. The point we are emphasizing now is that there is only one Savior. That there are not many Saviors, but only one Savior, is the great theme of the New Testament. This is what makes Christianity a unique faith. The world believes in many saviors, in many deliverers. It has its lists of saviors that it is always repeating. It talks about Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah and John the Baptist, and Jesus, and perhaps one of the apostles, Peter or Paul, and then adds some great men who have figured in the history of the world. Some lists add Confucius and the Buddha and perhaps Socrates and Plato. But the New Testament denounces such an idea and says that our Lord Jesus Christ is unique, that He is the one and only Savior. To deny this is to deny the central and most essential truth of the Christian faith.

I would emphasize this truth by asserting that there is an aspect of intolerance in the Christian faith: and I go further and assert that if we have not seen the intolerant aspect of the faith, we have probably never seen it truly. There are many statements in Scripture to substantiate this assertion that to place anyone by the side of Jesus Christ or to talk of salvation apart from Him or without Him at the center is a betrayal and a denial of the truth. The Apostle Peter, addressing the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Act 4:12). The authorities were trying to prohibit Peter and the other apostles from preaching in the name of Christ and working miracles in His name. Peter, "filled with the Spirit," made that reply. An alternative translation runs, "there is no second name." His is the only name. "One Lord." Peter says that there must be no addition to Him, that we must not place another name by the side of His name. He is alone and all-sufficient. He must be alone. There is no other who has come down from heaven to earth. There is no other who is both God and man. His uniqueness must be preserved. He does not need an assistant: He has done *everything*. He cried on the cross, "It is finished" (Joh 19:30). He left nothing for us to add, nothing for anyone to make up. He trod the winepress alone (Isa 63:3). No one else could do so, but He has done it...

It is only as we grasp the uniqueness of this one Person that we really begin to understand the true nature of the church.

From *Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1-16*  
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 94-101.



# WHY DO YOU CALL ME LORD?

Thomas Boston (1676-1732)

*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?—Luke 6:46*

**D**OCTRINE: There are [people] who call Christ their Lord, owning His authority over them and looking for benefit by Him, who yet make no conscience of doing the things that He as a Lord says to them and requires of them.

**FIRST, I WILL SHOW HOW MEN CALL CHRIST THEIR LORD.** Men call Him their Lord by,

**1. Professing Christianity.** *Christians* is the name of Christ's disciples who owned Him for their Lord and Master: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Act 11:26). As ye are called Christians, ye are called by His name, owning Him for your Lord and Master: "One is your Master even Christ" (Mat 23:10). Some, that they may take to themselves liberty, which others may not, will pretend they do not make a profession. Strange! Christians and yet not professors! Can there be a more holy profession than that of Christianity, whereof Christ is the head! "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb 3:1). Nay, at that rate, ye take the name and throw off the thing.

**2. Being baptized in His name (Mat 28:19).** They are thereby externally marked for His subjects and servants, and renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. It is a badge of subjection to Christ, which the members of the visible church have taken on, to distinguish them from the world, whereof Satan is the god, while Christ is the Lord and God of the church.

**3. Praying unto Him or to God in His name (Act 7:59; Dan 9:17).** Every praying person, as far as he prays like a Christian, calls Christ His Lord and begs His help, though many do little consider what that requires of them in their practice.

**4. Attending the assemblies of His people to hear His Word (Eze 23:31).** The Lord Christ has appointed these assemblies for declaring His will to His people, as to what He will do for them and what He will

have them do: and the very coming thither in a way of outward reverence is calling Him Lord, from Whom we are to learn our duty.

**5. Consenting personally to the covenant (Isa 44:5).** Thereby they say He is and shall be forever their Lord, and that they shall be His only, wholly, and forever. And at whatever time any have given such consent, they have no power to retract it after. Whether they shall ever renew it again or not, it stands recorded before God; and He will judge them accordingly.

**6. Lastly, partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.** The very name of that ordinance bears the partakers to call Him so (1Co 11:23, 26). And it is a very solemn profession before the world, angels, and men that He is our Lord, and we give up with all other lords. We take Heaven's seal upon it and, in a manner, make oath that it is so.

## SECOND, I WILL SHOW *WHAT THEY CALL CHRIST.*

**1. They call Him their Lord God, as Thomas did:** “My Lord, and my God” (Joh 20:28). They own Him to be God their Creator, Who made them, preserves, and sustains them to be their Sovereign Lord, the Most High God with His Father and Spirit, unless they declare the contrary. For so the universal church of Christ on earth do understand Christ to be the Lord (Rom 9:5), however lightly men let of<sup>1</sup> His commands.

**2. Their Lord Proprietor,<sup>2</sup> Master, and Owner, however little regard they show to the will of His providence and precepts (Rom 14:9).** For as all things are His by creation, so the Father has, by a new title, made Him heir of all things, Lord of all, which is declared in the gospel (Act 10:36). And so, the head of every man is Christ.

**3. Their Lord Redeemer (Exo 20:2),** however unsuitably they walk to the redemption purchased by Him. For so His people understand Him to be our Lord, Who bought us with His precious blood, paying our ransom while we were captives of sin and Satan, giving Himself for us.

**4. Their Lord Husband, however refractory<sup>3</sup> and disobedient they prove to Him:** “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you” (Jer 3:14). “Thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name” (Isa 54:5). And so, they own their obligation to be subject to Him, faithful and obedient until death. For as He is Lord, He is a Lord Head and Husband to His church.

<sup>1</sup> however lightly men let of – despite men having little regard for Christ's commands.

<sup>2</sup> Their...Proprietor – The author possibly sees *master* and *owner* as defining proprietor.

<sup>3</sup> refractory – stubbornly resistant to authority.

**5. Lastly, their Lord is King, however rebellious they are.** “The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us” (Isa 33:22). They own Him to be King in Zion, having power and royal dominion over them to command, reward, and punish, as they carry themselves towards Him.

**THIRDLY, WHAT IS THE IMPORT OF THEIR CALLING HIM LORD?** Men calling Him so do, in effect, own, acknowledge, and profess,

**1. His undoubted authority to command and prescribe<sup>4</sup> duty to them:** owning Him as their Lord Husband, King, and God, they cannot deny [that] He has authority to bind them with laws. The husband claims authority over his spouse, the king over his subjects—and shall not God claim authority over His own creatures? All these meet in Christ our Lord; so, by our own confession, He has authority over us.

**2. The justice and equity of His commands:** “The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Rom 7:12). Husbands and kings among men may require unjust things of their relatives through their own perverseness or blindness; but He being our Lord God is essentially just and can command nothing but what is truly good. Will we venture to attack the holiness of God—to accuse His commands of injustice for an excuse of our neglect of them?

**3. Our absolute obligation to obey Him.** If He is our Lord, we owe Him an unlimited subjection—obedience without disputing His commands (Psa 119:4) and a resignation to His providence without reserve<sup>5</sup> (Mat 20:15). As the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are we in His. The potsherds of the earth may strive with one another, but shall they strive with their Maker?

**4. The strongest ties upon us to be for Him.** If He is our Proprietor and Redeemer, are we not bound by all the ties of honor and gratitude to be wholly His? Do we say [that] He redeemed us from death, [yet] can we deny [that] we are bound to live for Him? Has He redeemed us by dying for us in our room and stead, and so saved us from dying eternally? What possible stronger incentive can there be to obedience?

**5. Lastly, the expectation of happiness from Him.** Calling Him our Lord, we expect from Him and by Him the pardon of our sin, the favor of God, and a part in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mat 7:21). We know that He is not only Lord of this world, but of the other world, and so we raise our expectations accordingly.

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<sup>4</sup> prescribe – state with authority a rule or an action to be carried out.

<sup>5</sup> resignation...reserve – giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God's governing our lives.

I will consider men's not doing the things that He says, notwithstanding all this. We may take it up in three things.

**1. Christ as a Lord prescribes duty to His subjects.** He [does not have] an empty title of lordship and dominion, but [He] is a Lawgiver: "He is our Lawgiver" (Isa 33:22). And the law of the Ten Commandments, in their spirituality and extent, is His law, [which binds] all that call Him Lord by His authority (Exo 20:2-3). As He is the Lord our God, He claims absolute and unlimited subjection and obedience of us; as He is our Proprietor, He claims the absolute disposal of us;<sup>6</sup> as He is our Redeemer, He requires our living wholly to Him; as He is our Husband, He demands our being subject to Him in love, faithfulness, and obedience until death, yea, forever; and as He is our King, He requires...faithful subjects to have no [dealings] with His enemies.

**2. He intimates His will to them as to their duty.** He says what He would have them to do. We have His written laws in the Bible, which is God's Word to everyone into whose hand it comes. His ministers, as His messengers, do proclaim His laws in His name and require obedience to them. Conscience within men's breasts testifies the necessity of obedience, so that no one can pretend ignorance. If they be ignorant of His will, it is affected:<sup>7</sup> they desire not to know it, as those who say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job 21:14).

**3. Yet men neglect it and regard it not in their practice.** They plead the *relation* to Him but make no conscience of the duty of it. He has laid down their duty in laws and commands and has intimated it to them; but they take no heed to regulate their practice according to them. He says what things He would have them to do, but they do them not.

***First, they have no due sense of their being absolutely bound up to His will.*** [They] fancy themselves to be at some liberty to walk according to their own, as if the government were divided between Christ and themselves: "Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psa 12:4). They do not feel the tie of the yoke of Christ always upon them, but are like young bulls unaccustomed to the yoke, skipping at ease according to their own pleasure.

***Second, they do not frame their life according to His will.*** Their habitual walk and practice are not holy, but loose, licentious, untender,<sup>8</sup> carnal, and like the world, not like the followers of Christ. [They are] like the

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<sup>6</sup> **disposal of us** – right to deal with us in whatever way He pleases.

<sup>7</sup> **affected** – pretended.

<sup>8</sup> **untender** – without a tender conscience to spiritual things.

Ephesians in their unconverted state, who “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). They attend ordinances and perform some religious duties; but look into the strain of their conversation:<sup>9</sup> it is no wise Christ-like, but world-like. [It is] contrary to that exhortation, “Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2).

*Thirdly, they never set themselves to do all that He says, contrary to what the Psalmist did, who had “respect unto all [God’s] commandments” (Psa 119:6).* This one or other thing that He says, they do: but they were never brought to a compliance<sup>10</sup> with the things He says without reserve. They pick and choose out some things, but they reject others, which is clear evidence that His authority, which is stamped on all His commands, has little weight with them (Jam 2:11).

*Fourthly, they habitually do against what He says, making their own lusts and inclinations their law.* [They are] like those who said, “I have loved strangers, and after them will I go” (Jer 2:25). They call Him their Lord; but Satan and their lusts are really their lords to whom they yield their obedience, being captives at their pleasure.

*Lastly, they do nothing purely because He says it, else they would endeavor to do all.* In what they do, they have other ends than to please Him: they do it to please themselves, for their own profit, pleasure, or safety.

I will show how it comes to pass that people call Christ Lord, and [they] make no conscience of doing what He says. The springs of this ruining practice that so prevails are many:

**1. The lack of a thorough change in their nature:** “A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes” (Luk 6:43-44). There is some change made on them; therefore, they call Christ Lord. It is not carried through; therefore, they do not what He says. Hence they are neither cold nor hot; they are neither professed enemies nor cordial friends; but like the Laodiceans, of whom our Lord said, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot” (Rev 3:15).

*First, good education and religious company embalms some dead souls, but they still lack the principle of the Spirit of life, like those of whom the apostle*

<sup>9</sup> strain of their conversation – characteristics of their behavior.

<sup>10</sup> compliance – submission.

**says**, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 1:19). So, they continue still dead in sin. Their course of life becomes abominable with dead works until, in the end, they are twice dead (Jude 1:12).

*Secondly, the gospel being new to some makes a reel<sup>11</sup> among their affections, as it did among the stony ground hearers.* “He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon<sup>12</sup> with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended” (Mat 13:20-21). So, they have some liking of the gospel and begin to look kindly towards the way of God: but it changes not their hearts (v. 21). And the newness going away, these affections wear off, and they begin to appear in their own colors of black nature. Hence we have many who, while they were springing up in youth, blossomed fair, and solemnly gave their names to Christ at sacraments: but being grown up, turn stark naught.<sup>13</sup>

*Thirdly, they get some new light into their heads, but no new life into their hearts.* This was the case of many of John’s hearers, who afterwards withered away; concerning whom Christ said, “He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light” (Joh 5:35).

*Fourthly, many get awakening grace that never get converting grace.* Their convictions bring them to call Christ Lord; but they—living strangers to the work of conversion—cannot do the things that He says.

**2. Entertaining wrong notions of religion.** They form to themselves such notions of religion as leave them at liberty in the course of their walk: (1) They think that is religion to call Christ Lord in performing duties of worship, praying, etc., and consider not that the substance of religion lies in holy, tender walking:<sup>14</sup> “The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Ti 2:11-12). Hence, having done these duties of worship, they are at no more care to keep their hearts in the Lord’s fear “all the day long” (Pro 23:17); but, on the contrary, [they] can take the greater liberty to themselves in loose walking as the whore did: “I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came

<sup>11</sup> **reel** – temporary emotional upheaval or excitement.

<sup>12</sup> **anon** – immediately.

<sup>13</sup> **stark naught** – completely worthless.

<sup>14</sup> **tender walking** – living with a tender conscience.

I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee" (Pro 7:14-15). Hence, publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before such people. (2) They think that faith will save them, though it be dead, idle, and unactive, contrary to what the apostle saith, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (Jam 2:14). "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jam 2:26). They do not consider that [such] faith is not saving faith, which is so. Hence, they can take a great deal of liberty in the way of sin and put off repentance from time to time, even to a deathbed, upon the confidence that their faith in Christ will save them. Such have been of old, and still are: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:4). There is no true faith but [that which] purifies the heart (Act 15:9) and sanctifies the whole man; and salvation by faith is salvation from sin.

**3. Reigning unbelief.** Of this our Lord complained, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (Joh 5:40). Whatever pretenses there are to believing in Christ, the unholiness of the lives of men is convincing evidence that unbelief is reigning at bottom with most of us: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa 53:1). The holiness of God, the spirituality of His law, His hatred of sin, and how severely He punisheth are not believed. The report concerning Christ, another world, heaven and hell, sinks not deeply into the hearts of many. If these things were truly believed, it is not possible that men could be so easy in a way of sin.

**4. Lack of consideration (Luk 15:17).** People dream away their life-time; and however deep they can enter the consideration of other things, they have no power to consider their soul's state and case: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa 44:20). Self-examination is utterly neglected; so, there is no due reflection made on their souls' state and the course of life they are leading: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa 1:3).

**5. The natural enmity of the heart prevailing against conviction.** "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:7). Hence is rebelling against the light, keeping the truth prisoner in the head that it may not get into

the conversation<sup>15</sup> to rule there (Rom 1:18). There are notions of truth that force their own way into the mind, especially under a clear [gospel-preaching] ministry. The natural enmity<sup>16</sup> yoking with these fights against them; and getting [victory] over them, runs with a stronger current than otherwise (Rom 7:13).

**6. Lastly, unmortified lusts [that are] keeping the rule and dominion over the soul, though Christ has the name of their Lord.** Many call Christ Master, who are still servants to sin, serving diverse lusts and pleasures. Hence, these hurry them into sinful courses, [so] that they must do what their impetuous<sup>17</sup> lusts drive them to and cannot do the things that Christ says.

From *The Whole Works of Thomas Boston: Sermons and Discourses on Several Important Subjects in Divinity*, ed. Samuel M'Millan, Vol. 6 (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1849), 527-534.

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**Thomas Boston (1676-1732):** Scottish Presbyterian minister and theologian; born in Duns, Berwickshire, UK.



“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 7:21). Christ was mocked when they cried, “Hail, king of the Jews!” (Mat. 27:29), and yet they crucified Him. If we would have dominion given to Christ, we must look upon ourselves as not our own, but His; not live to ourselves or use ourselves for ourselves but resign up ourselves absolutely to Him. Then for others, such is their love to Christ and the souls of men, that true Christians desire that Christ may not only be glorified by themselves, but [by] others; that He may be known, worshipped, and believed on in the world, especially those about them, as fire turneth all things about it into fire.—*Thomas Manton*

Christ will deny those to be His that do not depart from iniquity, though they name His name among the rest of His people. “Depart from me,” saith He, “all you that departed not from iniquity” (see Luk 13:25-27). Yes, they that shall name His name religiously and [do] not depart from iniquity are denied by Him all along. He alloweth them not now to call Him Lord. “And why call ye me Lord, Lord,” saith He, “and do not the things which I say?” (Luk 6:46). He cannot abide to be reputed as the Lord of those that presume to profess His name and do not depart from iniquity (Eze 20:39). The reason is, such do but profane His name and stave off others from falling in love with Him and His ways.—*John Bunyan*

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<sup>15</sup> **conversation** – behavior; lifestyle.

<sup>16</sup> **enmity** – hostility.

<sup>17</sup> **impetuous** – characterized by sudden, powerful, or rash emotions or energy.

# IS CHRIST YOUR LORD?

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

**W**E do not ask, Is Christ your *Savior*, but is He really and truly your Lord? If He is not your Lord, then He is most certainly not your Savior. Those who have not received Christ Jesus as their Lord, and yet suppose Him to be their Savior, are deluded, and their hope rests on a foundation of sand. Multitudes are deceived on this vital point; and therefore, if the reader values his or her soul, we implore you to give a most careful reading to this little [article].

When we ask, Is Christ your Lord, we do not inquire, Do you believe in the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth? The demons do that (Mat 8:28-29) and yet perish notwithstanding! You may be firmly convinced of the deity of Christ and yet be in your sins. You may speak of Him with the utmost reverence, accord Him His divine titles in your prayers and yet be unsaved. You may abominate those who traduce<sup>1</sup> His person and deny His divinity and yet have no spiritual love for Him at all.

When we ask, Is Christ your Lord, we mean, does He in very deed occupy the throne of your heart, and does He actually *rule* over your life? “We have turned everyone to his own way” (Isa 53:6) describes the course that we all follow by nature. Before conversion, every soul lives to please self. Of old it was written, “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jdg 17:6), and why? “In those days there was no king in Israel” (Jdg 21:25). Ah! That is the point we desire to make clear to the reader. Until Christ becomes your King (1Ti 1:17; Rev 15:3), until you bow to His scepter, until His will becomes the rule of your life, *self* dominates, and thus Christ is disowned.

When the Holy Spirit begins His work of grace in a soul, He first convicts of sin. He shows me the *real* and *awful nature of sin*. He makes me realize that it is a species of insurrection, a defying of God’s authority, a setting of my will against His. He shows me that in going my “own way” (Isa 53:6), in pleasing myself, I have been fighting against God. As my eyes are opened to see what a lifelong rebel I have been, how indifferent to God’s honor, how unconcerned about His will—I am filled with anguish and horror and made to marvel that the thrice Holy One has not long since cast me into hell. Reader, have you ever gone

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<sup>1</sup> traduce – speak ill of; slander.

through this experience? If not, there is very grave reason to fear that you are yet spiritually dead!

Conversion, true conversion, *saving* conversion, is a *turning from sin to God in Christ*. It is a throwing down of the weapons of my warfare against Him, a ceasing to despise and ignore His authority. New Testament conversion is described thus: “Ye turned to God from idols to serve [*be in subjection to, obey*] the living and true God” (1Th 1:9). An “idol” is any object to which we give what is due alone unto God—the supreme place in our affections, the molding influence of our hearts, the dominating power of our lives. Conversion is an about-face, the heart and will repudiating<sup>2</sup> sin, self, and the world. Genuine conversion is always evidenced by “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” (Act 9:6); it is an unreserved surrendering of ourselves to His holy will. Have *you* yielded to Him (Rom 6:13)?

There are many people who would like to be saved from hell, but who do not want to be saved from *self-will*, from having their own way, from a life of (some form of) worldliness. But God will not save them on *their* terms. To be saved, we must submit to *His* terms: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord [*having revolted from Him in Adam*], and he will have mercy upon him” (Isa 55:7). Said Christ, “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath [*all that is opposed to Me*], he cannot be my disciple” (Luk 14:33). Men must be turned “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,” before they can “receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Act 26:18).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col 2:6). That is an exhortation to Christians, and its force is, “Continue as you began.” But how had they begun? By receiving “Christ Jesus the Lord”: by surrendering to Him, by subjecting themselves to His will, by ceasing to please themselves. His authority was now owned. His commands now became their rule of life. His love constrained them to a glad and unreserved obedience. They “gave their own selves to the Lord” (2Co 8:5). Have *you*, my dear reader, done this? Have you? Do the details of your life evidence it? Can those with whom you come into contact see that you are no longer living to please self (2Co 5:15)?

O my reader, make no mistake upon this point: a conversion that the Holy Spirit produces is a very *radical* thing. It is a miracle of grace. It

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<sup>2</sup> repudiating – rejecting with contempt.

is the enthroning of Christ in the life. And such conversions are rare indeed. Multitudes of people have just sufficient “religion” to make them miserable. They refuse to forsake every known sin, and there is no true peace for any soul until he does. They have never “received Christ Jesus the Lord” (Col 2:6). Had they done so, the joy of the Lord would be their strength (Neh 8:10). But the language of their hearts and lives (*not* their lips) is, “We will not have this man to *reign* over us” (Luk 19:14). Is that your case?

The great miracle of grace consists in changing a lawless rebel into a loving and loyal subject. It is a renewing of the heart, so that the favored subject of it has come to loathe what he loved, and the things he once found irksome are now winsome<sup>3</sup> (2Co 5:17). He delights “in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom 7:22). He discovers that Christ’s “commandments are not grievous” (1Jo 5:3), and that “in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psa 19:11). Is this your experience? It would be if you received Christ Jesus THE LORD!

But to receive Christ Jesus the Lord is altogether beyond unaided human power. That is the last which the unrenewed heart wants to do. There must be a supernatural change of heart before there is even the desire for Christ to occupy its throne. And that change, none but God can work (1Co 12:3). Therefore, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found” (Isa 55:6). Search for Him with all your heart (Jer 29:13). Reader, you may have been a professing Christian for years past, and you may have been quite sincere in your profession. But if God has condescended to use this tract to show you that you have never really and truly “received Christ Jesus the Lord,” if now in your own soul and conscience you realize that SELF has ruled you hitherto, will you not now get down on your knees and confess to God. Confess to Him your self-will, your rebellion against Him, and beg Him to so *work in you* that, without further delay, you may be enabled to yield yourself completely to His will and become His subject, His servant, His loving slave, in deed and in truth?

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, August 1931;  
available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

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<sup>3</sup> **irksome...winsome** – loathsome...delightful.