

# **A Meditation on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ**

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[NOTE – *The reader’s prayerful attention is called to the accompanying article upon the Person of our most Holy Lord. May we ever contemplate so holy a theme with the awe and adoring worship which become us. May a spirit of controversy, or mere intellectual analysis or speculation, be removed far from us. No words that man’s wisdom teacheth can keep us from error; our best language falls short of the perfection of the “words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” Let us hold fast all these, and be very careful not to “go beyond” their divine limits. It is our joy, our salvation, that we know the Lord Jesus; it is also our joy that in the unutterable fullness of His own eternal being God alone can know Him*].

The secret source and spring and power of all real godliness is found in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no true piety without a true Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the believer and who produces in his life all that is fruit for God, ever stresses the truth concerning the glorious Person of the Son of God, that our hearts may be engaged with Him, and that beholding His glory we may become like Him and express Him in our walk and ways.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1Tim 3:16). And a true Christianity needs a *whole* Christ. He is its centre and stay. Apart from Him *in all that He is*, everything of truth is weakened and damaged, if not destroyed.

So it is that all down the centuries from the hour of His incarnation the enemy has made ceaseless attacks upon the truth of “Jesus Christ come in flesh” (1. John 4:2-3). Sometimes His Godhead glory is assailed: sometimes His real humanity. Thus, in the same fourth century, Anus of Alexandria denied our Lord’s true deity, and Apollinaris of Laodicea denied our Lord’s true humanity.

Anus regarded the Lord as not being possessed of absolute Godhead, but as being only the chief and greatest of created beings.

Apollinaris refused to acknowledge the full human nature of the Lord, denying His human spirit, and filling its place with the Divine Logos.

The importance of knowing well and holding fast and teaching constantly all that the Spirit of God affirms concerning Him cannot be over-estimated, and that which is written is for our learning. So with unshod feet and reverence of spirit we may enquire into that which is revealed, remembering that in its fullness, “No man knoweth the Son but the Father” (Matt. 11:27), and that adoration becomes us as we consider Him.

Into the depths of the mystery of His incarnation we may not penetrate, nor should we seek to be wise above what is written. The “obedience of faith” calls us to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, casting down imaginations and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2Cor 10:5). Therefore we do well to “think in Scripture” as far as we can, and to keep as closely as possible in our words to that which has been unfolded in its holy pages, for “the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times” (Ps 12:6).

Let us consider then how the Holy Spirit presents the Lord Jesus before us, beholding Him in His glories, as they are spread out that our souls may feed and rejoice.

It was given to the apostle John, who lay in His bosom at supper, to portray the full Godhead of the Lord, and to him was given also to express the truth of His full humanity. His whole Gospel brings before us that which the Son of God ever was and also that which He became in grace for us. As he says, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Here, as in other Scriptures, we find our Lord Jesus brought before us, as truly God and truly Man in one glorious Person. At times He is spoken of as though He were only God, at other times as though He were only Man; but always as one undivided Personality. And it is this completeness in the divine and human natures which makes Him so dear to the heart of the believer.

Being this He can be the "One Mediator between God and men" (1Tim 2:5). He is great enough to meet all the claims of the throne of God. He is lowly enough to lay hold of sinful men and to bring them to God in perfect righteousness. The "Daysman," longed for by the patriarch Job, is provided in Him. He is the one who can "lay His hand upon us both" (Job 9:33).

"He is the true God" (1. John 5:20), "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). He is also "the Man Christ Jesus" (1Tim 2:5). And faith neither "divides the Person, nor confounds the natures." They are united by a bond unique and inscrutable. He is the God-Man. He is God in all that God is. He is Man in all that man is, sin apart. He speaks of His spirit (Luke 23:46). He speaks of His soul (John 12:27). He speaks of His body (Matt. 26:12, 26). He claims Manhood as He claims Godhead, but ever speaking of Himself as a single personality "I". These truths of His Person are the foundation of that which the believer has for time and for eternity. *All* that He is gives efficacy to all that He has done and is doing.

The atonement made by Him at Calvary and His present ministry as Priest and Intercessor on high, and everything which flows from these, depend upon the truths of His Godhead and Manhood together. So loving Him we are called to hold fast the revelation though it is beyond the realm of human reasonings.

And He will be the object of wonder and of worship to the redeemed as they bow before Him in the courts of light and cast their golden crowns at His pierced feet. As we gaze upon Him now, in something of that same spirit, we sing,

*"The Person of the Christ,  
Enfolding every grace,  
Once slain, but now alive again,  
In heaven demands our praise."*

That which He has accomplished – His finished redeeming work of Calvary – gives peace to the conscience and enables us as "worshippers once purged" to consider Him Himself, and thus have our hearts and lips filled with praise and adoration. That He was truly Man enabled Him to suffer and die for man in making atonement on his behalf. That He was truly God gives that atonement its infinite value.

That He was and is truly Man, One who has been tried in all points as we are (sin apart), enables Him to sympathize with us as we tread our pilgrim way, seeking to follow His steps, while it is the hand of His Almighty which holds up "our goings in His paths."

We contemplate Him then, "coming in flesh." He is "that Holy Thing" born of the virgin. "The Seed of the woman," so long promised, has come to bruise the Serpent's head. Conceived in the womb by the overshadowing power of the Highest, He was born a Son to Mary – Jesus – His lowly name, yet He is to be great, and called "the Son of the Highest." The virgin's firstborn Son is "Christ the Lord." We contemplate Him in the Bethlehem stable.

*"Blest Babe who lowly liest,  
In manger-cradle there,  
Descended from the highest,  
Our sorrows all to share."*

He is cast upon God from the womb and made to hope upon His mother's breasts. May we not join the angels in spirit saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good pleasure in men?" He has come who shall bring highest honour to God and who shall reconcile men to Him in righteousness, so that a holy God may look upon them with complacency, and have them in His presence with delight, in fulfilment of His purpose of grace.

We contemplate Him in the temple when eight days old. "The Child Jesus" is brought in that the custom of the law may be carried out. Taken into aged Simeon's arms He is declared to be the Lord's Christ – God's salvation.

We contemplate Him in all the perfect unfoldings of childhood. He grows and waxes strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God is upon Him. He advances in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men. At twelve years of age He is consciously the Son of the Father. Missed by His parents, and found at last, in the midst of the doctors in the temple, He enquires, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" But thence He goes down with them, and comes to Nazareth and is subject unto them.

We contemplate Him in His holy Manhood "at the river of Jordan, where John was baptising." He, who ever was in the beginning with God, begins to be about thirty years of age. Before Abraham He was – the Great "I AM," the unchanging One, "the Same." The Word which "was God" was made flesh and dwelt among us, complete in Manhood now as He had been, and ever remains, complete in Godhead eternally.

To fulfil all righteousness He will identify Himself with the remnant of Israel in the waters of baptism, taking His place with them in their first step – though He is the Sinless One. Then when baptized, heaven breaks silence rejoicingly, and the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," while the Spirit of God descends as a dove and abides upon Him.

We contemplate Him in the desert. He is "driven by the Spirit into the wilderness," and we see Him hungering there and tempted by the devil. Answering the suggestion of the evil one that

He should make stones bread, He, the self-humbled, dependent, devoted, obedient One, says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The testing only brings out the perfection – the sweet incense is beaten small that its fragrance may be shed forth.

Then "full of the Holy Spirit," "led by the Spirit" and "in the power of the Spirit," He ever speaks and acts. It is "by the Spirit of God" He casts out demons. In His wonderful stooping, He who is "over all, God blessed for ever?" has taken a place in which He will be directed and empowered by the Holy

Spirit.

We contemplate Him further in His holy goings and ministry. He, "Emmanuel" – "God with us" – has drawn near to fallen men, His creatures for their good, making God known. Grace and truth have come in Him. Yet He is the "Man of Sorrows" the grief-acquainted One in outward circumstances, though in spirit He rejoices in the accomplishment of the Father's will. As it has been said, "He bore in His spirit that which He put away by His power," for "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." Everything essential in perfect holy Manhood we discern in Him, while as occasion calls for it we,

*"See the Godhead glory  
Shine through the human veil;  
Or willing hear the story,  
Of Him who's come to heal."*

He who is "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa 40:28), is discerned on Sychar's well, "weary" with His journeyings of love (John 4:6). He who keepeth Israel and never slumbers, is seen peacefully sleeping amid the howlings of the storm upon the Galilean lake.

He knows all that is to come upon Him and forewarns His disciples of His suffering and death at the hands of men. Yet He knows not the day or hour appointed of the Father for His glorious coming. He upon whom worlds are dependent is Himself seen as the dependent One, saying, "I will put My trust in Him" He who commands the universe and spoke worlds into existence is under commandment of the Father and declares, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me."

He "sighs deeply in spirit" when a sign is sought in unbelief. He is righteously angry with the wilful opposers of His testimony. He weeps with Mary of Bethany and "groans in spirit" at the grave of Lazarus. He mourns over Jerusalem. He prays throughout His way, and at Gethsemane prays "more earnestly" when His soul is "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There the bitter cup which He is to drink at Calvary is in view. In His holy hatred of sin He shrinks from all that the judgment will mean, but in His perfect obedience He cries. "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." "Though He were a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb 5:7-8).

Finally we contemplate Him in His holy sufferings and "death of the cross." There He will drain

to its dregs the cup of judgment from which He shrank in His holy perfection in Gethsemane's dark garden. He feels in sacred sensitiveness of spirit all the ridicule and shame, all the insults and mockery which are heaped upon Him by those who surround the cross, even as He knows the excruciating tortures of that awful gibbet.

Then bearing our sins and "made sin for us," He "who knew no sin" is abandoned in righteousness by God, and as all waves and billows pass over Him, and deep calls to deep, as judgment, for our sakes, falls upon Him, the cry rises from out of the darkness of that unparalleled hour, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Knowing then that all was accomplished the Victor's cry is heard, "It is finished," and He bows His head saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and so gives up that ghost.

He has been crucified and slain by wicked hands. And yet we know until His hour was come none could take Him. His life He lays down of Himself, and He will take it again, having authority for this also. Thus on the first day of the week we see Him rising triumphant from the dead. He raises up the temple of His body, while it remains true that "God raised Him from the dead."

We contemplate Him now in resurrection. We hear Him "by the Holy Ghost" giving commandment, and then, on Olivet, we see Him parted from His disciples and taken up into heaven, ascending up where He was before, but now in Manhood, and taking up His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, "The Man Christ Jesus" still, now in the glory of God.

There we know Him as "for us;" ceaselessly interceding on our behalf – Jesus, the Mighty Son of God, succouring, sympathizing, saving to the end His loved ones while on their pilgrimage, able to feel with them in all their trials because He Himself has suffered in like manner, sin apart, during His earthly sojourn. Man knows the things of a man by the spirit of a man which is in him. Our Lord in lowly grace became a Man that He might know and sympathize and live for us on high as once He died for us at Calvary.

In all these scenes we find Him whom our souls love, manifesting the faculties and powers of full and perfect Manhood, though full and perfect Godhead is His. Both the divine nature and the human nature appear with equal distinctness, each in its own perfection and time but inseparably connected in the same glorious Person.

In Him we "behold our God." In Him we "behold the Man." And while we know not the fathomless mystery of His glorious Person, we know His deep, eternal love, and with glad hearts praise and adore Him.

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*Magazine Help and Food, 1927, p. 273*