Articles by David Leathem

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Inspiration Of The Bible (Jan 1955)

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There is no doubt the Bible claims to be a supernatural, God-given, God-inspired book. It declares that, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” (2 Tim. 3:16)

The expression “Inspiration of God” is the translation of a Greek word, theopneustos, meaning God-breathed; therefore, the claim of the Bible is, that all Scripture, the entire Bible, is God-breathed, or out breathed from God. The word inspiration occurs but twice in the King James Version. (Job 32:8 and 2 Tim. 3:16) The word Scripture is used about fifty times in the New Testament, and is in all these places applied to the writings of the Old and New Testaments, and to no others. The doctrine of The Inspiration is, as has been said, “The fundamental of fundamentals,” and is the divine foundation of all truth. We need, therefore, to have no hesitancy in accepting the whole content of The Book as the revelation of heaven to mankind. God wrought the seamless robe of Holy Scripture.

The writers of the Scriptures wrote not as man’s will dictated, but as they were moved, or borne along, by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter has stated, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet. 1:21)

The statements of Paul and Peter just quoted, are applicable to all the Scriptures. If we examine Peter’s words, we shall find that the Old Testament writings are under review In Hebrews 1:1, we read, “God spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.” In Luke

1:70, a similar thought is expressed, “He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets.” Throughout the Old Testament, we find the often recurring expressions, “Thus saith the Lord,” and “The Lord spake.” There is no doubt, but that in every one of these references, God is referred to as the source of revelation. To Jeremiah the Lord says, “Behold I have put My words in thy mouth.” (1:9) Again we read, “The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest.”

The words of David in 2 Sam. 23:3 are very instructive, “God spake to me,” for they denote divine revelation. His language in verse 2 of the same chapter is likewise significant, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,” for it suggests inspiration. Many other quotations might be given which emphasize the claim of the Bible to divine revelation and divine inspiration.

Now, that which is true of the Old Testament is also true of the New Testament. The apostle Peter classes the epistles of Paul along with the other Scriptures. (2 Pet. 3:15-16) The apostle Paul when writing to Timothy cites a quotation from Deut. 15:4 and another one from Lu. 10:7, and calls them both by the significant name of Scripture. “Thou shalt not nuzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.” (1 Tim. 5:18)

In the production of this Divine Library man has had no choice; nevertheless, we can discern the human element throughout its every page. To the lover and the reader of this Book, the language of Jeremiah is distinctly different to that of Isaiah or of David, The same is true of the writings of Paul, of John, and of Peter, and of all the inspired writers. We, therefore, see God fitting

human experience into the structure of this unique Book, for the same supreme authority is consistent in every part, “Line upon line, precept upon precept.” Here in a language we can understand, we find the very words of the very God.

Together with the words of holy men, we also find those of Satan and of wicked men. Now, we do not believe for one moment, that God inspired these to utter their blasphemies and threats, but it must be clearly understood that the record of what they did say is directed and preserved by divine inspiration.

Our Lord frequently appealed to the authority of the Scriptures during His entire ministry of more than three years, and after His resurrection on the way to Emmaus, He began at Moses, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, to unfold to His two disciples the things concerning Himself. It is also stated that He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. (Lu. 24:44-45) The Scriptures were supreme in the life and ministry of Jehovah’s perfect Servant.

The infallible proofs of Inspiration are too numerous to come within the scope of this short article, but perhaps a few may be mentioned: We might think first of all of the MARVELLOUS PRESERVATION of the canon of Holy Scriptures, for in spite of the unceasing attacks upon it by its enemies, it exists in its entirety to this day. Atheists, with their unwarranted assaults made throughout many generations, have passed away leaving this precious volume still intact and as inviolable as ever. We recall the words of the Lord Jesus, “My word shall not pass away.” (Lu. 2:33) as well as the bold statement

of the apostle Peter, “The word of God liveth and abideth forever.” (1 Pet. 1:23)

Next, we shall think together of its MATCHLESS PRINCIPLES. There is nothing of a mediocre character here. Its standards are the very highest. Since the day that man became the happy recipient of its laws and precepts, the very best that has been seen in him has been produced by its influence. To this Book the mightiest intellects have turned doing homage to its sacred contents; in like manner, the humblest in the land have found solace and satisfaction in its pages. Sir Walter Scott when dying said, “Bring me the Book.” When asked, “What book?” He replied, “There is but one book, The Bible.” A remarkable statement from one who had himself written so many books. It was Sir Walter who wrote, “Within this wondrous volume lies the mystery of mysteries. Happiest they of human race to whom their God has given grace, to read, to tear, to hope, to pray, to lift the latch, to find the way, and better they had ne’er been born that read to doubt or read to scorn.”

In third place, let us consider its MANY PREDICTIONS that have been already fulfilled. An examination of these could fill many volumes. The land of Babylon, of Egypt, and of Palestine, abound with convincing proof of the accuracy of the prophetic pronouncement and the exact fulfilment of the same. Within the past few years, the archaeologist’s spade has unearthed further proofs of inspiration, yet there are many predictions still to be fulfilled, and all these will surely come to pass. Oh! those majestic mountains of prophesy, there is nothing like them in all the writings of men, but let us not compare the mighty Rockies with an anthill, or the light

of the sun with the light of a candle. Let us bow adoringly before the great contrast that exists between the words of God and the words of men.

Finally and briefly, let us examine the MIGHTY POWER exhibited wherever this Inspired Book has gone. There is a supernatural fulness and wisdom displayed in its going forth. As the heavens and earth have been constituted by the word of God; (Heb. 11:3) even so, by the energy of the Holy Spirit this word brings about a new creation in the lives of men, and it is always effective in its operations. (1 Pet. 1:23).

No less than forty writers make up the sixty-six books, with fifteen centuries separating the first from the last. Some of these were fishermen herdsmen, statesmen, shepherds, scholars, and kings. From the region of Sinai, and the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, the River of Babylon, and the prison of Rome, came these living and dynamic words which together give us the revealed mind of God.

The authenticity of this book is unquestionable. The accuracy of its biographies is unchallengeable. The adequacy of its contents is unsurpassable, and it is adaptable to every human need and circumstance.

“Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts, in several ages born and several parts, weave such agreeing truths; and how or why should they conspire to cheat us with a lie?

Unasked their pains, unsought for their advice, starving their gains and martyrdom their price.”

“If there is anything in my thought or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love for the Scriptures.”

--Daniel Webster.

Behold Thy God! (Mar 1955)

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The greater burden of the message of the Written Word is not the assertion of its own claims to divinity, but, rather, the presentation of the evidence of the divinity of the Living Word. By the minds of those who deny the inspiration of the Bible, its testimony to the proofs of the Deity of Christ will be rejected. Nevertheless, a sincere belief in the Deity of Christ is consequent to a belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. If we deny the One, We must deny the Other, but if we believe the One, we are convinced of the Other. Between them there is perfect accord, for the One witnesses to the Other. Let us review some of the testimony of the Scriptures to the Deity of Christ. In so doing, we shall examine the statements of the two major sections of the Holy Bible. The Old and The New Testaments.

The Witness Of The Old Testament:

It is incumbent upon us, that we approach this examination with caution, lest we indulge in unholy speculation. It will be well for us to confine ourselves to a close survey of only those Old Testament Scriptures which by the Eternal Spirit already have been applied to Christ in the New Testament.

When we speak of the Deity, let it be understood that reference is made to the Holy Being Who possesses the divine nature and essence with all their attributes. A proper and sincere use of the infallible Bible will convince the soul that the Lord Jesus possessed, the nature of Deity, and in His perfect manhood displayed

both the personal and moral attributes of God. The Son of God is:

JEHOVAH-JESUS: In chapter 12:14, of his Gospel, the apostle John, as he speaks of Jesus, makes reference to the wonderful vision recorded for us in Isaiah 6, “These things saith Esaias when he saw His glory” (the glory of the Lord Adonai which means Sovereign Master). It will be noticed that in this passage in Isaiah the vision purports to be that of Jehovah sittinig upon a throne. The vision is definitely that of Jehovah. John speaking of Jesus says, “His glory.” Obviously, then, Jesus is Jehovah. Jesus in His perfect humanity is Jehovah in His eternal Deity.

Another interesting point of the application made of Old Testament Scriptures in the New is, that, thereby, the titles of God are ascribed to Christ. In chapter 1 of the Hebrew epistle, we have a detailed delineation of the person and the work of Christ at the end of which a quotation from Psalm 102:25-27, is applied to Him, “And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth.” Psalm 102 is another description of the Lord Jehovah in His person and work.

There are several Old Testament quotations scattered throughout the New Testament in which the name “God” (Theos) is used to translate the Hebrew name Elohim. That which is true of God as the Almighty is also true of the Son of God. It was of Christ the prediction was made, and the sign was given, “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel,” (God with us) (Isa. 7:14) Most definitely both this sign and title with its signification are applied to Christ at His birth. “Now all this was done, that it

might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying," (Matt. 1:22-23).

One more case is worthy of note. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews applies the quotation from Psalm 45:6-7, to Christ, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the septre of Thy kingdom." (Heb. 1:8).

The witness of the Old Testament is startling and bold, emphatically it declares that Jesus is Lord, God, Jehovah.

The Witness Of The New Testament:

A very interesting and instructing comparison may be noticed between the opening of the Book of Genesis and that of the Gospel according to John. The first opens with a sublime declaration of God in His Triunity and power; the second, with a significant statement of the Godhead and power of the Eternal Son. In this important record of John there are several salient points:

(1.) The imagery employed: The "Word" (Logos), an expression used by John in all his writings, a precious title he applies to Christ. In his Gospel, Christ is the Word; in his epistle, He is the Word of Life; and, in the Book of The Revelation, He is the Word of God. John would convey to our minds the idea that Christ is the means by which God expresses Himself: "God spake… in these last days has spoken by His Son," (Heb. 1:1-2).

(2). The Eternity of the Word: "In the beginning was the Word." This sentence denotes the perpetual existence of Christ, the Word of God.

(3). The Personality of the Word: "The Word was with God." This means, that as one person associates with

another, even so, Christ, as a divine person, associates throughout all Eternity with God.

(4). The co-equality of the Word: “The Word was God.” The Father is not superior to the Son; the Son is not inferior to the Father, and the Spirit is equal to each.

(5). The creative power of the Word: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

(6). The Incarnation of the Word: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us… full of grace and truth.”

There are two notable Cristological passages in the writings of the apostle Paul, the first in his epistle to the Philippians, and the second in his epistle to the Colossians. The Philippian passage emphasizes more the personality of Christ, while the portion in Colossians declares His pre-eminence. It might also be stated, that in the former we view Christ as He moves from heaven through earth back to heaven, while in the latter, we see Him as He passes from Eternity through time to Eternity. In the sevenfold declaration of the superiority of Christ in this epistle (Col. 1:15-19) these facts are emphasized:

(1). His priority: “The First born of all creation,” (R.V.)

(2). His power: “By Him all things were created.”

(3). His authority: “By Him all things consist.”

(4). His position: “He is the Head of the body, the Church.”

(5). His resurrection: “The Firstborn from the dead.”

(6). His honour: “That in all things He might have the pre- eminence.

(7). His fullness: “In Him should all fullness dwell.”

The claims to Deity made by Christ Himself are witnessed to by the writer of the four Gospels. Even a simple examination of our Lord’s own works will further strengthen faith in this Glorious One. He demanded equal honour with the Father, “That all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,” (John 5:25). He declared Himself to be the “I Am”; “I am the Door;” I Am the Good Shepherd;” “I Am the True Vine.” He also revealed His pre-existence, for to the Jews He said, “Before Abraham was, I Am,” (John 8:58). Those who heard Him speak certainly understood His claims, for they took up stones to stone Him.

John the Baptist, in like manner lends his testimony to this absorbing theme. His answer to his critics was, “He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me.” And again, “He was before me.” (John 1:26-30) Now we know that in point of time John was born before Christ, so of the Lord he says, “He cometh after me,” but he quickly adds, “He is preferred, before me.” John knew that the Lord Jesus was before Him in existence, dignity, and glory.

Our Lord is the Eternal with Whom is neither past nor future, for He ever exists in the glorious circle of the infinite present. No circumstance ever affects Him. He is Eternal and Immutable. The God who veiled His immutable presence in the burning bush, is the Unveiled God of the Gospel according to John.

On one occasion the Lord raised the startling question, “What and if, ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up

where He was before," (John 6:62). The electrifying effect of this bold assertion, made by means of an interrogation, was that many publicly forsook Him, while others clung the closer to Him. Peter's response is the answer of a vast multitude of devoted hearts even in this our day, "We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Amen, and Amen!!!

* * *

"Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God." "Lord, this shall not be unto Thee." (Matt. 16:16 and 22) Wonderful words! Strange words! Words spoken by the same disciple, under the same circumstances, in the same place, on the same occasion. They almost sound contradictory. In the first, Peter declares the Messiah-ship of the Lord Jesus; in the second, he rejects His Saviourhood. Little did that disciple know, that Christ could never wear a diadem until after He had endured a death; that no crown could adorn His brow, until after a cross had been burdened with His form. Christ could not be the Messiah of Israel until after He had become the Saviour of the world.

The Empty Tomb (Apr 1955)

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The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is the foundation stone of Christianity and in many respects the most important fact in history. It has been called “the Gibraltar of Christian evidences”, and “the Waterloo of infidelity.” The cross of Christ is meaningless without the resurrection, as Paul writes, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain,” (1 Cor. 15:14). The writer of The Acts tells us, “He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” (Acts 1:3). Verse 2 of this same passage tells us that it was the apostles to whom He showed Himself, but to these witnesses might be added more than five hundred brethren which saw Him on another occasion (1 Cor. 15:6). In these days of shameless unbelief and of intense attack upon the great truths of revelation we need for our own profit, more and more to study the cardinal facts of our Christian faith.

When the Lord made known to His disciples for the first time that He would rise from the dead (Mark 9:9), “They began questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” Apparently, even after they had seen the empty tomb, they were still unable to grasp its significance, for we read, “As yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead,” (John 20:9). In spite of this, these very men became fearless witnesses of the resurrection, for, “With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord

Jesus," (Acts 4:33). In several instances they sealed their testimony with their blood. The veracity of all Christ's statements and the vindication of His character are inseparably linked with the resurrection.

Now, although this was the Lord's first intimation to His own that He would rise from the dead, the Old Testament Scriptures abound in figures, types, and predictions of this wonderful truth. The event where Abraham offers his son Isaac and receives him back from the dead in figure, is a foregleam of

Christ's death and resurrection. In Abraham's intention Isaac died; in his expectation he rose again from the dead. The Only Begotten Son of God did die, and He did rise again, (Heb. 11:17-19). During the Feast of Firstfruits, celebrated on the morrow after the Sabbath, that is, on the first day of the week, the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits before the Lord, reminds us of that first day of the week when Christ arose and became the first-fruits of them that sleep, (1 Cot. 15:20-23). On the Day of Pentecost Peter applied the words of Psalm 16 to the resurrection of Christ declaring, "David… being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption," (Acts 2:30-31).

The testimony to His resurrection is threefold, human, angelic, and divine. The devoted women who came to anoint His body with sweet spices found Him alive and, holding Him by the feet, worshipped Him, (Matt. 28:9). Reference has already been made to the fact that He

showed Himself to the disciples. The story concocted by His enemies only serves to confirm that He rose from the dead. It is recorded that, “Some of the watch came into the city and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.” They were then given money by the elders to propagate a lie, (Matt. 28:11-12). The angelic messenger, as he sat upon the stone, that had earlier been sealed by Pilate’s decree, was heard to say, “He is not here, for He is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” (Matt. 28:2-6).

The literal resurrection of Christ is further proved in that upper room. His invitation to His own, “Handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have,” leaves no room for doubt. Here we have a corporeal manifestation of the Lord. He also convinces them of His identity by turning their attention to His hand’s and feet. “It is I myself,” they hear Him say, (Luke 24:39). At a later dale, Peter tells Cornelius that He ate and drank with His disciples after He had risen from the dead, (Acts 10:41).

John in his Gospel presents a graphic picture of the touching scenes on that never-to-be-forgotten first day of the week. The fourfold vision of the sepulchre is of absorbing interest, and is progressive in its manifestation. Mary is found running from the tomb with tidings to Peter and John that the Lord’s body has been taken away. This sudden change in events causes the disciples to go with haste to see for themselves. John reaches the sepulchre before Peter and, “Stooping down, looking in, saw (blepo) the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in,” (John 20:5). This is the first part of the vision and suggests but a casual glance. John, characteristically, stands in awe; he learns what Mary

has told them is evidently true, the tomb is empty, the body of the Lord is nowhere to be seen. Peter, who was following John, now arrives, and being naturally impulsive goes right into the sepulchre, “And seeth (theoreo) the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself,” (John 20:6-7). The word “seeth” (theoreo) in the second part of the vision suggests he took a complete survey of the contents of the tomb, and thus saw also the napkin. The napkin was “wrapped together,” or “rolled up,” as the words really mean, in a place by itself, but the grave clothes lay in their original convolutions. Christ had left behind Him the habilements of death. The linen clothes and napkin remained as mute witnesses of His resurrection. No hand had disturbed the rounded shape of those clothes. This was the act of the Blessed God Himself, (Eph. 1:10-20).

Now in the third part of the vision, John follows the example of Peter and upon entering the sepulchre, “Saw (eidin) and believed,” (John 20:8). This look fully convinced the apostle. All doubt was gone in spite of the fact that, “They knew not the Scripture, that He must arise again from the dead,” (verse 9). It does seem strange that the two disciples should return again to their own home following this wonderful revelation. By so doing they missed the message of the angels, and the sight of their glorious Lord.

In our final scene, Mary, in true hearted devotion and love to her Lord is seen weeping, and as she weeps, “Seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.” (John 20:12). What a reminder these are of the

Mercy Seat of old whereon sat the Cherubim gazing down on the blood sprinkled there! Actually there is no cloud of incense here, nor is there the sprinkling of blood, for the work that vindicated the throne of God, and satisfied offended justice has been fully accomplished. Here, in the empty tomb, we have a silent yet eloquent witness to the glorious triumph of Christ over death and the grave. The vacant sepulchre provides us with the negative evidence of the resurrection, but Mary in the garden finds the real positive proof that Christ had arisen for, “She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.” The visible presence of the Lord, the true Shekinah Glory, is outside the grave, and there He appears to His own in the power of an endless life, and in the nearness of a new eternal relationship. As Mary waits and weeps, because of her personal loss, she is questioned by Him whom she supposes to be the gardener “Whom seekest thou?” In her zeal she replies, “Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away,” (John 20:15). Her faith and strength are but the expressions of her love to the Master. “Jesus saith unto her, Mary.” Mary, turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” She knew His voice; it was He, Himself. He was indeed alive, and although for the present she must not detain Him, for Him she bears a message to His own, “Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord.”

Behold the Man (June 1955)

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Jesus came forth from the Praetorium--wounded by the scourge, smitten by the soldiers, pierced by the thorns (John 19:1-5). The Word, Who was God, had become flesh (John 1:14). He Who was in the form of God appeared in the form of man, (Phil. 2:6-8). As a Man, He was about to suffer death on a cross. BEHOLD THE MAN!

The realization that Jesus the Christ can help those who are tried rests upon an appreciation of Him as One Who has already entered into the experiences of human life, (Heb. 2:18), including those of injury and death.

The purpose of the incarnation of the Word of God is amply detailed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. “Since then the children are sharers (koinonoe) in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook (metecho) of the same.” (Heb. 2:14. R.V.). (While the common lot of the children is to share blood and flesh, the historic fact of the incarnation is implied in the statement that Jesus “partook” of the same.) He was made lower than the angels with a view to the death of suffering and shame, but has been crowned with glory and honor as a Man whose work has been achieved with triumph. (Heb. 2:7-9).

He partook of human nature that He might die; that He might destroy the devil; that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest; that He might help those that are tempted, (Heb. 2:14-18). He is a great High Priest Who is able to sympathize with our infirmities, because He

has been tempted in every respect as we are, apart from sin, (Heb. 4:14-16), for He knew no sin, (2 Cor. 5:21).

The apostle John also refers to the purpose of the incarnation: He came to declare the Father. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth,” (John 1:14). “No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared,” (John 1:18);

In his first epistle, John states that “The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil,” (3:8). Through Satan, Eve had been beguiled (2 Cor. 11:3), with the result that the human race had become engulfed in sin and death. Man has been unable to meet God’s claims and to rid himself of guilt. He cannot effect His own redemption and must turn to One who Himself is free from the condemnation of sin and death. In this Man--the Man Christ Jesus --God has found all that His heart desired. Finally God accepted this Man’s sacrifice on the cross, a sacrifice whereby sin was dealt with for Eternity. Not only, therefore, “Hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” (Heb. 9:26) but also, that the sinner might be justified (cleared from every charge) through faith in the Son of God, (Rom. 5:1). Hence, Christ plays the role of Daysman (Job 9:33) that could lay His hand upon both God and man. “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all,” (1 Tim. 2:5-6. R.V.).

The Old Testament anticipated the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As the Seed of the woman (not of the man), He

was promised after the fall in the garden of Eden, (Gen. 3:15). Isaiah prophesied of His birth; indicating that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a Son whose name would be Immanuel; i.e., God with us, (Isa. 7:10-14).

The New Testament records the fulfilment of these prophecies and confirms the fact of the incarnation of God's Son; for example, Matthew refers to the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 1:23, following (1) the genealogy of Jesus which links Him with the children of Abraham, and (2) the statement of the angel to Joseph which declares Him to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, to be the born Son of Mary, the Saviour of the world. Matthew also records the wise Men's question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2), and the fulfilment of the prophecy that "He shall be called a Nazarene," (Matt. 2:23). Following the message of John the forerunner, and the baptism of Jesus, Matthew chapter 3 closes with the testimony from heaven of God the Father. The experiences of the Lord in His temptation (Matt. 4) constitute a further witness to the humanity of God the Son.

Other New Testament writers also make reference to His human birth. Luke in his narrative states that Mary, "Brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger." (Luke 2:7). The conception and birth of Christ were the result of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary; thus, by the power of the Highest overshadowing her, Christ was born, (Luke 1:35). Paul states that, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," (Gal. 4:4).

The writers of both Testaments thus declare the essential humanity of Jesus the Christ, God's Son, and His complete identity with our race.

That Christ was human is further indicated in some of the Scriptural titles accorded Him. The title "Son of Man" occurs about eighty times in the Gospels alone; first of all in Matt. 8:20, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The final New Testament reference portrays "The Son of Man" having on His head a golden crown of victory, (Rev. 14:14). We see His humiliation followed by His glorification, and all as the Son of Man.

His humanity is also indicated by the link with David's throne which is implied in the title "Son of David." God promised David, "That of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:30; Psa. 132:11; 2 Sam. 7:8-17). Christ's genealogy is traced through David in Matt. 1:6; the throne of David is therefore His, (Luke 1:32). Furthermore, Luke records graphicly how the birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem, the city of David, (Luke 2).

Jesus is also called "The Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). The promises were made to Abraham and his seed, (Gal. 3:16) including the land which his seed should possess, (Gen. 13:15) and which Christ, as the Seed and the Son of Abraham, will inevitably possess in a day to come, (Zech. 9:10).

The language of Scripture indicates the extent to which He became identified with the human race. He was hungry, tired, and often wearied. Privation, loneliness, and untold sorrow were His earthly lot. He even wept

tears as He entered into the perplexities of others. He was maligned, misunderstood, and misinterpreted by men. Finally He suffered the ignominy of dying on the cross. No wonder He can sympathize with His people in their trials!

The purpose of God will find its fulfilment in Christ glorified. He is presently the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22), and in the administration of the fulness of times, all things will be headed up in Him, (Eph. 1:10). Paul tells of Christ's subjection to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28), indicating that our blessed Lord will retain His perfect manhood for ever.

We, His people, enjoy in the present the benefits of His High Priestly work. It will be our joyous experience throughout eternal ages of bliss to BEHOLD THE MAN.

The Enthroned Christ (July 1955)

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The life of Christ in heaven for His people is second in importance only to His death for them on the cross. What a glorious contemplation, that He whom men despised and rejected and to whom they gave a cross of shame and suffering is now on the apex of the universe, on the throne of omnipotence! He has been given a name above every name (Phil 2:9). He has been raised to highest honour and glory. God “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 (age), 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… His body,” (Eph. 1:20-22). Surely, here is seen His supremacy above created intelligences, His sovereignty in the material and moral universe and, in addition, His Headship and Lordship in the Church, His body. Christ, in exaltation art God’s right hand, has undisputed authority. He, the mighty Victor, having overcome His foes, has taken His seat on the throne, (Rev. 3:21).

His wonderful accession is TYPICALLY PREFIGURED in the story of Joseph’s exaltation described in Genesis chapter 41. Joseph found the way to the palace was via the prison. He is brought out of the dungeon, is made the chief ruler of {pb 7the Head over all things to the Egypt, and receives, from Pharoah, three things:

1. A ring, the symbol of authority.

2. Vesture of fine linen, which would speak of dignity.

3. A gold chain, denoting royalty. We have seen, already, how this was all true with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second place it was PROPHETICALLY ANNOUNCED in Psalm 110, “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” The same quotation is made by the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 1:13, and this blessed fact forms part of the subject matter of that wonderful letter.

In the third place it is HISTORICALLY PROCLAIMED in the gospel by Mark, “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God,” (Mk. 16:19). Although seated, as the perfect servant He still works with His own (chapter 16:20). While doing so He does not vacate His throne. The Queen of the British Commonwealth does not cease to occupy the throne of the realm, while engaged in the service of her peoples across the seas. The fact that Christ is seen standing and walking on certain occasions after His ascension is therefore by no means contradictory. In Eternity, He will still occupy “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Rev. 22:1-3).

The finished work of Christ has earned for Him the Seat of Rest. “This Man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God,” (Heb. 10:12). His rest is eternal. He will never be called upon to rise up again in order to offer another sacrifice for sins. At the same time His glorious triumph has won for Him the Seat of Expectancy (vv. 13).

His occupation of the throne is DOCTRINALLY EXPOUNDED in the epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter 1 it is linked and associated with His person:

1. In His superiority to all, “God hath in these last days spoken unto us in the Son,” (vv 2).

2. In His sovereignty, “By whom also He made the worlds,” (vv 2).

3. In His sufficiency, “By Himself purged our sins,” (vv. 3).

4. In His sublimity, “Better than the angels,” (vv. 4).

5. In His supremacy, “Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” (vv. 3).

Having made purification for sins on the cross, and having stooped to the lowest degradation in the eyes of both Jew and Gentile, our Lord takes the seat of highest honour on high.

The words of Hebrews 8:1, present Him to us in His priestly ministry. “We have such an high Priest Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” “Seeing then that we have a great high Priest that is passed into (through) the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession,” (confession) (chap. 4:14). This verse introduces us to the great subject of His priesthood. Under the Mosaic covenant, the priest passed through the court of the tabernacle and the holy place before entering the holiest of all beyond the veil. This epistle shows Chat Christ has entered into God’s presence by virtue of His person and on the basis of His finished work on the cross (chap. 7: 6-27). Suffering and tried saints find succour and consolation in Him, their merciful and faithful high

Priest (chap. 2:17-18). A Puritan writer points up the importance of this work when he says, “There is no office of Christ which Satan hates so much as the priestly one, and none which he labours so incessantly to obscure and bring into contempt.”

A third reference to the Lord Jesus on the throne is found in Hebrews 10:12. Undoubtedly His great work of propitiation is before us here. First we see the Peace offering; then the Meal offering, followed by the Burnt offering and Sin offerings (Heb. 10:8). The Burnt offering is Christ for what I should have done; the Meal offering, Christ for what I should have been; the Peace offering, Christ for what I should have enjoyed; the Sin offering, Christ for what I was; the Trespass offering, Christ for what I have done. All these offerings were but shadows, imperfect and insufficient to meet the demands of the throne of God. They could not put sins away before God, nor the remembrance of them from the conscience of the offerer. (vv. 2-3). Christ’s sacrifice accomplishes both and also sanctifies the believer through the remission of his sins (chapter 10:10). How blessed the result! “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” (chapter 10:17).

Finally we have the pathway of the Saviour presented to us in Hebrews 12. His human name, Jesus, is appropriately used (vv. 2). The worthies of chapter 11, by their trials and triumphs, witnessed to a faith that overcomes. Jesus Himself is the perfect witness and example of such a faith. He, moreover, is the Author and Accomplisher of faith. In accomplishing the Father’s will, He endured the cross and the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and the God-Man triumphed

“and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (chapter 12:2).

“To Him whom men despise and slight,

To Him be glory given;

The crown is His, and His by right

The highest place in heaven.”

Behold The Bridegroom Cometh (Feb 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 2, Feb 1956.

The personal return of the Lord Jesus is the radiant hope and consuming passion of every true believer's heart. Midst the prevailing darkness of this world that shall, even yet, become darker, the child of God is cheered by the glorious promise of the "Morning Star", "the Bright and Morning Star" which will herald the approach of the Day of Christ.

In the New Testament there are over three hundred references to the coming again of the Saviour, or more than one for every chapter. The fact of His second coming is fundamental to the Christian faith. The certainty of the Lord's return is given us by way of a statement from Himself.

Christ's Personal Declaration

To the disciples He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3). Careful study will show that this does not refer to His coming to the disciples after His resurrection, nor does it refer to His coming at a believer's death, but it does point forward to His second advent when He will come for all His saints. Angels confirmed this promise, their testimony was, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). It was revealed later that "He passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14 R. V.), also that

“He was made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). He will descend out of that very same place into which He has gone, as the apostle Paul intimates, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout” (1 Thess. 4:16).

The Apostolic Attestation

The five writers of the New Testament epistles, each have something to say about this thrilling event. Paul writes of the rapture; the expression “caught up” (1 Thess. 4:17) denotes rapture. Peter speaks of being an eye-witness of His majesty (2 Pet. 1:16), and surely that scene on the Mount of Transfiguration was but a fore-gleam of the majestic glory that will be seen when the King comes back. James in his letter emphasizes justice for the believer. He wrote, “Behold, the Judge standeth before the door” (James 5:8). John in his reference speaks of purity, “Every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). Jude alludes to the judgment of the world, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all” (Jude 14-15).

The Definite Implications

There are three specific results to the coming of Christ. First, in connection with the Lord Himself, He is coming as a Bridegroom for His Bride. How He must anticipate that moment when He shall take to Himself the one for whom He has waited, for whom He shed His blood on the cross of shame! He is also coming as the King for His kingdom, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). Isaiah the

prophet tells us, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11).

Second, with regard to His people, when He comes “the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess 4:16). This is resurrection! Corruption will lose its hold on the bodies of the dead and incorruption will take its place (1 Cor. 15:53). A blessed reunion will then be experienced for we shall be “caught up together with them” (1 Thess. 4:17). Loved ones, long since gone from our midst, will then be reunited with us who once mourned their loss. The redemption of the bodies of the saints will become an accomplished fact (Rom. 8:23).

In the third place, the coming of Christ will be followed by “the wrath to come.” This will be the portion of the unregenerate. To the ungodly the day of His coming is unforseen, “The day of the Lord so com-eth as a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5:2). It will be a day unexpected, for “sudden destruction cometh upon them” (1 Thess 5:3). It, likewise, is a day unavoidable, “They shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).

The coming of the Lord really takes place in two stages, although it is but one coming. Our blessed Lord will first of all come to the air for His saints, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). This will be followed sometime later, by His eventual arrival on Olivet, outside Jerusalem. “His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem

on the east" (Zech. 14:4). Although He will be met only by His own in the air, yet when He finally comes to the earth, "Every eye shall see Him and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1:7).

The fact that He has not come, but is coming soon, is a sure test of the affections of His people. There are three things which test our love for a person far away: his absence, his distance, and his silence. May our hearts be kept in love with our absent but soon coming Bridegroom. His coming is also a truth teaching us to live suitably, "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). It also induces us to learn readily. The apostle writes, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren" (1 Thess 4:13); and to listen eagerly, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16). We are not enjoined to look for signs but to listen for sounds.

The cry already has gone out, "Behold, the Bridegroom com-eth" (Matt. 25:6). May our hearts respond, "Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

The Judgment Seat of Christ (June 1956)

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David Leatham

On more than one occasion reference is made to the Judgment Seat of Christ by Paul the Apostle in his epistles. In Romans we read, “We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ” (10:14), and in Second Corinthians it is said, “For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ” (5:10). This same Judgment Seat is also in view in First Corinthians where it is stated, “Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (3:13). The First letter to the Corinthians is addressed to the saints there “with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). It is therefore quite obvious that all believers will participate in this judgment.

Thank God, this is not the Great White Throne (Rev. 20)! There the wicked dead receive the final retribution for their rejection of the Saviour. Moreover, it is not the Judgment of the Living Nations spoken of in Matthew’s Gospel, where our Lord separates the sheep from the goats (25:31-46). Neither is it a judgment of the believer’s sins. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” said the Lord (Heb. 10:17). Our blessed Lord became accountable for the believer’s sins on the cross. The child of God “shall not come into condemnation” (Judgment)—John 5:24, because the final

consequence of sin was borne by Christ. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). The Judgment Seat of Christ is distinctly a judgment of the believer’s works and not his person. In glorified bodies we shall be called to “receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10 R.V.). “Each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12 R.V.).

In the passages quoted at the start of this article we have; in the first, a review of our whole service; in the second, a manifestation of our conduct one toward another; and in the third, an examination in connection with our assembly life and testimony.

The word “Judgment Seat” is “Bema” in the Greek, and it is taken from the ancient games of the Greeks. It was the place where the judge sat at the end of the course to judge those finishing the race, and accordingly to give the rewards.

The Lord will judge the motives that prompted our service by “making manifest the counsels of the heart” (1 Cor. 4:5). The literal reading of the first clause of the verse is, “Do not pass a judgment before the right time.” The searching eye of the Lord is upon the believer’s work, in order that, at the right time, He may pass a righteous judgment upon it. The carping criticisms of others with regard to the servant’s path are wholly unjustified in view of this.

The believer’s whole lifetime of service since his conversion will also be judged. As a steward of the Master’s goods he is required to be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

In the third place the conduct of believers toward fellow believers will be brought under review. It is written, “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother?” (Rom. 14:10) “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? (Rom. 14:4). This is the Lord’s prerogative. What right has the weak to judge or the strong to despise his brother ? (Rom. 14:3). It has been said that before speaking about any brother we ought to put the remark through four tests: The first, is it true? The second, is it kind? The third, is it necessary? The fourth, will it honour the Lord, Whose Name and character you ought to bear?

Finally, our work will be judged of what sort it is. The local assembly comes into the picture in First Corinthians chapter three. At the Judgment Seat of Christ our work will be tried as to quality and not as to quantity. This portion seems to apply especially to those who labour among the saints. The workman is seen building into the assembly either good or bad materials. Six kinds of such are specified: “gold,” a symbol of Divine righteousness; “silver,” a type of redemption by price; “precious stones,” a picture of the moral perfections of Christ. In contrast to these there is “wood,” which is combustible; “hay,” which withers; and “stubble,” which is worthless. A solemn warning precedes mention of these materials, “But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Cor. 3:10).

The believer involved will suffer loss if his works are burned up in that day, “But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:15). Those whose works abide will receive a reward (V. 14). The principles of judgment seen here are applicable to all believers, yet what

consolation to know that, “Then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5).

The parable of the nobleman who gave ten pounds to his ten servants (Luke 19:12-27) is a fitting picture of the responsibility the Lord has laid upon His servants during His absence to “Occupy till He come again.” A place in the Kingdom will be apportioned those who have traded and have sought to serve Him faithfully during the days of His rejection.

The Judgment Seat must of necessity take place between the rapture of the saints to glory and the Lord’s return to the earth where He will establish His Kingdom, and where “the saints shall judge the world” (1 Cor. 6:2).

A variety of crowns will be given in that Day of Christ. There will be the “incorruptible crown” for a race well run (1 Cor. 9:24-25); the “crown of righteousness” for personal love and devotion to Christ (2 Tim. 4:7-8); the “crown of life” for enduring temptation (James 1:12); and the “crown of glory” for the under shepherd, given by the Chief Shepherd Himself (1 Peter 5:4). Our Lord further declares, “Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward” (Mark 9:41).

Those put to death for faithfulness to the Lord will receive the martyr’s “crown of life” from the hand of Christ Himself.

“Dare to be faithful,

Dare to be true,

Keep the Judgment Seat

Always in view,

Look on it now.

As you’ll look on it then,

Scanned by Jehovah and angels and men.”

The Holy Trinity (Jan 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 1, Jan 1957.

The word “trinity” is not found in the Holy Scriptures, but it is used to describe a precious truth unfolded in both the Old and the New Testaments. The word itself means threefold or three in one.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity shows that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, in essence, are one God. It has been asserted that, “There is one God without division in the unity of Persons, and there are three Persons without confusion in the unity of essence.”

Now, any attempt to define the Holy Trinity would fail, for human intellect is inadequate for such a task, so we will merely look at a few outstanding passages of Scripture in which this truth is expressed.

The first great statement of the Bible, “In the beginning God (Elohim, a plural name of God) created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), suggests a plurality of Persons; whereas, in the one act expressed by the verb “created,” we see the Triune God acting in unison by a single force. In the last book of Moses, the Book of Deuteronomy, there is a clear doctrinal unfolding of the trinity of Persons in the Godhead. Notice carefully the statement, “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). In this verse the Lord (Jehovah) is declared to be one Lord; in like manner, God (Elohim, the name that denotes plurality in the Godhead) is declared to be one Lord. The word “one” means a compound unity and is used in connection with a collective body. Nothing could be clearer with regard to this wonderful subject.

The threefold high-priestly benediction of the Aaronic priesthood has but one interpretation, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Num. 6:24-26). The benediction conveys the knowledge that the blessings of the Lord upon His beloved people are from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is well to notice that the titles frequently used for the Father, are also used for the Son, as for example, “But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Heb. 1:8). In similar manner they are used for the Holy Spirit. This fact is made very obvious by noticing that the lie to the Holy Spirit on the part of Ananias was a lie to God (Acts 5:3-4).

There is another remarkable disclosure of the same truth by the pen of the Prophet Isaiah, “And now the Lord God, and His Spirit hath sent Me” (Isa. 48:16). The pronoun “Me” undoubtedly refers to Christ; “His Spirit,” to the blessed Holy Spirit; and then, of course, the name “God” embraces the idea of the Father.

The Trinity in its unity finds expression in God’s creative works. Man was made in the image and in the likeness of his Creator; he is a tripartite being consisting of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23). In the atmosphere there is space in the three dimensions of height, breadth, and length; there is, also, light, a combination of red, yellow, and blue rays, the three primary colors. Although God transcends His creation, He has manifested Himself in it through the wonders of nature. “That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly

seen” (Rom. 1:19-20). Nevertheless, all analogies and illustrations are incomplete in any attempt to depict the nature of the Holy Trinity.

This astonishing fact of Divine Revelation is interwoven in the frame work of the New Testament. Matthew in his Gospel gives us the command of the Lord in regard to Christian baptism, as well as the formula to employ in the carrying out of the ordinance, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

The whole of the Ephesian Epistle has for its doctrinal basis the fact of the Holy Trinity. Take for example, chapter 1 and the expression which occurs in it three distinct times, “The praise of His glory.” The first burst of praise and commendation to the Father rises because of His choice of us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Vv. 4-6). The second, because of the great accomplishment of the Son in both loosing and setting us free, and forgiving us our sins (Vv. 7-12). How rich is His grace! The third, is consequent to the work of the Holy Spirit in sealing us as the mark of Divine ownership, and in the taking up His residence in our hearts as the pledge of our enjoyment forever of God in Christ (Vv. 13-14).

The wonderful benediction from the pen of the Apostle Paul in which he gives to us a synopsis of the entire Epistle to the Corinthians, is one which links together the three Persons in the Godhead, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:14).

Our hearts respond in worship and in praise as we sing:

“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.

Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty,

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, Holy, Holy, all the saints adore Thee,

Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea.

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,

Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.”

The words of our blessed Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, “Ye are the light of the world,” remind us that we are left in this dark scene to shine for Him. Moody said once, “Do you know what the moon did when the dog barked at it? It just kept on shining.”

If the sons of darkness bark at us, just keep on shining, and someone who is stumbling in the darkness will be guided to Christ—The Light of the world.