

# SHOWERS UPON THE GRASS

*A companion volume to As the Small Rain*

by

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## CHAPTER TWO

### “TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD”

#### INFINITE LOVE

No man can question the deity of Christ without at the same time questioning His goodness. Christ cannot be a good man unless indeed He is God, for He claimed over and over again to be God. No mere man can make such a statement and be a good man. Either He is God or He is a fraud and a liar and an impostor.

One day as He sat on a well curb and talked to the woman of Samaria about the Messiah who should come, He said: “**I that speak unto thee am he**” (John 4:25, 26). Another place He states: “**He [Moses] wrote of me**” (John 5:46). The context shows that He meant that Moses wrote of Him as the God of eternity and the God who should be revealed. He declares: “**I am the Bread which came down from heaven**” (John 6:41). No man who was only a man could make such a claim. As to His person and origin, He makes clear declaration when He says: “**I proceeded forth and came from God**” (John 8:42).

He was not created; He was the Creator. The first chapter of John tells us that “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.**” That He Himself is the Eternal One, He affirms when he states, “**Before Abraham was, I am**” (John 8:58).

On one occasion He asked the question: “**Dost thou believe on the Son of God?**” The one to whom the question was addressed replied: “**Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?**” Firmly setting forth His deity “**Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee**” (John 9:35-37). That He permitted Himself to be worshipped as God is a fact worthy of our notice. On this occasion, we are told that the one to whom He spoke worshipped Him.

It was because of His claims of deity that He was crucified. John 5:18 tells us: “**The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.**” On the occasion of His trial, the high priest asked Him, “**Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.**” And He answered, “**Thou hast said.**” By that, He means, “*As thou sayest, I am.*”

Thus we see that many times by direct statements of His own claim, as well as by accepting worship as God, He laid claims to deity. Certainly His life manifested the truth of His claim.

- He did miracles which only God could perform.
- He lived a life which was completely without sin.
- He foretold future events which were locked in the knowledge of God.
- He applied Old Testament Scriptures, particularly the prophecies, to Himself.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, for He can do for poor sinners what only God can do—cleanse them from their sin, give them power to live lives of victory and assure them of eternal happiness with Him.

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my Lord, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace!  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race;  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light:  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread,  
Jesus, with all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

—Charles Wesley

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## THE VIRGIN BIRTH

No doctrine of Scripture has been more often attacked than the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our Lord. Even men who profess to be Christians are guilty of saying that belief in the Virgin Birth is a nonessential matter. Some say the doctrine is of no importance because the Virgin Birth of Christ is only mentioned by two of the Gospel writers. It is not necessary for God to include something in the record over and over again to make it true and valid.

One statement from the Word of God should be enough, but God gives us these two in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Neither Mark nor John deny the Virgin Birth, nor say anything contrary to the record set forth by Matthew and Luke.

However, the Virgin Birth of Christ is prophesied in the Old Testament, as well as recorded in two of the Gospels. The prophet Isaiah said: **“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14).

The Lord Jesus Christ must be Virgin Born or He is not the Messiah looked for by Israel and prophesied by Isaiah. His miraculous birth, Isaiah tells us, shall be a sign of His person. Had the Jews of His day admitted His Virgin Birth they would of necessity have had to accept Him as the Messiah.

It is difficult to understand why men have any trouble accepting this doctrine. Everything about the life of Jesus Christ is miraculous. A rabbi once said to a Christian minister, “If a woman should make the same claims about the birth of her son as the Bible makes in regard to the birth of Jesus Christ, would you believe her?”

The preacher replied, “If that son were a Jesus Christ, I would believe her.”

In his essay of the Virgin Birth, William Jennings Bryan said: “The birth of Jesus Christ is no more miraculous than the birth of each one of us. It is simply different. The God who gives life can give it in any way that pleases Him.”

If the Bible is the Word of God, then it must set forth the truth. The Book states positively and definitely that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. You must accept the Virgin Birth or you reject the veracity of the Book.

Our souls shall magnify the Lord,  
In God the Saviour we rejoice;  
While we repeat the Virgin's song,  
May the same spirit tune our voice.

The Highest saw her low estate,  
And mighty things His hand hath done;  
His overshadowing power and grace  
Makes her the mother of His Son.

He spake to Abra'm and his seed,  
"In thee shall all . . . the earth be bless'd;"  
The memory of that ancient word  
Lay long in His eternal breast.

But now no more shall Israel wait,  
No more the Gentiles lie forlorn:  
Lo, the desire of nations comes,  
Behold the promis'd seed is born!

— Isaac Watts

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### FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

The Lord Jesus Christ, co-existent with the Father from the beginning, the One who John tells us was in the beginning with God, voluntarily took upon Himself the form of man that He might redeem man and reconcile him unto God. What great condescension to step from the realm of glory which had been eternally His into the tempest and turmoil of time! What condescension for God Himself, whose habitation is the universe, to robe Himself with the garment of flesh and the graveclothes of humanity! Of His own will He came, eagerly, gladly, unselfishly to die. Paul tells us that He, "**for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame . . .**" and that it was for the death of the Cross that He became incarnate.

Christ was incarnate for a definite purpose. *He came to die*. Man had sinned, and man was under condemnation. The human race had transgressed the righteous Law of God and the sons of the race must be punished. No man could pay the penalty for the sins of man because no man was himself free from the condemnation of sin; but God Himself, the sinless One, in the person of His Son, incarnate in the flesh, paid the penalty for the sins of men. "**For this cause,**" said He, speaking of His dead, "**came I into the world.**" God did not become man to teach men how to live. Christ did not come into the world primarily to perform miracles, to restore sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, to send strength coursing through withered limbs. The miracles which He performed were indications of His deity, the proofs of His power. They were the flowers which blossomed in His footprints as He journeyed toward the Cross.

In the Lord Jesus Christ the power and the love of God ally themselves in satisfying His Law and in making divine mercy available for man through His Atonement upon the Cross for the sins of Adam's children.

Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,  
We wretched sinners lay,  
Without one cheering beam of hope,  
Or spark of glimmering day.

With pitying eyes the Prince of grace  
Beheld our helpless grief:  
He saw, and, O amazing love!  
He ran to our relief.

Down from the shining seats above  
With joyful haste He sped,  
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,  
And dwelt among the dead.

O for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break;  
And all harmonious human tongues,  
The Saviour's praises speak!

Angels, assist our mighty joys,  
Strike all your harps of gold;  
But when you raise your highest notes,  
His love can ne'er be told.

—Isaac Watts

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## MYSTERY DIVINE

When God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate among men, it was a complete identification of the deity and humanity: God in Christ became man, in all points like unto man, except that He only of all the sons of man was completely free from sin.

The Lord of glory became a child of earth. How great a mystery!

- The tiny Babe lying in the manger of Bethlehem was the One without whom **“was not any thing made that was made.”**
- The tiny, chubby hand upon the cheek of the Virgin Mother was the hand of Him who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand.
- The baby arm about the mother's neck was the arm of the One whose everlasting arms are underneath all things.
- The lisping words of the toddling Child of Nazareth were the words of the One who spoke the earth into being and who created a universe by the word of His mouth.
- The knowledge of the twelve-year-old Lad in the Temple as He confounded and amazed the doctors of the law was the knowledge of the One who is the Author of all truth and the embodiment of all wisdom.
- The One sitting on the well curb to rest, tired with His journey and burning with the heat of the day, was the God who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

- The One who paid taxes to Caesar was the One who established human government and from whose hand Caesar received the power he so often misused.

The whole wonder of the incarnation is this: it was for us, for you and for me, that God became flesh and dwelt among us. The personal application of His shed blood to our sinful hearts cleanses us; faith in Him imparts salvation to us. How wonderful that God should take upon Himself the form of man, become an inheritor of the “ills that flesh is heir to,” suffer the ignominy of the Cross! but how much more wonderful that He did this for us!

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,  
The Saviour promised long;  
Let every heart prepare a throne,  
And every voice a song.

He comes, the prisoner to release,  
In Satan’s bondage held;  
The gates of brass before Him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,  
The wounded soul to cure,  
And, with the treasures of His grace,  
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim;  
And heaven’s eternal arches ring  
With Thy beloved name.

— Philip Doddridge a

## **GOD WITH MAN**

The heart of the Christian doctrine is the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ—that He who is God became man; that He who was from the beginning the Creator of all things became flesh and dwelt among us. If Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, His death on the Cross could have no atoning value, because He then is just a man born in sin like other men. But He is not just a man; He is the Son of God.

- The Infant, dependent upon the tender care of a mother, is the God who gave to the sun the power to draw water from the sea; and from Him the moon derives its power over the tides of the oceans.

- The little Lad toddling about the carpenter shop at Nazareth and playing in the sawdust on the floor is the God who stood at the head of creation.

- The Child who holds in His hands curling wood shavings from Joseph’s workbench is the God who created the elements from which the wood is made.

- The little Boy just learning to talk and lisping His first baby words is the God who created all things by the Word of His power, who said, “**Let there be light: and there was light**” (Genesis 1:3).
- The Child who grows “**in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man**” (Luke 2:52) is the very One who made man in His own image and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

God became man.

- Hungry, He breaks off the grain as He passes through the fields; but He is nonetheless the God who hid the life within the seed and established the law of growth and the season of the harvest.
- Weary and thirsty, He asks drink from a woman of Samaria; but He is nonetheless the God who stores the waters in the hillsides and causes every river to flow down the valleys.

He entered into all the fellowship of human suffering and sorrow.

- Shedding His tears before the grave of Lazarus, He is nonetheless the God who can bid the dead come forth and restore the brother to the weeping sisters.

He, the Eternal God, “**is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble**” (Psalm 46:1). He, the incarnate God, having been tempted “**yet without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15), is able to succor them who are tempted.

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,  
When Thou camest to earth for me;  
But in Bethlehem’s home there was found no room  
For Thy holy nativity.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!  
There is room in my heart for Thee.

The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest  
In the shade of the forest tree;  
But Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God,  
In the deserts of Galilee.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!  
There is room in my heart for Thee.

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living Word,  
That should set Thy people free;  
But with mocking scorn, and with crown of thorn,  
They bore Thee to Calvary.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!  
Thy Cross is my only plea.

When heaven's arches ring, and her choirs shall sing  
At Thy coming to victory,  
Let Thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room,  
There is room at My side for thee."  
And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus,  
When Thou comest and callest for me.

— Emily E. S. Elliott

## A RELIGION'S TEST

God never commands us to do something without making it clear how it is to be done and without giving us strength to do it. We are told to "**resist the devil**" (James 4:7); but that we may not be left in any doubt as to how we are to fight against him, God tells us in another place: "**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds**" (II Corinthians 10:4), indicating that it is not in our own physical strength or powers of will that we defeat him.

The Lord Jesus sets us the example of how to meet Satan when He defeats him with the Word of God as He resists:

- The temptation to turn stones into bread by saying, "**It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**" (Matthew 4:4);
- The temptation to cast Himself down from the Temple by saying, "**It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God**" (Matthew 4:7);
- The temptation to bow the knee to Satan and receive all the dominion of the world by saying, "**Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve**" (Matthew 4:10).

Elsewhere, God tells us to "**believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world**" (I John 4:1). Certainly this command is needed in our day when on every hand are heard the clamoring voices of false cults and all sorts of religious systems and "isms" and when many are led astray by Satan through them. "How may I test the spirits?" many are asking. "How may I know whether a religion is true or false?" The answer is found in First John 4:2-3: "**Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.**"

This verse means simply this: It is not enough to admit that there was a Man named Jesus who at one time lived on the earth, who was a great Teacher and a great Miracle worker. Almost all religious systems admit the fact of Jesus, the unusual and good Man. On the basis of history, they must; but the test of a religious system is this: Does it admit that Jesus is the Christ? That is to say, does it admit that He is the Son of God, the Incarnate One, God come in the flesh, the Only Begotten Son of God, Lord, Saviour, Redeemer? If there is any uncertainty in the position of any cult or sort of religion on this great central fact, it is not of God.



“**Try the spirits;**” that is, test them. Test them by this standard: Do they recognize the deity of the Lord Jesus and His identity as the Living God?

O never star  
Was lost; here  
We all aspire to heaven and there is heaven  
Above us. If I stoop  
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,  
It is but for a time; I press God’s lamp  
Close to my breast; its splendor soon or late  
Will pierce the gloom. I shall emerge some day.

— Robert Browning

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### LIGHT OF THE WORLD

With godlike simplicity Jesus Christ asserted His deity. “**I am the Light of the world.**” “**I am the Bread which came down from Heaven.**” “**I and my Father are One,**” said He.

Beside the well of Samaria He revealed to the woman of Sychar that He was the looked-for Messiah, saying, “**I that speak unto thee am he.**” He associated Himself with the God of eternity when He used the name of the great “**I AM,**” saying of Himself: “**Before Abraham was, I am.**”

As God, He forgave sins and demonstrated His right to assume the divine prerogative of healing the body, saying: “**For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?**” From the Cross in the hour of His anguish He spoke forgiveness to a dying thief and opened the door of Paradise for the poor malefactor suffering beside Him.

His Deity was so evidenced even in His death in the rending of the veil of the Temple, the earthquake and darkness, that the centurion in charge of the Crucifixion was compelled to exclaim, “**Truly this was the Son of God.**”

What of His Resurrection? So powerful was He that death could not hold Him; so divine that He could take up again the life which He had laid down willingly and return victorious over the power of death and the tomb. The grave clothes lying in their place, the stone rolled back evidence but another time the deity manifest in the life of Jesus Christ from the moment the Babe was laid in Bethlehem’s manger.

His power in the lives of those who have acknowledged His deity and have been redeemed by His blood is proof that He must indeed be the Son of God. A great host—they testify that He has done for them what only God’s Son could do. A great cloud of witnesses, “a noble army: men and boys, the matron and the maid” in every century since He appeared upon our earth have trusted Him and proved Him God.

By His divine power drunkards have been made sober, unclean men pure, thieves honest. By His divine grace lives are transformed. *He is the Son of God!*

With cheerful voice I sing  
The titles of my Lord,  
And borrow all the names  
Of honor from His Word:  
Nature and art  
Can ne'er supply

Sufficient forms  
Of majesty.

The sovereign King of kings,  
The Lord of lords most high,  
Writes His own Name upon  
His garment and His thigh:  
His name is call'd  
The Word of God;

He rules the earth  
With iron rod.

But when for works of peace  
The great Redeemer comes,  
What gentle characters,  
What titles He assumes?  
Light of the world,  
The Life of men;  
Nor will He bear  
Those Names in vain.

Immense compassion reigns  
In our Immanuel's heart,  
When He descends to act  
A Mediator's part:  
He is a Friend  
And Brother too;

Divinely kind,  
Divinely true.

—Isaac Watts

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## DIVINE PERSONALITY

Christ drew men by the force of His divine personality. He called the disciples and they came without question, forsaking all to follow Him. Little children toddled from the shelter of their mothers' garments and clambered from their nurses' arms to crowd about Him and wicked sinners looking into His face recognized a friend.

He drew by the wisdom of His words. The doctors of religion gathered in rapt attention about the Lad of twelve in the Temple. Nicodemus brought his perplexities and spiritual problems to the light of the wisdom of the Son of Man. Crowds thronged to Him, drawn by the miracles which He performed. They came—some to be healed, some to be fed, some hungry for the truth which fell from His lips, some driven by curiosity, eager to behold the sensational and unusual.

On the occasion of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the reason for the enthusiasm of the populace is plainly set down. Those who had witnessed the raising of Lazarus had naturally spread abroad the story. **“For this cause the people also met him, for that they had heard that he had done this miracle.”**

So great was the throng about Him that the problem was often how to get near Him. One poor bedridden man was lowered through the roof to find healing at His feet. They came with all manner of disease, halt and deaf and blind. On one occasion ten lepers came at once, crying for healing to the Son of God, but no one who came in faith ever went away with the need unmet.

It is not primarily by the power of His personality, the wisdom of His words, or the miracles which He performed that He has drawn men to Him through the centuries. It is rather by the majesty of His suffering and death. It is Christ lifted up on the Cross that pulls men to Him. But as the eternal Lord of Glory, all men, even His enemies, shall perforce be drawn to Him—for He shall sit as the Judge before whose face those who now reject His love shall stand when He shall come in power and majesty.

Storms could not rage and tempest dared not tell  
Fury that demons know, when He was there;  
Waves, wild and unbridled, heard and fell  
Crouching in meek obeisance; everywhere

He walked those of great faith were healed, and rest  
Flowed from His spirit to the weary one;  
They who believed and followed were but blessed,  
Brought to the Father's presence by the Son.

Is this the price required by men for love,  
Compassion to a world steeped in its sin—  
Betrayal? Agony within a grove?  
And shame and suffering above the din

Of multitudes upon a darkened hill?  
O shadowed cross, I see thee lying still  
Upon the world; the scorner stumbles there . . .  
Another kneels . . . and as the tossing wave  
On Galilee was stilled, peace follows prayer.  
“**Never man spake as this man**”—now forgave.

—Ruth Gibbs

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### WONDERFULLY STRANGE

A group of Pharisees and scribes came one day to see Jesus. They did not come out of a friendly interest or even from simple curiosity. These men were His enemies. They came to see for themselves whether the wonderful reports of His power were true. They came in hatred to criticize and find fault, but when the day was over they exclaimed, “**We have seen strange things to day**” (Luke 5:26).

They saw a man sick of the palsy let down on his bed through the roof to the feet of Jesus and heard Him say: “**Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.**” Strange words these, but even stranger that which happened next. Jesus read their minds. They were thinking, This is blasphemy for a man to say that he forgives sin. Nobody can forgive sin but God. Jesus Christ, who is God, the God who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart, told them what they were thinking. Then to prove His right to forgive sin, which is a sickness of the soul, He healed the sickness of the body, and the palsied man took up his bed and went away healed.

The Pharisees and scribes saw strange things the day they spent with Jesus, but men who spend time with Him always see strange things. Everything about Him is unusual.

- It was a strange thing that Jesus Christ should die for our sins, the Just for the unjust.
- It is a strange thing that He who is the Lord of life became subject unto death and laid down His life.

The disciples and the women saw strange things the day they came to the sepulcher and found the dead Man risen and the tomb empty. Everything about the Lord Jesus Christ is strange and wonderful.

- It is strange that He can take a poor sinner and make him a child of God—that He can change lives. Strange, but true!

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
And publish abroad His wonderful Name;  
The Name all-victorious of Jesus extol;  
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save;  
And still He is nigh; His presence we have:  
The great congregation His triumph shall sing,  
Ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.

“Salvation to God, who sits on the throne,”  
Let all cry aloud, and honor the Son:  
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
Fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give Him His right,  
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,  
All honor and blessing, with angels above,  
And thanks never ceasing for infinite love.

— Charles Wesley

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### ALL IN ALL

“**God is Love**” (I John 4: 8). The Lord Jesus Christ by His death manifested God’s love to man. He who was God in the flesh demonstrated the love of the Father in the price of His own blood paid for man’s redemption. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

*God is Wisdom and the Author of all wisdom* (Daniel 2:20). The Lord Jesus Christ spoke only words of divine wisdom. “**Never man spake like this man**” (John 7:46).

*God is Truth* (Psalm 100:5). The Son of God never uttered one word untrue, and He Himself was Truth incarnate. “**I am . . . the truth**” (John 14:6), said He.

*God is Life and the Author of life* (Genesis 2:7). Christ said: “**I am come that they might have life . . .**” (John 10: 10) and: “**I am . . . the life**” (John 14:6). The dead were restored to life at His command.

*God is Light* (I John 1:5). In the Ark of the Covenant in ancient Israel God’s presence was manifested by the radiance called the Shekinah glory. Jesus brought the light of heaven into the darkness of the world of sin. He is the “**true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world**” (John 1:9). The brightness of His presence dispels the darkness in the lives of men.

*God is Power* (Psalm 62:11). The flash of lightning and the roar of the thunder speak of God’s omnipotence. All the forces locked in the universe came from God. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated deity in the power of His very words.

- He commanded the winds to cease and the waves to be still, and they obeyed Him (Matthew 8:27).
- He had power over disease, power to break the bonds of death and loose the stony portals of the tomb.

*God is Righteousness* (Jeremiah 23:6). Christ manifested perfect righteousness in every word and every act. Of all the sons of men He only was completely free from sin, without spot or blemish. No stain of guilt marred His life.

*God is Eternal* (Deuteronomy 33:27). The Bible opens with the statement: “**In the beginning God . . .**” The inspired Psalmist exclaims: “**From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God**” (Psalm 90:2). Jesus Christ is the eternal God come in the flesh. He “**was in the beginning . . .**” (John 1:2). He is “**the same yesterday, and today, and forever**” (Hebrews 13:8). Christ said: “**Before Abraham was, I am**” (John 8:58).

How true the words: “**For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**” (Colossians 2:9).

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die:  
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

— Alfred Tennyson

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### NONE GOOD BUT ONE

A rich and apparently prominent young Jew came to Jesus with a question involving the most important matter with which any man is faced: the matter of eternal life.

He came to the right One. He stood before the Lord of Life Himself, before incarnate deity, before the One who is the Giver of all life; but he recognized Him only as a teacher. **“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”** Jesus Christ for the moment ignored the question to challenge the salutation. **“Why callest thou me good?”** said He. **“There is none good but one, that is, God.”**

Our Lord here implied, “You greet me as a good teacher, nothing more. I cannot be a good teacher unless I am God.” Over and over again He claimed to be God. He identified Himself with the great God of the Ages when He used the unspeakable name of the great I Am, saying, **“Before Abraham was, I Am”** (John 8:58). On trial before the great High Priest on the charge of blasphemy for making Himself equal with God, He was asked: **“Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,”** and He replied: **“Thou hast said.”**

If Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, He is an impostor, a fraud and a liar. He must be God or He is not a good man, for He claimed to be God, and no good man would make such a claim unless He were more than man—unless He were God.

Any man is illogical in his thinking who says, “I believe that Jesus was a good man, but I do not believe that He was God.”

By reason of His deity Jesus Christ demands our worship, or because of His falsehood and dishonesty, deserves our contempt.

Ere the blue heavens were stretch'd abroad  
From everlasting was the Word:  
With God He was; the Word was God,  
And must divinely be ador'd.

By His own power were all things made;  
By Him supported all things stand;  
He is the whole creation's Head,  
And angels fly at His command.

But lo, He leaves those heavenly forms,  
The Word descends and dwells in clay,  
That He may hold converse with worms,  
Drest in such feeble flesh as they.

Mortals with joy beheld His face,  
Th' eternal Father's only Son;  
How full of truth! how full of grace!  
When thro' His eyes the Godhead shone!

— Isaac Watts

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## PALMS OF VICTORY

The King of Glory entered the gates of Jerusalem riding upon the foal of an ass. Before Him the populace laid their garments in the way and with the waving of palm branches and with shouts of hosannas, they welcomed Him into the city of David. The Pharisees, jealous and fearful of His power over the people, beholding the scene, said among themselves, "**Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him**" (John 12:19). Crowds thronged to Him, drawn by the miracles which He performed. A woman who had suffered much at the hands of physicians and whose illness was still uncured touched Him for healing as He moved through the streets of a city with the throngs surging about Him. The touch of faith brought health flowing into her through the hem of His garment. He drew by the wisdom of His words. He drew them by the force of His divine personality. Strange, sad sights the crowds must have presented. They came; and there is no record that any having faith went away with need unmet.

But, Christ, who drew the crowd, lost the crowd. He spoke of a Cross, of suffering and death. Some who had followed for loaves and fishes had no desire to drink of that cup or eat of that Bread. They came to take blessing and healing from His touch, but shrank from the curse of the Cross. It has ever been so. Down the years there have been many who professed themselves followers of Christ when there was something to be gained by a connection with His Church and an association with His Name but whose profession was retracted and whose devotion failed when persecution raged and the enemies of Christ were in power. But the crowd will be regained.

- Because He "**endured the cross, despising the shame . . .**" the kingdom shall be His.
- Because He suffered, He shall reign.
- Because He as a sheep before the shearers was dumb and opened not His mouth, every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord.

He draws them now, not the multitudes, but some hungry-hearted, needy ones, some who are willing to walk a narrow way and bear the shame of His Cross. He draws them, some out of every "**kindred, and tongue . . . and nation;**" but the day is coming when all the hosts of men shall acclaim Him, when the words which His enemies, the Pharisees, spoke in bitterness that day amid the swelling hosannas shall have become truth:

**"Behold, the world is gone after Him!"**

Hark! the sound of holy voices,  
Chanting at the crystal sea,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Lord, to Thee!  
Multitude which none can number,  
Like the stars in glory stands,  
Clothed in white apparel, holding  
Palms of victory in their hands.



Patriarch, and holy prophet  
Who prepared the way for Christ,  
King, apostle, saint, confessor,  
Martyr, and evangelist;  
Saintly maiden, godly matron,  
Widows who have watched to prayer,  
Joined in holy concert, singing  
To the Lord of all, are there.

Marching with Thy Cross, their banner,  
They have triumphed, following  
Thee, the Captain of salvation,  
Thee, their Saviour and their King.  
Gladly, Lord, with Thee they suffered;  
Gladly, Lord, with Thee they died;  
And by death to life immortal  
They were born and glorified.

Now they reign in heavenly glory,  
Now they walk in golden Light,  
Now they drink, as from a river,  
Holy bliss and infinite:  
Love and peace they taste forever,  
And all truth and knowledge see  
In the beatific vision Of the blessed Trinity.

—Christopher Wordsworth

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### WITH THE FATHER

Jesus Christ was not rejected and crucified because He was a good man. He was good—the only perfect Man who has ever appeared on the face of the earth, the only sinless One who has ever walked across the stage of history. The perfection and wonder of His life was a constant rebuke to those who lived for sin and self. Good men have often been misunderstood; they have been ostracized by society; they have even been martyred.

But Jesus Christ was not put to death because He was perfect and sinless. He was sent to the Cross because He was God. It was on the basis of His claims of deity that He was tried.

“**Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,**” the High Priest asked Him. He answered, “**Thou hast said,**” which in the idiom that He used is a declaration of the truth of the statement. It meant, “*As thou sayest, I am.*”

When He hung on the Cross, they mocked Him, saying: “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him” (Matthew 27:40, 42). The very fact that this shout echoed so loudly atop Calvary that day emphasizes the reason for His death.

Deity, by reason of itself, demands obedience and worship. Men hated and rejected the Son of God because His claims meant a sacrifice of their own wills and abandonment of their own selfish interests—a complete obedience to the demands of His Word and a full acceptance of the Truth which He taught. Because they were interested in themselves, because they wanted their own way, because they preferred to cling to their own sins, they rejected His claims; and in their hatred of the claims of deity, they desired His death and clamored for His blood.

If Jesus Christ be the Son of God, He has a right still to the obedience of men’s hearts and the surrender of their lives to His service. Those in our day who deny His deity do so because they resent the claims of Jesus Christ upon them and His demands upon the creatures whom He has made. John begins his Gospel with this statement: “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth**” (John 1:1, 2, 14).

Still in this twentieth century, He stands, full of grace and truth, very God of very God, and yet men in their sin and willfulness reject His claims of deity because they are not willing to bow the knee to Him.

O Love divine, what hast Thou done!  
The incarnate God hath died for me!  
The Father’s co-eternal Son  
Bore all my sins upon the tree!  
The Son of God for me hath died:  
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Behold Him, all ye that pass by,  
The bleeding Prince of life and peace!  
Come, sinners, see your Saviour die,  
And say, was ever grief like His?  
Come, feel with me His blood applied:  
My Lord, my Love, is crucified:

Is crucified for me and you,  
To bring us rebels back to God:  
Believe, believe the record true,  
Ye all are bought with Jesus’ blood:  
Pardon for all flows from His side:  
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Then let us sit beneath His Cross,  
And gladly catch the healing stream;  
All things for Him account but loss,  
And give up all our hearts to Him:  
Of nothing think or speak beside:  
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

— Charles Wesley

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### BEAUTY FOR ASHES

In ancient oriental lands when sorrow came, a man clothed himself in sackcloth, sat down in the dust, threw ashes upon his head and mourned aloud. Job grieved in just this fashion for his children who had been killed.

Today the world is wrapped in sorrow. Hearts are heavy. In Western lands sorrowing women in widows' weeds and heavy-hearted men with bands of crepe upon their sleeves are mourning amid the dust and ashes of wrecked cities. In our own land, which has been spared the physical destruction of battle and the marks of bombing, there are some whose hearts feel dusty with grief and who in their sorrow find food like ashes to the taste. Sad world!

But there is promise of a change. Isaiah foresaw it over 2500 years ago. Looking down the ages he beheld a new dispensation when the Prince of Peace shall have come to bring peace and joy to the earth. The attitude of men's hearts is richly described in oriental symbolism: "**Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**" (Isaiah 61:3). There are no disheveled mourners defiled with ashes. There is no dust, but beauty. There are no mourning robes. There are no cries of sorrow. Dressed in garments of worship, men and women are singing hymns of praise. Perfumed oil, the symbol of happiness and joy and festivity, has been poured upon their heads.

Such is the picture which Isaiah draws of the world wherein Christ reigns, a world in which the very dust of the desert has become the rich soil of a garden in full bloom. Men come and go in peace, and all creation seems to sing with joy.

Above the dissonance of Time,  
And discord of its angry words,  
I hear the everlasting chime,  
The music of unjarring chords.

I bid it welcome; and my haste  
To join it cannot brook delay;—  
O song of morning, come at last,  
And ye who sing it, come away!

O song of light, and dawn and bliss,  
Sound over earth, and fill these skies,  
Nor ever, ever, ever cease  
Thy soul-entrancing melodies!

Glad song of this disburdened earth,  
Which holy voices then shall sing:  
Praise for Creation's second birth  
And glory to Creation's King!

— Horatius Bonar

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~ end of chapter 2 ~

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