

THE EXALTED CHRIST

Our Sanctification with Him
in His Exaltation

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CHAPTER ONE

CHRIST, THE KEY TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

“As the Author, so also the subject of the whole Bible is one. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The testimony of Jesus is in like manner the spirit of every portion of Holy Scripture. Whatever the letter may be, whether it be Patriarchal narrative, or Mosaic type, or Prophetic poetry, or Evangelical parable, or Apostolical argument, or Apocalyptic vision, it bears to Jesus. He is the First and Last; the Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world; the seed of the woman; the seed of Abraham; the Son of David; the Priest, the Sacrifice, the Branch, the Shepherd, the King; the Alpha and Omega; the encyclopaedia of Revelation.”

- DEAN MCNEILE

“The great drift of the Old Testament prophecy is the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (I Peter 1:11.) Of course the prophets foretold a great many other things, but the two great outstanding topics of the Old Testament Scripture undoubtedly are these. In the mind of the living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, these were the great themes the only great themes, as it were, to occupy the minds and hearts of those inspired.”

- J. E. MATHIESON

“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Revelation 5:4-6).

You will notice the three paradoxes of this scripture.

- He looked for a Lion and beheld a Lamb;
- He looked for the root of David, and lo, one who was the offspring of David;
- He looked for Him that had overcome, and lo, one who had apparently failed.

But you will note that the scene may be taken as an illustration of the way in which our Blessed Lord took the sealed Book of the Old Testament and broke the seals of it to His disciples by the Holy Ghost. In the center of Rome there was a milestone on which all the roads of the known world converged; and we believe that there is a path, a road, in every book and from every chapter of the Bible, converging upon Jesus Christ. Not only is this the case in the Books of the New Testament, but in those also of the Old.

Let us for a moment turn to Matthew 1 and give due importance to that white sheet, which in our Bibles intervenes between the Old and the New. Because these two Books are bound together, we sometimes forget that a lapse of four hundred years is represented by that page, yet we are certain that the Jews possessed the Old Testament, in the Greek form, two hundred years B.C.

Now, in the Old that lies on one side of the valley, and in the New that lies on the other side of the valley, Jesus Christ is All.

- In the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is latent; in the New, He is patent.
- In the Old, the reference to Him is implicit; in the New, it is explicit.
- In the Old, we have foresight; in the New, insight.

The early Church did not attempt to argue for the facts of our Saviour's life, death, and resurrection. They were acknowledged for three hundred years after Christ left our world.

The one effort of the early Church was to show that the life and the work of Jesus Christ were the Rosetta stone which opened the hieroglyphics of the Old Testament Scripture. It has been said that there are some 333 predictions and references alluded to in the New Testament from the Old. The Old threads the New, as the warp the woof.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on His resurrection, Luke 24:27, set Himself to show this connection. **“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

“In all the scriptures.” In other words, the glory of Jesus shines on the pages of the Old Testament, as the light of God on the face of Moses. Only to many it is hidden. But your study of the Old Testament will be futile indeed, unless you have learned in every veiled type and symbol, in every history and character, as well as in the words of prediction, to find your Lord.

When you turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Let us consider the perpetual reference, on the part of the early Church, to this teaching about our Lord in the Old Testament. We will turn to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2. In Peter's sermon, out of twenty-two verses, eleven are Old Testament quotations.

I am not sure that congregations in these days would stand that proportion of scripture quotation in our sermons; but you will notice that the sermon which the Holy Ghost used so conspicuously that thousands were converted, was largely a mosaic of scripture; from which we may gather why the Holy Ghost does not own many of our modern sermons.

He seeks in them for something He can use. If we can once learn to use the Word of God, that is the sword which He can wield.

In the third chapter, in Peter's second sermon, there are five references to the prophets in the 18th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, and 25th verses. He cannot open his mouth before the Sanhedrim (chapter 4:7) without quoting the Old Testament; and in the 25th verse, as soon as the disciples get together, they quote for their encouragement the Word of God. The seventh chapter of the Acts is one connected series of scripture reference. And again, in the tenth chapter, the sermon which the Holy Ghost used to introduce the gospel to the Gentiles, was full of Scriptural quotation.

In Paul's first recorded sermon (Acts, chap. 13) you will notice distinct references to scripture in the 22nd, 27th, 29th, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, and his closing words in the 41st verse. So that again, if you will count the number of words in that sermon, you will find fully half of them are Old Testament quotations; throughout he is endeavoring to make the people see the correspondence between the Man of Nazareth and of Calvary with that wonderful portraiture in the Old Testament.

Will you turn next to chapter 17:3, where you learn that just so soon as Paul reached Thessalonica, for three Sabbath days he reasoned with them in the scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead, and **“that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is (the Messiah foretold the promised) Christ.”**

And then if you go to chap. 18:28, the characteristic of the golden tongue of Apollos was that he powerfully confuted the Jews, and publicly shewed by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. You have it again in chapter 26:27. When Paul found himself in the presence of a Jewish Judge, he said, **“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.”** And then lastly, in chapter 28:23, we are told that he expounded to the Jews in Rome, testifying to the Kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning till evening.

There are two things to be noticed here.

The first, of course, in our own reading of the Word of God to find Christ in the Old Testament; and secondly, in dealing with young men and young women who are troubled with modern doubt, and who are eagerly demanding all manner of books and helps by which to combat it. Let us shew them that the Bible is its own best witness, and that probably the most conclusive proof of the truth of scripture is this wonderful correspondence between the prophecy of the Old and the portraiture of the New.

Because the field is so vast, I am compelled to take a specimen to illustrate what I am saying, and limit our consideration to the paradoxes of the Old Testament. Now, a paradox is a sentence which consists of two separate statements, each of which is true, considered in itself, but which appear contradictory when laid side by side; but they are combined and harmonized by some deeper truth that lies beneath.

For instance, it is a paradox that, on the one hand, we are saved by the grace of God, and on the other hand, that it is necessary for every soul to act for itself, and to flee for refuge to take hold of Christ. It is the old controversy between election and free-will. But these two statements are, doubtless, consistent if we could get the deeper truths which harmonize them, and which at present are veiled from our sight. So it is with the paradoxes of the Old Testament. There were a number of apparently contradictory statements which awaited the fulness of time when Jesus Christ appeared; but, as God's deeper truth was manifested, it became obvious that they were in harmony.

Let us look for a moment at some of them.

Take our Lord's own paradox in Matthew 22:42. There our Lord turns the tables upon His interrogators. "**While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is He? They say unto Him, the Son of David.**"

This was the ordinary appellation for the Messiah. Thus the blind man had called out, "**Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy.**" And He said to them, "**How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord?**" quoting Psalm 110. How could the same being be at one and the same time David's son and David's Lord?

There are three sorts of paradox the paradox in prediction, the paradox in type, and the paradox in history.

First, *the paradox in prediction.*

Let us consider two or three instances. Take two psalms, the 22nd and the 45th. Psalm 22 has been called by an illustrious commentator the "Psalm of Sobs," because it is so full of the sighing and broken heart of Jesus. It seems to me that probably (if I may dare to say it) our Lord Jesus Christ was quoting this, verse by verse, to Himself as He was slowly dying on the cross.

- Look at the 6th verse, "**I am a worm**";
- look at the 12th verse, "**compassed me**";
- look at the 15th verse, "**athirst**";
- look at the 16th verse, "**compassed and pierced**";
- look at the 18th verse, "**stripped.**"

It is very remarkable that the death thus foreshadowed could only be the death of the cross, and very wonderful that it should have been predicted of Jesus Christ, since to the Jewish mind it was so utterly repugnant. But turn now to Psalm 45, the "Psalm of the Bridegroom."

- In the 2nd verse He who had been as a worm is said to be "**fairer than the children of men**";
- He who had been surrounded by enemies, in the 3rd verse is a "**conqueror**";
- He who had been athirst, in the 2nd verse has "**grace poured into His lips**";
- He who in the 16th verse had been pierced, in the 6th verse is "**on a throne**"; and
- He who in the former Psalm had been stripped of His garments, in the 8th verse is "**clad in royal robes.**"

How puzzling to a Jew.

Must he not have wondered how Psalms 22 and 45 could be true of the same Messiah? And yet the close of those two Psalms distinctly points the reference to Him.

Take another chapter in which these paradoxes occur very numerous, Isaiah 53. A friend of mine has noticed that Isaiah 53. comes just in the very middle of the sixty-six chapters of Messianic predictions with which the Book of Isaiah closes.

Now take this cluster of paradoxes.

- In the 8th verse He is **“cut off,”** in the 10th verse He **“prolongs His days.”**
- In the second verse He is **“a root out of a dry ground”** (there is no seed from it), but in the 10th verse **“He sees His seed and is satisfied.”**
- In the 9th verse He makes **“His grave with the wicked,”** and in the 12th verse He divides **“a portion with the great.”**
- In the 12th verse He is **“numbered with the transgressors,”** but in the same verse He makes **“intercession for the transgressors.”**
- In the 12th verse He **“pours out His soul unto death,”** in the 10th verse the **“pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand.”**

Do you wonder that the Jews have invented two Messiahs in order to satisfy that wonderful chapter? So much for paradox in prediction.

Turn for a moment to the paradox in type.

- He was the pigeon whose neck was wrung, and its blood shed over the flowing water; and
- He was the pigeon flung up into the air, and winging its way to its native woods the type of resurrection.
- He was the goat that fell beneath the stab of the priest, and
- He was the goat that went into the lonely land, bearing the guilt of the people.
- He was the victim and the priest.

With regard to the paradox in history.

- He was Elijah sweeping up in the ascension car, and Elisha completing a milder ministry.
- He was David the great conqueror, and Solomon the man of peace.
- He was Moses the law giver nay, a greater than Moses and he was Aaron the priest, and Joshua the forerunner.
- He was Adam the father, for He was the second Adam, and the figure of Him that was to come;
- He was also the son Abel, though His blood speaks better things than that of Abel, and puts away sin.
- He was Noah, who built the ark and swam the flood, and He was the Ark that bore him across.
- He was the Joshua that led the people into the promised land, and He Himself is the promised land.

So that beneath all these paradoxes, with which the Old Testament is so full, we must implicitly find our blessed Lord Jesus as the only interpretation of what is contradictory. Is this not true of all perplexity and anxiety of all that seems so contradictory in your life and mine that underneath all these dealings of God there is the one loving purpose in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Whenever there is a veil, whether on human life, or in regard to the mysteries of Scripture, so soon as we turn to the Lord it is removed. As Jesus Christ underlay the Old Testament, full of grace and truth, it was necessary for those who lived after His time, by faith to extract from the Old Testament that which He was.

Just as it is necessary for us in these days, who know that He underlies the New Testament, by faith to extract all the grace and all the blessing that await us there.

Turn for a moment to the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians. In chapter 3 the apostle imagines he is challenged for letters of commendation, which he refuses, "because" in the third verse he says, "You are my epistles, you are my commendatory letters; upon your hearts the Holy Scripture has engraved the character of Jesus"; and then he draws a contrast which I pray you to notice.

In the seventh verse and onward, he suggests a parallel between the face of Moses, upon which there was a veil, and the veiled glory of Christ in the Old Testament. He describes the Jews as sitting in their synagogues with their veiled faces, as though the veil had fallen from Moses face on theirs, and is fearful lest the same veil might hide from his converts the glories of the Lord.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth verses he says, "**Until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts.**"

When the people turn unto the Lord, the veil will be taken away.

First let us lay aside the veil; then receive the Spirit of the Lord; and then with unveiled face beholding in a mirror, or reflecting as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed. The Old Testament did not profit them because of the veil, because they did not realize the power of the Holy Ghost, because they did not adequately reflect.

These are the three lessons for ourselves here to-day.

(1) *Christ is in the New, as He was and is in the Old.*

Up till now, perhaps, with some of us, our Bible study has not profited. We have not seen Jesus in the Old or in the New; and, therefore, to-day let us meet the solemn challenge, Is there any veil upon our face?

There was a time when, in the Holy of Holies, the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

- Has there ever been, in your life and mine, a rending of that veil?

Has there ever been a time when your spirit and your soul have been, so to speak, thrown into one, and your individuality overshadowed and penetrated by the Shekinah glow of the Holy Ghost?

- Has there ever been a moment in your life when there was the sudden rending in twain from the top to the bottom of some prejudice, of some uncharity, of some inconsistency in heart or life?

Oh! what wonder, if there be such a veil, that up till now the Word of God has been a veiled Book that you have not seen Christ in it! And whatever it may be, I pray you get alone by yourselves before God Almighty, and ask that this veil whatever has come between you and the perfect vision of Christ in his Word may be rent in twain, and that you may see eye to eye.

(2) But next, there must be the reception of the Holy Ghost.

It was by the Holy Ghost that the prophets wrote, and by the Holy Ghost that the apostles were directed to understand what the Holy Ghost meant; and there must be on the part of all of us the constant reception of the Holy Ghost who wrote the Word, and who will reveal Jesus in that Word. It is by the Spirit that we know the Lord all along the line of our life.

You will find that if you live near God, there will be a constantly fresh reception a constantly enlarging reception of the Holy Ghost and in proportion as you get this, He will open up to you the Old and the New Testament alike Jesus Christ and His glory. Have you received the Holy Ghost? Have we received the Holy Ghost definitely into our life, as a spirit of revelation? And do you, whenever you open the Word of God, meekly bow your heads and say, "Oh! Spirit of God, shew me the face of Christ here"?

(3) And then, lastly, in order to appreciate Christ in the Old or New Testament, there must be reflection.

People go away from our Conventions and Conferences with their notebooks, and say to themselves, "I have got it all here"; and they think that because they have recorded the words of the speaker they have got the truth; whereas, in point of fact, they have only got so much truth as they are obeying and living in their lives. Those are not blessed who hear, but blessed who do - **"that man shall be blessed in his deeds."**

And if you really want to see Jesus in the Bible, you must go and live Jesus in your daily life.

When you have seen some sweet trait of the character of Jesus Christ in the Word, you must ask that by the grace of the Holy Ghost you may reflect it amongst men.

I want just to say a thing here that has been of extreme help to me.

So often in one's life, one waits to feel impelled in a certain Christ-like direction; and if the impulse does not come, one is disposed to postpone action.

But we have no right to wait to feel in the mood to act in such and such a way; rather, by the force of our will, obeying the impulse of the Holy Ghost who wills in us, it is our duty to do, or to attempt to do, what we know we should do; and as we do it, we shall find ourselves able to do it; so that, what we did merely by the force of our will, we shall do ultimately by the choice of our heart.

Thus if you will begin to live Christ up to the small limit of your knowledge, and because you ought, you will be transfigured by reflecting Christ, you will be changed into the likeness of Christ.

In other words, transfiguration does not only come to the man who, with rapt attention, beholds the glory of God in Jesus, but to the man who day by day is trying to translate Jesus into his daily life, and repeat Jesus in thought, word, and deed.

- If you would be a Bible yourself, you would understand the Bible.
- If you would pass on what you have found, the Bible would get richer and deeper to your soul.

So with the rent veil, with the reception of the Holy Ghost, and with the daily endeavor in the power of the Spirit to live Christ, we shall ever find in this Word the Christ who is in our heart. We shall see His face looking out from Old Testament and from New, and we shall realize that the whole Book is like His seamless robe, **“woven from the top throughout.”**

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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