

# Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 244

## THE GLORY OF CHRIST

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*Father, I will that they also, whom  
thou hast given me, be with me  
where I am; that they may  
behold my glory.*

John 17:24

### Our Purpose

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

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## THE GLORY OF CHRIST

# 244

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# SEEING THE GLORY OF CHRIST

John Owen (1616-1683)

*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.—John 17:24*

ONE of the greatest privileges the believer has, both in this world and for eternity, is to behold the glory of Christ. So, Christ prays that “they may behold my glory.” But this glorious privilege is not to be limited to the heavenly state only. It includes the state of believers in this world as I shall show.

Unbelievers see no glory in Christ. They see nothing attractive about Him. They despise Him in their hearts. Outwardly they cry, like Judas, “Hail, master” (Mat 26:49); but in their hearts they crucify Him. Thus, they strip Him of His glory, deny the only “Lord that bought them” (2Pe 2:1), and substitute a false Christ. Others think little of Christ and His glory and see no use for His person in Christianity—as though there were anything in our religion that has any truth or reality apart from Christ!

In the early days of the church, there were swarms of brain-sick persons who vomited out many foolish ideas, culminating at length in Arianism,<sup>1</sup> in whose ruins they now lie buried. The gates of hell in them did not prevail against the rock on which the church is built...[Yet,] many still oppose the person and glory of Christ under the pretense that nothing can be believed except that which reason can understand and accept. Indeed, unbelief in the Trinity and the incarnation of the Son of God, the sole foundation of Christianity, is so spread about in the world that it has almost demolished the life and power of true Christianity. And not a few, who dare not let people know what they really believe, lead people to think they love Jesus, when all the time they scorn, despise, and persecute those who truly desire to know nothing but “Christ, and him crucified” (1Co 2:2).

But God, in His appointed time, will vindicate His honor and glory from the foolish attempts of sinful men who attempt to strip Him of

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<sup>1</sup> **Arianism** – movement that started with Arius, bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 250/56-336), who taught that God the Son was created by God the Father and that before then, the Son did not exist. Jehovah’s Witnesses are modern day Arians.

both. Meanwhile, it is the duty of all those who “love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph 6:24) to testify to His divine person and glory according to the ability God has given to each of us; and this I have chosen to do, not in a controversial way, but in order to strengthen the faith of true believers, to build them up in the knowledge of Christ and His glory, and to help them experience that which they have, or may have, of the power and reality of these things.

That which I intend to show is that beholding the glory of Christ is one of the greatest privileges that believers are capable of in this world or even in that which is to come. Indeed, it is by beholding the glory of Christ that believers are first gradually transformed into His image and then brought into the eternal enjoyment of it because they shall be forever “like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1Jo 3:2; 2Co 3:18). Our present comforts and future blessedness depend on this. This is the life and reward of our souls (Joh 14:9; 2Co 4:6).

Scripture shows us two ways by which we may behold the glory of Christ. We may behold it by faith in this world, faith being “the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1), and we may behold it by sight in the next (2Co 5:7-8; 1Co 13:12).

When Christ prayed “that they may behold my glory,” He meant by actual sight in the light of eternal glory. But the Lord Jesus does not exclude that sight of His glory that we may have by faith in this world; rather He prays for the perfection of it in heaven. So, we can learn the following lessons:

No man shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight in heaven who does not, in some measure, behold it by faith in this world. Grace is a necessary preparation for glory and faith for sight. The soul unprepared by grace and faith is not capable of seeing the glory of Christ in heaven. Many will say with confidence that they desire to be with Christ and to behold His glory. But then they can give no reason for this desire, except that it would be better than going to hell. If a man claims to love and desire that which he never even saw, he is deceiving himself...

John writes not only of himself but of his fellow apostles also: “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Joh 1:14). Now, what was this glory of Christ that they saw, and how did they see it? It was not the glory of Christ’s outward condition for He had no earthly glory or grandeur. He kept no court, nor did He entertain people to parties in a great house. He had nowhere to lay His head, even though He created all things.

There was nothing about His outward appearance that would attract the eyes of the world (Isa 52:14; 53:2-3). He appeared to others as a “man of sorrows” (Isa 53:3). Neither was it the eternal essential glory of His divine nature that is meant, for this no man can see while in this world. What we shall see in heaven, we cannot conceive.

What the apostles witnessed was the glory of “grace and truth” (Joh 1:14). They saw the glory of Christ’s person and office in the administration of grace and truth. And how did they see this glory? It was by faith and in no other way, for this privilege was given only to those who “received him” and “believe on his name” (Joh 1:12). This was the glory that the Baptist saw when he pointed to Christ and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29).

So, let no one deceive himself. He that has no sight of Christ’s glory here shall never see it hereafter. The beholding of Christ in glory is too high, glorious, and marvelous for us in our present condition. The splendor of Christ’s glory is too much for our physical eyes just as is the sun shining in all its strength. So, while we are here on earth, we can behold His glory only by faith.

Many learned men have written of this future state of eternal glory. Some of their writings are filled with excellent things that cannot but stir the minds and hearts of all who read them. But many complain that such writings do nothing for them. They are like a man who beholds his natural face in a mirror and immediately forgets what he saw (Jam 1:23-24)...But why do these writings make no impression on them? Is it not because their idea of future things has not arisen out of an experience of them that faith alone gives?

In fact, a soul will be troubled rather than edified when it thinks of future glory, if it has had no foretaste, sense, experience, or evidence of these things by faith. No man ought to look for anything in heaven if he has not by faith first had some experience of it in this life. If men were convinced of this, they would spend more time in the exercise of faith and love about heavenly things than they usually do. At present they do not know what they enjoy, so they do not know what to expect. This is why men who are complete strangers to seeing the person and glory of Christ by faith have turned to images, pictures, and music to help them in their worship.

So, it is only as we behold the glory of Christ by faith here in this world that our hearts will be drawn more and more to Christ and to the full enjoyment of the sight of His glory hereafter. It is by beholding the glory of Christ by faith that we are spiritually edified and

built up in this world; for as we behold His glory, the life and power of faith grow stronger and stronger. It is by faith that we grow to love Christ. So, if we desire strong faith and powerful love, which give us rest, peace, and satisfaction, we must seek them by diligently beholding the glory of Christ by faith. In this duty, I desire to live and to die. On Christ's glory I would fix all my thoughts and desires; and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes, and I will be more and more crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy...

By beholding the glory of Christ, we shall be made fit and ready for heaven. Not all who want to go to heaven are fit and ready for it. Some are not only unworthy of it and excluded from it because of unforgiven sin, they are not prepared for it. Should they be admitted, they would never enjoy it. All of us naturally regard ourselves as fit for eternal glory. But few of us have any idea of how unfit we really are because we have had no experience of that glory of Christ that is in heaven. Men shall not be clothed with glory, as it were, whether they want to be or not. It is to be received only by faith. But fallen man is incapable of believing. Music cannot please a deaf man, nor can beautiful colors impress a blind man. A fish would not thank you for taking it out of the sea and putting it on dry land under the blazing sun! Neither would an unregenerate sinner welcome the thought of living for ever in the blazing glory of Christ.

So, Paul gives "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). Indeed, the first touches of glory here and the fullness of glory hereafter are communicated to believers by an almighty act of the will and the grace of God. Nevertheless, He has ordained ways and means by which they may be made fit to receive that fullness of glory that still awaits them, and this way and means is by beholding the glory of Christ by faith, as we shall see. Knowing this should stir us up to our duty, for all our present glory lies in preparing for future glory.

By beholding the glory of Christ, we shall be transformed "into the same image" (2Co 3:18). How this is done and how we become like Christ by beholding His glory will become clear as our study progresses.

By beholding the glory of Christ by faith we shall find rest to our souls. Our minds are apt to be filled with troubles, fears, cares, dangers, distresses, ungoverned passions, and lusts. By these our thoughts are filled with chaos, darkness, and confusion. But where

the soul is fixed on the glory of Christ, then the mind finds rest and peace; for “to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom 8:6).

By beholding the glory of Christ, we shall begin to experience what it means to be everlastingly blessed. “So shall we ever be with the Lord” (1Th 4:17). We shall “be with Christ” (Phi 1:23), which is best of all. For there we shall behold His glory (Joh 17:24). And by seeing Him as He is, we shall be made like Him (1Jo 3:2). This is our everlasting blessedness.

The enjoyment of God by sight is commonly called the “Beatific Vision,” and it is the only motive for everything we do in that state of blessedness. What the sight of God is and how we will react to it, we cannot imagine. Nevertheless, we do know this: God in His immense essence is invisible to our physical eyes and will be in eternity, just as He will always be incomprehensible to our minds. So, the sight that we shall have of God will be always “in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6). In Christ’s face, we shall see the glory of God in His infinite perfections. These things will shine into our souls filling us forever with peace, rest, and glory.

We can rejoice in these things even though we cannot understand them. We can talk of them but never fully comprehend them. In fact, true believers experience a foresight and foretaste of this glorious condition. Sometimes, when reading and meditating on the Bible, our hearts are filled with such a sense of the uncreated glory of God shining through Jesus Christ that we experience unspeakable joy. [Thus] arises that “peace of God, which passeth all understanding, [which] shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ” (Phi 4:7). “Christ in you [believers], the hope of glory” (Col 1:27) gives them a foretaste of that future glory. And where any have no acquaintance with these things, they are blind and dead to spiritual things. It is because believers are lazy and ignorant that we do not experience more and more in our souls the visits of grace and the dawns of eternal glory.

From *The Glory of Christ*, ed. R.J.K Law (Edinburgh; Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 2-10, [www.banneroftruth.org](http://www.banneroftruth.org), used by permission.

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**John Owen (1616-1683):** English Congregational pastor, author, and theologian; born in Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, UK.



As the beams of the sun, such is the glory of Christ, which cannot be said of any creature, He having the same glory with His Father.—*Thomas Goodwin*

# CHRIST'S GLORY

John Owen (1616-1683)

**T**HE glory of Christ is the glory of the person of Christ. So, He calls it “that glory which is mine,” which belongs to Me, to My person (Joh 17:24).

The first glorious thing we learn about the person of Christ is that He is the perfect revelation of the Father. This revelation of the Father is for the benefit of the church, for we behold “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6).

The glory of God includes both the holy properties of His nature and the things He has purposed to do. The only way we can know these things of God is “in the face” or person “of Jesus Christ,” for He is “the image of God” (2Co 4:4). He is “the brightness of his [Father’s] glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3). He is “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15).

But Christ is especially glorious because He and He alone perfectly reveals God’s nature and will to us. Without Christ, we would have known nothing truly about God, for He would have been eternally invisible to us. We would never have seen God at any time, either in this life or the next (Joh 1:18).

In His divine person,<sup>1</sup> Christ is the essential image of God the Father. He is in the Father and the Father in Him, both existing in the unity of the same divine essence (Joh 14:10). Furthermore, He is with the Father, as well as being the essential image of the Father (Joh 1:1; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). But when He assumed human nature, He became the representative of God’s image to the church, so that only by Christ do we understand the wonderful and excellent things of God’s nature and will (2Co 4:6). Without Christ, God would still be to us the “invisible God.” We see the glory of God only in the person of Christ.

This is the glory that the Father gave Him, which we by faith may behold. He alone makes known both to angels and men the essential glory of the invisible God, without which a perpetual comparative darkness would have covered all creation.

The foundation of our religion, the rock on which the church is built, the ground of all our hopes of salvation, of life and immortality,

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<sup>1</sup> See FGB 230, *The Deity of Christ*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



is the revelation that is made of God's nature and will by Jesus Christ. So, if Christ fails, if He, the Light of the world becomes darkness, then we are forever lost. But if this Rock stands firm, the church is safe and shall be triumphant forever.

It is as the representative of God that the Lord Christ is exceedingly glorious. Those who cannot see His glory by faith do not know Him. When they worship Him, they worship an image of their own devising. Not to see that Christ is the only true representative of the glory of God to the souls of men is to be an unbeliever. This was the sad state of the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles of old. They did not, they would not, they could not, behold the glory of God in Him; that was why they did not believe in Him (*see* 1Co 1:21-25). The one who does not see the wisdom and power of God and all the other holy properties of the divine nature in Christ—as well as seeing in Him the only way of salvation—is, to put it bluntly, an unbeliever.

The essence of faith lies in glorifying God (Rom 4:20). But we cannot do this without the revelation of the glorious qualities of His divine nature. These qualities and glories of the divine nature are revealed to us by Christ alone.

It is only by Christ that we can glorify God rightly and acceptably. Hence, the great purpose of the devil, when the gospel was first preached, was to blind the eyes of men's understanding and to fill their minds with prejudices so that they might not behold His glory. By various deceitful ways, he attempted to hold on to his title "god of this world" (2Co 4:3-4). By counterfeiting supernatural appearances of power and wisdom, he labored to prejudice the minds of men and so to turn them away from the glorious light of the gospel that proclaimed to all that the Lord Christ was the perfect and only true revealer of God's image. This blindness is taken away from the minds and hearts of believers only by the almighty power of God; for Paul tells us that God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts with "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6). The unbelieving world of Jews and Gentiles perished under this darkness; so do all present-day unbelievers who deny that Jesus is truly God as well as being truly man. But if Christ were only a man, He could never have truly represented God to us; for no mere creature can ever truly represent the divine nature.

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# CHRIST'S PERSON

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*The light of the glorious gospel of Christ.—2 Corinthians 4:4*

**T**HE glory of the gospel lies very much in *the glory of our Lord's person*. He Who is the Savior of men is God—"over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom 9:5). Is it not written, "When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb 1:6)? With the angels of God, we worship Jesus Christ as God.

Our Redeemer is also man—man like ourselves with this exception: in Him there is no taint of natural depravity, and no act of sin has ever stained His character. Behold the glory of Him Who is God and man mysteriously united in one person!<sup>1</sup> He is unique: He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the brother born for adversity (Heb 1:3; Pro 17:17). This is the gospel—that the Son of God Himself gloriously undertook the salvation of men and therefore was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory (Joh 1:14). If we had here a vast hospital full of sick folk, it would be the best of news for those languishing<sup>2</sup> therein, if I could tell them that a great physician had devoted himself to their healing; and the more I could extol<sup>3</sup> the physician who had come to visit them, the more would there be of good news for them. If I could say to them, "The physician who is coming to succor<sup>4</sup> you is possessed of infallible wisdom and unerring skill, and in him are united loving tenderness and infinite power," how they would smile upon their beds! Why, the very news would half restore them!

Should it not be much more so with desponding and despairing souls when they hear that He Who has come to save is none other than the glorious Christ of God? The mysteriously majestic person of Christ is the mainstay of the gospel. He Who is able to save is no angel and no mere man; but He is "Emmanuel...God with us" (Mat 1:23). Infinite are His resources, boundless is His grace. O ye guilty ones, who lie upon beds of remorse, ready to die of grief, here is a

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<sup>1</sup> See FGB 219, *The Person of Christ*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>2</sup> **languishing** – becoming weak and feeble.

<sup>3</sup> **extol** – praise.

<sup>4</sup> **succor** – aid; help.

Savior such as you need. When you think of what you are and despair, think also of what He is, and take heart. If I made you doubt the deity of the Savior, I should cut away the foundation of your only hope; but while you see Him to be God, you remember that nothing is too hard for Him. If I caused you to doubt His proper manhood, I should also rob you of comfort, since you would not recognize in Him the tender sympathy that grows out of kinship. Beloved, the Lord Jesus stands before you, commissioned by the eternal God, with the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him without measure (Joh 3:34); and thus, being in nature and person the first and the best, His message of salvation is to you most full and sure, and His glory is gospel to you.

**The glory of Christ lies not only in His person, but in *His love*.** Remember this and see the gospel that lies in it. From all eternity, the Son of God has loved His people: even from of old his “delights were with the sons of men” (Pro 8:31). Long before He came on earth, He so loved the men whom His Father gave Him that He determined to be one with them and for their redemption to pay the dreadful price of life for life. He saw the whole company of His chosen in the glass of His foreknowledge and loved them with an everlasting love. Oh, the love that glowed in the heart of our Redeemer “in the beginning” (Joh 1:1)! That same love will never know an end. Herein to us is His glory. He loved us so that heaven could not hold Him; He loved us so that He descended to redeem us; and having come among us amid our sin and shame, He loves us still. “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (Joh 13:1). Love, thou hast reached thine utmost glory in the heart of the divine Savior! And the glory of this love, which is without beginning, boundary, change, or close, is the very life-blood of the gospel. The love of Jesus is the glad tidings of great joy! Our great physician loves the sick and delights to heal them. He comes into the wards among the palsied<sup>5</sup> and the plague-stricken with an intense longing to bless them. Jesus is the sinner’s friend...A gracious gospel lies in the glory of the love of Christ!

**This being so, beloved, we next see the glory of *His incarnation*.**<sup>6</sup> To us, it was the glory of Christ that He was born at Bethlehem and dwelt at Nazareth. It looks like dishonor that He should be the carpenter’s son; but throughout all ages this shall be the glory of the Mediator,<sup>7</sup> that He deigned<sup>8</sup> to be partaker of our flesh and blood.

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<sup>5</sup> **palsied** – afflicted with paralysis and involuntary tremors.

<sup>6</sup> See FGB 234, *Incarnation*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>7</sup> **Mediator** – *literally*: “one who goes between”; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the covenant

There is glory in His poverty and shame; glory in His having nowhere to lay His head; glory in His weariness and hunger. Surpassing glory springs from Gethsemane and the bloody sweat, from Calvary and the death of the cross. All heaven could not yield Him such renown as that that comes from the spitting and the scourging, the nailing and the piercing. A glory of grace and tenderness surrounds the incarnate God; and this, to those convinced of sin, is the gospel. When we see God in human flesh, we expect reconciliation. When we see that He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses, we hope for pardon and healing. Born of a virgin, our Lord has come among us and has lived on earth a life of service and of suffering: there must be hope for us. He came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (Joh 3:17). See, I pray you, the glory of His life of doing good, of working miracles of mercy, of tender care for the fallen, and ask yourselves whether there is not in His life among men good news for all sad hearts. Did God Himself cover His glory with a veil of our inferior clay? Then He means well to men. Humanity, thus honored by union with the Godhead, is not utterly abhorred. In the Word made flesh, we see the glory of God; and noting how love predominates, how condescending pity reigns, we see in this a gospel of grace for all believing men.

The glory of Christ is further seen in *His atoning sacrifice*. But you stop me and say, "That was His humiliation and His shame." Yes, it is true; and therefore, it is His glory. Is not the Christ to every loving heart most of all glorious in the death of the cross? What garment doth so well become our Beloved as the vesture<sup>9</sup> dipped in His own blood (Rev 19:13)? He is altogether lovely, let Him be arrayed as He may; but when our believing hearts behold Him covered with the bloody sweat, we gaze upon Him with adoring amazement and rapturous<sup>10</sup> love. His flowing crimson bedecks<sup>11</sup> Him with a robe more glorious than the imperial purple. We fall at His feet with sevenfold reverence when we behold the marks of His passion. Is He not most of all illustrious as our dying substitute? Beloved, here lies the mar-

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made between them both, to be the mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, Head and Savior of His church, the heir of all things and judge of the world: unto Whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." (*Second London Baptist Confession*, 8.1) See also FGB 183, *Christ the Mediator*; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>8</sup> **deigned** – stooped down; lowered Himself.

<sup>9</sup> **vesture** – clothing.

<sup>10</sup> **rapturous** – overwhelmingly joyful.

<sup>11</sup> **bedecks** – decorates; adorns.

row of the gospel: Jesus Christ suffered in our stead. He “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24). That glory of His cross, which we again aver<sup>12</sup> to be greater glory than any other, is gospel to us. On His cross, He bore the whole weight of divine justice in our place; the iron rod of Jehovah, which must have broken us in pieces like potters’ vessels, fell on Him. He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phi 2:8); and in that act, He slew death and overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...But the glory of His sacrificial death, by which He blotted out our sin and magnified the Law, is the gospel of our salvation.

We will now travel a little further to *His resurrection*,<sup>13</sup> wherein His glory is more palpable<sup>14</sup> to us. He could not be held by the bonds of death (Act 2:24). He was dead: His holy body could die, but it could not see corruption; so, having slept a little while within the chamber of the tomb, He arose and came forth to light and liberty—the living Christ glorified by His resurrection. Who shall tell the glory of the risen Lord?...

Rising, He sealed our justification.<sup>15</sup> Rising, He rifled the sepulcher and released the captives of death. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom 1:4). Let us rejoice that He is not dead, but “ever liveth to make intercession for [us]” (Heb 7:25). This is the gospel to us; for because He lives we shall live also (Joh 14:19)! “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). Oh, the glory of our risen Lord! Consider it deeply, meditate upon it earnestly; and, as you do so, hear the clear sound of glad tidings of great joy! For our greatest consolation, we do not look to this precept or to that promise, so much as to Jesus Himself, Who has by His rising from the dead given us the surest pledge and guarantee of our deliverance from the prison of guilt, the dungeon of despair, and the sepulcher of death.

Once more, lift your eyes a little higher and note *the glory of our Lord’s enthronement*<sup>16</sup> and of His second coming. He sits at the right hand of God. He that once was hung up upon the tree of shame now sitteth on

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<sup>12</sup> **aver** – assert as a fact.

<sup>13</sup> See FGB 235, *Resurrection*.

<sup>14</sup> **palpable** – easy to see; obvious.

<sup>15</sup> **justification** – Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 32) See FGB 187, *Justification*; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>16</sup> See FGB 243, *Ascension*.

the throne of universal dominion. Instead of the nail, behold the scepter of all worlds in His most blessed hand. All things are put under His feet. Jesus, “who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,” is now “crowned with glory and honour” (Heb 2:9), and this is the gospel to us. For thus it is plain that He has conquered all our enemies and has all power in heaven and in earth on our behalf. His acceptance with God is the acceptance of all whom He loves; and He loves all who trust Him. His sitting in glory is a pledge that the whole of the redeemed by blood shall sit there in due time.

His second coming, for which we daily look, is our divinest hope. [Perhaps,] before we fall asleep, the Lord “shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (1Th 4:16); and “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat 13:43). Then will our weary days be ended: the strife of tongues, the struggle against sin, the stratagems<sup>17</sup> of error—all will be finished, and truth and holiness shall reign supreme. O my brethren, if I could but break loose from the impediments of mouth and tongue and speak my heart without these [clumsy] organs, then would I make you rejoice in the glory of my divine Master upon His throne today and in His glorious appearing at the appointed hour. If we could see Him as John did in Patmos, we might swoon at His feet; but it would be with the rapture of hope and not with the chill of despair.

Mark this: the less you make of Christ, the less gospel you have to trust in. If you get rid of Christ from your creed, you have at the same time destroyed all its good news. The more gospel we would preach, the more of Christ we must proclaim. If you lift up Christ, you lift up the gospel. If you dream of preaching the gospel without exalting Christ in it, you will give the people husks instead of true bread. In proportion as the Lord Jesus is set up on a glorious high throne, He becomes salvation to the sons of men. A little Christ means a little gospel; but the true gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ.

From a sermon delivered on Lord's Day morning, March 31, 1889,  
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

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



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<sup>17</sup> **stratagems** – plans or schemes intended to deceive someone or gain advantage over them.

# CHRIST'S LOVE

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

**T**HERE is no love like the love of Christ. The association of contrast will aid us here. God, Who is love (1Jo 4:8), is the author of all human affection. Love is the creation of deity, the descendant of heaven, the reflection of God; and he whose soul is the most replete with divine love is the most like God. Paralyzed though our humanity is by the fall, tainted<sup>1</sup> as it is by sin, the human heart is still the home of love in some of its loftiest and purest forms. It is impossible to behold its creations without the profoundest reverence. Who can stand, for instance, in the presence of a mother's love and not be awed by its dignity, won by its power, and melted by its tenderness?

But there is a love that equals, a love that excels, a love that surpasses it—the love of Christ! Institute your contrast. Select from among the different relations of life the nearest and dearest; choose from those relations the deepest, purest, truest love that ever warmed the human breast, prompting to generous and noble deeds, to tender and touching expressions, to costly and precious sacrifices. Place it side by side with the divine love that chose you, the love that ransomed you, the love that called you, the love that soothes you, the love whose eyelid never closes, whose accents never change, whose warmth never chills, whose hand is never withdrawn—“the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph 3:19); and it is the very antithesis<sup>2</sup> of selfishness. The love of Christ stands out in the “history of the love” as the divinest, the holiest, the strongest of all love—unequaled, unparalleled, unsurpassed. Oh! There is no love like Christ's love! Trace its features:

1. **The love of Christ is a *revealing* love.** It uplifts the veil from the heart of God and shows how that heart loves me. I would have known nothing of the love of my Father in heaven, but for the love of my Savior on earth. And that penitent, believing soul that feels the softest, gentlest pulse of Christ's love throbbing in his breast, knows more of the heart of God, sees more of the glory of God, and understands more of the character of God, than were earth and sky and sea

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<sup>1</sup> **tainted** – contaminated; polluted.

<sup>2</sup> **antithesis** – direct opposite.

to collect all their wonders and lay them at his feet.

2. **The love of Christ is a *condescending*<sup>3</sup> love.** No other love ever stooped like Christ's love. Go to Bethlehem and behold its lowliness; and as you return, pause awhile at Gethsemane and gaze upon its sorrow, then pursue your way to Calvary and learn in the ignominy,<sup>4</sup> in the curse, in the gloom, in the desertion, in the tortures, in the crimson tide of that cross, how low Christ's love has stooped. And still it stoops! It bends to all your circumstances. You can be conscious of the becloudings<sup>5</sup> of no guilt that it will not cancel, of the pressure of no sin that it will not lighten, of the chafings of no cross that it will not heal, of the depths of no sorrow that it will not reach, of the dreary loneliness of no path it will not illumine and cheer. Oh! Is there a home on earth where the love of Christ most loves to dwell, where you will oftener find, yes, always meet it? It is the heart—broken, contrite,<sup>6</sup> and humbled for sin!

3. **The love of Christ is a *self-sacrificing* love.** "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph 5:2). What a laborious life, what a suffering death was His, and all was but the out-paying, outpouring of His love. He obeyed every precept of the broken Law, He endured every penalty of an exacting justice. The path that conducted Him from Bethlehem to Calvary wound its lonesome way through scenes of humiliation and insult, of trial and privation,<sup>7</sup> the storm growing darker and darker, the thunder waxing louder and louder, and the lightning gleaming brighter and brighter until its central horrors gathered round the cross and crushed the Son of God! O marvelous love of Christ! What more could you do than you have done? To what lower depth of ignominy could you stoop? What darker sorrow could you endure? Where did another cross ever impale such a victim or illustrate such love?

4. **Nor is there any love so *forgiving* as Christ's love.** Forgiveness of injury is an essential element of true affection. We cannot see how love can exist at the same moment and in the same breast with an unbending, unrelenting, unforgiving spirit. Real love is so unique and lofty a passion, so Godlike and divine in its nature and properties, we cannot conceive of it but in alliance with every ennobling,

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<sup>3</sup> **condescending** – coming down or stooping to unworthy people.

<sup>4</sup> **ignominy** – disgrace; dishonor.

<sup>5</sup> **becloudings** – times of gloominess.

<sup>6</sup> **contrite** – crushed or broken in spirit.

<sup>7</sup> **privation** – lack of necessities.



elevating, and worthy sentiment. Selfishness, malignity, revenge, uncharitableness, and all evil speaking are passions of our fallen and depraved humanity, so hateful and degrading, it would seem impossible that they should exist for an instant in the same atmosphere with true affection.

But a yet loftier form, a more sublime embodiment<sup>8</sup> of love is presented to us in the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. God cannot love—we speak reverently—and not forgive. Those whom God loves, God pardons. That God regards every individual of the fallen race with a feeling of benevolence is unquestionable: “For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mat 5:45); but those to whom the love of God extends, His everlasting, His special, and His redeeming love—the gracious, the full, the eternal forgiveness of all sin—likewise extends. God could not love a being and give that being over into the hands of a stern, avenging justice. Divine love will never lose the lowest and unworthiest object of its affections.

If, my reader, you feel conscious that you love God, though your affection be but as a smoldering ember, as a glimmering spark, be sure of this: God first loved you (1Jo 4:19); and loving, He has pardoned you; and pardoning, He will preserve you to His heavenly kingdom that you may behold His glory and enjoy His presence forever.

We repeat the remark: there is no love so forgiving as Christ’s love. A human love may for an instant hesitate and falter; it may dwell upon the wrong inflicted, the injury done, the wound still bleeding; may, in its very muteness, speak in tones of inexpressible sadness, of confidence betrayed, of feelings lacerated,<sup>9</sup> of friendship sported with,<sup>10</sup> and the heart may find it difficult to take back the wrongdoer—the offender forgiven and the offense forgotten—to its embrace. But not so Jesus! He has canceled, obliterated,<sup>11</sup> erased every shadow of a shade of His people’s sins, and they shall come no more into remembrance. “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Mat 18:21-22).

Contrast this love, my reader—the forgiving disciple, the forgiving

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<sup>8</sup> **sublime embodiment** – awe-inspiring example.

<sup>9</sup> **lacerated** – torn or deeply cut.

<sup>10</sup> **sported with** – played with as if unimportant or of no value.

<sup>11</sup> **obliterated** – blotted out; utterly destroyed.

Savior—and then exclaim, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic 7:18).

There is no love, too, so gentle, so patient, so enduring, as Christ's love. Again and again you have questioned it, wounded it, forsaken it; again and again you have returned to it with tears, confession, and humiliation and have found it as unchilled and unchanged as His nature. It has borne with your doubts, has been silent beneath your murmurings, has veiled your infirmities, and has planted itself a thousand times over between you and your unseen and implacable<sup>12</sup> foe. It has never declined with your fickleness,<sup>13</sup> nor frozen with your coldness, nor upbraided<sup>14</sup> you for your backslidings, but all day long, tracking your wandering, winding way, it has hovered around you with a presence that has encircled you within its divine, all-enshrouding, and invincible shield.

Truly, there is no love like Christ's!

From *None Like Christ* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1868),  
28-40, in the public domain.

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



As every knee must bow to the dominion of Christ, so every tongue must confess that Jesus is the Lord. (1) The devils and wicked men shall be forced at the last to acknowledge the power of Christ, Whose authority they have always rebelled against. And as Pharaoh and the Egyptians cried out, “Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth against us” (Exo 14:25), so shall the stoutest-hearted sinners one day flee from the presence of Christ and call to the mountains to shelter them “from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev 6:16). And all the implacable enemies of Christ shall be forced through spite and rage to gnaw their tongues, gnash their teeth, and say, as that cursed apostate Julian, “Thou hast overcome me, O Galilean.” (2) All the saints and angels shall with one consent own, acknowledge, and praise Jesus Christ as *the* Lord and as *their* Lord. They shall acknowledge Him to be the Lord their Maker and their Savior; and so they shall cry “Hosanna” to Him! And they shall acknowledge Him to be their Lord and Sovereign; and they shall cast down their crowns at His feet and with everlasting hallelujahs sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev 5:12-13).

—William Taylor

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<sup>12</sup> **implacable** – impossible to pacify or make peaceable.

<sup>13</sup> **fickleness** – changeable in loyalties or affections.

<sup>14</sup> **upbraided** – charged with something wrong or disgraceful.

# CHRIST'S OFFICES

John Flavel (c. 1630-1691)

**W**HAT offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? Christ, as our Redeemer, doth execute the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king,<sup>1</sup> both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

1. What are the states and conditions of our Redeemer? Christ's states are twofold, namely, His state of humiliation and His state of exaltation: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phi 2:8-9).

2. How many offices belong to Christ in these states? Christ hath a threefold office, namely, of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

3. Why doth Christ take all these three offices? Because they are all necessary for our salvation, and we have the benefit of them all: "...who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30).

4. Can no man take Christ in one office and not in another? No. Whoever will have the benefit of any one [office] must receive Him in all: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Act 5:31).

5. What respect have the offices of Christ to the promises? The promises flow out of them as out of their fountain: "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen" (2Co 1:20).

6. What promises flow out of the prophetic office? All promises of illumination, guidance, and direction flow out of Christ's prophetic office.

7. What promises flow out of the priestly office? All the promises of a pardon and peace flow out of it.

8. What promises flow out of the kingly office? All the promises of defense, protection, and deliverances.

9. What is the first instruction? Hence, we learn the completeness of Christ for all the [needs] of His people: "And ye are complete in

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<sup>1</sup> See FGB 183, *Christ the Mediator*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col 2:10).

10. What is the second instruction? Hence, we learn the folly and misery of all those hypocrites that close partially<sup>2</sup> with Christ.

11. What is the third instruction? Hence, we learn the singular dignity of the Lord Jesus, none ever having had all those offices but Christ.

12. What is the last instruction? That faith is a considerate act<sup>3</sup> and requires much deliberation.

**HOW DOTH CHRIST EXECUTE THE OFFICE OF A PROPHET?** Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation.

1. What doth Christ's prophetic office imply? It implies man's natural blindness and ignorance: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Co 2:14).

2. What else doth it imply? That Christ is the original and fountain of all that light that guides us to salvation: “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6-7).

3. How doth Christ teach men the will of God? He doth it by *external* revelation of it: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Act 3:22); and by *internal* illumination: “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luk 24:45).

4. What need then of man's ministry? Very much, for Christ hath instituted ministers as instruments by whom He will teach us: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12); “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins” (Act 26:18).

5. Can no man savingly know the will of God without the teachings

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<sup>2</sup> **close partially** – professing to believe in Christ, but not truly believing the full revelation of Him made in Scripture, i.e., trusting in Christ as Savior, but not as Lord.

<sup>3</sup> **considerate act** – act that requires careful consideration and is well thought through.

of Christ? No; though common knowledge may be obtained in a natural way, yet not saving: “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat 11:25).

6. How appears it that Christ is appointed to this office? We have the written word for it: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Act 3:22).

7. What is the first instruction from hence? None need be discouraged at their natural weakness if Christ be their teacher: “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat 11:25); “The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa 19:7).

8. What is the second instruction? That it is a dreadful judgment to be spiritually blinded under the gospel: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2Co 4:3-4).

9. What is the third instruction? That prayer is the best expedient<sup>4</sup> to obtain saving knowledge: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jam 1:5).

10. What is the last instruction? Learn hence the transcendent<sup>5</sup> excellency of the knowledge of Christ above all other knowledge: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phi 3:8).

**HOW DOTHTH CHRIST EXECUTE THE OFFICE OF A PRIEST?** Christ executeth the office of a priest in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God and in making continual intercession for us.

1. What is the priesthood of Christ in general? It is His expiation<sup>6</sup> of our sins by the sacrifice of Himself and obtaining God’s favor for

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<sup>4</sup> **expedient** – means to an end.

<sup>5</sup> **transcendent** – surpassing others of its kind.

<sup>6</sup> **expiation** – removal or covering the guilt of sin.

us: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col 1:20).

2. What are the parts of Christ's priestly office? It hath two parts. *First*, oblation<sup>7</sup> or offering of Himself: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14). *Secondly*, intercession for us: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

3. What is the end<sup>8</sup> of Christ's oblation? The end of it, as to God, was to satisfy His incensed justice: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation<sup>9</sup> through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom 3:25). And as to men, to put away their sins: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26).

4. What is the first difference between Christ and other priests? Other priests offered the blood of beasts; Christ [offered] His own blood: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:12).

5. What is the second difference? They offered many sacrifices; Christ perfected all by one offering: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14).

6. What was the sacrifice Christ offered to God? His body: "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). And His soul: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isa 53:10).

7. Whence is the efficacy<sup>10</sup> of this sacrifice? From the divine person to whom that soul and body was united: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Act 15:28).

8. What is the first inference<sup>11</sup> from hence? That believers are discharged by Christ from all their sins and debts: "And by him, all that

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<sup>7</sup> **oblation** – offering as a sacrifice in worship.

<sup>8</sup> **end** – goal.

<sup>9</sup> **propitiation** – appeasement; sacrifice that turns away God's wrath.

<sup>10</sup> **efficacy** – power to produce a desired effect.

<sup>11</sup> **inference** – conclusion reached because of evidence and reasoning.

believe are justified from all things” (Act 13:39).

9. What is the second inference? That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an absolute God: “For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” (Luk 23:31).

10. What is the third inference? That it is impossible for man to satisfy God for his own sins: “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Psa 130:3).

11. What is the last inference? That the Christian religion only settles the conscience in peace: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14).

**HOW DOTH CHRIST EXECUTE THE OFFICE OF A KING?** Christ executeth the office of a king in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.

1. How manifold is Christ’s kingdom? Twofold. First, *internal* in men’s souls: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luk 17:21). Secondly, *external* over all the world: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:22).

2. What is the end of Christ’s providential kingdom? The good and salvation of the church: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Joh 17:2).

3. Wherein doth He exercise His kingly power? In restraining His and His people’s enemies: “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Psa 76:10).

4. How else is it exercised? In protecting His church amidst all enemies: “And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt” (Exo 3:3).

5. What instruments doth Christ use? Angels are ministering spirits to Him: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:14). And men, yea, the worst of men: “And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth” (Rev 12:16).

6. In what manner doth Christ rule the world? By supreme power: “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF

KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev 19:16). And perfect wisdom: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1:11).

7. What learn we from hence? That the church is saved amidst all dangers: “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee” (Jer 30:11).

8. What is the second instruction? That the godly may safely trust to Christ's care: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2Ch 16:9).

9. What is the third instruction? That all plots against the church shall surely be defeated: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper” (Isa 54:17).

10. What is the fourth instruction? It gives the saints full satisfaction in all conditions: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28).

11. What is the last inference? We should not stand in a slavish fear of men: “I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass” (Isa 51:12).

From “An Exposition of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism” in  
*The Whole Works of the Reverend John Flavel*, Vol. 6,  
181-186, in the public domain.

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



The medium through which the spiritual eye beholds the glory of Christ is faith. It is a hidden glory until the Eternal Spirit imparts this mighty principle to the soul...If a man sees not the glory of Christ, we hesitate not to say of him that, with regard to all other spiritual objects, he is totally blind—he is yet a stranger to the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit. To see the Redeemer's glory, the eye must be spiritual—a spiritual object being only discerned by a spiritual organ. Hence, the apostle prays in behalf of the Ephesian Christians, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened” (Eph 1:17-18).

—*Octavius Winslow*



# CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

William S. Plumer (1802-1880)

**R**ESPECTING the humiliation<sup>1</sup> of the Savior, the language of Scripture is strong: He “made himself of no reputation,<sup>2</sup> and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion<sup>3</sup> as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phi 2:7-8). This is an outline of our Lord’s humiliation, which has long been and will forever be the wonder and the song of angels and redeemed men. The whole of our Lord’s history on earth was one series of acts of self-emptying and humiliation.

Let us begin with the humble circumstances in which He came into the world. The husband of His mother was an artisan,<sup>4</sup> commonly supposed to be a carpenter (Mat 13:55). Both he and the mother of our Lord were descended from David (Luk 2:4). But this family was fallen so low that when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, their descent from David secured them no attentions or civilities;<sup>5</sup> they were lodged in a house built for cattle. There the mother of our Lord brought forth her child, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes,<sup>6</sup> and laid Him in a manger because there was no room in the inn (Luk 2:7). And when she brought Him to present Him to [God in the temple,] her offering was that of the poorest: “A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” (Luk 2:24). The law of Moses admitted that offering for those who were “not able to bring a lamb” (Lev 12:8). Thus, the most highly favored among women was found in the depths of poverty and in great neglect. Her firstborn shared her lot. I have heard of but one child born in a stable—the holy child Jesus.

At His birth, our Lord had all the weakness of infancy. He was helpless and dependent like other children. The inspired history tells us that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luk 2:52). He had the trials of childhood.

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<sup>1</sup> **humiliation** – Jesus’ obedient submission to His Father, seen in His human life.

<sup>2</sup> *Greek* ἄλλ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν = literally means “He emptied Himself.”

<sup>3</sup> **fashion** – form.

<sup>4</sup> **artisan** – one skilled in any art or trade.

<sup>5</sup> **civilities** – courtesies or politeness.

<sup>6</sup> **swaddling clothes** – clothes consisting of narrow lengths of bandage wrapped round a newborn infant’s limbs to prevent free movement.

No sooner was His birth known than Herod the Great, a cruel and bloody man, became intent on His death. He killed all the young children in one district of the land in the hope that he would thereby surely destroy Jesus. By timely warning from God, that infant Savior was rescued from the threatened evil; but only by flight into Egypt—Egypt, the “Rahab” and “Leviathan” of Scripture. The cruel, idolatrous, and degraded people of that land had a hereditary and inveterate<sup>7</sup> hatred against the Jews; but now their country was a safer asylum to this blessed family than any city or village of Judea.

On their return from Egypt, they settled in Nazareth. By some means this place had been rendered odious.<sup>8</sup> Even the guileless<sup>9</sup> Nathanael shared in the common aversion and cried, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (Joh 1:46). Jesus spent the most of His life here until He was thirty years old. Nazareth is not once mentioned in the Old Testament, nor by Josephus.<sup>10</sup> Prophecy said that Christ should be “despised and rejected of men” (Isa 53:3)...

Nazareth was probably infamous for the fierceness and brutality of its people (Luk 4:16-30). It was not the seat of any famous school. As a place of residence, it had the advantage of privacy; and its geographical position was truly beautiful. Here our Lord lived and wrought at the same craft as Joseph; for His own countrymen said, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” (Mar 6:3). If there was any school at Nazareth, Jesus does not seem to have attended it; for the Jews said, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (Joh 7:15). Another part of Christ’s humiliation consisted in His being tempted (Heb 2:18; 4:15). True, the prince of this world found nothing in Him (Joh 14:30). In His holy soul was no fuel to be kindled by the fiery darts; but it must have filled Him with anguish to have so foul suggestions made to Him. So far as we know, His first great conflict with the adversary was in the wilderness. It lasted forty days (Luk 4:2). Christ was about to enter on His public ministry and retired to the wilderness under the best desires to commune with God. But Satan annoyed Him continually. The temptation grew worse and worse to the close. The adversary then tempted Him to use His miraculous power to prove His deity to Satan and to satisfy His own hunger, as He had eaten nothing for forty days. The wicked one also tempted Him to an act of presumption by throwing Himself from

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<sup>7</sup> **inveterate** – long established, becoming deep-rooted or ingrained.

<sup>8</sup> **odious** – repulsive; detestable.

<sup>9</sup> **guileless** – innocent and without deception.

<sup>10</sup> **Titus Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37 - c.100)** – first century Romano-Jewish historian.

the pinnacle of the temple. Finally, he offered Him immense possessions and great honors, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, if He would commit one act of idolatry. It added not a little to the power of these besetments<sup>11</sup> that they were urged on Christ in His solitude. Although each assault was an utter failure, yet the devil departed from Him but for a season (Luk 4:13). The Savior was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15).

As Jesus was born, so He lived and died poor. He said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Mat 8:20). During His ministry, He seems to have chiefly subsisted upon the charity of some poor, pious women. Well did He know what it was to suffer hunger and want. When a capitation<sup>12</sup> tax was demanded of Him, though it was but half a crown<sup>13</sup> for Himself and Peter, He could not pay it without a miracle.

Another element of Christ’s humiliation was His liability to affliction. Above all that ever lived, He was the “man of sorrows” (Isa 53:3). He was subject to disappointment, grief, vexation, a sense of wrong, a sense of the ingratitude of men, and the pangs arising from a disregard of all the principles of friendship. His holy soul was filled with anguish by His cruel rejection. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (Joh 1:10-11). None of the princes of this world knew Him (1Co 2:8). “We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa 53:3). Those countless annoyances, called *slights*, must have pierced Him deeply. The people of the city where He had been brought up were so offended at His first sermon in their synagogue that they attempted to destroy His life by casting Him down from a high rock (Luk 4:16-30). And when He claimed existence prior to Abraham, the Jews took up stones to cast at Him (Joh 8:59). For saving two men from the most frightful torments, followed by the loss of some swine, the whole city of the Gergesenes “besought him that he would depart out of their coasts” (Mat 8:34). They preferred their swine, madmen, and devils to the Prince of Peace. Afterwards, on His trial, the Jews cried, “Away with him, away with him” (Joh 19:15). They preferred to have a murderer turned loose on their community, rather than that the Son of God should longer teach His heavenly doctrines. Their cry was, “Not this man, but Barabbas” (Joh 18:40). During His whole

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<sup>11</sup> **besetments** – attacks on all sides.

<sup>12</sup> **capitation** – tax or fee paid for each person; head tax.

<sup>13</sup> **half a crown** – half of a British coin worth twenty-five pennies.

ministry, the leaders among His foes denied that God had sent Him (Joh 10:24-26). Never was mission so well attested. Never were attestations<sup>14</sup> so malignantly set aside.

And never were hard names and opprobrious epithets<sup>15</sup> so heaped upon any one. His enemies said He was a deceiver (Joh 7:12), gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Mat 11:19). They said He was in league with the prince of the devils and that by satanic power He wrought miracles. Surely above all others, He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself (Heb 12:3). Nor were these things without their dreadful effects on His refined and tender nature. "His visage<sup>16</sup> was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa 52:14). Speaking in His name, the prophet said, "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa 69:20). The same prophet had elsewhere said in His name, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" (Psa 22:6-7).

The annals of our race furnish no parallel to His history in the lack of sympathy under amazing sufferings. No terms of derision, no taunts in the midst of His agonies were deemed indecent by His enemies (Mat 27:40-43). In His greatest trial, when He most needed the offices of friendship, His "disciples forsook him and fled" (Mat 26:56). The very boldest of all His followers denied Him thrice, and even with oaths and curses (Mar 14:71). Never by countenance did friend express such surprise, regret, and reproof, as when Christ looked on Peter after the cock crew.<sup>17</sup>

He was not only denied by one disciple; He was betrayed by another in a manner full of base hypocrisy, even with a kiss (Luk 22:48). The general motive for His betrayal was the depravity of Judas. The special motive was covetousness. Yet the son of perdition sold Him for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, the amount fixed by the law of Moses as the price of a slave, to be paid to his owner if his death had been brought about by the goring of a neighbor's ox (Exo 21:32). In prophetically speaking of this sum, Zechariah ironically calls it a goodly price. He cast the amount in scorn to the potter in the house of the Lord (Zec 11:13).

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<sup>14</sup> **attestations** – testimonies; proofs.

<sup>15</sup> **hard names and opprobrious epithets** – harsh, cruel names and terms of contempt.

<sup>16</sup> **visage** – appearance; face.

<sup>17</sup> **crew** – past tense of *crow*, which is the loud sound a rooster makes.

Another element in our Lord's humiliation was the character of the testimony on His trial. The witnesses were all suborned.<sup>18</sup> The Jews "sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; <sup>60</sup> But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none" (Mat 26:59-60). That is, the law required two concurring witnesses, and they found not two who agreed. "At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Mat 26:60-61). These witnesses lied, for they had not heard Him say anything about destroying the temple, and what He did say was quite unlike what they alleged. "Destroy this temple"—i.e., kill this body—"and in three days I will raise it up" (Joh 2:19). The thing charged was absurd and frivolous as well as false. No wonder Jesus held His peace and answered nothing. The Jews evidently felt that they had made good no serious charge; for they tried to get from Him a confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. Our Lord [thought] it was a right time to speak, whereupon He made that "good confession" (1Ti 6:13), so precious in the church ever since. He said He was the Christ.

The course of the judge who sat on His trial, while it was a disgrace to himself, was a deep humiliation to Jesus. If history can be trusted, Pilate was a monster of perfidy, avarice, cruelty, and obstinacy.<sup>19</sup> Previously, he had fallen on some poor Galileans and butchered them while they were making their prescribed offerings, thus mingling their blood with their sacrifices (Luk 13:1). No decency of life, no solemnity of religion could restrain him. Over and over again did he confess that Jesus had violated no law, had committed no offence. His wife warned him to do nothing against that just man. He knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up for envy. He was afraid that he would lose his place if he did not give sentence against Jesus. Instead of abiding by his own clear convictions, he turned to the malignant enemies of the innocent sufferer before him and asked them what the sentence should be (*cf.* Mat 27:18-19, 24; Joh 19:12-16). Before yielding to the violence of the mob around the judgment seat, this mercenary and vacillating<sup>20</sup> creature made a feeble effort to convince the Jews that the prisoner before him ought not to die, saying, "Why, what evil hath he done?" (Mat 27:23). This failing, he thought to save his popularity and the life of Jesus by working on their sympathies. So, he delivered Christ over to be scourged. This was a dreadful in-

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<sup>18</sup> **suborned** – bribed to give false evidence.

<sup>19</sup> **perfidy...obstinacy** – treachery, greed, causing suffering without pity, and stubbornness.

<sup>20</sup> **mercenary and vacillating** – greedy and wavering between opinions.

fliction. The back was made bare, the arms were drawn up, the scourge was applied first with the right hand and then with the left. Men often grew faint at the shocking sight. All this had been predicted by the evangelical prophet: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isa 50:6). But all this had no effect in appeasing the rage of the malignant throng. Nor did it strengthen any just purpose in the bosom of the judge. So, he delivered His guiltless victim to be crucified (Mat 27:26). It is often asked, What became of Pilate? His murder of the Galileans and like acts of violence would probably have caused his dismissal, had not Tiberius<sup>21</sup> died. He, however, fell under the displeasure of the successor of that emperor, was degraded from office, became a wretched outcast, and ended his days by committing suicide.

As the form of trial granted to Jesus was a mockery of all justice and decency, so mockery was kept up to the last. They spit in His face and buffeted Him. Others smote Him with the palms of their hands, and asked Him, "Who is he that smote thee?" They stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe, as though He were a royal personage. But all was in derision. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit upon Him and took the reed and smote Him on the head. And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him (Mat 26:67-68; 27:28-31).

It would be wonderful<sup>22</sup> indeed if so long and sleepless sorrow, such scourging and smiting, had not much exhausted His strength. And so we find it. At first by their bidding, He bare His own cross (Joh 19:17); but, as is supposed, growing faint under it, He could bear it no farther. They met a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Matthew says they compelled him to bear the cross. Luke says they laid the cross on him that he might bear it after Jesus (*cf.* Mat 27:32; Luk 23:26). Who this Simon was, friend or foe, or how he felt on the sad occasion is not certain; but he was probably suspected of leaning to the cause of Christ. It is not certain whether he bore the whole cross or only the hinder part of it.

As the procession advanced, there followed Him a great company

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<sup>21</sup> **Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus (42 BC-AD 37)** – Roman emperor.

<sup>22</sup> **wonderful** – astonishing; incredible.

of people and of women that also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, knowing He should soon be through His troubles and seeing the glory that should follow, turning to them, said, “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” He then foretold the awful doom of the holy city (Luk 23:27-31).

Reaching the dreadful spot, Jesus was again stripped and nailed to the cross. Truly, this was the hour of darkness! A few days before, the Son of God was in tears. The night before, He had been in bloody sweat (Luk 22:44). Now He is on the cross, receiving at the hands of men a punishment reserved for the worst criminals and those slaves. Some think hanging on the cross produced dislocation. So they understand that phrase, “All my bones are out of joint” (Psa 22:14). Others think it is figurative language, descriptive of dreadful agony, as if all the bones were dislocated. Perhaps this is the more probable view. The theory of death by crucifixion was the extinction of life, not by strangulation nor by loss of blood, but by nervous distress. The extremities, the seat of very tender sensation, were wounded and lacerated. The distortions of the frame were dreadful. The sufferer was confined to one position, itself great torture if long continued. One may read the history of crucifixion until his feelings are petrified. The details are indeed lacerating. No doubt a graphic description of them in a large assembly would make many swoon away. But the object of this chapter is not to [rip up] sensibilities, but to show how Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wondrous cross! Wondrous tree...But the efficacy of the cross is not in the wood, but in the blood shed by Him Who hung upon it...Every death by the cross was shameful. That of our Lord was peculiarly so. He was crucified between two thieves, and with every mark of ignominy.<sup>23</sup>

Such was the agony of death by the cross that, as a matter of humanity, it seems to have been customary to administer some powerful narcotic to produce insensibility. “Wine mingled with myrrh” was offered to our Savior, but He “received it not” (Mar 15:23). He drew His solace from another source. As He had despised their reproaches and cruelties, so He [despised] their proffered stupefying cup. Christ would end His days with an unclouded intellect. He would not leave the world in voluntary stupor. Yet even the offer of wine mingled with myrrh was soon followed by renewed derision (Mat 27:42-43).

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<sup>23</sup> **ignominy** – disgrace.

The death of the cross is often called accursed. It was so indeed. Paul says: "It is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal 3:13). He refers to Deuteronomy 21:22-23: "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." These texts do not teach that eternal misery always followed this kind of death. We know this is not so. The penitent thief went from the cross to paradise...

Though the sentence given by Pilate was wholly unjust, and though it was with wicked hands that Jesus was crucified and slain (Act 2:23), yet, as He voluntarily and by God's approval stood in our place, He bore "the curse of the law," not for His own, but for our sins. No doubt the Mosaic law pointed to the death of Christ, for above all that ever lived, He was "made a curse" (Gal 3:13), though not for Himself, yet "for us." He was not only forsaken of men, but of God. The bitterest cry ever heard came from the cross: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"<sup>24</sup> (Mar 15:34).

Not long after, our Savior cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. The executioners admitted that He was dead, and neither friend nor foe doubted. The water that came from His side proved that He was dead and cold. But the Lord of heaven and earth had no sepulcher of His own. The love of one of His followers secured Him burial. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor and a rich man, who had hitherto shown much timidity, went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus. He bought fine linen and took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen, laid Him in a sepulcher that was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher (Mar 15:43, 46). Here the Lord lay surrounded by a strong guard of Roman soldiers.

This was the end of His humiliation.

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**William S. Plumer (1802-1880):** American Presbyterian minister and author; born in Greensburg, PA, USA.



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<sup>24</sup> **Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?** – *Aramaic* for "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"



# CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw  
all men unto me.—John 12:32*

**C**HRI<sup>S</sup>T'S crucifixion is Christ's glory.<sup>1</sup> He uses the words *lifted up* to express the manner of His death. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (Joh 12:32-33). But notice the choice of the word to express His death. He does not say, "I, if I be crucified, I, if I be hanged on the tree"; no, but "I, if I be lifted up." And in the Greek, there is the meaning of exaltation: "I, if I be exalted—I, if I be lifted on high." He took the outward and visible fashion of the cross, it being a lifting of Him up, to be the type and symbol of the glory with which the cross should invest even Him. "I, if I be lifted up."

Now, the cross of Christ is Christ's glory. We will show you how. Man seeks to win his glory by the slaughter of others—Christ by the slaughter of Himself. Men seek to get crowns of gold—He sought a crown of thorns. Men think that glory lieth in being exalted over others—Christ thought that His glory did lie in becoming "a worm, and no man" (Psa 22:6), a scoff and reproach amongst all that beheld Him. He stooped when He conquered; and He counted that the glory lay as much in the stooping as in the conquest.

**Christ was glorified on the cross, we say, first, because love is always glorious.** If I might prefer any glory, I should ask to be beloved by men. Surely, the greatest glory that a man can have among his fellows is not that of mere admiration, when they stare at him as he passes through the street and throng the avenues to behold him as he rideth in his triumph. The greatest fame, the greatest glory of a patriot is the love of his country—to feel that young men and maidens, old men and sires,<sup>2</sup> are prepared to fall at his feet in love, to give up all they have to serve him who has served them.

Now, Christ won more love by the cross than He ever did win elsewhere. "O Lord Jesus, Thou wouldst never have been so much loved, if Thou hadst sat in heaven forever, as Thou art now loved since Thou

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<sup>1</sup> See FGB 226, *Christ upon the Cross*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>2</sup> **sires** – title of address formerly used for men of rank and authority.

hast stooped to death. Not cherubim<sup>3</sup> and seraphim,<sup>4</sup> and angels clad in light, ever could have loved with hearts so warm as Thy redeemed above, or even Thy redeemed below. Thou didst win love more abundantly by the nail than by Thy scepter. Thine open side brought Thee no emptiness of love, for Thy people love Thee with all their hearts.” Christ won glory by His cross. He was never so lifted up as when He was cast down; and the Christian will bear witness that though he loves his Master anywhere, yet nothing moves his heart to rapture and vehemence of love like the story of the crucifixion and the agonies of Calvary.

Again: Christ at this time won much glory by fortitude.<sup>5</sup> The cross was a trial of Christ's fortitude and strength, and therein it was a garden in which His glory might be planted. The laurels of His crown<sup>6</sup> were sown in a soil that was saturated with His own blood...Christ looked upon the cross as being His way to honor. “Oh!” said He, “Now shall be the time of My endurance: I have suffered much, but I shall suffer more; and then shall the world see what a strong heart of love I have!” How patient is the Lamb, how mighty to endure! Never would Christ have had such paeans<sup>7</sup> of praise and such songs of honor as He now winneth, if He had avoided the conflict, the battle, and the agony. We might have blessed Him for what He is and for what He wished to do; we might have loved Him for the very longings of His heart; but we never could have praised Him for His strong endurance, for His intrepid<sup>8</sup> spirit, for His unconquerable love, if we had not seen Him put to the severe test of crucifixion and the agonies of that awful day. Christ did win glory by His being crucified.

Again: Christ looked upon His crucifixion as the completion of all His work; therefore, He looked upon it as an exaltation. The completion of an enterprise is the harvest of its honor. Though thousands have perished in the arctic regions and have obtained fame for their intrepid conduct, yet, my friends, the man who at last discovers the passage is the most of all honored; and though we shall for ever remember those bold men who pushed their way through winter in all its might and dared the perils of the deep, yet the man who accomplishes the deed wins more than his share of the glory.

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<sup>3</sup> **cherubim** – angelic beings represented as part human and part animal.

<sup>4</sup> **seraphim** – angels of the highest order, with six wings, hands and feet (Isa 6:1-6).

<sup>5</sup> **fortitude** – unyielding courage in the endurance of pain or adversity.

<sup>6</sup> **laurels** – leaves of a laurel tree woven into a wreath, worn on the head as a symbol of victory or a mark of honor.

<sup>7</sup> **paeans** – songs of praise, thanksgiving, or triumph.

<sup>8</sup> **intrepid** – without fear.

Surely the accomplishment of an enterprise is just the point where the honor hangs. And, my hearers, Christ longed for the cross because He looked for it as the goal of all His exertions. It was to be the place upon which He could say, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30). He could never say, “It is finished,” on His throne; but on His cross He did cry it. He preferred the sufferings of Calvary to the honors of the multitude who crowded round about Him; for, preach as He might, bless them as He might, heal them as He might, still was His work undone. He was straitened.<sup>9</sup> He had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straitened until it was accomplished! (Luk 12:50). “But,” He said, “now I pant for my cross, for it is the topstone<sup>10</sup> of My labor. I long for My sufferings because they shall be the completion of My great work of grace.” Brethren, it is the end that bringeth the honor; it is the victory that crowneth the warrior rather than the battle. So, Christ longed for this, His death, that He might see the completion of His labor. “Ay,” said He, “when I am crucified, I am exalted and lifted up.”

**And, once again, Christ looked upon His crucifixion with the eye of firm faith as the hour of triumph.** His disciples thought that the cross would be a degradation; Christ looked through the outward and visible and beheld the spiritual. “The cross,” said He, “the gibbet<sup>11</sup> of My doom may seem to be cursed with ignominy, and the world shall stand round and hiss at the crucified. My name be forever dishonored as one who died upon the tree; and cavilers<sup>12</sup> and scoffers may forever throw this in the teeth of My friends that I died with the malefactor;<sup>13</sup> but I look not at the cross as you do. I know its ignominy, but I despise the shame—I am prepared to endure it all. I look upon the cross as the gate of triumph, as the portal of victory. Oh, shall I tell you what I shall behold upon the cross? Just when Mine eye is swimming with the last tear and when My heart is palpitating<sup>14</sup> with its last pang; just when My body is rent with its last thrill<sup>15</sup> of anguish, then Mine eye shall see the head of the dragon broken (Gen 3:15); it shall see hell’s towers dismantled and its castle fallen. Mine eye shall see My seed eternally saved; I shall behold the ransomed coming from their prison houses. In that last moment of My doom, when My

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<sup>9</sup> **straitened** – distressed by force of circumstances.

<sup>10</sup> **topstone** – stone forming the top of something, therefore, the highest point.

<sup>11</sup> **gibbet** – upright post upon which the bodies of criminals were hung.

<sup>12</sup> **cavilers** – those who raise annoying petty objections.

<sup>13</sup> **malefactor** – criminal.

<sup>14</sup> **palpitating** – throbbing or beating rapidly.

<sup>15</sup> **thrill** – trembling caused by intense emotion, producing a shudder or tingle in the body.

mouth is just preparing for its last cry of 'It is finished,' I shall behold the year of My redeemed come, I shall shout My triumph in the delivery of all My beloved! Ay, and I shall see then the world, Mine own earth conquered, and usurpers all dethroned, and I shall behold in vision the glories of the latter days, when I shall sit upon the throne of My father David and judge the earth, attended with the pomp of angels and the shouts of My beloved!"

Yes, Christ saw in His cross the victories of it, and therefore did He pant and long for it as being the place of victory and the means of conquest. "I," said Jesus, "if I be lifted up, if I be exalted." He puts His crucifixion as being His glory...

And now I close by noticing the last sweet thought: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Then Christ Jesus will draw all His people to heaven. He says He will draw them unto Himself. He is in heaven; then Christ is the chariot in which souls are drawn to heaven. The people of the Lord are on their way to heaven; they are carried in everlasting arms, and those arms are the arms of Christ. Christ is carrying them up to His own house, to His own throne. By-and-by His prayer—"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (Joh 17:24)—shall be wholly fulfilled. And it is fulfilling now, for He is like a strong courser<sup>16</sup> drawing His children in the chariot of the covenant of grace<sup>17</sup> unto Himself. Oh! Blessed be God, the cross is the plank on which we swim to heaven; the cross is the great covenant transport that will weather out the storms and reach its desired heaven. This is the chariot, the pillars wherewith are of gold and the bottom thereof silver; it is lined with the purple of the atonement<sup>18</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, poor sinner, I would to God [that] Christ would pardon thee. Remember His death on Calvary; remember His agonies and bloody sweat—all this He did for thee, if thou [knowest] thyself to be a sinner. Does not this draw thee to Him?

"Though thou art guilty He is good,  
He'll wash thy soul in Jesus' blood."

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<sup>16</sup> **courser** – large powerful horse, ridden in battle.

<sup>17</sup> **Covenant of Grace** – God's gracious purpose of redemption, designed before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, and accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the benefit of which is applied to all that believe in Him (Gen 3:15; Gen 12:1-3; 2Sa 7:5-17; Jer 31:31-34; Gal 3).

<sup>18</sup> **atonement** – reconciliation with God by removing or covering the guilt of sin; this was accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. See FGB 227, *Atonement*; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

Thou hast rebelled against Him and revolted; but He says, “Return, ye backsliding<sup>19</sup> children” (Jer 3:22). Will not His love draw thee? I pray that both may have their power and influence, that thou mayest be drawn to Christ now, and at last be drawn to heaven. May God give a blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

From a sermon delivered on July 5, 1857, at the Music Hall,  
Royal Surrey Gardens.



At this time, there is a coal of burning love in the breast of Christ. This fire was indeed from everlasting, but the flames are as hot this day as ever. Now it is that Christ loves and lives, and [why does He live] but only to love us and to intercede for us? Christ makes our salvation His constant calling; He is ever at His work: “Yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). There is not one hour in the day, nor one day in a year, nor one year in an age, in which Christ is not busy with His Father in this heavenly employment of interceding for us. He loved us before He died for us, His love being the cause *why* He died for us; and He loves us still in that now He intercedes for us. It is as much as to say, “Christ hath loved us, and He repents not of His love.” Love made Him die for us; and if it were to do again, He would die over again. Yes, if our sins had so required that for every elect person Christ must die several deaths, love, *love* would have put Him willingly upon all these deaths. Oh, the love of Christ towards our poor souls...He carries us on His shoulders, as a man found his sheep, and “layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luk 15:5). Nay, I must yet come nearer; for Christ by His intercession sets us nearer yet: “his left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me” (Song 2:6). He wears us in heaven as a bracelet about His arms, which made the spouse cry out, “Set me as a seal...upon thine arm” (Song 8:6). He stamps and prints us on the palms of His hands, “Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isa 49:16), as if our names were written in letters of blood upon Christ’s flesh. He sets us as a seal upon His heart; that is the expression of the spouse too, “Set me as a seal upon thine heart” (Song 8:6). Nay, so precious are the saints to Jesus Christ that they lodge in heaven in His bowels and in His heart, for they dwell in Christ: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him” (1Jo 4:13). And they dwell in God, and dwell in love: “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God” (1Jo 4:16). I know not what more to say. You know, the manner of the high priests was to carry the names of the children of Israel into the holy of holies on their shoulders and on their breasts; but was it ever heard that any high priest—besides the great “High Priest of our profession” (Heb 3:1)—should carry the names of thousands and millions on his shoulders, on his arms, on his hands, on His bosom, and on his heart...as a memorial before the Lord? Oh, unmatched love!

—Isaac Ambrose.

<sup>19</sup> See FGB 197, *Backsliding*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

# CHRIST'S EXALTATION

Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)

*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him  
a name which is above every name.—Philippians 2:9*

**W**HEREIN consists Christ's exaltation? In His rising from the dead, His ascending into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father,<sup>1</sup> etc.

In what sense hath God exalted Christ? Not in respect of Christ's Godhead, for that cannot be exalted higher than it is. As in Christ's humiliation, the Godhead was not lower, so in His exaltation, the Godhead is not higher; but Christ is exalted as Mediator—His human nature is exalted.

**How many ways is Christ exalted?** Five ways: God hath exalted Christ I. In His titles; II. In His office; III. In His ascension; IV. In His session at God's right hand; V. In constituting Him judge of the world.

**I. God hath exalted Christ in His titles.** *First title:* He is exalted to be Lord: "The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Act 19:17). He is Lord in respect of His sovereignty; He is Lord over angels and men. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mat 28:18). Christ hath three keys in His hand: (1) the key of the grave, to open the graves of men at the resurrection; (2) the key of heaven, to open the kingdom of heaven to whom He will; (3) the key of hell (Rev 1:18), to lock up the damned in that fiery prison. To this Lord all knees must bow: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phi 2:10). *Name* is put here for *person*—to that "holy thing" Jesus (Luk 1:35), to the scepter of that divine person every knee shall bow. *Bowing* is put for *submission*—all must be subdued to Him as sons or captives and submit to Him as to the Lord or Judge: "Kiss the Son" (Psa 2:12) with a kiss of love and loyalty. We must not only cast ourselves into Christ's arms to be saved by Him, but we must cast ourselves at His feet to serve Him.

*Second title:* Christ is exalted to be a prince: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince" (Dan 12:1). Some think it was a

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<sup>1</sup> See FGB 235, *Resurrection* and 243, *Ascension*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

created angel; but it was *Angelus fœderis*—“the angel of the covenant.”<sup>2</sup> He is a great prince: “The prince of the kings of the earth” (Rev 1:5). They hold their crowns by immediate tenure<sup>3</sup> from Him. His throne is above the stars, [and] He hath angels and archangels for His attendants. Thus, He is exalted in His titles of honor.

**II. God hath exalted Christ in His office.** He hath honored Him to be the Savior of the world: “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Act 5:31). It was a great honor to Moses to be a temporal<sup>4</sup> savior; but what is it to be the Savior of souls! Christ is called the “horn of salvation”<sup>5</sup> (Luk 1:69). He saves from sin (Mat 1:21) and from wrath (1Th 1:10). To save is a flower that belongs only to His crown: “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Act 4:12). What an honor this is to Christ! How it makes heaven ring with saints’ praises! They sing hallelujahs to Christ their Savior. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev 5:9).

**III. God hath exalted Christ in His ascension.** If He be ascended, then He is exalted...But the Scripture is plain: He ascended into heaven, “far above all heavens” (Eph 4:10; Luk 24:51)—therefore above the firmament.<sup>6</sup> He is ascended into the highest part of the empyrean heaven,<sup>7</sup> which Paul calls “the third heaven” (2Co 12:2). Concerning Christ’s ascension, two things:

1. The *manner* of Christ’s ascension: (1) Christ, beginning to ascend, blessed His disciples. “And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Luk 24:50-51). Christ did not leave His disciples houses and lands, but He left them His blessing. (2) Christ ascended as a conqueror in a way of triumph. “Thou hast led captivity captive” (Psa 68:18; Eph 4:8). He triumphed over sin, hell, and death; and Christ’s triumph is a believer’s triumph: Christ hath conquered sin and hell

<sup>2</sup> **angel of the covenant** – title of Christ as mediator, “messenger (angel) of the covenant” (Mal 3:1; cf. Gen 48:16, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> **tenure** – authority.

<sup>4</sup> **temporal** – earthly.

<sup>5</sup> **horn of salvation** – The “horn of salvation” (κέρας σωτηρίας, *keras sōtērias*) is drawn from the OT, where it pictures an ox with horns that is able to defeat enemies with the powerful thrust of its protected head (Deu 33:17). (Bock, Luke 1:1-9:50, Vol. 1, 180)

<sup>6</sup> **firmament** – heaven or sky.

<sup>7</sup> **empyrean heaven** – highest and purest region of heaven.

for every believer.

2. The *fruit* of Christ's ascension: Christ's ascension to heaven causeth the descension of the Holy Spirit into our hearts: "When he ascended up on high, he...gave gifts unto men" (Eph 4:8). Christ having ascended in the clouds, as His triumphant chariot, gives the gift of His Spirit to us, as a king at his coronation bestows gifts liberally to his favorites.

**IV. God hath exalted Christ in His session at God's right hand.** "After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mar 16:19). "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph 1:20-21).

What is meant by Christ's sitting at God's right hand? To speak properly, God hath no right hand or left; for being a Spirit, He is void of all bodily parts. But it is borrowed speech—a metaphor taken from the manner of kings who were [in the habit of advancing] their favorites next to their own persons, seating them at their right hand. Solomon caused a seat to be set for his mother the queen and placed her at his right hand (1Ki 2:19). So, for Christ to sit at the right hand of God is to be in the next place to God the Father in dignity and honor.

The human nature of Christ, being personally united to the divine, is now seated on a royal throne in heaven and adored even by angels. By virtue of the personal union of Christ's human nature with the divine, there is a communication of all that glory from the deity of Christ that His human nature is capable of. Not that the manhood of Christ is advanced to an equality with the Godhead, but the divine nature being joined with the human, the human nature is wonderfully glorified, though not deified. Christ as Mediator is filled with all majesty and honor beyond the comprehension of the highest order of angels: Christ in His humiliation descended so low that it was not fit to go lower; and in His exaltation, He ascended so high that it is not possible to go higher. In His resurrection, He was exalted above the grave; in His ascension, He was exalted above the airy and starry heaven; in His sitting at God's right hand, He is exalted above the highest heavens far, "far above all heavens" (Eph 4:10).

**V. God hath exalted Christ in constituting Him judge of the whole world.** "The Father...hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Joh 5:22). At the Day of Judgment shall Christ be exalted superemi-



nently.<sup>8</sup> “He cometh in the glory of his Father” (Mar 8:38). He shall wear the same embroidered robes of majesty as the Father; and He shall come with all His holy angels (Mat 25:31). He Who was led to the bar<sup>9</sup> with a band of soldiers shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels. Christ shall judge His judges; He shall judge Pilate that condemned Him! Kings must leave their thrones and come to His bar. And this is the highest court of judicature,<sup>10</sup> from whence is no appeal.

Use 1. Of information: Branch 1: See Christ’s different state on earth and now in heaven. Oh, how is the scene altered! When He was on earth, He lay in a manger—now He sits on a throne. Then He was hated and scorned of men—now He is adored of angels. Then His name was reproached—now God hath “given him a name which is above every name” (Phi 2:9). Then He came in the form of a servant. And as a servant, [He] stood with His basin and towel and washed His disciples’ feet (Joh 13:4-5)—now He is clad in His prince’s robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before Him. On earth He was a man of sorrow—now He is anointed with the oil of gladness. On earth was His crucifixion—now His coronation. Then His Father frowned upon Him in desertion—now He hath set Him at His right hand. Before He seemed to have no form or beauty in Him (Isa 53:2)—now He is in the brightness of His Father’s glory (Heb 1:3). Oh, what a change is here! “God also hath highly exalted him” (Phi 2:9).

Branch 2: Was Christ first humble and then exalted? Hence learn, the way to true honor is humility: “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luk 14:11). The world looks upon humility as that which will make one contemptible, but it is the ready way to honor. The way to rise is to fall, the way to ascend is to descend. Humility exalts us in the esteem of men, and it exalts us to a higher throne in heaven. “Whosoever...shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat 18:4), viz.,<sup>11</sup> he shall have a greater degree of glory in it.

Branch 3: Christ suffered and then was exalted. See hence that sufferings must go before glory. Many desire to be glorified *with* Christ, but they are not content to suffer *for* Christ. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him” (2Ti 2:12). The wicked first reign and then suffer; the godly first suffer, and then reign. There is...no way to heaven,

<sup>8</sup> **supereminently** – supremely exalted; exalted above others in rank or dignity.

<sup>9</sup> **to the bar** – place in a court of law where the accused person stands.

<sup>10</sup> **judicature** – administration of justice; highest court of a judge’s authority.

<sup>11</sup> **viz.** – from Latin *videlicet*: that is to say; namely.

but through sufferings; no way to the crown, but by the way of the cross. Jerusalem above is a pleasant city—streets of gold, gates of pearl; but we must travel through a dirty road to this city—through many reproaches and sufferings (Act 14:22). We must enter glory as Christ did: first He suffered shame and death, and now [He] is exalted to sit at God's right hand.

Use 2. Of comfort: Branch 1: Christ, being so highly exalted, hath ennobled our nature. He hath crowned it with glory and lifted it above angels and archangels. Though Christ, as He was man, "was made a little lower than the angels" (Heb 2:9), yet as the human nature is united to the divine and is at God's right hand, so the human nature is above the angels. And if God hath so dignified our human nature, what a shame it is that we should debase<sup>12</sup> it! God hath exalted the human nature above the angels, and the drunkard abaseth the human nature below the beasts.

Branch 2: Christ being exalted at God's right hand, the key of government is laid upon His shoulders. He governs all the affairs of the world for His own glory. Do you think when Christ is so highly advanced and hath all power in heaven and earth in His hand, He will not take care of His elect and turn the most astonishing providences to the good of His church? In a clock, the wheels move cross one to another, but all make the clock strike. [Likewise,] Christ, being at His Father's right hand, will make the most cross providences<sup>13</sup> tend to the salvation of His church.

Branch 3: Christ being at God's right hand, we may be assured He hath now finished the work of man's redemption. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb 10:12). If Christ had not fully expiated sin and satisfied God's Law, He would not have sat down at God's right hand but would still lie in the grave; but now He is exalted to glory—this is an evident token He hath done and suffered all that was required of Him for the working out of our redemption.

Branch 4: Though Jesus Christ is so highly exalted in glory, yet He is not forgetful of us on earth. Some, when they are raised to places of honor, forget their friends: when the chief butler was restored to his place at court, then he forgot poor Joseph in prison. But it is not so with Christ: though He be exalted to such glory in heaven, yet He is mindful of His saints on earth. Our high priest hath all the names

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<sup>12</sup> **debase** – lower in dignity; morally corrupt.

<sup>13</sup> **cross providences** – adverse or unfavorable conditions or circumstances.

and [needs] of His people written upon His breastplate. Art thou tempted? Though Christ be in glory, He knows how to pity and [strengthen] thee. “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb 4:15). Dost thou mourn for sin? Christ, though in a glorified state, hears thy sighs and bottles thy tears (Psa 56:8).

Branch 5: Christ being exalted at God’s right hand is for the comfort of believers that they shall one day be exalted to that place of glory where He is. Christ’s exaltation is our exaltation. Christ hath prayed for this: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am” (Joh 17:24). And He is said to go before to “prepare a place” for believers (Joh 14:2). Christ is called the Head; the church is called His body (Eph 1:22-23). The Head being exalted to honor, the body mystical shall be exalted too. As sure as Christ is exalted far above all heavens, so sure will He instate believers in all that glory that His human nature is adorned with (Joh 17:22). As here He puts His *grace* upon the saints, so shortly will He put His *glory* upon them. This is comfort to the poorest Christian. Perhaps thou hast scarce an house to put thy head in; yet thou mayest look up to heaven and say, “There is my house, there is my country, and I have already taken possession of heaven in my Head, Christ. He sits there, and it will not be long before I shall sit there with Him. He is upon the throne of glory, and I have His word for it: I shall sit upon the throne with Him” (see Rev 3:21).

Use 3. Of exhortation: Hath God highly exalted Christ? Let us labor to exalt Him. Let us exalt 1. His person, 2. His truths.

1. Let us exalt Christ in our hearts. Believe! Oh, adore and love Him! We cannot lift Christ up higher in heaven, but we may in our hearts. Let us exalt Him with our lips: let us praise Him! Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, our tongues must be the organs in these temples. By praising and commending Christ, we exalt Him in the esteem of others. Let us exalt Him in our lives by living holy lives...Not all the doxologies and prayers in the world do so exalt Christ as a holy life; this makes Christ renowned and lifts Him up indeed, when His followers walk worthy of Christ.

2. Let us exalt Christ’s truths. Bucholcerus,<sup>14</sup> in his *Chronology*, reports of the nobles of [Poland] that whenever the gospel is read, they

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<sup>14</sup> **Abraham Buchholzer** (1529-1584) – German Protestant theologian; devoted himself to chronological research and 17 years later published *Index Chronologicus*, in which he described the story of the creation of the world until the year 1580.

lay their hands upon their swords, intimating that they are ready to maintain the gospel with the hazard of their lives. Let us exalt Christ's truths [by maintaining] the truths of Christ against error, the doctrine of free grace against merit, [and] the deity of Christ against Socinianism.<sup>15</sup>

Truth is the most orient<sup>16</sup> pearl of Christ's crown! Contend for the truth as one would for a sum of money that it should not be wrested<sup>17</sup> out of his hand. When we exalt His truths, wherein His glory is so much concerned, Christ takes this to be an exalting of Him.

From *The Select Works of the Rev. Thomas Watson* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1855), 137–140, in the public domain.

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**Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686):** English Nonconformist Puritan preacher and author; possibly born in Yorkshire, England, UK.



Let every believing eye look through the thick darkness and behold Jesus as He sits this day upon the throne of His Father. Let every heart rejoice while it sees the many crowns of dominion upon His head. First and foremost, there sparkles about His brow the everlasting diadem of the King of Heaven. His are the angels. The cherubim and seraphim continually sound forth His praise! At His behest the mightiest spirit delights to fly and carry His commands to the most distant world. He has but to speak, and it is done. Cheerfully is He obeyed, and majestically doth He reign! His high courts are thronged with holy spirits, who live upon His smile, who drink light from His eyes, who borrow glory from His majesty. There is no spirit in heaven so pure that it does not bow before Him, no angel so bright that it does not veil its face with its wings when it draweth near Him. Yea, moreover, the many spirits redeemed, delight to bow before Him. Day without night, they circle His throne, singing, "Worthy is He that was slain and hath redeemed us from our sins by His blood. Honor, and glory, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!" To be King of heaven were surely enough! Christ is Lord of all its boundless plains. He laid the precious stones upon which was built the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He is the light of that city, He is the joy of its inhabitants, and it is their loving life evermore to pay Him honor.—*Charles Spurgeon*

That real view which we may have of Christ and His glory in this world by faith is inexpressibly to be preferred above all other wisdom, understanding, or knowledge whatever.—*John Owen*

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<sup>15</sup> **Socinianism** – 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century movement of Faustus and Lelio Socinus, who professed belief in the God of Scripture, but denied original sin, the substitutionary aspect of Christ's atonement, the deity of Christ, and consequently the Trinity.

<sup>16</sup> **orient** – bright; glittering.

<sup>17</sup> **wrested** – taken by force.

# CHRIST'S BEAUTY

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

**T**HERE is no beauty like Christ's beauty. We might expect that such divine glory, if ever it tabernacled on earth—the world's resplendent Shekinah<sup>1</sup>—would be enshrined in a temple in all respects worthy of its dignity. We therefore find language like this: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me” (Heb 10:5). It was a body prepared by the Holy Spirit, of real, yet sinless flesh, in which the Son of God was to dwell. Hence, we find the inspired artist, in portraying Christ's beauty as man, represents Him as “Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips” (Psa 45:2). Himself the source and author of all beauty, His own beauty eclipses all.

We love to trace the creations of His beauty in the varied and endless forms of loveliness that still linger, adorning and enriching this fallen world. Those bright constellations—Christ created them; those burning suns—Christ kindled them; those snow-wreathed Alps, those cloud-capped hills—Christ raised them; those verdant<sup>2</sup> valleys—Christ spread them; that blushing rose, that graceful lily, that exquisite fern, that curious sea-flower tossed upon the shore, that wayside violet that screens the dew-drop from the sun, that winding stream, that leafy grove—Christ formed and penciled it all! Christ clad that magnificent landscape with its robe of living green, scented the air with its fragrance, and hollowed out the depth of that expanding ocean dimpled<sup>3</sup> with beauty by the gentle breeze or dreadful in its grandeur when trod by the giant storm. Truly, “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Ecc 3:11). Oh! I delight to see the incarnate God, Who died to save, scattering from the opulence<sup>4</sup> of His own boundless resources all this jewelry, making man's sinful home so

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<sup>1</sup> **resplendent Shekinah** – dazzling glory of God made visible to the human eye in the form of a radiant cloud of light. It first appeared in the Exodus as a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (Exo 13:21-22). Later it covered Sinai (Exo 24:16), filled the Tabernacle (Exo 40:34-35), and filled the Temple (1Ki 8:11). Significantly, Ezekiel pictured its departure because of sin (Eze 10:18). After a long absence, the Shekinah glory reappeared in Christ at the transfiguration (Mat 17:5).

<sup>2</sup> **verdant** – green with grass or other rich vegetation.

<sup>3</sup> **dimpled** – marked with ripples.

<sup>4</sup> **opulence** – great wealth.

rich, so lovely, so attractive.

But His own beauty—who can describe it? His person so lovely, His nature so holy, His heart so fond, His spirit so gentle, His look so winning, His voice so soothing. His whole character, life, and demeanor so inlaid and resplendent with every human, spiritual, and divine perfection—truly, it was no imaginative picture, and it was no mere oriental imagery with which the church, in her just and lofty conception, described Him as “the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song 5:10) and “altogether lovely” (Song 5:16).

But Christ's beauty is shared with all those who have union with Him. Washed in His blood, robed with His righteousness, and adorned with His graces, each believer is lovely through His loveliness put upon him. And there is more of wonder because there is more of God; there is more of beauty because there is more of Christ in that poor sinner who clings in penitence,<sup>5</sup> faith, and love to the cross, looking up to God as a pardoned child, and pulsating with a life derived from the indwelling Spirit than in all this vast creation, enameled and sparkling with endless forms of loveliness.

Reader, has Christ's beauty caught your eye, and penetrated your soul, transforming you—reflecting His image in your Christlike principles, your Christlike spirit, your Christlike walk, your whole Christlike life? Then, dim and imperfect as is the copy, before long, it will be complete, when you “shall see the king in his beauty” (Isa 33:17) and join the faultless throng who encircle the throne of God and the Lamb. Oh! then, be it your employment to contemplate, study, and reflect the beauty of Christ, for there is no beauty like His! “It is a finished portrait!” exclaimed an accomplished infidel, as the character of Christ was delineated to his view. It is a finished portrait—examine it, transfer it to yourself, and beware how you allow a creature's beauty—a being of human loveliness and love to veil or shade a scintillation<sup>6</sup> of Christ's surpassing beauty from your eye.

From *None Like Christ* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1868),  
21-27, in the public domain.



Wherein lies therefore that great communion of glory that shall be in heaven?  
It is in seeing the glory of Christ, Who is the image of the invisible God  
that is worshipped. As God Himself was invisible, He hath  
stamped His glory upon His Son.—*Thomas Goodwin*

<sup>5</sup> **penitence** – repentance; regret for one's sins.

<sup>6</sup> **scintillation** – sparkle.

# CONTEMPLATING CHRIST'S GLORY

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

**R**EADER, what do you think of Christ? What are your apprehensions of His glory as it has thus far been placed before you? Do you see beauty, surpassing beauty, in Emmanuel? Has His glory broken upon your view? Has it beamed in upon your mind? Has a sight of Jesus, seen by faith, cast you in the dust, exclaiming, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6)?

Your honest reply to these searching questions will decide the nature and the ground of your present hope for eternity. On the confines of that eternity you are now standing. Solemn consideration! It is of infinite moment, then, that your views of the Son of God should be thoroughly examined, sifted, and compared with the inspired Word.

A crown now lowered on your brow, a kingdom stretched at your feet, a world gained and grasped, were as infants' baubles compared with the tremendous interest involved in the question, "What do you think of Christ?" And what do you think of Him? Is He all your salvation and all your desire? Have you laid sinful self and righteous self beneath His cross? And in all your poverty, nakedness, and vileness, have you received Him as made of God unto you, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30)? Does His glory dim all other glory, and does His beauty eclipse all other beauty in your eye? Can you point to Him and say, in the humble confidence of faith and joy of love, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend" (Song 5:16)? Eternal God! But for the righteousness of Your Son, I sink in all my pollution! But for the atoning blood of Emmanuel, I perish in all my guilt! Holy Father, look not on me, but behold my Shield, and look upon the face of your Anointed! And when Your glory passes by—the glory of Your majesty, Your holiness, and Your justice—then put me in the cleft of the rock, and cover me with Your hand while You pass by.

Cultivate frequent and devout contemplations of the glory of Christ. Immense will be the benefit accruing<sup>1</sup> to your soul. The mind

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<sup>1</sup> **accruing** – received in increasing amounts over time.

thus preoccupied, filled, and expanded, will be enabled to present a stronger resistance to the ever advancing and insidious encroachments<sup>2</sup> of the world without. No place will be found for vain thoughts and no desire or time for carnal enjoyments.

Oh, how crucifying and sanctifying are clear views of the glory of Emmanuel! How emptying, humbling, and abasing! With the patriarch, we then exclaim, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And with the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips...mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (Isa 6:5). And with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal 6:14). Oh, then, aim to get your mind filled with enlarged and yet expanding views of the glory of the Redeemer! Let it, in all the discoveries it affords of the divine mind and majesty, be the one subject of your thoughts, the one theme of your conversation. Place no limit to your knowledge of Christ. Ever consider that you have but read the preface to the volume, you have but touched the margin of the sea. Stretching far away beyond you, are undiscovered beauties, and precious views, and sparkling glories, each encouraging your advance, inviting your research, and asking the homage of your faith, the tribute of your love, and the dedication of your life.

Go forward, then! The glories that yet must be revealed to you in a growing knowledge of Jesus, what imagination can conceive, what pen can describe them? "Thou shalt see greater things than these" is the promise that bids you advance. Jesus stands ready to unveil all the beauties of His person and to admit you into the very arcade<sup>3</sup> of His love. There is not a chamber of His heart that He will not throw open to you; not a blessing that He will not bestow upon you; not a glory that He will not show to you. You shall see greater things than you have yet seen: greater depths of sin in your fallen nature shall be revealed; deeper sense of the cleansing efficacy of the atoning blood shall be felt; clearer views of your acceptance in the Beloved; greater discoveries of God's love;<sup>4</sup> and greater depths of grace and glory in Jesus shall be enjoyed. Your communion with God shall be closer, and more the fruit of adopting love in your heart; your feet shall be as hinds' feet, and you shall walk on your high places. Your peace shall

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<sup>2</sup> **insidious encroachments** – subtly spreading intrusions.

<sup>3</sup> **arcade** – covered passageway lined with shops.

<sup>4</sup> See FGB 238, *God's Love*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



flow as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea (Isa 48:18). Sorrow shall wound you less deeply; affliction shall press you less heavily; tribulation shall affect you less keenly—all this and infinitely more will result from your deeper knowledge of Jesus. Ah, wonder not that the heaving, panting, thirsting soul of the apostle exclaimed, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phi 3:8, 10). “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD” (Hos 6:3).

Let your life be a clear reflection of the glory of the Redeemer. The saints of God are the only witnesses to this glory—the only reflectors the Lord has in this dark and Christ-denying world. Holiness, springing from the fount of the Spirit’s indwelling grace, cherished and matured by close views of the cross and imparting a character of sanctity and beauty to every act of your life, will be the highest testimony you can bear to the Redeemer’s glory. That glory is entrusted to your hands. It is committed to your guardianship.

Seeing, then, that it is so, “what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2Pe 3:11)! How exact in principles, and upright in conduct—how watchful over temper and how vigilant where most assailed, how broad awake to the wiles of the devil, and how watchful against the encroachments of sin, how strict in all transactions with the world; and how tender, charitable, meek, and forgiving in all our conduct with the saints! Alas! We are at best but dim reflectors of this great glory of our Lord. We are unworthy and unfaithful depositories of so rich a treasure! How much of clinging infirmity, of unmortified sin, of carelessness of spirit, of unsanctified temper, of tampering with temptation, of a lack of strict integrity and uprightness, dims our light, neutralizes our testimony for God, and weakens, if not entirely destroys, our spiritual influence! We are not more eminently useful because we are not more eminently holy. We bring so little glory to Christ because we seek so much our own. We reflect so faint and flickering a beam because our posture is so seldom that of the apocalyptic angel, “standing in the sun” (Rev 19:17). We realize so imperfectly our oneness with and standing in Christ; and this will ever foster a feeble, fruitless, and drooping profession of Christianity. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (Joh 15:4).

Oh, to know more of this abiding in Christ! See how Jesus invites His saints to it. Are they fallen? He bids them take hold of His

strength. Are they burdened? He bids them cast that burden on His arm. Are they wearied? He bids them recline on Him for rest. Does the world persecute them...? He bids them take refuge within the hallowed sanctuary of His own pierced and loving heart. Do they need grace? He bids them sink their empty vessel beneath the depths of His ocean fulness and draw freely “more grace” (Jam 4:6). Whatever corruptions distress them, whatever temptations assail them, whatever adversity grieves them, whatever cloud darkens them, whatever necessity presses upon them—as the watchful Shepherd, as the tender Brother, as the faithful Friend, as the great High Priest, He bids His saints draw near and repose in His love.

Oh, He has a capacious<sup>5</sup> bosom: there is room, there is a chamber in that heart for you, my Christian reader! Do not think your lot is desolate, lonely, and friendless. Do not think that all have forsaken you and that in sadness and in solitude you are threading your way through an intricate desert. There is One that loves you, that thinks of you, that has His eye upon you, and is at this moment guiding, upholding, and caring for you: that one is Jesus! O that you could but look into His heart and see how He loves you; O that you could but hear Him say, so gently, so earnestly, “Abide in my love!” (Joh 15:10). Cheer up; you are in Christ’s heart, and Christ is in your heart. You are not alone: your God, even your Father, is with you. Your Shepherd guides you; the Comforter spreads His wings around you, and heaven is bright before you. Soon you will be there. The pilgrim will repose his weary limbs; the voyager will be moored in his harbor of rest; the warrior will put off his armor and shout his song of triumph. Then look up! Christ is yours, God is yours, heaven is yours. If God is for you, who can be against you? (Rom 8:31). And if you find disappointment in created good, it will but endear Jesus; and if you know more of the inward plague, it will but drive you to the atoning blood; and if you have storms and tempests, they will but shorten the voyage and waft you the quicker to glory. “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2Co 9:15).

From “The Prophetical Glory of Christ” in *The Glory of the Redeemer*  
(London: John F. Shaw, 1845), 117-123, in the public domain.



What will heaven be, but seeing the glory of Christ?  
—Thomas Goodwin

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<sup>5</sup> **capacious** – spacious; able to hold much.