

Christ — Essential to God

Genesis 1: 1, 2; Matthew 3: 13-17; Acts 2: 1-3; 1 Corinthians 14: 25; 1 Corinthians 15: 28.

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If I were asked to summarise my remarks, I would say that what I want to show, by the help of the Holy Spirit, is the absolute essentiality of Christ to God. That is what I want to speak about. Is Christ essential to us? He is indeed, blessed be His Name, but He is essential to God.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The scientist may search with his telescope or probe with his microscope; the agnostic may cavil in his dark lack of knowledge as to why God created the heaven and the earth, but we know. Let me say at once that faith enters into this matter. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," (Heb. 11: 3). "For Thy pleasure they are and were created," (Rev. 4: 11). The moment the will of God is introduced you get two things, one blessed, one malign. The moment the will of God is introduced the mind must of necessity be focused on Christ. In no other way could the will of God be brought in. It is established by One Who loved that will, Who enshrined it in His heart. But the moment the will of God is brought into the universe, the devil opposes it. He had opposed it before the condition seen in the second verse of Scripture. The earth was waste and empty, but God did not create it so. Satan had opposed the will of God, and how did he oppose it? In opposition to the Son of God. In Ezekiel 28, we read of that mighty being clothed in gold and precious stones, yet not content with the status that God had given him. He lifted up his heart in pride and it was against Christ, not yet known as Christ, but that blessed One. The feelings of God came into it. Could we think that God did not feel this opposition to His Well-Beloved Son? Beloved brethren, He **did**. Do we? If we felt the opposition to God's beloved Son it would bring us right out of the world, because all the world lies in the lap of the devil, the one who had opposed Christ from the outset. No lover of Jesus will want to have part in a system which is marked by diametrical opposition to Christ.

The Spirit moved upon the waters. Hidden in that word "moved" are the feelings of God. He was not moving arbitrarily; He was not moving casually; He took account of the fact that the creation which was brought into being for the will and glory of God which must centre in Christ, had been besmirched by the awful movements of the devil. You will find that the enemy made several definite attacks against the establishment of the will of God in this scene. One was in Egypt when he said through Pharaoh that every male child was to be thrown into the Nile. Why? In the garden of Eden God said that the seed of the woman would crush, as the word really is, the serpent's head. The devil was on the look-out for a man, and when God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," he knew from whence that Man was coming, and he set himself vehemently against that nation. He would destroy that nation. Why? Not because he particularly hated the Jews but he would not have Christ come in. "If it be a son then ye shall kill him." God ordered otherwise. There were women there who treasured the thoughts of God, and feared Him. Beloved brethren, the will of God stands related, precious and intimately, to His own subjective work by His Spirit in your heart and mine. That is the great banner against the movements of the devil, the consolidation of the work of God in the heart of His people. The position was saved by the women and God honoured them. He built them houses; not tents, houses. It would suggest God's desire that such features should have a **permanent** dwelling place amongst His people. How blessed if God can perceive in your heart and in mine a desire for the preservation of that which is precious to Christ!

In the book of Esther we see another crisis in the history of God's people. The Agagite was there, the enemy of God and His people; in type the enemy of Christ. The position was again saved by a woman, indicative as we have said of the subjective work in the hearts of the people of God. Esther, Hadassah her name as of Israel, meaning, "a myrtle tree." If the Scriptures are searched you will find that when God mentions the myrtle tree He is delighting in preserving that which stands related, typically, to Christ. "Instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the LORD for a name," (Isaiah 55: 13). Then we read in Zechariah of the "Angel of the LORD . . . among the myrtle trees," and the LORD says, "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; . . . the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem," (Zech. 1: 11, 16, 17).

In the day of recovery spoken of in Nehemiah, as the joy of the feast of booths entered into the heart of the recovered people, they fetched trees as instructed in Lev. 23, but, amongst others, they added the "myrtle tree." Surely there was joy to God as He regarded His peoples' affections rejoicing in Himself?

The God of glory appeared to Abraham calling him out, a man called out from idolatry to be here for God. Stephen, who speaks of this in Acts 7, looked into the opened heavens and saw "the glory of God, and Jesus." Beloved brethren, the glory of God and Jesus! Jesus is essential to the glory of God and if the God of glory appeared to Abraham calling him out, it is in Christ at God's right hand we see the mighty triumph God has secured, a Man in the glory of God. It says in Psalm 29, where the only other reference to the God of glory is made, "Jehovah sitteth upon the deluge" (New Trans.). The word for flood here is the same as in Genesis, but God sits above it all. He sits above all the judgments that have been necessary because of the failure of man to regard Him through listening to the devil, but He also reigns forever. The completeness of the victory is seen in Christ at His right hand. Then God takes up a people for Himself, to dwell among them. This involved the great truth of redemption and only the blood of that lamb — speaking so precious of Christ — could effect this. Having brought His people out He indicates the details of His Sanctuary and commences with this precious word "Make an Ark," (Exodus 25: 8-10). Beloved, if God would dwell among His people, the central object of that sphere is the ark of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold, typically Christ.

The first Psalm brings before us the moral features of Christ. Each book of Psalms ends in a doxology, and the climax is "Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD." But all begins with the beauties of Jesus. What a victory, beloved brethren! This is how God works. All the Psalms, how blessed they are, ending with everything that hath breath praising the LORD and all based upon the fact that God has found a blessed Man whose every moral feature rejoices His heart. It is **that** Man Whom He sets on His holy hill of Zion. Let the heathen rage; let men in their concerted actions set themselves against the bands and cords of God; let them strive for the highest place, if they could get there they would find it occupied, for **Christ** is there.

In Proverbs, that book of wisdom, we have the prophecy of Agur, the son of Jakeh, (Prov. 30). The word prophecy there is the same word as that used in relation to Chenaniah the master of music. Ithiel means "God is;" Ucal means "God must prevail." I can understand that any prophecy with those thoughts in mind will take on the feature of music. Prophesying as having what Ithiel and Ucal represent in mind will cause the hearts of the saints to skip like lambs and bound in responsive joy to Christ. This prophecy was an utterance, and that utterance means there had been a discourse in his own heart, and he had the sense of confirmation in his own spirit that what he said would be established. We have this music ringing in our hearts tonight. We are assured that every word God has said in relation to that blessed Man is going to be established. God is, let the agnostic go out of sight, "he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." What will

the reward be? — constant, continuous, fresh and blessed impressions of the preciousness of Jesus. The winds must be gathered, winds which the devil has raised in this world in his antagonism to God. Such an attempt was seen on the lakes of Gennesaret; but he did not know Who was there. Let us adoringly contemplate the majesty of the Man Who could stand up and say to the waves "be still."

The waters have to be bound, the waters of death needed to be overcome. Who can do it? Jesus. The rights of God have to be established to the ends of the earth. Who can do it? "What is His name and what is His son's name, if thou canst tell." God would tell me on every page of Scripture that Christ is essential to His glory.

I move on to Isaiah, the beginning of the prophets, and I see in Isaiah one who as a prophet is characterised by his word before he speaks it. His name means, "The salvation of Jah." As I think of Jah, my mind goes to Psalm 68, which is full of the movements of Jah. I see three outstanding things in that Psalm. I see every enemy scattered; then I see God filling the scene of death with the blessed compassionate love of His Own heart. God, Who is presented to us in that Psalm doing such marvellous things, is said to "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows." What makes the fatherless and the widows? Death. In the scene where death has robbed God of His pleasure in man and the pleasure of man in his God, God pours out His compassion. What a triumph! How did He do it? In Jesus. See that poor woman coming out of the gate at Nain. The Lord was going to do something spectacular; He was going to cancel a funeral procession, but there was something greater than that, for it says, "He had compassion on her." "The father of the fatherless and the judge of the widows." There is a third thing in that Psalm, and it all stands related to a Man ascended on high. "Thou has ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts in Man, and even for the rebellious, for the dwelling there of Jah Elohim," (Psalm 68: 18, New Trans.). That is the triumph, a scene where the enemies' power has been broken; where affections are filled with the compassions of God, and where God Himself dwells.

We go on to Isaiah 6. In the previous chapters, which are a preface to the book, we find, in spite of the rebellion of the people of God, that God holds to His thoughts. His righteousness is there; His redemption is there; the majesty of His glory is there; His ways are there; His paths are there. Then comes a moment when the man after the flesh goes out of sight and dies, that leprous man; and there comes into view a blessed Man. You say, It is the sixth of Isaiah! I know, but **Christ** is in mind, (See John 12: 39-41). "His train filled the temple," and "the whole earth is full of His glory." He fills heaven and earth. All the thoughts of God in heaven and earth shall be brought together. Indeed, He says in the beginning of the book, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth." The only way He can bring them together and fill them both with His glory is in Jesus, there is no other way. We could go through all the prophets in the same way, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," (Rev. 19: 10). The Eunuch in Acts 8 is reading from Isaiah; Philip goes to him and begins at the same Scripture and preaches to him, "Jesus." Wherever he had been reading, Philip could have commenced at the same Scripture and preached to him, "Jesus."

We come to the New Testament, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Christ comes to establish the rights of the throne of God, the Son of David; and as the Son of Abraham He is the blessed administrator of every promise. "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us," (2 Cor. 1: 20). Not at the expense of the throne of God, nor at the expense of the glory of God; nor at the expense of the will of God. As He moved through this scene the gospels portray His every word, every act, as pleasurable to God; all that comes into the sphere of revelation was seen perfectly displayed in that blessed Man. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matt. 3: 17).

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down and He did two things. He not only filled each one, but He filled the place where they sat. He established a realm in which He should work, and then He sat upon each one of them. Why did He do it? He was to take of the things of Christ and show them to them, He was commissioned to exalt that blessed Person. This is the Spirit's day and, beloved brethren, what the Holy Spirit has been doing right on from Pentecost is to exalt Christ. He came to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, and to reproduce in the saints the features of the only Man Who has stood unswervingly for the will of God. The work of God in our hearts is something that the enemy can find no point of contact with. This is the triumph of God in the very place where Jesus has been refused and cast out, when it looked as though the enemy had triumphed. One of the things which is going to rejoice my heart is that I am going to hear every tongue say Lord to Jesus. In the meanwhile, beloved, I have said Lord to Him; you have said Lord to Him, and what does it mean? As coming under His authority God would work out His will in us. God has made a new beginning, this wonderful beginning which He ever had in mind in Christ. In the day of the Spirit you find hearts coming under the influence of the preciousness of Christ. The glorious result is that in a world which wholly lies in the lap of the wicked one there are men and women who are bearing testimony to the fact that God is amongst them in truth. Everything that Jesus did or said was a perfect replica of how God would have done it. Beloved, I am not exalting the saints above measure, we should be nothing were it not we are the complement of Christ, but as brought to Him and under the power of the Spirit, our demeanour, our words, our actions should speak of God. If you and I desire to be here expressive of God, we do it as the love of God takes possession of our hearts. Where do I see the love of God? In Jesus. If the love of God takes possession of our hearts and transforms our minds, and thoughts, and words, and life, there is a testimony to men that **God** is amongst us.