

# The Declarations of God as to the Person of Christ

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On only two occasions has the voice of THE FATHER been actually heard by men. In Old Testament days, before the truth of the Trinity stood clearly revealed, we do frequently get God speaking face to face with men, as with Moses, for example. With the advent of Christ, however, everything is changed. At His baptism the Trinity — Father, Son, and Spirit — stood forth in a clear light, and the Father's voice was heard saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1: 11). This was a personal declaration to the Son.

The second occasion was at the Transfiguration, when the same voice was not only heard, but evidently addressed itself *to men*, saying, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him" (Mark 9: 7).

There was a third occasion when the Father's voice was uttered to the Son in the hearing of men (see John 12: 28), but apparently it was only heard as a peal of thunder by them.

All this is strikingly in keeping with the fact declared in Hebrews 1: 2, that the Son has become the spokesman of the Godhead, being Himself more than a spokesman, since He is Himself that which He expresses. The Father therefore first expresses His personal delight in Him, and then declares that delight to men, adding the significant words, "Hear Him." From that time onward it is the Son who speaks, and we listen to Him.

But though these are the only occasions when man is permitted to hear the Father's voice speaking of or to the Son, we are permitted to read in the Scriptures words which are a prophetic declaration of the thoughts of God the Father towards the Son. It is even as though they were directly addressed to Him.

Wonderful words such as these stand out by themselves and have a unique place, just as the prayer of the blessed Lord recorded in John 17 can be compared to no other. Nothing can exceed the privilege of being allowed to hear the Son addressing the Father, or the Father addressing the Son.

In the early chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we have the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ so strikingly emphasised in contrast to all who went before, we find five distinct utterances from God the Father to the Son quoted from the Old Testament. They are all found in the Messianic psalms, and are here grouped together by the Spirit of God like a constellation of shining stars declaring the glory of JESUS.

Let us briefly consider them:

## **At His Birth.**

1. *"For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son this day have I begotten Thee?" (Heb.1: 5).*

This is a quotation from Psalm 2 which contemplates the raging and opposition of men which will precede the glorious appearing of the Christ, when He will be set as King upon God's holy hill of Zion. In verse 7 Messiah speaks, declaring the divine decree concerning Himself.

This decree is not only quoted by the Spirit in Hebrews 1: 5, as above, but is also quoted in Acts 13: 33, when Paul was preaching in the synagogue at Antioch. This latter quotation fixes for us the bearing of the decree. It is connected with the way God took to fulfil the promises made to the fathers,

viz. by the *raising up* of Jesus. (The word "again" should not be in this verse, see R.V. or N.T.)

God had "raised up" many a prophet in bygone days, as Hebrews 1 tells us, but the raising up of Christ was an act distinct from all else. He was born of a woman indeed, but let us never forget that the power of the Holy Ghost was so intimately concerned with His "raising up" that it is written "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1: 35).

Here is a ray of light concerning His glory. It is as "the Son" — the second Person of the Trinity, as we speak — that God has spoken, revealing Himself to us, but to do it He became Man. But having thus humbled Himself to become the great spokesman of the Godhead there is risk of His own proper glory being obscured, and hence the decree is published, and we are permitted to hear the utterance of God the Father to Him spoken, as it were, at the very moment of His birth. The Man Christ Jesus is *the Son of God*.

### **As He Enters Millennial Glory.**

2. *"But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows"* (Heb. 1: 8, 9).

Psalm 45 is now laid under contribution by the Spirit of God, and we travel in thought into millennial scenes.

That psalm is a song of triumph in which the godly celebrate the entrance of Messiah upon His kingdom of glory. The verses quoted by the Spirit of God in Hebrews 1 are its climax.

In verse 1 Messiah is "the King."

In verse 2 He is full of grace, blessed of God, and transcending in all moral perfections the children of men.

In verses 3, 4, and 5 He is seen in majesty and power, executing judgment, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness."

All this is good and moves the heart of the Psalmist until he overflows in ready praise.

But verses 6 and 7 are the voice of God, addressed to Messiah Himself. We should have hardly known this were it not for Hebrews 1: 8. It is even as if the Father Himself interrupts the praise of the Psalmist. Good as that was, it is not enough. We are in spirit suddenly lifted as on the wings of an eagle, up and up and up, until, piercing the highest cloud strata, the light of the sun bursts undimmed upon our vision. Messiah is GOD. He is so saluted of God the Father! His throne is for ever, His sceptre is right.

In that millennial day Messiah, who is God, will take the throne and wield the sceptre, but not as unidentified with the lowly path He trod, owning God as His God. He loved righteousness unto death. He hated wickedness unto death — and that death, the death of the cross; and therefore He sits on the throne, anointed by His God with the oil of gladness above His companions. This is morally right. One great "Amen" will fill the world on that day.

In these quotations in Hebrews 1, then, we step from the utterance of God the Father to the Son at His birth as Son of God in time to this utterance at the moment of millennial glory — from the *beginning* of God's WAYS in connection with Christ to their *consummation*. We sometimes sing:

"Son of Man, His incarnation

Opened first the tale of grace,  
Son of God, in new creation,  
Leader of a chosen race.  
Well may glory  
Crown Him in the ordered place!"

But the beginning and the end could not be thus happily brought together were there not a middle link. This, in Hebrews 1 the Spirit of God hastens to supply.

### **In View of Death.**

3. "*And [He saith], Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail "* (Heb. 1: 10-12.)

There is the middle link! Between incarnation and millennial glory there lay the cross and all that it involved, and hence the Spirit of God with divine skill extracts these matchless verses from Psalm 102 and enshrines them here.

Psalm 102 is "a prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." In it we have supplied to us by the spirit of prophecy the very utterance of the soul of Jesus when He knelt in Gethsemane's garden contemplating the cross.

From the beginning down to the middle of verse 24 we have Messiah's voice. He pours out His sorrows into Jehovah's ear; He had been lifted up as the promised Messiah, and cast down that He might bear the judgment and the curse (ver. 10). His holy mind travels on to the days of glory yet in store for Zion, and the gathering together of the people at last in peace and blessing; and yet He, the Holy One of God, weakened in strength, and shortened in days. Feeling all these things in perfection, His cry — His strong crying and tears, as Hebrews 5: 7 puts it — is, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days."

Then Jehovah speaks — though again we should not have known it but for Hebrews 1: 8 and 10. In that great crisis, the most supreme of all in Messiah's history, He is saluted by Jehovah as "the Father of eternity" (Isa. 9: 6, N.T.).

Higher and higher yet we soar. The Jesus who has endeared Himself to our hearts by dying is declared to be the Creator, the Sustainer, and the ultimate Finisher of all things. He is THE SAME. Here we reach — so it seems to the writer — a point beyond which it is impossible to go. The *mind* fails, and spiritual affections alone come to the rescue. When we can no further investigate we can worship.

Is it not most fitting that these exquisite words should be the utterance of God the Father to the Son in *the hour of death*? When Jesus had in self-denying love abased Himself to the lowest point, that just then He should be saluted by that which gives expression to the highest point of His glory.

Jesus, then, received this wonderful declaration of His glory just before He entered that tremendous hour when

". . . desolate but undismayed  
With wearied frame and thorn-crowned head

He, God-forsaken, man-betrayed  
Went up for us to Calvary,  
And dying there in grief and shame  
He saved us — blessed be His Name "

### **In Resurrection.**

4. "*But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?*" (Heb. 1: 13).

After death, resurrection and exaltation. What else could possibly follow the death of such an One as we have seen Jesus to be? And so the Spirit of God next selects these words from Psalm 110.

These are the words which Jehovah said unto David's Lord, words which completely puzzled the Pharisees (see Matt. 22: 41-46), because they involved something of the glory of His person which they were determined not to admit. David saluted this distant descendant of his as his Lord because He is Son of God as well as Son of David.

God not only raised up Jesus from the dead, but gave Him glory, and that as seated at His right hand, the place connected with power and administration. This reference is particularly connected with the present moment. It defines Christ's present position while waiting for the kingdom in power when Jehovah will send the rod of His strength out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies, exalted by His willing people.

To-day, however, He is rejected, and it is as the rejected yet risen One that these words are addressed to Him, expressing the divine satisfaction in Him. As the result of the way in which He glorified God in death, He is glorified in God, and that immediately (see John 13: 32)

Four times over, exclusive of this quotation from Psalm 110, do we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews of Christ being seated at the right hand of God.

In Hebrews 1: 3 we read He "set Himself down [N.T.] on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here this exalted position evidently stands connected with the *exceeding greatness of His person*.

Hebrews 8: 1 He is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." This is as High Priest. He is there in virtue of the *exceeding dignity of His office*.

Hebrews 10: 12. He "offered one sacrifice for sins" and "for ever," *i.e.* "as a perpetual thing" He "sat down on the right hand of God" — the place is His because of the *exceeding perfection of His work*.

Hebrews 12: 2. He has "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Here, as the context plainly shows, it is because of the *exceeding moral glory of the whole path He trod* as the Author and Finisher of faith.

Is there not ample reason here for this utterance of Psalm 110, the like of which was never uttered to angels? Indeed there is.

### **As Received into Glory.**

5. "*Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*" (Heb. 5: 6). This utterance is clearly connected with the foregoing in Psalm 110, and in Hebrews 5 it is with equal distinctness linked on with the utterance in Psalm 2. Christ did not elevate Himself into the high priestly office, but He who

said to Him "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," He who saluted Him as His Son in incarnation, has lifted Him up to glory as Lord in resurrection, and has inducted Him as an eternal Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Here we reach that which has an application to ourselves. Each previous utterance has been purely personal to Christ Himself in its bearing. As Priest after the order of Melchisedec He is the great Sustainer of everything for God. It is quite evident that He is at present exercising that priesthood after the pattern of Aaron (see Heb. 2: 17, 18; Heb. 4: 9-16), yet He is not of Aaron's order. That was a changeable priesthood connected with a material and visible order of things. He is unchangeable, eternal, outside man's genealogies and time-reckonings, and therefore Melchisedec, the mysterious king-priest of Abraham's day, has become the type of His order.

Such an One as this has become our great High Priest. We are entitled to read into the "Thou" of this verse all the wealth of power and love and glory we have previously contemplated, and say "THOU art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Can we wonder that presently the Spirit of God should add, "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).

This last quotation of the five stands out from the others also in that it is connected with an oath. Hebrews 7: 20-22 refers to this, and the inference drawn is that it signalizes the immense superiority of the new covenant. A "better testament" has been established. By dying Jesus became "surety" for it, and now living in resurrection He sustains as Priest both the covenant and those who are under it. In regard to Himself personally no oath could possibly be needed, but here it is His official position that is in question. A position upon which depends the *sustaining* of all the redeemed in life and blessing. Here an oath is most appropriate. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent."

"*Will not repent.*" Thanks, then, be to God, no disaster shall ever overtake that new covenant or those who are under it. We shall be carried through into God's eternal day of REST. We may safely sing:

"Peace, perfect peace, the future all unknown.

Jesus we know, and *He is on the throne.*"

Does it not seem, then, that we are permitted to hear the utterances of God the Father to the Son in the great moments of crisis which He met with in consequence of His having stooped in lowly grace to become the Mediator?

1. At His birth.
2. As He enters into His millennial glory.
3. In full view of death.
4. In resurrection.
5. As received up into glory.

The first gives us the first step in this wonderful story. The second the consummation of the work in the mediatorial kingdom. The last three give us the necessary steps to its accomplishment.