

"The Word became flesh"

John 1: 14; 1 John 4: 2.

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According to these and many other passages of the Word of God it is evident that the predilection of God was with men. Christ, the eternal Word, in emptying Himself (Philippians 2: 5-8) passed by the hosts of unfallen angels and became a Man, infinite grace! The designs of God for His own glory and pleasure were inextricably associated with highest blessing for His creature man. Though sinful and rebellious and plunged into such abysmal darkness and distance, men should be brought near to God, and in order that this might be accomplished our Lord became a Man.

In 1 John 4: 2 we read — "Every spirit which confesses Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God." How true and how increasingly necessary it is to emphasise — "Jesus Christ *come . . .*". This stresses His pre-incarnate existence and testifies to His Deity. It is equally necessary to emphasise — "*come in flesh.*"

He became Man, wonder of wonders! This witnesses the interest of God in men. In Proverbs 8 we are privileged to view our Lord as Wisdom personified. Before time began — "before His works of old . . . I was brought forth . . . when he prepared the heavens, I was there . . . when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him . . . and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and *My delights were with the sons of men.*"

So the Word became flesh and tabernacle amongst us, full of grace and truth. John says, "and we beheld His glory." Yes, there was downstooping; there was self-emptying; there was the humbling of Himself — but there was "*glory*". He brought into flesh the glory and sweetness of His eternal relationship with the Father.

John 3: 12, 13.

Having spoken with Nicodemus of the Kingdom of God and of the necessity of New Birth for either seeing or entering that Kingdom, He now speaks of the heavenly side of the Kingdom. All that which "a master of Israel" would have known from the Old Testament as to the Kingdom, fell within the range of our Lord's expression — "earthly things." Yet He was here in the grace of His incarnation to witness of "heavenly things." Hence, we have His remarkable statement — "And no man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which *is in heaven.*"

Already in John 1: 18 we have had, "which *is in* the bosom of the Father." This "which (who) is in" is a divine and eternal predicate. Our Lord in becoming Man has given up nothing of His Godhead — He has not ceased to be all that He ever was in the co-equality of Godhead. And there He stood, corporeally present and apparent to Nicodemus, yet He said something about Himself, under a title which belonged to Him in His Manhood — "*Son of Man,*" which could only be true because of His Godhead. "Son of Man," a human title; "Who is in heaven" — a divine predicate. He had taken upon Himself flesh and blood (see Hebrews 2: 14) in order to carry into effect the eternal purpose of God. The Father's work, given Him to do, would remove every impediment to the outflow of divine and eternal love. The Son came to die in order that the love of God might be known, enjoyed, and responded to by men who otherwise would be righteously consigned to the misery of eternal woe.

Thus our Lord went on to speak of His lifting up as Son of Man, that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish but have eternal life. Praise His blessed Name for ever.

John 6: 61, 62. "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"

If, in coming down, He never ceased to be all that which He had ever personally been, so in going up He did not cease to be what He had become in coming down. The blessedness of this is emphasised to us; He has gone up where He was before, but in a condition in which He was not there before; He has gone up in Manhood — He abides a Man for ever. How necessary then it is for us all to know that in becoming flesh He did not cease to be God, and now that He has gone from earth to heaven, having by His work of redemption — His sacrificial work on the Cross — opened heaven and heavenly blessing to men, He has not nor shall He ever, cease to be *Man*. Thus there is emphasised to us that the predilection of God is with men; and so we delight to sing:

"We bless Thee, God and Father,
We joy before Thy face;
Beyond dark death for ever,
We share Thy Son's blest place.
He lives a Man before Thee,
In cloudless light above,
In Thine unbounded favour —
Thine everlasting love."

John 14: 1-3. "I go to prepare a place for you."

In taking His place in Manhood in the Father's house He has prepared a place for men there. He is not busy *preparing* the place, no, His going there in abiding Manhood *has prepared* the place for His own. Such is His love — that same love that brought him down from the glory, into the world; and down into death at the Cross — that it cannot be satisfied while He is there and His own are here. He is coming again to receive them unto Himself that *where He is* there they may be also.

The heavenly things of which He told are the property of all those who are His own. There is a heavenly people on earth today to whom the heavenly things belong. They now have the light of them by the Spirit, from the Word, but they have it in circumstances entirely foreign to them, for has our Lord not said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"!

Yet, "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world." So His own are *in* the world but not *of* the world (see John 17: 11, 16). His love then cannot be satisfied until they (the heavenly ones) are with Him (the heavenly One) where He is at home.

May we know and enjoy these blessed truths in such a way that we might spontaneously and practically answer to His love until we hear His voice and rise to meet Him, to be like Him and with Him for evermore.

"Like Him! O grace supreme!
Like Him before Thy face;
Like Him to know that glory beam

Unhindered face to face.
O love supreme and bright!
Good to the feeblest heart;
That gives us now, as heavenly light,
What soon shall be our part."