

"BEHOLD THE MAN"

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" John 19:5.

In the process of the trial of Christ, Pilate took Him and scourged Him. Then He was turned over to the rude and brutal soldiery. The method of such punishment was to tie the arms of the victim to a post near the ground. In that position lashes were inflicted on the bare shoulders, head, and face, with a whip of leather thongs loaded at the extremity with lead or bone. To add insult to injury, the soldiers mantled His bleeding form with a purple robe, and pressed upon His head a torturing crown of thorns. They then made a pretended obeisance in rude mockery. Instead of a salute, each one spit in His bruised face. It was a carnival of fiends working their vengeance. But even with all their multiplied insults He had the carriage, poise, and power of the Son of God. He bore it with patience and ineffable love. It all placed Jesus on the throne of eternal memory and universal dominion.

Pilate, again, at this juncture led Christ out before the mob and appealed to them as he said, "Behold the man!" Perhaps he thought that the sight of this tortured, mangled form would appeal to their sympathy. It actually, however, kindled more deeply their hatred and cruelty. In presenting Jesus to them with the words, "Behold the man!" Pilate was saying more than he knew. Did he know that he was dealing with the Man of all men? Did he know that this was the Man who was to make the earth to tremble and kingdoms to shake? His manhood is more sublime than the Himalaya heights with all their grandeur. He is the earth's loftiest specimen, the effulgence of God's greatest glory. He is unique in history. His glory blazes like a conflagration across the centuries. He is both God and man.

I. Behold The Ministry of The Man!

No one message can do more than touch the marvelous and matchless ministry of Christ. We shall confine this discussion to the phase of His ministry announced by the angels at His birth, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men."

1. The principles of peace.

A mere declaration about peace will not bring peace. Resolutions however well worded and earnestly voted, are powerless to guarantee peace. Jesus came to bring peace to mankind. Today the opposite of peace seems regnant in the world. This condition is dominant because the world has not recognized and followed the principles Jesus enunciated. Some have tried to legislate peace. Others have tried to subjugate peoples into a state of peace. Peace cannot be forced; it must grow out of the soil of right principles.

2. The price of peace.

Christ is an example of the fact that peace is costly. See Him in Gethsemane; before the unjust tribunals of His day; dying on Calvary! Our nation is an example. The colonists suffered, sacrificed, and died for peace in America. See Washington and his half-clad men at Valley Forge! Trace them by the blood from their wounded feet, and you will see how costly American peace was.

3. The Prince of Peace.

There are two kinds of peace -- the peace of nations and the peace of individuals. Christ came to bring both. The world may be torn asunder, but amidst it all the heart that trusts Jesus will have peace, "peace, sweet peace." If the peoples of the earth would turn to Jesus, "The Prince of Peace," and acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, peace would reign throughout the world.

II. Behold The Mastery of The Man!

1. Christ has mastery over nature.

How vast is nature, yet God holds it in the hollow of His hand! Christ walked upon earth's waters. He is mightier than nature.

2. Christ has mastery over sin.

Sin is a black, hideous, ugly, ravenous monster. It blasted and withered Eden. It deluged and drowned the earth. Sin burned Sodom and Gomorrah. It has peopled death's dominions. It sends its horrors along every street to the march of the funeral dirge. It has made and filled the gloomy chambers of hell. Yet Jesus masters sin. Neither gilded iniquity, nor classic idolatry, nor cruelty of paganism, nor sorrow, nor tragedy, nor crimson suffering, nor the soul made blackest by sin is too much for Jesus.

Jesus has salvation for every soul. He is healing for every broken heart; the Great Physician for every sick soul; hope for every hopeless individual. Christ is living water for every famished soul and heaven's light for every starless night.

3. Christ is master over death.

"Let gorgeous tragedy in sceptered pall come sweeping by" and Christ will master it, for He has mastered death, hell, and the grave. He raised Lazarus from the grave, brought to life the dead damsel and declared, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." Those who come to die with faith in Jesus can say farewell to tears, farewell to troubles, farewell to poverty, farewell to sin and suffering, and farewell to death. Then the light of a new day will burst in upon the soul, --

Out of the darkness and out of the storm,
Into those mansions where all is warm;
Out of the tempest and out of the cold,
Into a city whose streets are gold!

III. Behold The Mystery of The Man!

Some people claim that they will not accept anything that cannot be explained. If there is mystery they will not accept it, they avow. Jesus is a mystery. In fact, there is mystery everywhere. It is a mystery how a man eats food and it becomes brains, blood, flesh, tissue, muscle, hair, bone, and nails. It is a mystery how a cow eats grass and it grows hair, makes flesh and milk; the goose eats it and it makes feathers; the sheep eats it and it becomes wool. It is a mystery how God could preserve Jonah for three days and nights in the belly of the fish. It is just as great a mystery that mere man can make a submarine and live in it for days on the bottom of the ocean. It is a mystery that God can hear our prayers; it is a greater mystery than man has made a radio that is capable of picking up voices around the world and carrying them into our homes. It is a mystery how God could carry Elijah to heaven in the chariots of the clouds; it is a greater mystery that man has perfected a machine that can carry great tonnage through the air 400 miles an hour. It is a mystery how God could, by the mere gesture of His hand, hang out the sun and moon and stars; it is more of a mystery that man has made an incandescent light to illumine entire cities. It is a mystery that water came forth from the rock when Moses struck it; but it is a greater mystery how man can drill a well 10,000 feet into the bowels of the earth, put tile in it as he goes down, and extract oil from the bottom of that well. It is a deep mystery how God could put Adam to sleep, take a rib from his side and make a woman; it is a greater mystery how a surgeon can cut a man open, take parts out, sew him up, and soon he is on his feet again.

1. The birth of Christ is a mystery.

How God could become flesh I cannot explain; but that He did I unequivocally accept. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,....full of grace and truth." "Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in

a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins."

"As a man He was born of a woman; as God His advent was sung by angelic voices. As a man He ate, drank, and slept; as God His word multiplied five loaves into enough to feed 5,000 hungry people. As a man He slept in Peter's boat; as God He rebuked the winds and waves and they became still. As a man He was smitten and afflicted; as God His touch acted as a panacea for the removal of diseases in man. As a man He wept at the grave of Lazarus; as God He brought Him back to mortal life again. As a man He was put to death; as God His dying groans shook the earth and opened graves. As a man He was put into a tomb; as God He broke forth out of the tomb and triumphed over death. As a man He met His disciples among the hills of Galilee; as God He issued a commission for them to go out and evangelize the world in His name."

I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the Manger Child
Has brought God's life to me!

2. The death of Christ is a mystery.

It is a mystery how His death saves souls. Paul said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

Yes, mystery shrouds Christ's death. We cannot explain it, but we can feel it.

I know not how that Calvary's cross
A world from sin could free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me.

3. The resurrection of Christ is a mystery.

How He could come forth from the tomb, robed in the dazzling garments of the resurrection, is a mystery. We listen to Him as He says, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

The disciples were disappointed when Jesus was sealed in the tomb. Their hopes were shattered; their light had gone out. They had pictured Him reigning on a throne; now He lay dead in a tomb. Instead of regal robes, He wore the shroud of death. The gentle, noiseless stars and pale moon stood sentinel, but they seemed to be weeping. But Jesus arose from the somber chills of the earth's darkest night. There is mystery in Christ's resurrection.

I know not how that Joseph's tomb
Could solve death's mystery;
I only know the living Christ,
Our immortality!

Before this wonderful man we stand amazed!

Wonderful Man of Galilee,
Wonderful Man of Galilee;
He's dearer than all the world to me,
This wonderful Man of Galilee!

Christ is the world's only Saviour. He is the world's only hope. In Him the hope of the world centers. He is the universal Christ. On Him the eyes of the world are focused. On Him the salvation of the world hinges.