

'Christ's Sermon on His Deity' Ch. 5

by Charles Alexander

The sermon on Christ's deity emphasizes the Lord's equality with God and His role as the Son of God, and it reveals the significance of the pool of Bethesda and the healing of the impotent man in the context of the Gospel of John.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 40:9, John 5:24, Romans 2:9

Topics: "Christology", "Kingdom Of God"

Description

Charles Alexander preaches about the significance of the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled in Christ Jesus, introducing the mystery of the Kingdom of God. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the divine preparation and symbolism in events like the healing at Bethesda, showcasing the pre-eminence of Christ and the Kingdom of God. The sermon delves into the intricate details and symbolism in the Gospel of John, highlighting the divine precision in Christ's earthly ministry and the establishment of the true House of Mercy through the gospel. Through various biblical references, Charles Alexander underscores the eternal covenant of redemption, the angelic activity at Bethesda, and the surpassing glory of the gospel dispensation over the Law.

Transcript

The extent to which the four Gospels were designed to show forth the fulfillment of the O.T. prophecies in the manifestation of Christ Jesus the Son of God, and to introduce in Him the N.T. mystery of the Kingdom of God, the realisation of all O.T. promise to Israel, has not been sufficiently perceived by commentators, It is of paramount importance today when a spurious Dispensationalism has played havoc with Bible interpretation.

Pre-eminently this vital element of Christ's work is presented in the Gospel of John, A peerless example of this is shown in the fifth chapter -the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; and the unexampled sermon of the Lord on the subject of Himself which arises from circumstances of that miracle.

Bethesda (in the Greek language in which John wrote) is a name of seven letters -- a fact of special importance in the gospel, where the figure seven always denotes deliberate divine preparation of all circumstances for the purpose of giving a sacred character to the event. The name means, "House of Mercy." The situation near the sheepgate (or sheep market) in proximity to the temple, denotes the sacrificial element in the work of Christ, the sheepmarket being the place where the devout worshippers procured the beasts for the altar sacrifices. The five porches are clearly intended to indicate the Law, the

Mosaic code being embodied in the first FIVE books of the Bible, to this day known among the Jews as the TORAH (Law). The porches being crowded with impotent folk, lame, halt, withered, blind, waiting for the supernatural troubling of the water, shows the impatience of the Law (the Old Testament dispensation), to heal the soul. The 38 years of the man's infirmity are the precise extent of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness following their turning back in unbelief from the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea.

Here then at Bethesda it pleased the Lord to assemble all the significant details designed to set forth the pre-eminence of Christ and the nature of that, Kingdom of God which He came to establish. He Who was the architect of creation; who introduced a universe, planned and executed with consummate precision could not in His incarnate activity on the created earth introduce His new and invisible creation with less care. The six waterpots of Cana, the five porches of Bethesda and the five loaves of the Wilderness miracle (John 6) were not accidental. We do not know what earthly agents they were who, oblivious of the part they were playing; set precisely six waterpots at Cana ready for the Master's use, or who constructed the Bethesda porches according to the number of the Law. Like the other unknown who prepared an upper room in Jerusalem on the eve of the world's redemption for an Unexpected Guest, these were the servants of providence, pursuing in complete personal liberty their predestined task in marking out the footprints of redemption.

The fountain of Bethesda therefore was a geographical feature created by the great Provider of all things, at a precise place in the topography of Jerusalem to teach those who had eyes and ears to perceive and hear what God would do. In the patience of a Sovereign Creator, all was provided in readiness for the coming of Him who is the true Bethesda, that the tribes of the mystic Israel, the Kingdom of God, might be there assembled from the utmost limits of time and the far flung boundaries of all mankind, in accordance with the everlasting covenant of redemption.

Jerusalem's Bethesda was very well fitted to muster under the temporary regime of Moses, a great multitude of helpless and infirm subjects waiting for the moving of those Old Covenant waters, but Christ showed that day, that the true Bethesda was the fountain of gospel grace opened up in Him for the life and healing of the nations. He was setting up the true House of Mercy, the gospel, through which on the grandest scale, the whole wide world would be witness of Christ's healing grace in His mysterious and invisible Kingdom of Redemption.

In a great sermon to the poor fisherfolk and artisans of Hippo in North Africa in the Fourth Century of our era, Augustine spoke in these terms of Bethesda and its significances:

"It is more important that He healed the faults of souls, than that He healed the weaknesses of mortal bodies. But as the soul knew not Him by whom it was to be healed, and had eyes in the flesh whereby to see corporeal deeds, but had not yet sound eyes in the heart with which to recognise Him as God concealed in the flesh, He wrought what the soul was able to see, in order to heal that by which it was not able to see.

"That pool and that water seem to me to have signified the Jewish people. For that peoples are signified under the name of waters the Apocalypse of John clearly indicates to us, where after he had been shown many waters, and he had asked what they were, was answered that they were peoples Rev. 17: 15. That water then - namely, that people - was shut in by the five books of Moses, as by five porches. But those books brought forth the sick, not healed them. For the law convicted, not acquitted sinners. Accordingly

the letter, without grace, made men guilty, whom on confessing grace delivered. For this is what the apostle saith: For if a law had been given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. Why, then, was the law given? He goes on to say, 'But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.' What more evident? Have not these words expounded to us both the five porches, and also the multitude of sick folk? The five porches are the law. Why then, did not the five porches heal the sick folk? Because, 'if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.' Why then, did the porches contain those whom they did not heal? Because, 'the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them believe'.

"What was done, then, that they who could not be healed in the porches might be healed in that water after being troubled? For on a sudden the water was seen troubled, and that by which it was troubled was not seen. Thou mayest believe that this was wont to be done by angelic virtue, yet not without some mystery being implied, After the water was troubled, the one who was able cast himself in, and he alone, was healed: whoever went in after that one, did so in vain. What, then, is meant by this, unless it be that there came one, even Christ, to the Jewish people and by doing great things, by teaching profitable things; troubled sinners, troubled the water by His presence, and roused it towards His own death? But He was hidden that troubled. For had they known Him, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. Wherefore, to go down into the troubled water means to believe in the Lord's death. There only one was healed, signifying unity: whoever came thereafter was not healed, because whoever shall be outside unity cannot be healed."

Angelic Activity

There is a further and strong dispensational element in the angelic activity at Bethesda. The legal dispensation introduced at Sinai was inferior in every respect to the gospel dispensation which came into full activity after the resurrection of the Lord from the dead. The angelic agency in the "troubling" of the waters points back to the part which angels played in the giving of the Law at Sinai. It pleased God to reveal Himself through the Son in Old Testament times, in angelic form. The Son of God, Jehovah, the Lord of angels and men, there appeared to Moses and the elders of the people in angelic form, and the entire angelic creation was assembled there to show forth the glory and dignity of that administration.

It was a settled principle of O.T. theology therefore that the Law came through angelic mediation. Stephen declares to the Jewish Council (Acts 7: 53) that they "had received the law by the disposition of angels and had not kept it."

David (Psalm 68:17) declares, "The chariots of God are twenty

thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among these as in Sinai in the holy place."

Acts 7:38 -_ This was he (Moses) that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in Mount Sinai."

Galatians 3:19 - "It (the law) was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Moses)."

Hebrews 2:2 - "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast...."

The gospel, however, was the personal act of God incarnate and as such, it superseded the angelic dispensation (ministry). It introduced a new, final, and perfect administration which so far surpassed its

predecessor that the glory of the former no longer had any glory, by reason of that divine glory of Christ which excelled it (2 Cor. 3:10-18; 4:6).

The dispensation of the Law was indeed a glorious revelation attended as it was by the entire angelic creation who exhibited its glory in terrifying majesty, but there was in it no healing virtue of divine grace in the remission of sins. Only the Son of God in Person, to whom Moses acted as but the clerk in the transcript of God's holy Law -- only He who bore in Himself all the glory of the Godhead, could introduce that new covenant mercy by which the spiritually dead are raised to life eternal, and the spiritually blind and impotent are restored to holiness and favour.

The Healing and the Prophecy

The account of the healing of the impotent man is firmly based on the prophecy of Isaiah. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him" (Isaiah 59:16). Without being aware of it, the lonely sufferer of Bethesda uses the very language of this prophecy; "Sir, I have NO MAN....." is his lamentation (John 5:7).

The Saviour's "Wilt thou be made whole?" is addressed over the head of the man to the nation he represents, and these words sounded for another 40 years between the Crucifixion in A.D. 33 and the final destruction of the Jewish state and nation, temple and priesthood in A.D. 73 when the Roman siege ended. Thus the 40 years with which the nation began its course were matched by the 40 years with which its history ended as the Saviour's words went unheeded.

The Sabbath

The narrative in John 5 returns to the individual case of the impotent man, and confers upon him the benefit of healing. He takes up his bed and walks --"and on the same day was the Sabbath."

The Lord deliberately chose that day but not merely to provoke the conflict with Jewish unbelief which inevitably followed. The Jews boasted of the Sabbath yet never kept it in the spirit of it. As the sign of their covenant with God it had become rather the sign of their breach of that covenant. The O.T. had already voiced the solemn warning of an even greater judgment than that of the wilderness wanderings (Psalm 95:7-11, compared with Hebrews 3:11 to 4:11). The warning at Bethesda went unheeded.

The man goes on his way till accosted by the Jews for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day. He cannot tell them who it was who told him to carry his bed. Later in the day the Saviour finds him in the temple and warns him, "Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." Jerusalem might have taken those words to itself but it knew not the time of its visitation and for 40 years longer, filled up the measure of its unbelief till there was no remedy and the "worse thing" came upon her.

The tidings that it was Jesus who had instructed the man to "break the sabbath" brought the incensed and fanatical Jews upon the Saviour intent on His destruction -- an intention aggravated by the Saviour's words, which we now consider "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." (verse 17).

Entire Theology of Person of Christ

This verse opens up the entire theology of the Person of Christ, and He who speaks observes no restriction in the claim He makes for Himself in the opening sentence. No attempt is made by Him to

introduce gently and unobtrusively the fact of His Godhead. Sufficient had been done in the miracle just wrought, with its carefully designed details, to make heinous the crime of denying the revelation of His deity. He who came to fulfil Israel's greatest prophecy - "Behold, your God!" (Isaiah 40:9) -- had reached the point in His short earthly ministry of three and a half years when He must present Himself as "Emmanuel God with us," in language which would bear no other interpretation.

"My Father worketh hitherto and I work," was a statement which the incensed Jews at once recognised as a claim to be "equal with God" (verse 18). This was precisely the effect intended.

The words are a clear unmistakable avowal of equality with the Father, for therein Christ identifies His work with that of the Father.

The ceaseless energy of the Father, the great Creator, in sustaining the entire universe by His word, without intermission of sabbath days: is claimed by Christ as the ground of all His acts of "new creation" in the restoring of a lost and fallen human race. Indissolubly one with the Father in Being and in wisdom, power and creative activity, He is also Lord of the sabbath day, the earthly observance of which is but the shadow of that mystic Sabbath of salvation or new creation, in which the Godhead is eternally engaged. What the Jews in their obduracy persisted in regarding as "breaking the sabbath" was in fact the keeping of the sabbath in its true end and purpose.

Moreover the Lord's deliberate association of Himself with the Godhead in the words "My Father" was plainly understood by the Jews to be an exclusive claim to be the Son of God. Though the full doctrine of the divine Sonship Of Christ could not then have been known to the Jews, there was enough in the term itself, as well as in the Old Testament scriptures, for them to apprehend that He, was claiming a relationship with God which amounted to an identity of nature and therefore of equality.

In Psalm 2, The Almighty said of Messiah, "Thou art my Son" (verse 7).

Psalm 89. The coming King of Israel is described in unequivocal terms: "He shall say unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (verses 26-27).

The great prophecy of 2 Samuel 7: 14 "I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

Solomon in Proverbs 30, verse 4 foretold this mysterious Person who, as Son with the Father was identified with the Creator; "What is his name, and what is his son's name if thou canst tell?"

Solomon's awe-inspiring description of this One with the incommunicable name, is developed in Isaiah's prophecy of the Son who was to be born King of Israel - "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful (i.e., ENIGMA) Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

The O.T. doctrine of the Angel of the Lord, the Angel (or Messenger) of the Divine Presence, is developed by John in chapter 1 of this gospel verses 1-14 (See our commentary upon this portion).

There was abundant evidence for the Jew of Christ's day that the expected Messiah was the Father's co-eternal Son -- if they had been ready to receive it. To have this Biblical evidence reinforced before their eyes by One who performed in His own Name and in the Name of the Eternal Father, mighty creative works of omnipotence, should have convinced them that this Jesus of Nazareth was in fact that Person.

They refused the light because of the obduracy of their evil hearts. Christ had already warned them, "This is the condemnation, that light As come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

The Jews sought the more to kill him because He claimed to be equal

God and this gave rise to one of the greatest of all Christ's sermons on Himself, His identity, and His place in the Godhead, and the work He had been sent to do.

The Sermon Begins

The sermon begins in verse 19 with one of those "double Amen's," Verily, verily which are peculiar to the gospel of John. This, as we have already had occasion to show in our commentary on John chapter 3, is the note of deity -- a claim to be the Amen, the sealing Word of God concerning His truth.

There are three "double Amen's" in this sermon, and fourteen

(a double seven) occurrences of the word "Father." The term "the Son" occurs seven times between the first "Amen, Amen" of verse 19 and the second (verse 24), The third "Amen, Amen" in verse 25 introduces a threefold introduction of the term "Son" in diversified form. "Son of God ... Son ... Son of Man" in three successive verses - ten occurrences in all, of "Son" one of the numerals of sacred perfection and divided here into the seven and the three. These numerals are not accidental, but intentional, and in full accord with the almost universal construction of the poetical portions of the Old Testament. The Spirit of inspiration designs thereby to make the hearer or the reader search and think. Hidden in these features of the Sacred Volume is the unfolding of mysteries. The "numbers" of Christ's sermon in John 5 are those of divinity. The three double Amen's point to the threefold Being of God in unity. The fourteen occurrences of "Father" are the double seven of the divine perfection in wisdom, authority and power. Likewise the sevenfold occurrence of "Son" followed by the threefold diversified presentation of the Son in eternity and in time, points back to His place in the Trinity of the Godhead.

This is not less or more than we should expect in this stupendous revelation of the Godhead in the very words of the Second Person. We should feel there was something missing in such a discourse from such a Person if there were not the evidence of formal majesty in this pronouncement. Inspiration could do no more in human speech. This is the highest level of divine speech and we would hazard the doctrine of the total verbal inspiration of the Bible on this passage alone.

Secret of the Divine Being

"Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (verse 19).

In this verse the Lord claims that all His acts are performances of the Divine mind, wisdom, will and purpose, "Can do nothing of Himself" is not a note of inferiority, or of dependency. This word touches the highest level of Being. The secret of the Divine Being is not independence but interdependence. It is of the essence of sin to assert an independent existence. This was Satan's original error and through his agency it was introduced to the human creation and soon became regnant. Yet not even in this fallen world can the evil principle be for long maintained, for man can find no region where he is absolutely free. In his fragile existence he leans upon others and claims for himself that which is another's. He cannot exist alone, though his pride would venture to overturn the laws of his own being. In vain! Love, which is the true

element of being, whether in God or in the creature, never seeks her own, but gives all in a subordination of true desiring. We should expect from our nature, to find this principle brought to the highest perfection in God, and so we do. In the Godhead is a plurality of Persons -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Persons are one and indivisible in the Eternal Being -- a unity of love, will, purpose and desire.

It is proper for the Father as the fount of deity to be the First Person. The Son comes forth from the Father in an eternal act of birth which never began and will never end. In that eternal "generation," the Father beholds Himself in the loveliness and perfection of the Son and loves what He sees. It is proper to the Son as the Second Person (second in order, but not in time) to be all that the Father is, the possessor of the divine nature and Being, yet a distinct Person rendering to the Father filial honour and love in an eternal act of subordination and obedience. The mystery of the Third Person is that He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son by whom the Father pours forth the fulness of His Being in the Son and the Son renders again to the Father that fulness in a never-beginning never-ending act of love. Thus proceeding from the Father and the Son (of both, yet neither the One nor the Other), the Third Person is a true and distinct Person known as the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, going forth as the Spirit of Holiness and Truth, of Love and Peace, of Wisdom and Light, the Sevenfold Outpouring of the Divine Being, the Third of the Holy Trinity who proceeds yet never began to proceed nor will cease to proceed.

In that all-glorious and most mysterious and incomprehensible Being of God, there is no region of independence between the Persons. They are mutually interdependent in a most glorious and adorable unity. There is one mind, one will, one purpose, one counsel, one power, one glory.

Thus when Christ says, "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what he seeth the Father do" He is not confessing inferiority to God but proclaiming the central fact of the Divine Life where only love reigns. Where there is love there is peace and true liberty, oneness, concord, concert, and consubstantiation. This is the law of the universe proceeding from God, embodied in the Sinaitic regulations (in negative terms) but expressed positively in the new commandment which Christ gave to His disciples -- a new commandment which in its sole requirement of love, brings all things back to the holy unity which is the object of the Divine purpose. God could never promulgate any other law than the one He has promulgated. Any other law would have abolished His own existence.

The eternal retribution reserved for Satan and shared by those whose spirits are given over to evil, is not an exception to the law of God's nature, nor must evil be regarded as a "second force" in the universe to the injury of the unity of God's purpose and wisdom. We do not know enough about the nature of final retribution to be dogmatic, but we do know that it is as never-ending as the holiness of God. In the total triumph of Christ, that which is rejected will remain, not as an exception to His most, glorious reign, but as a memorial of that condition over which He is eternally victorious. In that victory emerges the new creation which could not exist if there had never been an evil to be conquered.

The wicked will not be proudly independent in hell. Satan and his angels acquiesce in their fate and acknowledge the right of Christ to rule. It is written that at the name of Jesus every knee must bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2).

If we would know what the Father is like, let us behold the Son, who says, "Whatsoever the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise." There is no activity of the Father which is not carried out to perfection in the Son. Dominant in the Son is that humility and submissive obedience which never seeks its own but

only the Father's glory; which pleases not itself nor seeks its own will, but declares in the most supreme agony, "Not my will, but thy will be done."

Whatever the mystery of the eternal torment of the impenitent, it will find its solution ultimately in the fact that sin is rebellion against love, not against despotism. The crushing sense of this in that blackness whence light is eternally withdrawn, will be found to contain all those tortures of conscience which may be fitly represented in the figure of the fiery, burning lake. That "the bottomless pit is the soul of man" was an early thought in our Church History.

To behold Him on the throne who once wore creation's crown of thorns, and who in perfect love and obedience resigned Himself to unspeakable shame and scorn, and the horrors of death-- to behold Him, we say, and to know that it is against Him that our final act of unbelief is hurled, is to cry out, "Let me sink from His sight and let blackness and darkness cover me forever from that countenance on which love once wrote the characters of infinite sorrow and pain."

Further than that we cannot go -- God help us!

"I Delight To Do Thy Will"

The Son can only "do what he seeth the Father do", says Christ.

This "seeing" is not visual beholding, but understanding the whole of the Wisdom of God. Christ is that wisdom (Psalm 8; 1 Cor. 1: 24). The mind of the Father is His (Christ's) own mind. The decrees and purposes of God are the law of Christ's being. He comes forth from the womb of eternity declaring, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

He who shares all the secret council of the Most High "sees" what the Father will do and in filial love "does" all that He sees. Thus He executes the Divine counsel in creation and redemption. He proceeds in His sermon to declare.

"For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (verse 20).

The meaning of this verse is that there is no reserve in the Father's wisdom and knowledge not shared by the Son. The Father's love unfolds to the Son all the totality of wisdom and knowledge, design and purpose. He who is as wise as God must Himself be God. He who is able to receive and understand the all-knowledge which is the attribute of Godhead, must be equal with God and therefore is God. He who appears in human power and true human nature and says these things of Himself, claims thereby to be the very fulfillment of the prophecy - "Behold your God" (Isaiah 40).

The "greater works" which the Father would "show" the Son are those which exceed the miracle of Bethesda and can only refer to the work of Redemption by which the spiritually impotent and dead would be raised to glorious life and activity. This, Christ proceeds to explain the next verse (21).

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

In these words Christ claims for Himself the ultimate mark of deity, "whom he will." To raise the dead is to be the Lord of Creation. To wear on His girdle the keys of death and of hell, is to be the Lord and conqueror of all things. The raising of the physically dead, truly is a work in which men like Elijah, Elisha,

Peter and Paul have participated, but not in the sense in which Christ here speaks. They did not raise whom they would, but only those whom the sovereignty of Christ determined, Of a divine Person only could it be said, "He makes alive those whom He wills to make alive." So the Son "quickeneth whom He will." He proceeds in His sermon to show that this power and will go beyond the raising of the physically dead and extend to the work of eternal redemption in which He raises to eternal life and glory those whom He wills to save.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (22-23).

The Father has given to Christ His eternal honour and throne. This expresses the totality of all that the Father is. To bestow all this upon another requires that the "other" be equal with God, consubstantial, co-eternal with the Father. And only as the Second Person stands in relation to the First Person as Son to Father, can the honour and glory of the Father be properly bestowed upon Him.

There is a tendency today (in the enthusiasm created by speculation as to the future of the Jewish people) to regard the Jew as being a "special case" for the divine favour despite his obdurate unbelief in the deity of Christ. But there are no exceptions, and there is no difference. They who do not honour Christ as God do not honour God at all, and must suffer the pains of eternal woe in consequence. Modern apocalyptic sects (like the so called Jehovah Witnesses), must share with unbelieving Jews and modernistic professors and theologians, the fate of all the wicked who do not know Christ as God and who refuse to submit themselves to His sceptre. There are no exceptions. Neither race, nor genealogy, nor orthodoxy, nor intellect, will provide a shelter in the judgment, from the fiery indignation of God and the wrath of the Lamb. Those who plead for a Jewish precedence over the rest of mankind had better attend to the word which says "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that death evil, of the Jew first" (Rom. 2:9)

Hearing, Believing, and Living

At this point there occurs the second of the three "double Amen's":

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (verse 24).

This glorious verse is a summary of the gospel and shows the method of salvation. "Hearing" the word of Christ is synonymous with "believing." "Hear, and your souls shall live" is the O.T. source from which Christ takes the word (see Isaiah 55:3). The word He speaks is power, even life from the dead. The hearing of that word is the understanding of it, the readiness to receive it, the humble and penitent believing of it, the recognition that Christ is the Word whom God hath sent, the only life of the world. Believing in Christ is believing in God. The Jews did not believe in God because they did not receive Christ, and this is their state today, for though they may boast much of Abraham and the oracles of God, they are strangers both to Abraham and to God so long as they do not "hear" Christ's word.

That this "hearing" is not simply the outward hearing of the spoken word of the gospel, but the inward understanding and receiving of it in penitent faith is clear from that other saying of Christ - "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8.43). Likewise the unbelieving even among His "disciples" said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (6:60).

The conditions of everlasting life are here. Those who in penitent faith hear, and understand, and receive that word of Christ, receive not the outward sound of it but the inward power of it. As when God Created man, the breath of God enlivened the form of a man made of the dust of the ground and man in that instant became a living soul, and as the Spirit of God entered into the slain in the visionary Valley of Dry Bones when Ezekiel prophesied, "Come from the four winds, C breath, and breathe upon those slain that they may-live," so in the gospel, the "outward" word is accompanied by the inward inspiration of the Spirit of God and the soul dead in trespasses and in sins lives again and comes forth from the sepulchre of sin and death.

There is this important difference, however. The "dead in sins" are very much alive in their unbelief. They are not impassive corpses incapable of feeling. There is something which speaks for God in their souls. That voice is the voice of conscience, of which not even Satan is devoid. Conscience is the voice of God in the soul of man -- a voice from God which speaks for God, and which will be even more active in hell than on earth.

The word of the truth of the gospel, which is the word of Christ, searches the mind and the heart and is the means which the Holy Spirit employs in the awakening of the soul. Those who do not hear, cannot hear because of the love of sin and hatred of the light. Those who hear are awakened by sovereign grace so that their deliverance is an act of Christ's triumph. If this fact raises mysteries, they are nothing to the mysteries which are raised by the doctrine that the determining factor in salvation is the independent human choice. No-one really consistently believes this. Those who are readiest to say so are the readiest in their prayers to ask that God would exercise an absolute sovereignty in saving the lost. "O Lord, save souls tonight" is the cry, "Let none depart unsaved." The "hymns" of this "school" are likewise surcharged with emotional appeals to the Almighty to exercise His power in saving souls, apparently in disregard of the sinner's free "choice." There is a very moving chorus, often heard in former days in "after-meetings" --

"Tonight, Lord! tonight, Lord!

Bring wanderers home tonight."

The sentiment may be admirable but the language is, scarcely consistent with the theology of those who believe in the sovereign will of the sinner in relation to the gospel "appeal."

At the same time those of us who believe that sovereignty is found only in the holy will of God, are not always wise. The moral forces by which God, in ways beyond our knowing, brings the soul to the place of yielding acquiescence, and to penitent believing in the word of the gospel, should be clearly recognised in our preaching. The theological term which denotes this process is more familiarly known as REPENTANCE.

Those who probe into divine mysteries had better see to it that they are singularly well equipped with a humble and reverent spirit, patient, quietly devoted, and submissively adoring in divine things. They are dealing with, those issues of life and death which belong to God alone.

The Last Judgment

Our verse 24 tells us that those who hear and believe are already in possession of eternal life "and shall not come into condemnation but are (already) passed from death unto life."

By those words Christ tells us that His own triumph over sin and death is ours also, through Him, and there is no longer any means or process of condemnation which can bring us again into death. This word does not exclude our appearance at that last judgment Scene which must be attended by all creation -- angels, moon and devils -- for the final assessment of the righteousness and truth of God, the public recompence of eternal justice and the vindication of God in the eyes of all creation.

(2 Cor. 5:10; Romans. 14:10-12).

We dismiss as unworthy of serious attention the dispensationalist error in separating the judgment of 2 Cor. 5 from that of the "great white throne" in Revelation 20. Romans 14:10 clearly refers to the same judgment as 2 Cor. 5:10, but verse 11 of Romans 14 makes it plain that the judgment referred to is universal, where the righteous and the wicked and indeed the angelic creation Shall appear. One great Judgment Day! One moment of truth for all creation! One universal assize the dread process of which will be discharged in a moment of time for all the world. For the books which are opened are the books of memory and conscience and in one tremendous moment of truth the light will shine upon all, and all will know, even as also they are known.

The true believer does not dread that judgment, but rather welcomes it, for though its all-revealing light shows the full extent of his sinfulness, it also shows the grace which effectually banishes the guilt, and he enters into the everlasting glory with the praises of Christ on his lips - "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" Though they "shall not come into condemnation," they will be there at the judgment to hear that the decree of acquittal in Christ is eternally ratified and upheld.

The third of the double Amen's now sounds in the Saviour's sermon -

"Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and. now is,

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live" (v.25).

There can be no serious doubt that the Lord is speaking of spiritual resurrection -- regeneration, or the raising to life eternal of those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Here is a wonder which these unbelieving Jews could not understand. The One standing before them claimed that by His voice the sinner is instantly raised from his, couch of sin and condemnation, to a new life of holiness and forgiveness and truth. Again, the condition is, that they hear: "They that hear shall live."

The Lord's words are still being drawn from Isaiah 55. "They that hear shall live" is a plain reference to "Hear and your soul shall live," (Isa. 55:3). This is so plain that it needs no elaboration. The Lord takes His stand in the prophecy and in effect says, "I am the fulfillment of prophecy. These men of God wrote of me" -- as in the last part of His sermon in this chapter He declares, "Moses wrote of me" (verse 46).

The Lord of Life

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

To have life in oneself is to be the source and fountain of life. The Father is this source, and in the mystery of the Godhead He imparts to the Son, by eternal act, the same prerogative of life. In other words the Son is constituted, by divine decree, the Lord, of Life. As by His word He gives life, even life for evermore.

The "authority given to him to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man" has no reference to the last judgment but to Christ's reign as Son of Man at the right hand of God, from the time of His ascension to the moment when all His work is ended and He renders up the kingdom to the Father

(1 Cor. 15:24-28). This is the work in which Christ is now engaged. The Father has granted to Him the dominion over all things, originally intended for created man, but forfeited by sin. Now in the Second Man, the intention of creation is realised, and therefore the Lord is careful in verse 27 to refer to Himself as "Son of Man," not "the Son" or "the Son of God" as in the two preceding verses.

It was as man, and as man's representative, our bone and our flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, that our blessed Lord is raised through His own merits and obedience, to the right hand of the majesty on high, all things being made subject to Him. He now reigns, and must continue to reign, till all His foes are made His footstool.

The dispensationalist error in speaking of a "postponed" kingdom, and the error of all millennialist in looking for an earthly fulfillment of Christ's reign, is really unpardonable. Christ's throne is in the heavens. He will never vacate that majesty for some earthly pageantry. Already crowned, already carrying the sceptre of universal dominion in heaven and in earth, He who has conquered death must continue to reign over all things, till all is made His footstool, and His triumph is complete.

The Father has approved the work of Christ and given Him authority to rule righteously and victoriously over all. His Word now goes forth from that "holy hill of Zion" upon which His throne is set. Zion is, not an earthly city but a heavenly (compare Psalm 2:6 and Heb. 12:22). It is in short, the Kingdom of God, the invisible realm where the Word of Christ is the law. It fulfils all those prophecies which speak of the law going forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, as in Isaiah 2:3, Isaiah 4:1-2,

Isaiah 59: 20 (Romans 11:26). These, which by false chiliasm (millennialism) are relegated to a Jewish kingdom supposed to arise at the end of time, are actually fulfilled from the day of Christ's ascension.

In the words of our text, the Father has given Christ authority to rule over all, because He is the Son of man. One of the most fundamental and crippling errors of our time is the teaching that those great O.T. prophecies await their fulfillment in a Jewish kingdom which two thousand years after the Cross has not yet been realised. Until this error has been recognised and repudiated in all its forms the health of the Church cannot be re-established.

Not Two Resurrections

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have, done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (verses 28.29).

That is, men are not to marvel that Christ in His unseen kingdom should call whom He will from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, for there will follow, at the end of time, the general resurrection of the dead, righteous and wicked. At the sound of His voice all shall obey the summons to appear before Him. There are not two separate resurrections of the righteous and the wicked, but one resurrection which will be of life to the righteous and of damnation to the wicked.

The doctrine of two bodily resurrections separated from each other by a millennium of time has no scriptural support and appears to be based on a false exegesis of this text and a false interpretation of

Rev. 20.

In verse 30, the Lord completes the theological part of His sermon. Again He asserts that He does not act independently of the Father. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge. (i.e., rule or govern), and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." As in verse 19 (see above) so here, the Saviour shows the true nature of the Godhead and the relationship of the Persons in the Oneness of perfect love.

The Father's Witness To The Son

Having in the preceding sentences proclaimed His own divinity and the special relation of Sonship which He bore toward the Father, Christ proceeds to a unique declaration of the Father's witness to the Son.

He repeats in verse 30 that which He had already declared in verse 19 -- that the Son does not act independently of the Father, but in the unity of that holy will which proceeds from the Father as the fountain head of deity - "I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

Statements such as these, never before uttered by the lips of men, are now appropriately authenticated by evidence -- such evidence as the Father only could bear of the Only Begotten Son. It is not sufficient that the Son, in His human condition, should require His testimony concerning Himself to be received. He therefore appeals directly to the Father's own witness to Himself as Son.

v.32: There is another (i.e., in addition to Himself) that beareth witness of me and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

The One described as "Another" is none other than the Father. But in what way is the Father's witness to the Son conveyed, seeing "ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape" (verse 37)?

It is usual for those who speak or comment upon this testimony to Christ, to claim that a fourfold witness to Christ is indicated in this chapter, but this is not really the case. Christ is speaking of one only witness to His divinity and His office, and that one is the Father. He does not say "There are others who bear witness of me," but "there is another."

Though He mentions the witness of John the Baptist, it is only to exclude it from present consideration - "I receive not testimony from man" (v.34). John is referred to only on a subordinate level of testimony, as the greatest prophet of the old dispensation, "a burning and a shining light" indeed (v.35) whose witness to Christ, borne before the Jewish nation, is described in this Gospel in chapter 1:19-34.

The Lord reminds His Jewish hearers of what they might have conveniently forgotten -- the rejected testimony of the forerunner. He puts this testimony aside at once, however, because the people must be taught to look higher than John and find the evidence of His (Christ's) divinity in the word of Him (the Father) of whom John was sent. The people, in other words, were not to look to John for authentication of Christ's Word, but to the Father alone. The Lord condescended to bring John into view that the Jewish hearers "might be saved" (v.34). That is, if they would but remember the bright and burning light of the Baptist's ministry, in which for a season they rejoiced, they might be led to consider the higher testimony of the Father Himself.

It is thus that the Lord plies all means, even with the wicked, that "they might be saved." Doctrines of reprobation notwithstanding, it is important for preachers to do what the Lord did, and employ all means for the salvation of their hearers, leaving to divine wisdom and sovereignty the mystery of election and effectual calling. It is a serious thing for anyone to claim knowledge of the unknowable.

To a crowd of unbelievers, Christ proclaimed, "These things I say, that ye might be saved," and let us do no less.

The Lord proceeds to describe the nature of the Father's witness to the Son. The works the Father gave Him to do bear witness that the Father had sent Him. These works were of course, and first of all, the miraculous powers exercised through the Son, one of the most notable of which had just given rise to the present dialogue with the Jews -- the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. It is plain however that this witness was not meant to terminate with examples of bodily healing. Deliverance from bodily infirmity was but the outward token of Christ's power to heal the soul and to bring in the Kingdom of God.

Christ was speaking not to that generation of Jews alone, but to all succeeding ages of history, for the annals of mankind would bear witness to His sovereign rule from the eternal throne and His omnipotence in the deliverance of His Church, the calling of the gentiles, the binding of Satan and the ultimate arraignment of all creation at the bar of His judgment.

His strictures on the unbelief of those whom He was even then addressing in the temple precincts, are applicable in all subsequent circumstances - "ye have not his Word abiding in you, for whom He hath sent, him ye believe not" (v.38). This is always the cause of unbelief -- not the want of a divine decree ordaining the sinner to everlasting life, but the inveterate repulse of light and truth by the soul committed to the love of sin.

The word of Christ to these Jews was of peculiar force in view of the national pride of the Jewish nation which boasted of being the people to whom the Word of God was committed. It was a dreadful thing in their ears to be told, "Ye have not his Word abiding in you."

O.T. Appearances of God

There is a special force in these words, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape, and ye have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not."

What Christ is telling the Jewish nation is that the Old Testament "appearances" of God in shape and sound were not "appearances" of the Father but of the Son acting as the Angel of the Divine Presence - "the angel of the Lord." The word "angel" means a messenger or "one who is sent." Throughout the history of the C.T. dispensation, the voice of God was heard -- by the patriarchs, and by Moses and the people at Sinai. The long succession of the prophets saw visions of God and heard His voice. "Hearing and seeing" were of frequent occurrence in the O.T, but Christ now tells the Jews that what they saw was Himself (Christ) and the voice they heard was His (Christ's). Never at any time did the Father Himself speak by a voice to the people or exhibit Himself in visible form. Always it was the Son, as the Messenger of His Presence. Christ is the Eternal Word (LOGOS), the revealer of God. The One whom Isaiah saw "high and lifted up," whose train filled the temple (Isaiah 6) was not the Father but Christ (John 12:41). The One with whom Jacob wrestled at Peniel was Christ (Genesis 32:30), and it is in this meaning that the patriarch says, "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved" (compare Hosea 12:4).

Christ as the Angel of the Lord was therefore Jehovah and anticipated His own incarnation by revealing Himself to the Church in the Old Testament. But the people of Israel always rejected their God even as then; Christ was declaring to them that He was the One whom the Father had "sent" Whom he hath sent ye believe not."

The nation was on trial for its life. Henceforth Israel was rejected "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life" (v.40) "Ye have not his word abiding in you" (v.38).

Hengstenberg's comment at this point is of great importance: "When therefore the Jews do not accept the testimony of the Father to the Son, when they reject Christ, they thus dissolve all connections with God and become 'without God in the world' no less than the heathen. Never having stood in immediate relation to God the Father, they now wantonly destroy the medium of connection with Him, and there is nothing therefore left to them but darkness, deception and death, in which we see them buried even to the present day. Moreover, by the rejection of Christ they have not God's word abiding in them; for Christ alone is the true and essential Word of God."

The Father's Testimony To The Son

The Father's testimony to the Son is further developed in the direct exhortation of the Son to His hearers and traducers that they "search the scriptures" in which the Jews were fully persuaded already that their eternal life lay. They would find if they searched with diligence and with repentance, that the O.T. scriptures authenticated the claim of the One who now stood before them (v.39).

Isaiah (34 verse 16) had written, "Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord and read." It was a settled principle in Israel that all questions and disputes must be determined by appeal to Holy Scripture. The noble remonstrance of Nicodemus to his fellow Pharisees to abate judgment till the accused Lord was heard, met only with the harsh rejoinder, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:50-52). The gainsayers were agreed that the dispute should be taken to the Book of the Lord ("Search and look"). Unhappily they did not take their own advice or they would have been forced to acknowledge that a prophet -- a very significant prophet indeed -- had arisen in Galilee, namely Jonah the son of Amittai, of the city of Gath-hepher, reputed to have been the earliest of the writing prophets and whose three days in the belly of the whale fittingly foretold of the three days during which the greatest "Prophet of Galilee," should be in the grave.

The Lord fully endorses the principle that the Scriptures hold the key to eternal life, and His testimony to the full inspiration of the Old Testament writings (and by inference, the New Testament also) is to be duly noted.

But those who search the scriptures for answers had better examine first their own hearts and consciences, for unless there is a disposition of will to receive and understand, to repent and humble the soul before God there will be no light and truth perceived. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life" (verse 40) is not a verse which any theology should find it easy to explain away. A faith which does not move the will is not valid.

The "coming unto Christ" referred to here, is in accord with the prophecy, "Incline your ear and come unto me, Hear and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 55:3). Always Christ brings forth His words from the depths of the living Scriptures of truth.

"I receive not honour from men" (v.41). We are content here to quote the fine comment by Hengstenberg:

"Jesus turns aside the reproach of ambition which the Jews might and indeed must, have brought against Him on the ground of the words 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' The honour conferred by men can be of no consequence to the Son of God. He has the honour of the Only Begotten of the Father and is therefore raised above all other honour. He then brings against them the counter accusation that they 'have not the love of God in them' (verse 42) and therefore have not that which is laid down in their law as the foundation of all life and salvation. They manifest this want of love to God in that they love not Him whom He has sent."

True and False Religion

v.43: I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

Thus were these Jews reprov'd -- and warn'd. Their want of love to God was conceal'd in their hatred of Him who came in the name of the Father -- that is with the Father's authority and glory, fully revealing, as the Word of God incarnate, the mystery of the Godhead.

In claiming that they who do not love Him do not love God, Christ is making a supreme claim that He is of the one substance with the Father. To "come in the Father's name" is a claim which no mere man can make -no man except One who is God--an, the Word, Wisdom and Power of God incarnate.

Though the divine majesty of the Godhead was "veiled in flesh," the witness of the Father to the Son in prophecy and in fulfillment, in creative work and signs -- this was sufficient for faith to grasp the love of God in the One whom He had sent. That instead of love there should be hate and envy was the fruit of an evil mind not subjected to the holy love of God. The Jewish devotion to God was not a pure and holy thing but a religious fanaticism entirely centred in the flesh. Hence, "if another should come in his own name, him they receive." This is a settled principle with false religion. Any plausible claim by a religious opportunist or fanatic is bound to find a ready discipleship, because invariably error makes no real demand for moral renovation. Satan is too shrewd to attempt to make disciples by valid moral demands for renovation of life -- apart from the fact that he is an enemy of all righteousness.

The false religion of the Pharisees was self centred to the last degree. The first pronouncement of the gospel - "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was an offence to them. The false messiahs who sprang up in Jewry from that time onward had this in common, that they sought only to attract power and honour to themselves and had nothing to say about national sins.

Hengstenberg well says, "Salvation without repentance was, even under the Old Covenant the watchword of the prophets who prophesied out of their own heart. Bar--Cochba (who led the final revolt against the Romans, AD 132-135) was wise enough to declare war against the hated Romans instead of against bosom sins. How did Mahomet indulge the passions of his people, and how carefully did he avoid any conflict with the national spirit!"

The history of corrupt Christianity is strewn with wretched examples of the same tendency for men to raise themselves to positions of power, ecclesiastical or otherwise, by inventing religions which might have many exciting novelties, promises of earthly prosperity, or fleshly indulgence, but the tree is known by its fruit. Evangelical repentance, devotion to Christ and to His honour and name alone, are unmistakable

signs of grace.

Those who see in Christ's words a warning of a coming Antichrist should be cautioned against carrying that view beyond what is written. It is all so easy and so thrilling to hazard speculations for the future which have no relevance to present living. Apocalypticism has been a great manufactory of religions without repentance.

Christ's warning to the Jews had an immediate fulfillment when God gave them over to the fanaticism of false messiahs and Jewish zealots who quickly led that very generation to its destruction.

v.44: How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Here is a significant cause of unbelief -- the aim to appear well among ones fellowmen rather than to seek the divine approval. Salvation certainly does not proceed from the merit of any such seeking from God, but it is a sure token of repentance when the soul looks to God rather than man and values His smile more than all the world can offer.

Hengstenberg well observes, "The desire to receive honour from men is very deeply seated in our theology; not to break with it but to accommodate to it is one of its most pressing cares. This is the worm that eats at its root, the curse that weighs it down."

That observation comes with special force from the man who led the battle against German theological rationalism on the continent of Europe for a large part of last century. His words and his theological and expository works, are sorely needed today when the dark forces against which he contended have at last overwhelmed the Reformation, and cleared the field for the last Satanism.

"The Only God"

"The honour that cometh from God only" is a phrase in this verse which has been generally rendered, "from the only God," and is derived from the doctrine of the divine unity as stated in Deuteronomy 6:4 -"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." God is the "only" God, the "only wise" (Rom. 16:27; Jude 25), the "only Lord God" (Jude 4).

Christ is clearly teaching that all honour belongs of right to the undivided God, in the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is no rival honour, no other deity, no contending majesty. The "only" God is entitled to the undivided love and worship of all His creatures. "My glory will I not give to another." "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." The only true and valid honour is that which proceeds from Him and which He bestows.

His gifts in men may properly be recognised, but only as this is subordinate to the honour which belongs to the One Only Lord God and Saviour. The honouring of faithful men and the paying of tribute to the memory of the deserving, is not to be forbidden, when it recognises the grace of God in His Servants, but it is only too easy to create idols and forget the honour which is due to God through Christ, His peerless and all-glorious Son, who is the Chief among any ten thousand of the brightest and most glorious in all creation. Who is creation's ROSE and creation's CROWN, the pride, the beauty, the desire of the New Creation. Paul who knew Him best, declared, "To me, to live is Christ."

Again Hengstenberg: "The unity of God designates His absoluteness. There are no other gods beside Him. If there is but one God, there is but One to be feared in heaven and earth, and but One to love."

v. 45-47: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Fathers there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?"

Moses wrote of Christ, not in respect of the occasional prophecies which in the Mosaic books foretell directly of the coming of Christ, but as the one theme of all he ever wrote, or to put it in Bengel's terse and telling phrase -

NOWHERE DID MOSES NOT WRITE OF CHRIST

We are to look for Christ in the O.T. scriptures as the subject matter of the whole. Creation was His work and for Him. The creation of man was for Christ and when God set man over the works of His hands and gave man the dominion, it was Christ whom He was honouring and for whose coming He was preparing (see Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:6-9).

The history of man clusters around the promise of Genesis 3.15, which is a promise of Christ as the Deliverer who should overturn the verdict of Eden and destroy the dominion of the Serpent. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob walked with Christ and in the annals of their lives they enacted beforehand the significant aspects of Christ's earthly life. It was Christ with whom Jacob wrestled, at the ford. Joseph knew Him and foreshadowed Him in his rejection and sufferings and final exaltation in the midst of his brethren. It was Christ who revealed Himself to Moses at the bush, and indeed long before, when He gave His prophetic Spirit to Moses while he was yet in the house of Pharaoh, so that Moses knew that by his hand God would deliver Israel. This was that Moses who "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Heb. 11)

So we might proceed and write a book about Christ as the subject theme of all the Bible and here we once again pay our tribute to a gracious servant of Christ, more or less unknown, who never achieved fame or was honoured in this world, but who in our youth set for us the guidelines for the exposition of the Divine Word by graphically illuminating for us that text, "MOSES WROTE of ME," with quotations from Bengel. (see above) and from Ryle and John Duncan, with which now we close our chapter: -

"There is probably a depth of meaning in the Pentateuch that has never yet been fully fathomed. He shall probably find at the last day that Christ was in many a chapter and many a verse and yet we knew it not. There is a fulness in Scripture far beyond our conception." -- Bishop. J.C. Ryle.

"The true Christology of the Old Testament is not to be sought merely in some isolated passages, but as the pervading element of the whole book; those passages that have been selected as Messianic are but the culminating points of the rock whose foundations lie deep in the ocean of Old Testament scriptures. Herein is their infinite importance and solemnity that they speak of Him with whom we have to do, or rather, He with whom we have to do speaks to us in them."-- Dr. John Duncan.

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