

Very Man

by Horatius Bonar

Jesus Christ is the true and very man, fully human yet without sin, and He is the center of God's workings and teachings, through whom God's purpose is to bless, teach, judge, and rule humanity.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1, Matthew 25:31, Luke 2:52, John 1:1, John 5:27, Romans 8:3

Topics: "The Humanity of Christ", "God's Purpose in Salvation"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the dual nature of Jesus Christ as both very man and very God, highlighting His human lineage through David and Abraham as well as His divine essence. He explains that Jesus embodies true humanity, experiencing all human emotions and conditions while remaining sinless, and that His Jewish heritage connects Him to God's elect nation. Bonar further illustrates that Jesus is our King, destined to rule as the heir of David's throne, and that His coming fulfills God's purpose of grace and blessing for all humanity. The sermon concludes with the proclamation of Jesus as the Savior, prophet, priest, and king, affirming God's love for mankind.

Transcript

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."--Matthew 1:1

This first verse of Matthew's Gospel contrasts strikingly with the first verse of John's; this human pedigree of the Son of God reads strangely when placed side by side with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Yet it all the more exhibits the true Person of Him who was the "Word made flesh,"--"God manifest in flesh,"--true and very man, yet also true and very God.

As we take Matthew's history literally, so do we take that of John. If we allegorize the first chapter of the one evangelist, we must allegorize the first of the other. If John does not mean that Christ was very God, Matthew does not mean that He was very man. The divine side of Christianity is as strongly shewn in the one evangelist as the human side in the other. He whom we call Lord and Master, Saviour and Redeemer, is one in whose Person the extremes of all being unite. All Godhead and all creature hood are in Him; the fullness of the finite, and the fullness of the infinite; all the excellence of the created and the uncreated.

I. He is a man. He is not in this chapter expressly called "Son of Adam"; but in Luke's genealogy we find this designation; and apart from that, the whole of this chapter is a historical exhibition of his true and very manhood. He is of the same stock as we are,--the same ancient root,--the first man Adam, whom God created. He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; "God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"

(Romans 8:3). In everything that is truly human He is one of us. He "knew no sin"; He was "that holy thing"; yet was He all the more human because of the absence of sin; for sin is not an original part of our nature. As man, then, He sympathizes; He pities; He loves. As man, He "loved his neighbor as himself" and so "fulfilled the royal law of love." As man, He was born, He lived, He "grew in stature, and in wisdom, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). His was thoroughly a human body and a human soul; his was thoroughly a human life and a human death. His was human hunger and thirst, human sleep and waking, human weariness and rest. His words were human words, issuing from human lips, and the utterance of a human heart. His looks were human looks, his tones were human tones, his tears were human tears. He was man all over, yet sinless; man all over, living in man's world, yet not partaker of that world's evil; man all over in every step He took, and every word He spoke; man all over in his daily intercourse with his fellow-men, and in his fellowship with his Father in heaven.

II. He is a Jew. God's purposes concerning earth have always unfolded themselves by election and selection,--of men, of places, of nations. Church-history is the record and manifestation of the electing and selecting will of a Sovereign God. There are elect nations and countries as well as elect souls. Israel was God's elect nation of old, Canaan his elect land, Jerusalem his elect city, and Zion his elect hill. This national election began with individual election,--Abraham. From the day of his being chosen, God's purpose centered in a nation,--the nation that was to spring from him. The Jew was chosen to be the first of nations,--to rise above the civilized Greek and the mighty Roman. The Jew was to be the center of God's workings and teachings. The Jew was to be the race with which Godhead was to be connected. Messiah was to be son of Abraham,--son of the great believer. And it was so; the seed of Abraham was that portion of the seed of the woman from which Messiah came. Jesus was a Jew; a son of Abraham; a scion of that race to whom God had committed his oracles and his covenant; in connection with whom the true history of our race is connected: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the Son of Abraham."

III. He is a King. He is of David's royal stock,--the God-selected family, for whom Israel's crown was destined for ever. God first narrows the circle of humanity to Abraham's race; then He limits that circle to the tribe of Judah; then he selects from that tribe David's family. Kingship in Israel was to be connected with David and his line. Messiah came not only as the son of Judah, but as the son of David,--heir to Israel's crown,--heir apparent to the throne of the world. Jesus of Bethlehem, Jesus of Nazareth is our King; son of David as well as son of Abraham. The crown of the world, nay, of the universe, is on the head of a Jew,--a son of David, a son of Abraham.

In all this, however, we find that others are interested besides Israel. Angels are interested, for it is through Gabriel that the announcement is made (Luke 1:26), and "angels desire to look into these things"; the Gentiles are interested, for Rahab and Ruth are among the Messiah's ancestors; the chief of sinners are interested, for in his line we find some of the worst; everything in this verse and chapter assures us that heaven and earth are, in all their regions, interested in this wondrous birth. The tidings are for all; they are to be preached "to every creature that is under heaven."

But, further, we learn here something concerning God's purpose,--his purpose of grace and blessing,--to which it will be well to give heed; for that purpose bears upon us and on our earth on every side. It is a purpose of love. God has loved the world, and sent his Son!

(1.) God's purpose is to bless by a man. It is a human channel that is to be made use of for blessing earth. Salvation comes by a man. The Saviour is a man. Everything connected with blessing to the race or to earth comes through a man; the son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam,--child of Mary!

(2.) God's purpose is to teach by a man. Earth is to have a human, not an angelic prophet. From human lips are all our lessons to come. He who was to teach humanity, was to be a man; He who was to say, "Learn of me," was to be one of ourselves. It was in a man that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were to be hidden for us.

(3.) God's purpose is to judge by a man. The Father does not judge, but has committed all judgment to the Son. Judgment is given to Him because He is the Son of man (John 5:27). It is as Son of man that He sits upon the throne of his glory (Matthew 25:31).

(4.) God's purpose is to rule by a man. The King both of earth and heaven is to be son of David and son of Abraham. "The man Christ Jesus" is heir of the throne of David as well as possessor of the throne of heaven. The crown of all the earth is to be placed on the head of a man. Human hands are to wield the scepter of the universe.

(5.) God's purpose is to link heaven and earth together by a man. It is in the man Christ Jesus that the reconciliation takes place between them. It is by this man that the nearness is to be maintained for ever. He is the bridge, the ladder, the chain, the golden clasp that is to knit together the heavenly and earthly regions and races. Round this human center the universe is to revolve.

Glad tidings! The woman's seed has at length come to our rescue from the hands of our great enemy! Glad tidings! Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. Glad tidings! Jesus, the son of Mary, of David, of Abraham, of Adam, is our Saviour; our prophet; our priest; our king. Oh, has not God loved man?

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