

Christ Eternal

by J.C. Ryle

Jesus Christ is eternal, the Creator of all things, and the source of all spiritual life and light, making Him the perfect Savior for sinners.

Scripture: John 1:1

Topics: "The Nature of Sin", "The Divinity of Christ"

Description

J.C. Ryle emphasizes the eternal nature of Jesus Christ as the Word, who existed before creation and is distinct yet one with God the Father. He highlights that Christ is not a created being but the very God who created all things and is the source of spiritual life and light for humanity. Ryle urges believers to recognize the gravity of sin in light of Christ's divine nature and the strength of their hope in Him as the eternal Savior. The sermon encourages Christians to treasure the profound truths of Christ's identity and the implications for their faith and understanding of sin.

Transcript

"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. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:1-5)

The five verses now before us contain a statement of matchless sublimity concerning the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. He it is, beyond all question, whom St. John means when he speaks of "the Word." No doubt there are heights and depths in that statement which are far beyond man's understanding. And yet there are plain lessons in it, which every Christian would do well to treasure up in his mind.

We learn, firstly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is eternal. St. John tells us that "in the beginning was the Word." He did not begin to exist when the heavens and the earth were made. Much less did He begin to exist when the Gospel was brought into the world. He had glory with the Father "before the world was," (John 17:5). He was existing when matter was first created and before time began. He was "before all things," (Col. 1:17). He was from all eternity.

We learn, secondly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is a Person distinct from God the Father, and yet one with Him. St. John tells us that "the Word was with God." The Father and the Word, though two persons, are joined by an ineffable union. Where God the Father was from all eternity, there also was the Word, even

God the Son--their glory equal, their majesty co-eternal, and yet their Godhead one. This is a great mystery! Happy is he who can receive it as a little child, without attempting to explain it.

We learn, thirdly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God. St. John tells us that "the Word was God." He is not merely a created angel, or a being inferior to God the Father and invested by Him with power to redeem sinners. He is nothing less than perfect God, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds.

We learn, fourthly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. St. John tells us that "by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made." So far from being a creature of God, as some heretics have falsely asserted, He is the Being who made the worlds and all that they contain.

We learn, lastly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all spiritual life and light. St. John tells us that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He is the eternal fountain from which alone the sons of men have ever derived life. Whatever spiritual life and light Adam and Eve possessed before the fall, was from Christ. Whatever deliverance from sin and spiritual death any child of Adam has ever enjoyed since the fall, whatever light of conscience or understanding anyone has obtained, all has flowed from Christ. The vast majority of mankind in every age have refused to know Him, have forgotten the fall and their own need of a Saviour. The light has been constantly shining "in darkness." Most have "not comprehended the light." But if any men and women out of the countless millions of mankind have ever had spiritual life and light, they have owed all to Christ.

Such is a brief summary of the leading lessons which these wonderful verses appear to contain. There is much in them, without controversy, which is above our reason; but there is nothing contrary to it. There is much that we cannot explain and must be content humbly to believe. Let us, however, never forget that there are plain practical consequences flowing from the passage, which we can never grasp too firmly or know too well.

Would we know, for one thing, the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Let us often read these first five verses of St. John's Gospel. Let us mark what kind of Being the Redeemer of mankind must needs be in order to provide eternal redemption for sinners. If no one less than the Eternal God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, could take away the sin of the world, sin must be a far more abominable thing in the sight of God than most men suppose. The right measure of sin's sinfulness is the dignity of Him who came into the world to save sinners. If Christ is so great, then sin must indeed be sinful!

Would we know the strength of a true Christian's foundation for hope? Let us often read these first five verses of St. John's Gospel. Let us mark that the Savior in whom the believer is bid to trust is nothing less than the Eternal God, One able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by Him. He was "with God," and "was God," is also "Emmanuel, God with us." Let us thank God that our help is laid on One that is mighty. In ourselves we are great sinners. But in Jesus Christ we have a great Savior. He is a strong foundation stone, able to bear the weight of a world's sin. He that believes on Him shall not be confounded.

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