

CONSIDER HIM

The attention of all mankind has been turned with perplexity and questioning to Jesus of Nazareth. For four thousand years men expected, Prophets wrote, and Poets sung of a coming deliverer; and for nearly two thousand more, all eyes have been turned to Jesus of Nazareth saying, Can this indeed be he? – a babe of humble mother – a boy of marked intellectual ability and moral integrity – a young man of thirty years just emerging from obscurity. Three and a half years more gathered about him a few disciples who hung upon his words, almost persuaded that this was indeed the sent of God, until his young and beautiful life was suddenly and ignominiously terminated in death. Then hope was blighted and sadly they turned away saying, "We trusted, it had been he who should have redeemed Israel."

In the short period of his public career (three and a half years) when the eyes of all men were centered on him, they all marveled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, saying, "never man spake like this man." Some thought he was one of the Prophets risen from the dead – others that he was that great Prophet whom Jehovah had promised to raise up. Some said he was an impostor and a fanatic, but he claimed to be the Son of God – the Christ – the promised deliverer.

No other character on the pages of history ever attracted such universal attention for so great a time, yet his career was so brief and he was distinguished by none of this world's marks of greatness. The spirit of Jehovah gives us the history of this wonderful being and to his Word alone we turn for the answer to our questionings.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel, we find the most concise and comprehensive sketch, therefore let us consider its teaching. (N.B. Read with open Bible referring constantly to it.)

The Greek word, logos, translated word in vss. 1 and 14 of this chapter, would be properly translated by the words, intention, plan, purpose, or expression. Apply this definition to the following passages where the same word (logos) occurs: Acts 10:29. "I ask therefore for what intent (logos) ye have sent for me." Acts 4:29. "Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word" – declare thy plan, purpose, or intention. Acts 8:4. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word," plan or purpose of God. Acts 18:11. "Teaching the word (intention, plan or purpose) of God among them." Mark 4:20. "Such as hear the word (intention, plan or purpose of God) and receive it." Matt. 24:35. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words (plans or purposes) shall not pass away."

With this understanding, then, we may thus read John 1:1. "In the beginning," before anything was created, and when none existed, but Jehovah, "was the word" – plan, intention, or purpose of God. Yes, God had a well defined, and matured plan, formed in his own mind before it found expression in the slightest development. The great Architect of the universe and Author of all life, first counted the cost, and reckoned that all should culminate to his honor and glory. (Luke 14:28-31; Rev. 4:11.)

"And the word (plan or purpose) was with God." So far, it existed only in his own conception; it was his own thought, intention, plan, purpose, not yet expressed.

"And the word was God." The term logos, not only applied to the plan existing only in the mind, but also to the expression of that plan. We understand this text then, to mean that the word – plan or purpose of God, found its first expression in the creation of him, who was "The beginning of the creation of God" – "The first-born of every creature" or better translated "born before all creation" (who afterward became the man, Jesus). Rev. 3:14 and 1:5. Col. 1:15; and

though now fully exalted to the divine nature, still "His name is called the "Word of God." Rev. 19:13.

This being, in whose creation, Jehovah's plan began to find expression, is here called a God – "And the Word [expression of the plan] was God." The word God signifies mighty one; but not always the All-mighty One. It is the translation of each of four Hebrew words – el, elah, elohim, and adonai, all signifying the mighty, or great. It is a general name, often and properly applied to our Heavenly Father, as well as to Jesus, angels, and men. (Deut. 10:17. Gen. 32:24,30; Judges 13:21,22; Jer. 16:13, 10:11; Exod. 7:1.) In Psa. 82 the distinction between beings referred to by the word God is very marked: "God (elohim) standeth in the congregation of the mighty (el); he judgeth among the Gods" (elohim). Here the first word, God, evidently refers to Jehovah, the All-mighty one, while the others evidently refer to other mighty ones – the church, the sons of God, of whom Jesus is the head or chief. Again vs. 6, "I have said ye are Gods (elohim); and all of you are children of the Most High (el yon, the highest God,) but as men ye die." We, now, though sons of the Most High die and appear to men nothing more than others. In us, as in our Leader and Head, God is manifest in our mortal flesh. (See John 10:35 and 2 Cor. 4:11).

The Hebrew word Jehovah is the distinctive name of the Almighty Father and is never applied to any other being – "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, (el-God shaddai- almighty) but by my name JEHOVAH, was I not known to them." Exod. 6:3. In our common version (O.T.) its distinctiveness as a name is lost, being generally rendered the Lord.

"And the word was God." The Son of God (afterward called Jesus,) is here called THE WORD, because Jehovah revealed his word – plan or purpose, through him. It was an eastern custom for kings to have an officer, called the King's Word or Voice, who stood

upon the steps of the throne, at the side of a lattice window, where there was a hole covered with a curtain. Behind this curtain the king sat and expressed his commands to this officer, who communicated them to the officers, judges and attendants. It is from this custom, it is thought, that the phraseology of the text is derived.

Primarily then, the word refers to the plan of God, and it is afterwards applied to the messenger of that plan – the Son of God.

Vss. 2 and 3. "The same (being) was in the beginning (of creation) with God. All things were made by him, (as the agent of Jehovah) and without him was not anything made that was made." He then, as here plainly stated being the first and chiefest of Jehovah's creature, was honored by him, as the agent through whom all things, both animate and inanimate were afterwards created – "Without him was not anything made."

Jehovah had no beginning but is "from everlasting to everlasting;" (Psa. 90:2) hence that which is here called the "beginning" must refer to the beginning of creation.

"In him was life." How brief this expression, and at first sight how simple and seemingly absurd. If the surface meaning were taken, the statement of such a self-evident truth would indeed be absurd – that in the Son of God, who was Jehovah's agent in the works of creation, was life. But let us look deeper, and we will see that it is just like God's grand and eloquent brevity. Since the accomplishment of the work narrated in verse 3, the Son of God had laid aside the glory of his pre-existent condition, and become a man. As a man, he had lived 30 years – the maturity of manhood – and had consecrated his human being to death. Here he received the earnest of his after, high exaltation – the begetting of the Spirit, to the divine nature, to which he was born in the resurrection, when the consecration of the human being to death, was actually accomplished. In the Son of God – the Word – Jesus, then, from 30 years of age, was this Divine life which

he never before possessed. (See "Narrow way to Life," **page 134**, of "Food for Thinking Christians.") "And the life (this divine life) was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not." (Diaglott.)

Verses 10 and 11. "He was in the world and the world was made by him; and the world (of mankind) knew him not. He came unto his own, (people – the Jewish nation) and his own received him not."

But, though the world knew him not, neither did his own receive him, yet, nevertheless – vs. 9, "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This light has not yet enlightened every man. It now lights only those referred to in vs. 12 – "as many as receive him and believe on his name." To this class – believers – "gave he privilege (margin) to become sons of God" on condition that they follow in his footsteps, sacrificing the human nature. These, throughout the Gospel Age, "walk in the light," and like their Head, Jesus, are "lights in the world." (Phil. 2:15.) But still the world fails to apprehend the light, and will, until Jesus and all the members of that overcoming company

– followers in his footsteps –

constituting the Heavenly City (Rev. 21:2) are as a "city set on a hill" which "cannot be hid;" Matt. 5:14. Yes, this heavenly city "shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it: (Isa. 2:2.) "and the nations shall walk in the light of it." (Rev. 21:24.) Then this "true light shining in its strength, from the exalted Divine Christ – head and body, will enlighten every man that cometh into the world."

That this interpretation of vss. 4 and 5 is correct, is proven by vss. 6,7,8, and 15. (Note what positive proof.) John came six months before Jesus' baptism, and begetting to the divine nature, bearing witness of the coming light, saying, "There cometh one after me, who

is preferred before me, FOR HE WAS BEFORE ME." [R422 : page 6]

Jesus had already come as a human being, and had, as John declared, existed before him, not as a man, for John was six months older than Jesus; but in his glorious pre-human condition. In what sense, then, did Jesus come after John's preaching? We answer that at the time of his consecration and typical baptism, he came as the Anointed One, the Christ, the divinely begotten Son of God, and consequent light of the world.

Vs. 14. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

As in verse 3, we are informed of the glory and power of the pre-existent Word, and in vs. 4, ignoring the subsequent human nature for which he left that glory, we are informed of that divine life which is ultimately to enlighten every man that cometh into the world; so vs. 14 goes back to tell how he left the glory which he had with the Father, gave up his spiritual being, and became a human being.

"And we beheld his glory (the glory of his perfect humanity), the glory as of the only begotten of a father." His perfect human nature shone with such lustre in contrast with all imperfect men, that he seemed not to be a son of the fallen race, but the only begotten of some perfect being – and such he was, a new creation of God, the second direct human creation of God, just as [R422 : page 7] Adam was the first. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, while Adam was

*A father is a life-giver – The life which comes to us through Adam is an impaired and forfeited one; but the life which Jesus had, was not received through Adam, but from his Father – God. He was no more contaminated with sin by his association with Mary, than was Adam by the dust of the earth from which he was formed. God was directly the Father of both Adam and Jesus, therefore the life of both was perfect and unforfeited.

Jesus, because a perfect man, was full of grace (favor) and truth. He lived in full and constant favor with God, and therefore God made known his truth – his plans – to him.

Vs. 16. "And of his fullness have all we (believers) received." Yes, of that same fullness of favor with God, which Jesus enjoyed because of his sinless perfection, have all we received because of our justification through faith in his blood. Thus Jesus lifts believers out of condemnation and sin, up to the plane which he occupied, into fullness of favor and communion with God – "justified freely from all things."

"And grace for grace," or favor on account of favor: that is, being lifted from the condition of rebels and sinners to that of justification by faith, was one act of favor; then that favor opened the way for another favor – viz., the call to become partakers of the Divine nature, to become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus by suffering with him.

Yes, with Paul, because of this grace (of justification) wherein we stand, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God – a further grace. (Rom. 5:2.)

Vs. 17. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here a contrast is drawn between the Jewish and Gospel Ages: In the former, only the Law was given, (the shadow of good things to come during and after the Gospel Age.) But it could never give life, because none were able to measure up to its requirements. "But grace" – the payment of our ransom price, and not only so, but also the additional favor – "truth," or the knowledge of God's plan, and our high-calling as revealed through it – both these favors came by Jesus Christ. "The appearing of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, brought life (the "restitution" to perfection of humanity) and

immortality (believers' high-calling) to light." (2 Tim. 1:10.) This special favor ("grace,") and this wonderful knowledge ("truth") belong only to the Gospel Age.

In the brief space here considered what a glorious biography we have presented to us, of the once glorious spiritual, subsequent perfect human, and now "highly exalted" Divine, Immortal WORD. Her it stands on the sacred page in its simple, eloquent brevity as dictated by the spirit of Jehovah. Behold what grace the Father bestowed upon him – "That all men (and all created beings) should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

"If all the world my Saviour knew,
Then all the world would love Him too."

Thank God the happy day is dawning in which this knowledge shall fill the whole earth.

Beloved followers in his footsteps, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we (as partakers with him, and joint-heirs of the same things) should (also) be called the sons of God."

Turning again to the Scriptures, we inquire,

WHY THIS EXALTATION

of one of God's creatures so far above all others? Paul replies – Hath not God power to make one vessel unto more honor – what if God wills to show the riches of his glory on the vessels prepared unto glory; Who art thou that repliest against God? – Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it Why hast thou made me thus? (Rom. 9:21-23,20.) No, Paul, we would not question Jehovah's absolute right to do what he will with his own. If he has created angels perfect and glorious on their own plane of being, and men perfect and glorious on another, a little lower, and Jesus still higher, the Lord over

all, each rejoices in the perfection of his being, and all redounds to the glory of God.

But we would inquire why the additional glory of Jesus, and his exaltation to the divine nature?

Paul would here point us to a principle in God's government as expressed by Jesus and Peter – viz.: that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" – "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." And again Jesus intimates that if any of God's creatures are exalted above others, it is for the blessing and service of all – "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 23:11,12.)

Paul seems to have in mind and to contrast the pride and ambition of Satan with the humility and obedience of Jesus. The former aspired to exalt himself above the stars (sons) of God, even to usurp Jehovah's throne. But of Jesus, Paul says that "though being in God's form (a mighty spiritual being), yet (he) did not meditate a +usurpation (of God's authority) to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:6-8. Diaglott.) Here we see the grandest intelligence next to Jehovah, recognizing his rightful authority, and bowing in meek and loving submission to his will.

"WHEREFORE" – on this account, says Paul – "God hath highly exalted him."

In his glorious exalted condition and divine nature, we now see Jesus prepared for the work of blessing. Of this he informed his disciples after his resurrection, saying, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me;" and Prophets and Apostles, in types, and symbols, and wonderful sayings, tell of the glory that shall follow.

Now taking Jehovah's standpoint of view, which his word reveals, we look away back to the dim and distant universal void, and beholding the former glory of the first-begotten, we exclaim in the sublime words of the poet –

"The mighty God, from out whose hand,
The planets rolled like grains of sand."

And who can estimate the exceeding, and ETERNAL WEIGHT of that glory to which he is now exalted, and which the revolving ages shall accumulate. And yet this was not Jehovah, but only his honored agent, looking up to him as his rightful Lord, and rendering implicit obedience to his will.

Now we are prepared to understand the words of Jesus to John on Patmos. (Rev. 1:8,11,18.) "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" – Almighty since Jehovah had given to him all power in heaven and in earth. And again he declares, "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of hades (the grave) and of death." In or through him as here declared, we see the whole plan of Jehovah consummated. Beginning with creation we have seen him as the alpha of the plan, and faith looks into the revealed future and beholds him as its omega.

With such an example before us as Jesus' humiliation and consequent exaltation, let us, as the Apostle says, consider him lest we be weary and faint. Let us call to mind our high calling to become his bride, and as such to be joined in heirship with him whom God hath appointed heir of all things. To appreciate this wondrous calling is to lay aside every weight and hindrance. To make its fulfillment sure, is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that he

may exalt us in due time to be "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." (1 Pet. 5:6. Rev. 21:9.)

With such a hope clearly in view, who would not gladly trail his bit of earthly reputation in the dust, and take joyfully the spoiling of his earthly treasures, while he is counted the filth and offscouring of the earth? Dearly beloved, keep the prize for "him that overcometh" before you; keep your garments unspotted from the world; make your calling and election sure by being "faithful unto death." – "Consider Him."

+The Greek word *harpagmon*, here rendered *usurpation* being a word of very rare occurrence, a great variety of translations have been given. The following may serve as examples: "Who did not think it a matter to be earnestly desired." – Clarke. "Did not regard as an object of solicitous desire." – Stuart. "Thought not a thing to be seized." – Sharpe. "Did not eagerly grasp." – Kneeland. "Did not violently strive." – Dickenson. "Did not meditate a usurpation." – Turnbull. This last is adopted by the *Emphatic Diaglott*. It is the clearest expression of the same idea which is conveyed by all.