

## PLEASE SCROLL DOWN

### What If Jesus Were Only a Man?

REV. F. J. LANKENAU, Napoleon, O.

(Continued.)

Yes, Jesus is continually representing Himself as equal to His Father. "I and My Father are one," He declares John 10, 30. And John 5, 27 He claims the divine right to execute Judgment; He will reward His faithful servants, Matt. 24, 44—47, and assign to them for their eternal abode mansions which He has prepared for them. John 14, 2. The divine prerogative (Luke 5, 21) of forgiving sins, Jesus exercises unhesitatingly, Matt. 9, 6, in the presence of those who are correct in their opinion that for any one but God to exercise this right is blasphemy. Then, too, it is worthy

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13) We have actually met men who thought that by ignorance of German they might increase their knowledge of English. At one of America's best universities, however, I met men who studied German in order to know more of English. In fact, at this institution German was required if one wished to make a deeper study of English. And indeed, some of the best speakers in the American vernacular whom we heard were men who knew German well. The man who has no room in himself for more than one language—has he very much room? Joseph Addison is a model writer of English. Few have approached him in ease and purity of style,—it is doubtful if he has ever been far surpassed. And yet he knew Latin so well and studied it so assiduously that he wrote good Latin poetry. Of Thomas Carlyle it is said that he read and studied German so constantly that his English was affected by it. But what of that—he produced one of England's greatest classics: *Frederick the Great*.

14) *Acres of Diamonds*, by Russell H. Conwell.

of note that Jesus always claimed to have sole deciding authority in matters of faith and duty. In the Sermon on the Mount He calmly decides every question of morality and duty with His "But I say unto you." With complete self-possession and as a thing absolutely self-evident He assumes the right of sole arbitration in every question of moral duty. The common people readily noticed this marked difference between the manner of Jesus' and the scribes' teaching; "for He taught them as one having authority." He declared that He was the Lord of the Sabbath, Matt. 12, 8, assumed the power to lay down doctrine, commissioned His apostles and disciples to baptize the nations in His name, and insisted that His ordinances be observed in His Church on earth, Matt. 28, 19, 20. He declares Himself the Source of all life. In the remarkable passage John 5, 21—27 He declares that He has life in Himself, which He proved by raising Himself on the third day; that He gives spiritual life to those spiritually dead by nature; that all the dead will hear His voice on the Last Day and come forth from the graves; and that to those who believe in Him the resurrection will be unto life unending, the entrance into an undisturbed communion with Him and the Father. John 14, 3.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus speaks of the gift of the Son as the richest and greatest gift of divine love to the world, and Matt. 11, 28—30 He declares that He is the one thing needed for the soul. He calls Himself the rest of the soul, while we know from other passages that this is a claim which God makes for Himself. By declaring Himself to be our rest, Jesus makes claim to deity. For Him to make such an assertion regarding Himself and not to be God would, to say the least, not show much meekness and lowliness on His part. Similar are those passages in which Jesus speaks of Himself as the Source of our peace. John 14, 27; 16, 33. For Jesus to direct us ever to Himself as He does and yet be no more than a man, would surely be very egotistic on His part. If Jesus is not true God, He was also guilty of self-exaltation when He told His disciples the purpose of Lazarus's sickness was "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," and when He asserted that the mission of the Holy Spirit was to glorify Him. John 16, 14.

Here, too, let us look at those passages in which Jesus demands of us that we believe in Him as the only Way to heaven. John 14, 6. To Nicodemus He says that faith in Him brings to the believer eternal life. John 3, 16.

He tells the people that only those who have faith in Him have life, John 6, 53, and John 10, 28 He declares Himself to be the Giver of life to those who hear His voice. As we read this whole passage, John 10, 27—30, we cannot be surprised that the Jews declared that by His assertions concerning Himself He was making Himself God, and that, considering their views concerning Him, they took up stones to kill Him because He had spoken blasphemy. By making the claims He did, Jesus surely did make Himself guilty of blasphemy if He was not God. Consider, too, Jesus' teaching concerning His indispensability to us, John 15, 1—5, where He declares: "Without Me ye can do nothing." In short, for us to follow the Gospel requirements concerning the proper attitude to Jesus would expose us to the curse hurled at those who trust in man, if Jesus of Nazareth is not God.

But we have not yet ended with the claims which Jesus made while visible on earth. He lays claim to the immanent, incommunicable divine properties of ubiquity and eternity and says of Himself that He is omnipotent and omniscient. To the Jews He says: "Before Abraham was, I am," John 8, 58, and in His high-priestly prayer He declares that He was "before the world was," John 17, 5. Matt. 18, 20 He promises His presence to all those who gather in His name, wherever such gathering may be, and Matt. 28, 20 He tells His disciples that He will be with them always. When Nathanael, in response to Philip's urgent plea, came to Jesus, He at once described his character and thus revealed His omniscience. The astonished skeptic cried out in surprise: "Whence knowest Thou me?" and received the answer: "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." This reply of Jesus convinced Nathanael that Jesus was the "Son of God," because it proved His omnipresence. And Jesus did not correct the mistake of Nathanael, which He surely would have done as an honest man, had Nathanael been mistaken, but rather confirmed him in his opinion. John 1, 47—51. Omnipotence is another divine quality which Jesus lays claim to. John 10, 28; Matt. 28, 18. If Jesus were possessed of one nature only, the human, how could He have made representations such as those contained in these passages? If we weigh these words of the Lord, how can we explain them in any other way than that the Lord Jesus wanted us to believe that He is the God-man, God incarnate?

In perfect conformity with the declarations of Jesus quoted above and His conduct as there described is His insistent demand

that divine homage and worship be accorded Him. "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him," so says Jesus Himself. John 5, 23. Jesus here tells us that there is no difference between the honor accorded to the Father and that which we owe Him. In honoring the Son, we honor the Father; while in withholding honor from the Son, we deprive the Father of the honor due Him. With great solemnity He speaks of the time when all will see Him sit on the throne of His glory. He suffers divine honors to be rendered Him and commends His disciples who worshiped Him. Matt. 16, 16; 28, 9. 17. He chides Thomas because of his unbelief, but permits the same disciple to address Him as his "Lord and God." Could Jesus have suffered such idolatrous worship on the part of Thomas to have gone un-reproved, had it been idolatry, and still be able to lay claim to just ordinary, every-day honesty? —

There seems to be no reasonable doubt that Jesus' own disciples understood Him to lay claim to deity, and they were willing to bring Him the homage due Him as this idea germinated in their minds. The confession of Peter can only be an acknowledgment of Jesus' Godhead. Over against the estimate of the people, who all betoken a high opinion of Jesus according to the testimony given by the disciples, Peter gives expression to his confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." These are not empty words on the lips of Peter, but a testimony of the disciples' conviction that Jesus is more than a man, — more than Elijah, more than Jeremiah, more than the greatest prophet, — that He is the only-begotten Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of the world. While truly human as the Son of David, He is the eternal Son of God according to His divine essence. Peter wants Jesus, the Christ, to be recognized as the "Son of the living God," not as a mere man, not even as the most exalted of men, but as the Son of God, of one substance with the Father, begotten, not made, of the Father before all the worlds, God of God, very God of very God, perfect God and perfect man, the Son of God and the Son of man. Christ accepts Peter's confession and his definition of Him as "the Son of the living God" and tells him that none but the Father Himself could have revealed the Son thus fully and clearly to him. Matt. 16, 15—17. The disciples imbibed the idea of Jesus' deity from the personal teaching of their Lord, and subsequent revelations served but to expand in their minds the

seed-thoughts which He dropped there from His own sacred lips as He lived with them. Thomas's confession was perfectly in line, therefore, with the convictions of those who had intimately associated with Him during the three years of His public ministry. The words of Thomas, "My Lord and my God," John 20, 28, are not merely an exclamation of wonder and surprise, but words of a believing disciple addressed to Him whom He recognizes as His Savior and as the eternal and infinite God. Unrebuked and uncondemned Thomas addresses Jesus as the very God. With neither word nor gesture does Jesus reject the homage which here is given Him; He rather accepts this worship of Thomas as the outflow of that faith which He has always spoken of as the means of appropriating all the blessings He came to bring to fallen mankind. But of those who companied with Jesus during the days of His earthly ministry Peter and Thomas were not the only ones who accepted Him as the very God. In the sublime prolog to his gospel, John surely brings evidence upon evidence as to his convictions. John 1, 1—18. He calls Him the "Word which was God," says that He was "in the beginning with God," ascribes to Him the creation of "all things," and calls Him the Source of all life and light, the Life and the Light, the incarnate God Himself. The holy women on their way home from the grave accord Him supreme worship, Matt. 28, 9, and the disciples at the seashore in Galilee do the same, adoring Him as God and Lord, Matt. 28, 17. On Mount Olivet the whole gathering of disciples worship their ascended Lord, Luke 24, 52, who, though invisible to their eyes, according to His promise was ever present with them.

*(To be concluded.)*

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