

THOUGHTS ON THE CHRIST

I have been studying the Bible for over fifty years and I have never found anything to indicate that Christ was, or is, anything other than what He claimed to be and appeared to be. He asserted that God was His Father, and even the unbelieving Jews realized that this assertion clearly amounted to a claim of equality with God (John 5:18). The great apostle Paul certainly believed that Christ had the same nature and essence as God the Father (Philippians 2:6) and consequently Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Now, it is not reasonable to think that Christ, in His nature and essence, could be equal with God and yet not be God. Hundreds of years before Christ came into the world He was called Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14), which means, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). John referred to Christ as the "Word" and declared that not only was He in the beginning with God, but He was God, and the world was made by Him (John 1:1-9). In the first chapter of Hebrews we are told that Christ is "the brightness of (God's) glory, and the express image of His person. We are also told again that He made the worlds. And not only that, but even the angels of God worship Him. Now, if He were not God it would then be sacrilege for the angels, or anyone else, to worship Him. Only God is to be worshipped. He will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8 & 48:11).

Christ never refused the worship of His followers, nor did He ever indicate in any way that it was folly in them to do so. He clearly did not think He was robbing God of any glory to assert His equality with Him. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is indeed a Father-Son relationship between these first two persons in the godhead. This being true, and it being a fact that God does not change (Mal. 3:6, James 1:17), we are forced to conclude that this relationship is an eternal one. If God is a Father today, then He has always been a Father, for He cannot change. If Christ is a Son, then He has always been a Son, for He cannot change (Heb. 13:8). Therefore, even though our finite minds cannot fathom this—particularly in view of any natural father-son relationships that we are presently familiar with—yet we, by faith, accept it as a truth revealed in God's inerrant word. There has to be something here that we, in our present state, are not capable of fully comprehending. Perhaps it will be made plain to us in eternity.

It has been very astutely pointed out by men much wiser than I, that Christ was either all that He claimed to be or else He was the greatest impostor who ever lived. However, many long years of study have assured me, as well as millions of other Bible students, that Christ could not have been an impostor. He was the God-man. Everything about His life, everything about His stay on earth was totally consistent with His being possessed of both pure Deity and perfect manhood. There was never a misstep on His part, never a misspoken word, never an unbecoming temper, attitude or disposition of any kind. Yet, at the same time there were innumerable manifestations of His power over all flesh and all nature. He could calm the sea as well as raise the dead. His Father anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power, and He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him (See Acts 10:38). And, we are not told anywhere near all that He did (John 21:25). Worlds of books could have been written.

He never gave the slightest indication that He was inferior in any way to His creatures. He never offered Himself to anyone except to God the Father (Heb. 9:14) and that offering was approved and accepted. It was "without spot" and it perfected forever those in whose behalf it was made; those whom God had previously set apart for a holy use (See Heb. 10:14). He never pleaded with anyone to "accept Him." He never established but one church, and He never gave but one set of rules by which that church was to function. He never appointed any Popes or set up any higher officers than servants of His church. There was never any failure even remotely associated with Christ or His works. He finished the work that His Father gave Him to do and He was received back into Glory where He ever sits at the Father's right hand, making intercession for the saints. One day He will come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also. And when He presents them to His Father He will say, "Behold, I and the children (not part of the children) which Thou hast given me," (See Isaiah 8:18 & Heb. 2:13). All this is to the glory of God and is totally consistent with eternal deity. May He help us to meditate often upon these and all such wondrous truths and find our chief delight in them.—Elder Ralph Harris