

## THE WORLD'S MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER

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The advent of another Christmas is an appropriate time to appraise the impact of the personality of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only upon our individual lives but on the world as well. The title of this article as you know is borrowed in part from one of the current magazines. Perennially lists appear giving someone's opinion as to the "greats" of all time. Whether it is an eminent statesman like Gladstone, an author such as H. G. Wells, or a hack-journalist compiling the roster, the undisputed first place is always given to Jesus of Nazareth.

Let us look at the reasons for the lasting impression the Son of the Carpenter has made upon civilization. Here is one, humanly speaking, who grew up in an obscure village in a small land which at that time was under the heel of a dictator. Today the Christ of the Gospels is acclaimed as the head of humanity, the goal of progress and the consummation of glory.

At least three important things arrest our attention and lead us to nominate Him as the World's Most Unforgettable Character; namely, the mystery of His incarnation, the majesty of His words and works, and the miracle of His atonement.

It is surely a providence and not just a coincidence that the birthplace of Jesus seems to be at the center of all things. It is the center of time. Everything that came before Him led up to Him, and all which is good since His coming has flowed out from Him. For centuries the Messiah was the theme of prophecy. Isaiah beheld Him as Immanuel, Zechariah as Jehovah, Ezekiel as Shepherd. Micah as Ruler, Malachi as reformer and Sun of righteousness. It is no wonder that when He came of lowly birth of humble parents with a barn stall as a delivery room. His own race rejected His claims for they were deluded by their desire for a political ruler and a temporal deliverer.

In our chronology all that came before the nativity is B. C. and since then A.D. Even among non-Christian cultures the date of the Christian calendar is used on most public buildings.

The little land of Palestine was geographically the center of the known world at the time of Christ's birth. The three largest continents joined at His cradle. In a general way that point marks the dividing place of culture, for East of there, the reading of a book is in reverse to the Westerner and the Oriental languages are in the form of characters rather than the letters we use on the printed page.

Not only is this phenomena associated with His birthplace, but our Lord was of supernatural origin. His was not an ordinary birth. There is no way on a mere human level by which we can account for Him. He was Spirit begotten and virgin born. It seems odd that so many intellectually cannot receive this truth, yet at the same time readily accept the story of creation—of Adam coming into the world without benefit of a father or mother, of Eve created without benefit of a woman. Why then, should it seem peculiar to accept the holy account of Christ being conceived by the Holy Ghost. Those having experienced the new birth do not question or disbelieve for such a one knows experimentally what it is to be born of the Spirit.

As to the reasoning behind the human and divine nature of our Lord, the state of man was such that the twofold being of Christ is a necessity. He is very man and very God, human enough to sympathize with us, divine enough to save us. He is just as much man as though He were never God, and just as much God as though He

were never man. The story of Bethlehem is not an ascending act on the part of man, but a descending act on the part of God. He thus became a blood brother to the race, yet a bound being to the Infinite God. Such mysteries are not objections, but rather fascinations upon which we can ponder with delight. The heart knows things which the mind can not understand. Needless to say, anyone who scoffs at the Babe in the manger will also sneer at the Cross.

In the majesty of His words, we have One who is mediator—able to take the language of God and speak it to man, and the language of man and speak it back to God. You may have heard of the Lorraines. Years ago a savage tribe of head-hunters asked that a missionary be sent to them, having witnessed what the gospel had done for their neighbors. This courageous couple went, but labored with the language barrier and developed a sense of hopelessness in getting their message through to these hungry hearts. One day a lovely little blue-eyed, blonde baby girl arrived to bless their home. She was the joy and wonder to the natives who hailed her as a white princess. As the child grew she became bi-lingual, and thus in time communicated enough words to her parents so that the truth of salvation could be preached to the heathen. What a comparison to the meaning of Christ's birth whereby mercy had a human face, pity a human heart, and Divine love became human flesh. The simplicity, sincerity and sympathy of the words of Jesus cause all of us to say with Simon Peter, "To whom else have we to go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," and with the disciples, "Lord, teach us," or the centurion's "Never man spake thus."

In His life, Jesus was always on the right side of every question. So perfect is His example that the past cannot impair Him, not the future improve Him. Founders of other religions were by their own confessions, sinful men, hence incapable of saving others. In Jesus, there is no flaw or defect. John Stuart Mill who professed to be an agnostic stated. "This I am bound to say, that I know of no better example than Jesus Christ; and no man could have a better rule for his life than in any circum-

(Continued on Page 4)

### WHAT MAKES CHRISTMAS?

It was not the angels' singing

Gave the Christmas thought,

Not the precious gold and incense

By the Wise Men brought;

Not the shining star that led them

On their unknown way;

'Twas the Christ within the manger

Made our Christmas Day.

So 'tis not the tree and presents

Make our Christmas Day,

'Tis not what we get that counts,

But—what we give away.

'Tis the joy of loving service

Makes the glad hours bright,

Thinking first of others' pleasures,

Self put out of sight.

We need never mourn that Christmas

Comes but once a year

Since the blessedness of giving

Brings the Christmas cheer.

If we keep the Christmas spirit

In our hearts always,

Through the whole year we can make it

Christmas every day.

—Annie Johnson Flint