

— Our Pastors Speak —



FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

Jesus — The Son of God

by Rev. B. C. Cochran

The strength or weakness of the Church of Christ will be determined by its concept of the Person of the Lord Jesus. "What think ye of Christ?" asked Jesus of the Pharisees, "whose son is he?" On another occasion he directed a similar question to His disciples: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

In both these instances the answers indicated a fatal misconception on the part of those who expressed their opinions concerning Christ. The Pharisees' statement: "He is the son of David". The "men" referred to by our Lord in the query directed to the disciples, represented the general opinion concerning the person of Jesus, registered as follows: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets". The contexts related to both scriptures referred to reveal that a "confession of faith" which limits Christ to being a man, however great, is illogical and insufficient.

"How can you say that Christ is the son of David, when David in the Spirit called Him Lord? how is He then his son?" asked Jesus of the Pharisees. And when the question of the Saviour's identity is directed to His own followers, Peter, enlightened and inspired by the Spirit declares: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". 'Twas at that point that the Lord Jesus classified this confession as the very foundation for establishing and extending the Kingdom of God: "Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it".

It is not enough that we honour Christ by presenting Him as a great prophet, a great teacher, a great man. Or, if you wish, use the superlative—make Him the greatest—and it is still not enough. There is only one title that will do justice to Christ—"the Son of the living God". Faith must carry us to this point and hold us to this position, or we will neither know Him as our Saviour nor be able to present Him to others as Redeemer. Public opinion on this question may have little serious effect on the life of the Church, but the position of the Church itself on this point of belief will have a life-giving or a death-dealing influence. We must be rigid at this point. To do other would be fatal.

We may safely and scripturally challenge every Church and sect with the demand: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" If there is a clear and convincing statement of faith in answer to this question, we may conclude that the Group has a good foundation at least. If there is denial of this truth, or doubt concerning it, we must draw the line and keep the issue clear. This is the traditional and scriptural position of historic and vital Christianity. Declared Dr. B. B. Warfield, in his book "The Lord of Glory": "Those who will not have a divine Christ must seek their human Jesus outside the entire evangelical literature".

"Before Abraham was, I am", was the unqualified claim of Jesus concerning Himself. The Jews accused Him of blasphemy because, according to His own statement, "I said I am the Son of God". The Word of God presents

numerous evidences in support of this truth. Christ is presented as the eternal Son, identical to the Father in Divine character, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life". He "was before all things, and by Him all things consist". "The World was from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning", wrote Matthew Henry. And the Bethlehem birth, according to the scriptures, was this divine, eternal, creator Word, taking upon Him "the form of a servant . . . made in the likeness of men".

The atmosphere that is created by the historical statements concerning the Lord Jesus is pregnant with the supernatural and the miraculous. Virgin born by the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost, He lived the only sinless life in the long history of the human race, displayed his mastery over devils, disease, and man's invisible foe, death. To read the record of His entrance to this world, His sojourn among men, and His departure "mid rending rocks and dark'ning skies", with open mind and responsive heart, will inevitably move us to exclaim: "Truly this was the Son of God". And it is this supernatural element in our faith that makes the Gospel a saving Gospel to us and others. Take this away, and the foundation is gone. As a consequence the superstructure would come crashing down around us and the work of Kingdom-building would be suspended.

How can we safeguard this great truth as a vital part of our "Confession of Faith"? By retaining it in our doctrinal statement? By sermons and songs on this emphasis? By verbal statements of belief? These are all good and proper, but they are not enough. There is just one thing that will preserve to the Church and the Gospel a living, saving, faith in Christ as the Son of God—the direct and dynamic ministry of the Holy Spirit among and within us. This is a truth that must be revealed if it is to continue with us. The light must stream from heaven, the life must come through the ministry of the Holy Ghost. So long as we are limited to "flesh and blood" there will be neither conception nor confession. God must speak to us and move among us. It is the presence of the Christ which banishes doubt and gives birth to the fervent exclamation: "My Lord and my God".

Our doctrinal position is sound, but is personal experience vital? We have the letter, but do we have the Spirit? Lord Jesus, help us to honour Thee in our faith by having Thee in our hearts!

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REPORT FROM BETHESDA HOSPITAL

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definite conversions in the hospital. Services are held prior to each clinic as well as several services during the week and on Sunday. During our recent African Conference held during the first week in January, of the five new seekers, three were directly related to the hospital contact. It is, of course, difficult to assess completely the spiritual ministry which is resulting from our medical work; only time and eternity will fully reveal this.

Finally, Preacher Samson Nyoni has been appointed by the Conference to become resident preacher at the Rosamond Dow Church and to serve as evangelist in the hospital and clinics during 1962. Nyoni has just completed Bible School; he has a large family; he is a devout, spiritual man who has been saved from much. We would appreciate your praying for him as he assumes these duties.

Sincerely in Christ,
S. Emmett, M.D.

LIC. JAMES MacARTHUR PASSES

Word has reached us that Lic. James MacArthur has passed away. Funeral service was held on Tuesday, Feb. 6.