

Printed Pamphlets

“God with Us”

Matthew 2

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It is a very significant fact, that the test of every one and everything is Christ: doctrines do not test in the same way as the Person to whom, no doubt, all the doctrines of scripture relate.

The great question now, as in the days when the Lord Jesus was here, is, “What think ye of Christ?” Thus it is that here where we have the record of His advent into this world, all classes are manifested in their true character in relation to Him. In this Gospel He is presented as Son of Abraham, Son of David, Messiah the King: hence it is in this connection all through this Gospel we ever find Him, and the presentation of the truths found in the gospel are ever set forth in this connection. There was a spot on earth -- the place of privilege and blessing -- a favored place, the city of the great King. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Sion.” Now it was to that spot every eye was turned, wherever expectation was alive in any true heart, it was from thence its hope sprung; hence it is that we find these wise men coming from the far East to Jerusalem, with the language of affection and earnestness, saying, “Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him.” Thus were their hearts moved by His birth, it is the King of Israel they come to seek, all about Him has a claim upon them, they leave their own and distant country, guided by His star, if only they can reach Him; this is the first class or company whom His advent into this world brings as it were to the front. It is a lovely picture this for faith to look upon, oh how Christ can engross heart and mind! Does He command ours? How much would we go through if only we might reach Him? Then observe their attitude on arriving at the place where He was -- “they fell down and worshiped him” --

“Jesus is worthy to receive
Honor and power divine” --

is in reality the language of their willing hearts; how blessed to see faith at its goal, enjoying the prize! Is it not lovely to see how His Person having won their affections, commanded their adoration, and opened their treasures! They had nothing too costly to withhold from Him, precious as were their gifts -- “gold and frankincense and myrrh” -- He was far more precious still. Oh what a sight for faith, child though He was here, an infant of days as to His humanity, yet He as such was their all! He had but just come, yet it was Himself who had come and was there before them. It is lovely to trace in the scriptures how His Person ever addressed the faith and affection of which He was the object; here it was in the first moments of His birth; later on, as we know, in the close of His days on earth, and in the face of the hostility and hatred which beset Him, there was found a Mary who would expend on Him what the Holy Ghost was pleased to call “very costly” -- and as she placed it on His body, perfumed the house with its odor. Oh, how at the beginning and at the end Christ was all to faith, whether in the Magi or in a Mary, it found in Him its satisfying portion, and the hatred and violence which

marked both the scenes to which we have called attention, could not hinder it in its devotion and affection to Him. Is it so, may I ask affectionately, with us?

I would not leave this beautiful scene without a word on another subject -- truly the center of all we have had before us. Let me ask you to think who is this wonderful child, whose advent seems to touch and test all hearts? Who but Emmanuel, God with us! He was none less than God manifest in flesh; the mighty God was there. Oh what grace and love, that He who was “in the beginning with God,” was God, should thus come down to become man; most affecting it is to dwell in thought on circumstances in which He is here found as having become Man: a little child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger -- lowliness, poverty, and rejection, are all found in His birth: well may we sing

“Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,
Thence is all Thy people’s hope
Thou wast poor, that we might be
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee.”

Again, it is striking to note how from the first moment of His advent He was a sufferer; in different ways and at different times He was such. Oh how it does appeal to and attract the heart! it is a suffering, sorrowing Christ which does this; in His humiliation He wins, in His glory He satisfies; His humiliation and His glory are the two great powers which work upon our hearts. Then see how Israel suffers too in connection with Him. “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not” -- oh what an expression of suffering and death, “they are not”! What a sense of desolation these words carry with them!

Thus we have looked at, in this first class, the faith and affection which found its all in Himself, and expended it all on Him, and we have also looked at who He was, the Object of such faith and love.

We must now look at the second class we find here, whom His Person and presence brings out. We find then a striking contrast to the Magi in the king (Herod) and all Jerusalem with him; Herod is a sad character full of pride, vanity, and worldly lust; besides he is a foreign king who is here seen usurping the allegiance of Messiah’s people, while He the true king, owned by the Gentiles as represented by these wise men, is cast out and refused, His own people being entirely indifferent to Him. Oh what a sight is here presented in the distress and trouble which His advent brought upon Herod and all Jerusalem! I need hardly dwell upon the *moral* state here presented: may I ask you how far you suppose things and people now are changed? Is there any more heart now than then for Christ? Alas! the answer is but too distinctly stamped upon the vast scene of profession around, where there is no more room for Jesus now than on the morning of His birth.

But suffer me to bring this question nearer to our own doors, and to ask, How is it with us in relation to Him? Another has so truly said, that what marked the man who then had possession of the throne of Jerusalem, was “victorious