

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Loveliness of Christ

C. I. Scofield

“Yea, He is altogether lovely.” Song. 5:16

All other greatness has been marred by littleness; all other wisdom has been flawed by folly; all other goodness has been tainted by imperfection. Jesus Christ remains the only Being of whom, without gross flattery, it could be asserted, “He is altogether lovely.”

Perfect Humanity

First, of all, as it seems to me, this loveliness of Christ consists in His perfect humanity.

In everything but our sins and our evil natures, he is one with us. He grew in stature and in grace. He labored and wept and prayed and loved. He was tempted in all points as we are — sin apart.

With Thomas, we confess Him Lord and God. We adore and revere Him. There is no other who establishes with us such intimacy, who comes so close to these human hearts of ours: no one else in the universe of whom we are so little afraid. He enters as simply and naturally into our twentieth century lives as if He had been reared in the same street with us. He is not one of the ancients; He is one with us.

How wholesomely and genuinely human He is! Martha scolds Him. John, who has seen Him raise the dead, still the tempest, and talk with Moses and Elijah on the mount, does not hesitate to make a pillow of His breast at supper. Peter will not let Him wash his feet, but afterwards wants his head and hands included in the ablution. They ask Him foolish questions, and rebuke Him, and venerate and adore Him in one breath. And He calls them by their first names, and tells them to fear not, and assures them of His love. In all this He seems to me altogether lovely. His perfection does not glitter; it glows. The saintliness of Jesus is so warm and human that it attracts and inspires. We find in it nothing austere and inaccessible, like a statue in a niche. The beauty of His holiness reminds one rather of a rose, or a bank of violets.

Jesus receives sinners and eats with them — all kinds of sinners: Nicodemus, the moral, religious sinner, and Mary of Magdala, “out of whom went seven devils” — the shocking kind of sinner. He comes into sinful lives as a bright, clear stream enters a stagnant pool. The stream is not afraid of contamination, but its sweet energy cleanses the pool.

Perfect Compassion

Moreover, Christ’s sympathy is altogether lovely. He is always being “touched with compassion.” The multitude without a shepherd, the sorrowing widow of Nain, the little dead child of the ruler, the demoniac of Gadara, the hungry five thousand — all these represented suffering, and whatever suffers touches Jesus’ heart. His very wrath against the scribes and Pharisees is but the excess of His sympathy for those who suffer under their hard self-righteousness.

Did you ever find Jesus looking for “deserving poor”? He “healed all their sick.” And what grace there is in His sympathy! Why did He touch that poor leper? He could have healed him with a word as He did the nobleman’s son. Why, for years the wretch had been an outcast, cut off from kin, dehumanized. He lost the sense of being a man. It was defilement to approach him. Well, the touch of Jesus made him human again.

A Christian woman, laboring among the moral lepers of London, found a poor street girl desperately ill in a bare cold room. With her own hands she ministered to her; she changed her bed linen, procured medicines and nourishing food and a fire, making the poor place as bright and cheery as possible. And then she said, “May I pray with you?”

“No,” replied the girl, “you don’t care for me. You are doing this to get to heaven.”

Many days passed — the Christian woman unwearily kind, the sinful girl hard and bitter. At last the Christian said: “My dear, you are nearly well now, and I shall not come again, but as it is my last visit, I want you to let me kiss you,” and the pure lips that had known only prayers and holy words met the lips defiled by oaths and unholy caresses — and then, my friends, the hard heart broke. That was Christ’s way.

Perfect Humility

Again, Christ’s humility is altogether lovely. Can you fancy His calling a convention of Pharisees to discuss methods of reaching “the masses”? He, the only one who ever had a choice of how He should be born, entered this life as one of “the masses.” What meekness, what lowliness! “I am among you as one that serveth. He “began to wash his disciples’ feet.” “When he was reviled, reviled not again.” “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Can you think of Jesus as posing and demanding His rights?

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**Continued from page 1 — *The Loveliness of Christ*
Perfect Gentleness**

Further, Christ's gentleness is altogether lovely. It is in His way with sinners that the supreme loveliness of Jesus is most sweetly shown. How tender He is, yet how faithful; how considerate, how respectful! Nicodemus, candid and sincere, but proud of his position as a master in Israel, and timid lest he should imperil it, "comes to Jesus by night." Before he departs, this master in Israel has learned his utter ignorance of the first step toward the kingdom, and goes away to think over the personal application of the truth, "they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." But he has not heard one harsh word, one utterance that can wound his self-respect.

When He speaks to that silent despairing woman, after her accusers had gone out, one by one, He uses for "woman" the same word that He used when addressing His own mother from the cross.

Follow Him to Jacob's solitary well and hear His conversation with the woman of Samaria. How patiently He unfolds the deepest truths, how gently yet faithfully He presses the great ulcer of sin which is eating away her soul! But He could not be more respectful to Mary of Bethany.

Even in the agonies of death, He could hear the cry of despairing faith. When conquerors return from far wars in strange lands they bring their chief captive as a trophy. It was enough for Christ to take back to heaven the soul of a thief.

Perfect Poise

Finally, Christ is altogether lovely in the perfect equipoise of His various perfections. We could speak at length of His dignity, of His virile manliness, of His courage. In Him, all the elements of perfect character are in lovely balance. His gentleness is never weak. His courage is never brutal. My friends, you may study these things for yourselves. Follow Him through all the scenes of outrage and insult on the night and morning of His arrest and trial. Behold Him before the high priest, before Pilate, before Herod. See Him browbeaten, bullied, scourged, smitten upon the face, spit upon, mocked. How inherent greatness comes out! Not once does He lose His self-poise, His high dignity.

I close with this word of personal testimony: This is my Beloved and this is my Friend. Will you not accept Him as your Saviour and likewise discover His loveliness?

Is He not altogether lovely? *

York Bible Study Program

November 14 Bruce Hulshizer - Ephesians
December 12 Tom Irwin - John's Epistles
10 AM - 3PM Lunch served.

Continued from page 3 — *Pressing On*

on instinct rather than seeking the guidance of the Lord. He works tirelessly to keep the unsaved under his sway and to thwart believers from advancing to higher ground.

So, what is our recourse then? How do we gain ground as Paul encouraged the saints at Philippi to do? How are we to "press on" in the midst of so many hindrances and ardent opposition? One way is to stay focused on the bigger picture. Keep your eye on the goal—the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. One day we will be in heaven and this "light affliction" which lasts but for a moment will yield eternal reward. (2 Cor. 4:17) In the words of another, "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus." As a well-known evangelist once stated: "I have read the last chapter of the Bible and we win!"

Another, way to keep pressing on is to stand on the promises of God's Word. God has given us light for the path and all along this path are the promises of His Word. There are the promises of His presence, of His power, and of His provision. He has told us clearly, that "...He will never leave us nor forsake us so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper what can man do unto me? (Heb. 13:5-6) Like Jacob, He will be with us and keep us in the way that we go, (Gen. 28:15) and He finish the work that He began in us. (Phil. 1:6) This promise of His faithfulness should motivate us to live even more for Him, that we may do that we may be well-pleasing to Him. (2 Cor. 5:9)

Yes, there are so many things to discourage us when we look around – defections to the world, disagreements with others, disappointments with ourselves – things that can keep us living on a lower plane. But when we look to the Lord and His Word, there is so much more that will brighten our path as we journey toward our home in Heaven. Press On!

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto that perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) *

Fellowship

Sadly, many saints do not truly understand what its means to be "in fellowship." They see fellowship as something they "do." To many it speaks of the good times of fellowship around the meal table, or in some other social activity.

While such things are certainly proper for Christians, fellowship in a local assembly is far more than this. In Acts 2:42 the word "fellowship" is a noun. In the original language the verse reads, "the fellowship." It is a *place* as well as an activity. "The fellowship" was *where* the saints continued stedfastly!

The word *fellowship* comes from the root word translated "partners" in Luke 5:10. James, John, and Peter were partners in the fishing business. The "fellowship" in Acts 2:42 was in reality a "partnership of believers." From "*Commitment*

or Convenience." Write for free copy.

Pressing On

Mark Kolchin

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Phil 3:12

We sing the hymn regularly (or at least we use to in years gone by):

I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights

I'm gaining every day;

Still praying as I'm onward bound, "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's table land,

A higher plane than I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

The next stanza really brings it home:

My heart has no desire to stay, Where doubts arise and fears dismay;

Though some may dwell where those abound, My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.

We sing this hymn both as a prayer and an admission that we are not where we should be with the Lord. There is indeed far more ground to be gained in our walk and service for Him. Though we would like to think that we are "gaining new heights every day" we are more like Joshua who was told by God that despite his advanced years there was "much more land to be possessed." (Joshua 13:1) It seems to be the same for many of us. Truthfully, for all the personal devotions we have had, the messages listened to and the Bible studies attended, we really should be a lot further along in our lives for Christ than we are.

So why aren't we gaining new heights every day? Why are we so vulnerable to the doubts that arise and the fears that dismay? Admittedly, there are a lot of personal hindrances in the Christian life, but the chief reason may fall squarely on us. It really boils down to a matter of the heart. God says, "My son, give me thine heart." (Prov. 23:26) If our hearts are not fully occupied with Christ, they can become easily occupied with other things. We can easily be lured off center. At best, we are unprofitable servants and like Paul can attest, "In me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. 7:18) Truth be told, our hearts lean toward Egypt. We glance back there from time to time and then wonder why we are not satisfied with manna from above. Frankly, it shows that we still have an appetite for things that we developed a taste for in our former life. (Num. 11:1-6) In the words of another hymn writer, we confess, "prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love." It is not that He leaves us – He will never do that (Rom. 8:39; Heb. 13:5) - but we can and do

drift from Him. We would like to blame it on everything and everyone else, but when it comes right down to it, we are at fault because we allow the "little foxes" to come in and spoil the vines. (Song 2:15) These are just some of the personal hindrances that keep us from gaining higher ground.

But there are also outward hindrances that keep us from living life on a higher plane. There are a lot of adversaries to the Christian. (1 Cor. 16:9) We live in a day in which the word of God is being denied, if not attacked. There is a "famine" in the land. (Amos 8:12) The room is getting darker as the curtains of this age draw to a close. There is not much to encourage us as we watch the nightly news. Scripture calls this system, "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) It is contrary to the things of God and all we stand for. The world hated the Lord when He walked on this earth and it hates Him now when He is faithfully represented by His servants who walk in His steps. (Luke 23:35-36; John 15:18, 1 Peter 2:21) Through various means it enslaves the lost as it promulgates its philosophies and distracts and even derails the saints, causing them to leave to their first love and affection for the Savior. (Rev. 2:4) The glitter and glamour projected by the world and its ways are but a thin veneer that disguises the anti-God values that characterize it. Daniel's prophecy of successive world empires portrayed it perfectly – valuable in the eyes of man (Dan. 2), but in actuality horrific and beast-like in the eyes of God (Dan. 7). It is worse than we may even think, yet many of us are taken up with its ways. We need to turn from it and take our cue from Demas' defection (2 Tim. 4:10) and also the men in Elisha's day when they said of Jericho, "the situation of the city is pleasant...but the water is bad and the ground barren." It is an apt description of this world. (2 Kings 2:19) Like Jericho, the world offers nothing to refresh and satisfy the soul.

The main reason for all of this opposition that keeps many living on a lower plane is due to the instigation of the avowed enemy of our soul, the devil. He possesses a vast array of weaponry in his arsenal to make the path of the believer as difficult as possible to tread. Through temptation, deceit, imitation, lies, inferences, and a plethora of other snares and devices (2 Cor. 2:11), he is able to dupe those who are rely

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Shadows

William MacDonald

...they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

(Acts 5:15)

The people recognized that Peter's ministry was a ministry of power. Wherever he went, the sick were healed. No wonder the crowd wanted to get into his shadow! He wielded a tremendous influence.

Everyone of us casts a shadow. Inevitably we influence the lives of those we contact. Herman Melville wrote: "We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."

You are writing a gospel/ a chapter each day/ by the deeds that you do/ by the words that you say/ Men read what you write/ Whether faithless or true/ Say! What is the gospel/ according to you?

When asked which of the gospels was his favorite, one man answered, "The gospel according to my mother." And John Wesley once said, "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England."

It is sobering to realize that someone looks at each one of us and thinks, "That's just what a Christian should be." It may be a son or daughter, a friend or neighbor, a teacher or student. You are his hero, his model, his ideal. He watches you more closely than you think. Your business life, your church life, your family life, your prayer life—all these set the pattern for him to imitate. He wants your shadow to

Generally we think that shadows are nothings. But the spiritual shadow we cast is something real. Therefore we must ask ourselves this question: When to the last great reckoning/ the lives I meet must go/ Shall this wee, fleeting touch of mine/have added joy or woe?/ Shall He who looks their records o'er -/of name and time and place -/ Say "Here a blessed influence came"/ or "Here is evil's trace"? (Strickland Gillilan).

Robert G. Lee wrote: "You can no more prevent what you are, what you say, and what you do from affecting other people than you can prevent your body from casting a shadow in sunlight. What you are within you shows without, with no ambiguous expression. You exert an influence which mere language and strong persuasion are feeble to express." * From *Truths to Live By - One Day at a Time*

Open House

You see them every where. Signs informing people there will be an "Open House" today. The purpose of the open house is to invite potential buyers inside the home.

The Scriptures put great weight upon an "open house." Included in the qualifications of those desiring to provide oversight to the local assembly we read "given to hospitality." They are to be characterized as those who are "lovers of hospitality." Those who have an "open house."

There are many accounts in Scripture in which saints have opened their home to strangers and saints. Most notably is the home in Bethany which was open to the Lord on numerous occasions. Lydia likewise opened her home to Paul and his company. (Acts 16:15, 40). The assembly met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla. (1 Cor. 16:19)

Are our homes open to be used of the Lord, or do we keep this important asset solely for ourselves? *