

"Behold The Man!"

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Synopsis of an Address given at Montrose Bible Conference.

John 19:5

BEHOLD the Man! " It was spoken by a Roman; it came from the lips of a heathen. He presented to the Jewish, satanically controlled mob, a pitiful figure. The Man stood before them, who for three years had healed the sick and done deeds of mercy and kindness, who had revealed His supernatural power. The most lawless act in human history was about to be consummated, and the most lawless cry had been heard, "Barabbas give us the murderer Barabbas! Crucify the Man, crucify Him." And there He stood. His bleeding shoulders covered by the purple robe, His head crowned with thorns, His visage marred and smitten, perhaps beyond recognition. Pilate spoke Latin and uttered in his tongue but two words, "Ecce Homo. "

What did he mean by it? He hated the Jews. Did he present the Man of Sorrows to the mob out of contempt? Or was his motive to create pity in hearts so that some might demand mercy? We do not know. Yet it is a great word he spoke *this " Ecce Homo, "* □ He did not know what he spoke, for in this word, "Behold the Man!" is contained the great message of the Bible.

God's revelation is to man. If man were not in existence there would not be and could not be the written Word, the written revelation of God. The animal world has no capacity to receive a revelation; the world above man, the world of aigels needs no revelation. God's revelation is to man and about man, the two, the first Man and the second Man, the first Adam and the last Adam. From Genesis to Revelation God speaks, "Behold the Man!

I. In the first chapter of the Bible God presents the Man, and in creation He speaks, pointing to His creature, "Behold the Man ". The earth had been brought out of the deep waters of death and judgment. It had brought forth vegetation and an animal creation; all is garnished with beauty and glory. Finally God brings forth by direct creation a creature which is His offspring. 'Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness.

The persons of the Godhead are concerned in this creative act. And one of the three, the One in the middle, knew that some day He would garb Himself with such a body, and appear in the form of man.

We look upon this first man, not a cave-man, not a ferocious half-ape, not an unintelligent brute, but a being of wisdom and knowledge. He possessed superior knowledge of the creation to be put under him. He has names for every beast of the field and of the forest. Without a moment's hesitation he names them. Could our present day scientists do this? But the highest was not the superior knowledge of the first man, but his fellowship with God. He enjoys His presence, has communion with Him. And the Creator expressed His loving kindness towards the creature created for His pleasure. "Behold the Man!"

II. Soon the scene changes. Man leaves the presence of God, and as we behold man now we see the awful contrast. The entrance to Eden is barred, the man and his companion driven out. They mistrusted their Maker, they had listened to the sinister voice of the mysterious being. They became transgressors, and as they leave God's presence the voice speaks after them the words of unhappiness and suffering-sorrow! The sweat of thy brow! Thorns! Curse! Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return! Behold the man dragged down, stripped of his erstwhile glory, beginning his age-long history of sin, of shame, and

of suffering. We see him in Scripture in his wanderings further and further away from God. Deeper and deeper sinks man, the evidence that he is lost, hopelessly lost. Sin drags him lower and lower. Darker becomes the night. And God has recorded it all in His revelation, and points to him now, "Behold the man!" Behold what he has become through sin.

But will God leave him there? Can God, yea, will God do nothing to bring him back? Is he so lost that God's power cannot reach him, and that for sinful man there is nothing left but endless night? If such were the case God would not be God.

III. God speaks again, and His great message now is "Behold the Man," that other man. He speaks in prophetic promises, and all redemption prophecies, and redemption hope centre in the Man, the second Man. He is to be the seed of the woman, not of a man, a sinful man. His supernatural birth is indicated at once. For thousands of years the fingers of the prophets write of Him, and point to Him. "Behold My Servant! "Behold the Branch! " "Behold the King! " "Behold Immanuel! " God comes down to man, to suffer, to die, to take sin upon Himself, to be the sin-bearer. Behold He cometh to be the Lamb of God, to remove sorrow, the curse, the shame, the ruin, and death. He comes, that Man, to bring man back, not to an earthly Eden, but into a higher glory. "Behold the Man!" that is the age-long cry of prophecy, the Man comes, the One from above, the deathless One comes to suffer death and to conquer death.

IV. We open our New Testaments, and are brought at once face to face with that second Man. The message of the Gospels is none other than "*Ecce Homo!*" He came, born of the Virgin. What a horrible thing it would be if it were otherwise, as the religious misleader says in Modernism to-day. If He was not Virgin-born then could He not be the Man. He, too, if born by a natural generation would be linked with the first man, and share his sin and his curse. But He came, sinless and holy, not man alone, but the God-Man. "Behold the Man!" thus speaks the Holy Spirit of God in the Gospels. Look at Him in His sinless, in His perfect life, in His loveliness! Behold Him in His submission to the eternal will of God! Behold Him in the display of His power! Listen to His words of eternal life!

But He came for something greater than to live on earth as the perfect man, and make the invisible One visible in His person. John the Baptist in his God-given witness states the great truth, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." But the Lamb needs an altar; the altar is the Cross. The first man was in a garden of delight, the second Man also must go into a garden. It is Gethsemane, the garden of sorrow and the bloody sweat. We hear the weeping and the wailing, the strong cries, and the tears (Heb. 5), "Behold the Man"; and now He is what prophecy predicted, "I am a worm, and not a Man" (Psa. 22). The Man of Life and Glory becomes the willing captive. And after all the dishonour done to Him, the cruel scourging, Pilate presents Him with his "*Ecce Homo!*" They look upon Him with hearts filled with satanic hatred. Demons look on with rejoicing, and angels weep.

The Man is nailed to the Cross. Where was it done? Not as a hymn says, "There is a green hill far away, without the city wall," but Scripture says, "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden" (John 19. 41). The crown of thorns is still upon His blessed head, the head which rested in all eternity upon the Father's bosom. He bears the curse, He bears the shame. He makes atonement and satisfies God's righteousness. On that Cross "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." He bows His thorn-crowned head, and His lips give the great shout of victory, "It is finished!" "Behold the Man!"

Then comes the great message of the Spirit of God, addressed to a world of sinners. "Behold the Man!" "Behold the Lamb of God!" He has finished the work; peace has been made in the blood of the Cross! "Behold the Man!" He is the One, the only One who saves. He has made the new and living way into God's glorious presence. "Behold the Man!" trust in Him, accept Him; He brings back to God, and brings into the Father's house. Life and glory are given the moment faith looks to Him, the Christ who died for our sins.

V We hear it again, "Behold the Man!" The grave is empty. There He stands, that Man who had died, victor over death and over the grave. He has conquered them for ever. He is not a spirit, nor a phantom. He proved after resurrection that He is the Man, and that Man risen from among the dead is the pattern of man redeemed by Him; He is the head of the new creation; what He is in resurrection glory all His own shall be. Transformed into His image, the image of the second Man, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.

VI. Once more we say, "Behold the Man!" And now we look up. He has ascended upon high. He passed through the Heavens. The power of God lifted up the Man, and carried higher and higher; carried Him into the third Heaven, into the highest part of all the Heavens. And now we look up and see "Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and with honour." He sits down at the right hand of God. Far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, is the Man, the Man who lived, who died, was buried, and rose again. Oh! glorious vision for faith to see Him in that highest glory, the Divine assurance that we, redeemed by Him, one with Him, shall share with Him the glories above. "Behold the Man!" Your great High Priest, your loving Advocate with the Father. "Behold the Man!" The Head of the Body, the coming Bridegroom.

VII. The scene will change. Not always will that Man be hidden from human gaze. I see Him, some day, the day appointed by God, I see Him leaving the Father's side. He arises from His glorious place. He leaves the mediatorial place. He descends once more. He comes to the air, and gives the commanding shout, the shout which opens the graves of His own, the shout which will gather all His saints together to meet Him face to face, to receive the travail of His soul. "Behold the Man!" We shall "see Him as He is, and shall be like Him." What vision it will be! We shall not see Him as the mob saw Him, when the Roman cried his "*Ecce Homo*," but we shall see Him in the fulness of all His glory.

And after that He will be enthroned. The crown rights over the earth are His. The second Man will restore a ruined creation. There will be a great regeneration. His mighty power will banish the curse. His heel will crush the serpent's head. "Behold the Man!" He is upon the throne to rule and reign in righteousness. "Behold the Man!"