

**STUDIES OF THE  
MAN CHRIST JESUS**

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Studies of the Man Christ Jesus by Robert E. Speer

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**ROBERT E. SPEER**

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"One mediator between God and men,  
the man Christ Jesus."—1 TIM. II. 5, A. V.



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## PREFACE

THIS little book lays no claim to originality. It grew out of a study of the Gospels inspired by Bushnell's *Character of Jesus Forbidding His Possible Classification with Men*. The longing of our time to know more perfectly the character of "the man Christ Jesus," while not losing the vital faith of His deity, is prompting ever more and more such study.

These studies were undertaken with no thought of making this little book, but for the sake of the college students who gather each summer at Northfield, and to whom the picture of Jesus presented here proved helpful, both strengthening faith in His real deity, and increasing admiration for His perfect and glorious humanity. Later these studies were reviewed with a group of British students at Keswick, and with little companies at Rutgers and Bryn Mawr colleges. They are published now at the request of some, not so much for general reading as for the use of Bible classes, especially of college students, and for others who love to discover ever fresh angles from which, in their own study of the Gospels, they may view the sweet face of Jesus.

The references throughout are to the Revised Version. The bibliography of the life of Christ is too well known to need mention here. The student should, however, have his attention called specially to Bushnell's *Character of Jesus* and Young's *Christ of History*, which should be studied with these lessons. Of other books, those quoted in the studies will prove helpful. The studies are broken as they are into short chapters and sections to make them more easy of use in classes.

Of such a study as this there is a twofold fruit: (1) A reason for the Christian faith. Jesus Himself is the great apologetic. There is no prejudice against Him. His beauty and sincerity are acknowledged by all. We are on common ground with Unitarian, agnostic, infidel, and atheist in praising His loveliness. Have they any right to part company with us as we see how lovely He was, and

draw the inferences from the perfection of His loveliness? For Jesus was *such* a man that He must have been more. He was "the man Jesus," but He was "the man *Christ* Jesus"—the one anointed and sent, the heaven-born. An understanding study of Him excludes Him from the class of natural phenomena. Whoso begins with the acknowledgment, "This was a righteous man," cannot stop short of the confession, "Surely this man was the Son of God." (2) An example for the Christian life. Such a study presents the full "Imago Christi." It reveals Jesus as He revealed the Father. Each new trait seen in Jesus is a new obligation incurred. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," He said of the Jews, "they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John xv. 22). What is shown us in Christ is shown for our appropriation. "What things ye see and hear in me, do," were the words of His greatest follower, but they are His words. Increasing knowledge of Jesus requires increasing imitation of Jesus. The study of His life is perilous to the insincere. For those who long to be like Him it is both duty and delight.

All study of Jesus demands a reverent use of the imagination. We are sometimes told—the suggestion comes from different quarters—that the province of imagination in religion is limited; but surely religion is the proper sphere for the freest exercise of imagination. In a true sense, as Bushnell contends in a fine essay, our gospel is a gift to the imagination. And in *Modern Painters* Mr. Ruskin asks, "What are the legitimate uses of the imagination; that is to say, of the power of perceiving with the mind things which cannot be perceived by the senses? Its first and noblest use is to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things which are recorded as belonging to our future state or invisibly surrounding us in this. It is given us that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses in heaven and earth and sea as if they were present—the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven, and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with forever; that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of our God beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round; but, above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer" (*Frondees Agrestes*, §9, Section II.).

We do not enough picture to ourselves the earthly life of Christ as a real, human life. There is no little unconscious Docetism in Christian thought still. We must believe, however, that our Lord took upon Himself our human nature in a real sense, or the incarnation would not be a real incarnation; Jesus could not have been tempted in all points as we are, and He could not have wrought out for us a salvation in any such vital sense as can alone constitute a salvation. But for the discussion of the person and nature of Christ the reader should study Du Bose's *Soteriology of the New Testament*.

Paul settles the matter for us: "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Let us look upon His life as the life of the Son of man. Let it live again before us. Transport it into modern times, conditions, and forms. Do anything reverent to break the shackles of formalistic and unscrutinized conception, that we may see Him as He was, and follow Him until, when "He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).