

THE VOICE - - which interrupted three great meetings
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(Matthew 3:17)

All true preaching begins in heaven. From thence come the Living word, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of the Almighty; and without these the most eloquent of men are but tinkling cymbals. All who would testify of the Saviour should take as their example the three occasions when God preached from His cloudy pulpit. At the beginning, in the middle, and again at the conclusion of His earthly ministry, God bore witness concerning His Son; and these Scriptures form a comprehensive commentary on the Person of Christ.

God Witnessed concerning the Purity of His Son
(Matt. 3:16-17)

When John Baptist first appeared in the Jordan valley, few people could have visualized the scenes soon to take place. The peaceful countryside soon became filled with eager listeners, and the baptismal services eloquently told of the power of John's ministry. One day Jesus of Nazareth came to be baptized, and as the crowd watched, "The Spirit of God descended like a dove . . . upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In order to appreciate the magnitude of this statement, we must remember that sin is a nature. Before Adam could sin, it was necessary for Satan to tempt him. Yet later, when Cain murdered his brother, the wicked thought originated in his own being. The entrance of sin into Adam's life had made him a sinner; and that life was transmitted to his child. Thus did David say, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). Without the miraculous conception, Jesus of Nazareth would have been born a sinner. Christ resisted every temptation, and at the beginning of His public ministry God was able to say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

God Witnessed concerning the Preaching of His Son
(Matt. 17 : 5)

"And behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." By the addition of a single sentence, God increased the scope of His testimony concerning the Lord Jesus. Amid all the contradictory statements and confusion in Israel, God instructed the leaders of the Church to heed the words of the Saviour. As the living Word, He was the expression of the highest authority; no earthly wisdom could supersede His knowledge of the counsels and purposes of God. His teaching concerning the fundamental things of time and eternity was fully endorsed by God, and the greatest advice ever given to preachers was enshrined in "hear ye him." That Christ was termed the Son of God did not signify that He was less than the Father. Christ is called the Son to reveal that He is of the same essence: not to signify His inferiority, but as an indication of oneness in the divine Family.

God Witnessed concerning the Passion of His Son
(John 12:28)

As the shadow of the cross began to darken the horizon of Jesus, His soul became troubled and He said, "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this

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cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.
Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both
glorified it, and will glorify it again - . . . Jesus answered
(the people) and said, This voice came not because of me,
but for your sakes . . . I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men unto me" (vv. 27-32). Thus did God
speak beforehand concerning the death of His Son. The
tragedy of the cross was to become the greatest triumph
of all time, the medium whereby the Father would be
glorified, and the Son eternally exalted as the supreme
head of His redeemed people. Calvary was destined to
become a lighthouse to guide life's travellers to an ever-
lasting harbour of refuge. No one can dispute the fulfil-
ment of the Saviour's word, for the power of redeeming
love represents the greatest force in our world. The Lord
Jesus Christ occupied the supreme place in the affections
of God; and if He be relegated to any other position in
my heart, then my folly will rival the love of God in
dimensions.

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