

## The Life and Character of Christ

It has been well said that “the Gospels nowhere describe Christ’s character. They nowhere tell us that He was dignified under insult, calm before opposition, submissive under suffering, indignant at the sight of hypocrisy, sympathetic with sorrow. These characteristics are manifested by Him, but never affirmed of Him. They appear only in His words and acts. The writers of the first three Gospels make no attempt at delineation; they are apparently quite unconscious that they are giving to the world a portrait; they make Christ speak and act before us, and we form our judgment of His character independently, as if we had seen and heard Him ourselves. Whatever feelings may spring from reading the Gospels, they are never the result of sympathy with the writers. One could not be sure, judging from their style, that the synoptic evangelists were not indifferent spectators of what they recorded. There is no writing for effect, no exhibition of their own opinions, but an unadorned narrative which simply recounts the words and works of Christ.”<sup>i</sup>

The Gospel narrative is like a clear pane of glass through which we see a marvelous prospect without being conscious of the existence of the intervening medium transmitting the light. It is no “storied window,” staining with artificial hues the light which it transmits. The narration is of the simplest, clearest, most uncolored character. It permits us to stand on the hillside of Galilee, or by the margin of Gennesaret, just where the first disciples stood, and to see the things they saw, just as they saw them.

And as we gaze what do we behold? We see a character wholly unique, symmetric, generic, perfect; one which soars above all other characters without an effort; which attains greatness without seeking it; which rises as it stoops; a moral miracle; a character combining in a supernatural degree the morally beautiful with the morally sublime. Moral beauty—yes, without compare! Love in its essence, light in its effulgence, goodness blent with truth, wisdom with kindness, severity with tenderness, the all-searching glance with the all-sympathizing tear, the unconquerable antagonisms of holiness with the irresistible attractions of grace; and moral sublimity without measure; the highest aim, the largest purpose, an outlook which dominates the ages, a work which throws all human achievements into the shade,—the founding on truth and love a kingdom which should replace all others and endure for ever, the redemption and regeneration of the world!

(Creation Centred in Christ by H. Grattan Guinness, New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, n.d., 217-218, Text Modified)

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<sup>i</sup> “The New Era,” Josiah Strong, D.D., p. 105.