

Apostles." The traditions concerning the scenes of St. Matthias' missionary labours and his martyrdom are diverse and untrustworthy.

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"THE NATURE OF CHRIST."

I HAVE lately received the second edition of a valuable little book with the above title, by the Rev. William Marshall, the author of a larger work published some time ago, and entitled the *Visible Son*.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of the *Nature of Christ* is, I think, opportune, as the attention of most thoughtful Christians is at present very properly much directed to the important question—perhaps most important of all—"What think ye of Christ?"

It has become very evident to most thinkers that it is useless to invite the deeply-laden sinners of these last years of the "times of the Gentiles" to a merely human Saviour. We need nothing less than Divine power to raise us from the depth of lost opportunity and actual evil into which we have fallen as the heirs of all the sins of the great apostasy and of unbelief into which we have fallen since our Lord returned to heaven.

It seems equally plain that a Divine Saviour must be an eternal Being, whose existence is not to be dated from the nativity at Bethlehem, some 1,900 years ago, but who was "at the beginning," and is, the same Lord who appeared to Adam, to Abraham, and to other Old Testament saints, whether as Jehovah, or as the "Angel of the Covenant," whose acting in relation to man thus extends all the way from the creation of Adam, and who is the Alpha and the Omega of the whole scheme of redemption. It thus appears that our complete Christology must include

<sup>1</sup> Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1896.

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all the so-called "theophanies" of the Old Testament, the thirty years of humiliation and suffering recorded in the Gospels, the residence in heaven since the Ascension, and the return and everlasting kingdom of the future. This can, I believe, be fairly deduced from the whole tenor of the New Testament, including such sayings of our Lord as, "I and the Father are one," "No man hath seen God at any time," "The only begotten Son, He hath declared Him," "Before Abraham was, I am"; the testimony of Paul in Colossians i. 15, 16, etc., and that of John and Peter in the second Epistle. It no doubt fell much into neglect in the ages of decadence following the apostolic age, but was revived by the more profound thinkers of the Reformation period, and is implied in the statements of the Westminster standard. In this belief I was trained in my youth, and have seen no reason to depart from it, though, as a student of nature, my mind was specially turned rather to the learning of the works and Word of God than to the greater mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." At my present age, and in infirm health, it would be useless for me to enter into its further discussion; but I may refer for details to the pages of Mr. Marshall, who has compressed into small space the testimony of Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments, and has also noticed the various phases of belief on the subject from the apostolic times downward, including the doctrines held by the more robust theologians of the Reformation period, like Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Lee, as well as those who followed in the lead of the post-apostolic fathers. What, then, are we to expect in the future? When Jesus ascended from Olivet, attendant angels predicted that in like manner He would return; and the long interval, with added prophecies, warrants us in affirming that the time of His reappearance must be near at hand, in comparison with the long time of His absence. It therefore becomes His disciples to watch, and

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to study the signs of the times, and to look in hope for this final appearance of our Lord from heaven—an appearance very different from that recorded in the Gospels, in the respect that He will return not as a helpless infant, but in the plenitude of His power and glory, so that neither friends nor enemies will any longer be able to doubt, and we may expect that none, even of the most stony-hearted of our modern scribes and Pharisees, though petrified in heart by centuries of anti-Christianism, will dare, like Caiaphas of old, to denounce Him as an impostor and blasphemer. Even so, come Lord Jesus, that we may ever be with Thee in full joy of Thy blessed immortality.

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\*.\* The above article is the last written for the press by our esteemed contributor.—ED. EXPOSITOR.