WHO IS JESUS?

BY REV. SIA SEK ONG, FOOCHOW, CHINA.

[Translated from the Chinese, for the Tract Society of the M. E. Church, by Rev. S. L. Baldwin.*]

"But whom say ye that I am?"—Matt. xvi, 15.

FROM the time when man first yielded to the temptation of the devil the world has constantly strayed from the right way, and has been exceedingly at variance with sound prin-

* In 1871 Rev. Y. J. Allen, editor of the Shanghai Church newspaper, (published in the Chinese language,) offered a premium for the best essay on the text, "But whom say ye that I am?" The responses were quite numerous. After due examination, the premium was awarded to Rev. Sia Sek Ong, of the Methodist Episcopal
The vain judge men according to appearance; the insolent treat men with disdain. Usually the poor are lightly esteemed, and the rich treated with respect. Because of ignorance, men err in their judgment of others.

In accordance with this, there was a Man who was originally rich and condescended to become poor; who is the world’s indispensable man; whom it is absolutely necessary the world should know. But the world also judged him according to appearance, treated him with disdain, could not determine in what class to place him, and to the end knew not who he was. This is the way the world treated Jesus.

Jesus is the incarnated Word, dwelling among men—God and man; having ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and all the bodily organs; mission at Foochow. The essay has since been published as a tract by our Society at the Mission Press in Foochow, and is very popular with Chinese readers. We now send it forth in English, hoping that these words of a converted Chinaman may lead some who have known the name of Jesus from infancy to pause and reflect, and to accept him as their Saviour.

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walking and resting; speaking and keeping silence; in all things differing not from men. Do men hunger and thirst? So did he. Do men become weary? So did he. Do men experience sorrow and joy? He also was not exempt from the same: born in Bethlehem, dwelling in Nazareth, quietly enduring poverty, voluntarily becoming a servant, with brethren and sisters not different from other people, mingling with men on terms of familiar acquaintance.

At first they did not know that the promises which God anciently made, and intrusted to the prophets to record in the Holy Scriptures, pointed to this man: originally equal with God in glory and power; without beginning, without end; the Lord of myriad blessings; the fountain of everlasting life; upon whom all things in the universe depend for preservation; upon whom all men beneath heaven depend for salvation; incarnated by the power of the Holy Ghost; having both God’s and man’s nature; named Immanuel; “made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared
to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Connected with this are impene-
trable mysteries, which men cannot fathom—
that which truly is difficult to understand, and which, unless the Holy Spirit reveal, to the end men will fail to comprehend.

On this account Jesus availed himself of an opportunity to ask his disciples who he himself was—not that he did not know whether or not his disciples knew who he was, but he intended to make use of this question to convey instruction to their ears. It was for this reason he asked them, "Whom say ye that I am?" I imagine him continuing his discourse with them somewhat as follows:

"Since men do not know me, and the rulers also are ignorant of me, those who seek to solve the question correctly waste their energies in vain, and are unable to decide. If you say I am David's son, David on the contrary calls me Lord. If you say I am one of the prophets, it is of me on the contrary that the prophets bare witness. I was born of a poor family,
but glorious omens attended my incarnation. I was cradled in a humble place, but it was made known to the shepherds by the songs of angels. Would you know my biography? This is it: Before David was, I was. Before the prophets were, I existed. At creation's beginning I dwelt with Jehovah. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by him.'

"Now I am made a little lower than the
angels, not differing from men. Men look upon me as a citizen of a small place, a child of poverty. Therefore, when I heal on the Sabbath day they censure me; when I pluck the ears of wheat they reprove me. They criticise me for eating with publicans and sinners; they say that I cast out devils through the prince of the devils; they present the question of giving tribute to Cesar to entrap me; they bring up the doctrine that there is no resurrection to trouble me; they are angry at me because I say to the palsied man, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee;' they hate me, because I use the metaphor of building again the temple in three days. Whenever they see me they slander me, revile me, hate me, persecute me, as if they were unable to endure my presence among them.

"Besides the heavenly Father, only the holy prophets of old have known me, and foretold in their writings my incarnation, calling me by many names—The Seed of the Woman, Melchizedek, Righteous Branch, Angel of the Covenant, Lord of Life, Prince of Peace, Rose No. 13.
of Sharon, Root of Jesse, Standard for the People, Refiner's Fire, Sharp Arrow, Sharp Sword, the Judge, the Anointed, Rain, Dew, Leader and Commander to the People, Fountain, Counselor, the Great Prince, Michael, Lord of Glory, Angel of Deliverance, Star of Jacob, Sun of Righteousness. All these names were used by the prophets to designate me.

"Moreover, the names by which the Father has called me, those which I have applied to myself, and which others have given me, are also many—Jesus Christ, Son of Man, Bridegroom, Physician, Beloved Son, Nazarene, King of Israel, Friend of Sinners, Horn of Salvation, Pearl of Great Price, Offering, Ruler, Servant, Prophet, Householder, Master, the Word, Husbandman, Good Shepherd, the Stone which the Builders Rejected, the Lamb of God that Taketh Away the Sins of the World, Living Water, Light of the World, the Door, the True Vine, the Bread of Life.

"The facts concerning me are these—Though originally without form, yet I have a
form; though originally without a body, yet I have a body. Though I have a form, I do not depend on it for life; though I have a body, I have no solicitude for it. I am the resurrection and the life. Except by me none can ascend to heaven. Except by me none can escape hell. I am an example of righteous living for all men; I am the beginning of a new life for all mankind. I am the revealer to sinful men of their just condemnation; the giver of repentance for past transgressions; the guide of the people to God; the Saviour of the people from their sins; a redeeming sacrifice for the sins of the world; the leader of the resurrection to all the dead. I was rich, but for your sakes became poor; I was exalted, but for your sakes humbled myself and condescended to become a man, taking upon me the form of a servant. These things you twelve men have already heard and known.

"Think! Who is he that will not break the bruised reed? Who is he that will not quench the smoking flax? Who is he that dies for sinners? Who is he that prays for his ene-
Who is Jesus?

Who is he who when he suffers, threatens not, and when he is reviled, revileth not again? Who is he whom men regard as a root out of dry ground, treat as a criminal, see in him no beauty that they should desire him, appoint him his grave with the wicked? Of what family is he the son, think you? To what household does he belong? Is he one of the prophets returned to the world, or John raised from the dead?

"Are not ye the twelve whom I have chosen? Ye ought to know me; but every day ye show that ye have not yet apprehended me. Therefore ye ask, 'Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Therefore ye are filled with indignation against John and his brother. Therefore ye dispute by the way who shall be greatest. Therefore ye ignorantly talk of building tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration. When I speak of my approaching death and resurrection, ye rebuke me. When I walk on the sea, ye think it is a spirit. When I rebuke the wind, ye say, 'What manner of man is this?' When I would wash
your feet, ye refuse me. When ye walk on the water to come to me, ye are still afraid.

"Now ye have walked by my side and been intimate with me for three years. You have heard of my changing water into wine. You saw my transfiguration on the mountain. You know that with a word I defeated the devil and escaped from his snares. You saw me feed the multitude with five fishes, and yet have fragments to gather up. And greater things than these: the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the lepers are cleansed, the maimed are healed, all diseases are cured, the dead are raised. These things the holy prophets of old desired to see, but saw not; and to hear, but heard not. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Now, carefully reflecting upon what you have seen and heard, whom say ye that I am?"

Somewhat in this manner I suppose Jesus talked with his disciples. I now leave this question, "Who is Jesus?" with the reader, praying that the Holy Spirit may guide him.
n his meditations upon it, until with Thomas
he shall joyfully exclaim, "My Lord and my
God!"

Join all the glorious names
    Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
    Or angels ever bore:
Il are too mean to speak his worth—
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.

Great Prophet of our God,
    Our tongues shall bless thy name;
By thee the joyful news
    Of our salvation came—
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of hell subdued, and peace with heaven.

Jesus, our great High Priest,
    Has shed his blood and died;
The guilty conscience needs
    No sacrifice beside:
His precious blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.

O thou almighty Lord,
    Our Conqueror and King,
Thy scepter and thy sword,
    Thy reigning grace, we sing.
Thine is the power; behold, we sit
In willing bonds o'neath thy feet.
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