

Carmen Christi

'Carmen Christi' (or Hymn of Christ) is the traditional title of a wonderful passage of Scripture, Philippians 2:6-11, which speaks of the humility of Christ and his subsequent glorification. We are exhorted to have the same attitude of Christ...

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Before his conception in the womb of the virgin Mary, the Son existed eternally in the form of God, 'being in very nature God.' We exist in human form because we are human; Christ exists in the form of God because he is truly God.

His divine glory was manifest in heaven and he was served and worshipped by all the angels. Yet he made an incredible choice. He 'did not consider equality with God something to be grasped' even though he fully deserved such honour. He set aside his divine rights and privileges in order to serve us and accomplish our redemption. The Maker and Master of creation 'made himself nothing'! Deity was veiled in humanity. 'He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.'

The *Lord* took the form of a *servant*; he came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Moreover, the Law-giver 'became obedient' and was born under the Law. Finally, he lowered himself to the very bottom by submitting himself to crucifixion, the most degrading form of execution known to the ancient world reserved for the worst criminals. Even more, the cross is the symbol of divine judgement for the Scriptures say, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'

Behold Christ in his humiliation -- from the divine glory of heaven, coming down to earth as a man, a servant and sin-bearer. Life was killed; the Blessed was cursed; the Holy One was made sin for us!

But the story of Christ does not end with his burial. Indeed if Christ was not raised, our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. Praise God, the final act of the drama of redemption takes us to the highest heaven.

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Previously, 'it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer', but now, 'God exalted him to the highest place.' Previously 'he was despised and we esteemed him not', now God 'gave him the name that is above every name'.

As Christians we rejoice to see our Saviour so exalted above the heavens because we know who Jesus is – God incarnate – and what sufferings and humiliation he had to go through for our salvation. But the Father insists that every rational creature shall recognize and confess that he who once was nailed to the cross is the Lord of lords, 'that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow'. Every man and woman, whether saved or lost, all the angels and even the demons, must give divine worship to Jesus Christ. For the Lord God had said,

*By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.
(Isaiah 45:23).*

Do you acknowledge Jesus as your Lord and your God? Have you turned to him for salvation? Are you living in obedience to him? Do you gladly bow your knees before Christ in adoration? I sincerely hope that you do so with exceedingly great joy.