

Reflection on the social position in which Christ lived from the outset

(Betrachtung über den Stand, in welchem Christus von Anfang an gelebt hat)

A sermon outline by Friedrich Schleiermacher, delivered on 25th December 1795.

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Source: Friedrich Zimmer, “Predigtentwürfe aus Friedrich Schleiermachers erster Amsthätigkeit”, in *Zeitschrift für praktische Theologie* 4 (1882), 281-290, 369-378), 370–71. (This article includes several outlines and texts of sermons)

Luke 2: 6-7

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Introduction: If we did not already know the more immediate circumstances of the story, we would present it to ourselves quite differently.

Theme: Reflection on the social position in which Christ lived from the outset.

I. To reassure those of us in similar circumstances

1. He could live contented
 - a) with inadequate means through inner delight.
 - b) in a contracted life through friendship.
2. He could cultivate himself
 - a) in honesty and correct attitude through common instruction.
 - b) in worldly wisdom through attentiveness and use of reason. Other forms of knowledge are not necessary.

II. To encourage us in doing good.

1. The good that is done in an inferior social position contributes to the perfecting of the world.
 - a) a single action can often be the cause of much evil, and that is averted.
 - b) we are doing our part towards the better future, which would come to pass if everyone acted thus.
2. The good example which is given in an inferior social position is not in vain:
 - a) almost all great role models have belonged to this class.
 - b) a universally admired virtue is too rare to excite attention.

Conclusion: Christ has become like us in all life's limitations; let us become like him in all human perfections.