

# **Who Is Our God?**

**by Alexander Thomson**

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# **Who is Our God?**

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Doctrine of God Must Come First**

Mankind, animals, and plants cannot thrive if denied essential vitamins. Not only so, but diseases flourish where these elusive vitamins are absent.

The same is true of scriptural doctrines. If the essential life-giving element is removed, errors arise and flourish.

A very ancient example of such devitalized doctrine is known as Unitarianism, the adherents of which maintain that divinity is to be ascribed to God the Father alone, and not to the Son.

Ever since the Lord was on earth, there have been Unitarians—human beings whose mentality causes them to postulate the sort of God they wish.

They are described as "agreed only as to a series of negations, but are altogether at variance as to positive truths." Many of them are latitudinarian, semi-rationalist, allowing unfettered freedom of thought while denying the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and the personality of the Devil.

It will thus appear that the Unitarian "creed" is based, not upon the whole Scriptures, but upon a synthetic extract decocted from the Scriptures. With the Unitarian, the statement by the Lord in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4 is not acceptable, "Not on bread alone shall man get him a life, but on every declaration going out through God's mouth." Apparently, the Unitarians can thrive upon a devitalized revelation.

Our present purpose is to discover the vitamins which the Unitarians have discarded, and shew how their doctrine dishonors the God of the Scriptures and His Son.

All the half-truths dished up by Unitarians in ever attractive looking colors over the past nineteen hundred years have been exposed time after time. The fact that these errors survive proves that there are many who do not wish Truth so much as their version of Truth. Such people must possess a faint perception of God, and a very faint perception of judgment to come.

The chief negation whereon the Unitarians are united concerns the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ before His birth at Bethlehem. Some friends asked me to criticize a pamphlet on this subject, but on looking for some mention of the vital texts, I found to my astonishment that these had been quietly ignored.

In our School of Concordance, when we seek to recover the most exact meaning of an inspired Bible term, we must digest every occurrence and context, because sometimes it happens that one single occurrence makes necessary a readjustment in the English standard we use. Similarly, when studying a doctrine, and especially a very important one such as this, we do not have the right to ignore any context. It is when contexts are harmonized that we find Truth is looking us steadily in the face.

It is most unfortunate that Unitarians do not maintain exalted views of inspiration of the Scriptures. Our arguments, therefore, will hardly appeal to them. But they may appeal strongly to all who realize that without holiness shall no man even see the Lord.

Perhaps the author of our pamphlet felt somewhat uneasy or guilty because he suppressed those verses which oppose his views. At any rate, he labors hard—too hard it seems—to make up for this deficiency by laying great stress upon the graciousness and sympathy of his Christ, as though this was the main feature in Him.

While it is admitted that Jesus had a miraculous birth, and was without sin, just how His being merely an unusually outstanding member of the human race is going to help humanity is not at all made clear.

The writer considers transmutation of one species into another, say from angel into man, or God into man, is unthinkable, because everything continues "after his kind." But we might ask, if a man is born miraculously of a virgin, and without sin, would such a birth be in accord with the law, "after his kind?"

Surely in the Virgin Birth God Himself was directly taking hold upon humanity. Was this action in a way not a transmutation, something entirely out of the ordinary course of nature? "To think of a supernatural being becoming a man would either end his existence or there would be transmigration."

Let us get this matter straight once for all. Let us believe all that God has revealed to us for our edification and understanding. Abraham got immense blessings just because he dared to believe God implicitly. May we do the same.

Would the above statement mean, then, that the three men (anushim) or messengers (mlakim), one of whom Abraham repeatedly names Jehovah, became completely metamorphosed or suffered extinction? Surely our writer cannot mean this. In very deed, one of them is not only called a man, but also angel or messenger, and even Jehovah, that is, God Himself! (Gen. 18:2, 16; 22; 19:1). No fewer than eleven times does Abraham (in the ancient Hebrew text) address this God-man-messenger as Jehovah. And to shew that it is no less a Person than God, Abraham addresses Him with profound respect and worship. To prove beyond all doubt that the event is no mere vision or dream, Abraham gives his visitors a meal, and "they are eating" (18:8). Let us note also, that although in ancient times Hebrew scribes appear to have rubbed out the name Jehovah in Ch. 18 a few times and substituted Adonai (Lord), they did not rub out the words "men" or "angels."

One of my first teachers was an elderly gentleman who belonged to the Plymouth Brethren. I can remember him, almost forty years ago, solemnly laying forth that these three men were "The Trinity." That view I could not swallow. There was no need to make the scene merely a vision or an allegory. In such cases, the fact of the parties being represented as eating and drinking is brought in to rule out any opinion that the story is an allegory. Compare also Exodus 24:11 and Luke 24:40-43.

If we are in error in believing that a superhuman being can become a man or appear as a man, then much of the Old Testament must be false, and the Jews must be a most cruelly deceived race.

Let us cite a few more cases where the God-Man appeared. Gen. 32:24-30: Jacob is being left alone and a man (aish) is wrestling with him until the dawn. Jacob enquires after the name of the stranger, but is told he ought to know. "And Jacob is calling the name of the place Face of God (Peniel), for I see God face to face, and my soul is being delivered."

Exodus 24:9-11: "And Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel are going up. And they are seeing the God of Israel, and under His feet as a sapphire tile work, and as the substance of the heavens for clarity. And unto the adjacent sons of Israel He puts not forth His hand. And they are perceiving God, and they are eating and drinking."

Here we are not actually told God is seen as Man, but the reference to His feet infers this. Not long afterwards it happens that "Jehovah speaks unto Moses face to face, just as a man (aish) is speaking unto his friend" (Ch. 33:11). This clearly implies that Jehovah was once more in human form. Indeed, it is against the entire tenor of Scripture that God, if He does appear in a form, appears in any form but that of Man.

Josh. 5:13-15: Joshua beholds a Man (aish) standing in front of him with drawn sword, who says that as Chief of Jehovah's Army He has come. Joshua worships, falling on his face. The Chief tells him the ground is holy and Joshua removes his shoe. In Ch. 6:2 the name of the Chief is stated. He is Jehovah. Judges 6:11-22: And Messenger-Jehovah is coming and sitting under the oak. Then Messenger-Jehovah is appearing unto Gideon. Then in v. 14, Jehovah is facing him. In v. 21 Messenger-Jehovah causes fire to burst out of the rock, and He vanishes out of Gideon's sight.

Some will ask, why not render by "a messenger of Jehovah," as ordinary versions put "an angel of Jehovah?" We shall explain, as the point is of some importance to the meaning. The Hebrew has two words only, *mlak Yeweh*. In Hebrew there is no such thing as our genitive case. That is, they have no word corresponding to our word "of." Just try to speak or write English without this little word. It will soon become impossible. But the Hebrew did not require such a word. They had another device which did quite as well. We might either say, "heat of summer," or just "summer heat." The Hebrews used the latter construction. In other words, they used what was like our compound noun. The former word of the two is generally shortened either in tone or in length, so that it sounds as though it has been run into the second word. This formation is called the "construct state." Thus, if *oinim* is eyes, and *e-aish* is the man, *oini-e-aish* means "the eyes of the man," in which case the Hebrew omits any definite article before eyes. Or the same expression can stand for "eyes of the man" or "the man's eyes." "God's word" stands as *dbr-Aleim* (sounded as DbarElohim), which is simply "word-God."

Sometimes it is therefore not easy to say whether to insert an "of" or not. In this case in Judges 6, it would hardly make sense to read "angel of Jehovah" or "the messenger of Jehovah," for this reason, that the Person described is named as Jehovah a few times in the chapter, and the altar which Gideon builds is called by him Jehovah-Peace.

At the same time, let us confess that we are not thoroughly satisfied with the rendering "messenger" for the Hebrew word *mlak*. According to Dr. Robert Young, the term is rendered in the A.V. 4 times as ambassador, 111 times by angel; and 98 times by messenger. Another word, very similar, *mlake*, occurs about 155 times, of which 126 are rendered by work; 12 by business. "On the seventh day God ended His work" (Gen. 2:2). Might we say, "His message?" Perhaps the word might rather express business, something undertaken, something executed. At any rate, it is our duty to bridge the gap between "messenger" and "work." This would mean that the messenger is one who goes forth on business, with some task to undertake, as though he had executive authority. Let us compare another very similar Hebrew word, a very common one, *mlk* (or *melek*, KING; to reign). Not a messenger, but assuredly an

executive. Suppose it was Jehovah's Executive who made those fleeting visits in Old Testament times. This Executive who came also with a message—could it be other than The Word of God?

Of this Angel or Executive, it is said, "My name is within Him" (b-qrbu)—that is, My name and reputation and characteristics (Exodus 23:21). Not merely a name which was given to this Angel, but a name which was inherently His within Him.

This digression may help to explain the messengers to the seven ecclesias in Rev. Chs. 2 and 3. Dr. Bullinger, in his "Apocalypse" has explained that there was an officer in the Synagogue, called Sheliach Tzibbur (literally, sent one of the gathering), who was the mouthpiece of the synagogue, its legate, and leader of divine worship. This is taken from Dr. Kitto's Cyclopaedia (1866) and reproduced in the Concordant Press volume "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ." In other words, this official seems to be a kind of executive, who received and delivered messages for the congregation.

Judges 13:3-22: In the story of Manoah we learn that the Messenger-Jehovah appeared to his wife, who informs him that the God-Man (aish e-Aleim) had come to her, and His aspect was like that of the God-Messenger (mlak e-Aleim), very terrible. In v. 10 this wonderful Being is termed simply "the man." Later, Manoah got to know He was the Messenger-Jehovah, and thinks they would both die, because "we have seen God."

Some have objected to the expression God-Man, as though it was not scriptural. Let them learn a little Hebrew, and their objections will vanish. We have abundantly proved that Jehovah God did appear at times in human form, as Man, and He did not lose His Godhead or His Manhood thereby. And the same One is still God, and He is still Man.

As He always was. But we are anticipating.

The first verse of John's Gospel tells us that "In beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was face to face with God, and God was the Word." If we read as most versions do in the final clause, it must be "and the Word was God." At the beginning of his first Epistle, John tells us about the "Word of Life," that living or life-giving Word that was manifested, that Eonian Life which indeed was face to face with the Father.

Everything which came into being did so through that Word (John 1:3). Paul tells us that all things in heaven and on earth have been created through God's Image (Col. 1:16). But should there be any dubiety as to who or what this Word is, Rev. 19:13-16 will dispel this, for He is called, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

In ancient times that Word was face to face with God, the Father. But now, John shews that He has come face to face with Mankind.

"And the Word becomes Flesh," says John. He does not say it united with flesh, or fell upon flesh, or assumed flesh. The Word becomes something which it was not before. And if that Word appears in flesh as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that is, a Man, why should not that Man, or God-Man, of the Old Testament theophanies, Who spoke for God and represented God, be the same Word or Expresser of God? Could He be anyone else? Were there two distinct Beings who have expressed God? One who could appear at times in glorious form, and another in weakly flesh?

"Supernatural beings," says our Unitarian friend, "cannot enter sympathetically into the experience of human woes, because they do not sin or suffer temptation through flesh that they do not have." This

statement would make God the Father a very unsympathetic Being, and it would rule out a mass of very comforting texts upon which we have been relying. And those messengers of Heb. 1:13-14, are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service on account of those about to fall heir to salvation? They must be supernatural, as human beings are not spirits.

But we have One who, admittedly, had a supernatural human birth, although He knew no sin whatever. But he was nothing more than a lucky human being? He might have been anybody?

If the Lord Jesus had no pre-existence of any kind or form, some verses will be extremely difficult to explain or understand. Let us test a few of them.

Gal. 4:4: "Now when the fullness of the time comes, God sends forth His Son, coming to be (genomenon) of (ek; out of) a woman, coming to be (genomenon) under law." Here for "coming to be" the A.V. reads "made," while the R.V. erroneously reads "born," which would require a spelling in the Greek slightly different, *gennomenon*, as found at Luke 1:35, to which we shall later refer. The two verbs are quite distinct, BECOME, come to be, come into being, occur, come to pass, is *ginomai*; while be born, beget, generate, is *gennaō*.

Now, while it is perfectly true that the Lord was born of a woman, in addition, He came to be of a woman. To speak thus of an ordinary human being would be rather absurd. Truer would it be to assert that human beings come into being through two parents. Nor could it be asserted that the One seen in Old Testament times "came to be" of a woman. No wonder Douglas Edwards, in his fine book, "The Virgin Birth in History and Faith" (1943: Faber & Faber, London), asks, "Why does St. Paul, when writing of the earthly origins of Jesus Christ, consistently refuse to employ the ordinary Greek word for being 'born'?"

The other day, I picked up cheap a book on "The Virgin Birth," by a man who ridiculed this idea altogether. He demanded to know why such a doctrine was not blazed forth by every New Testament writer, if it was true. Edwards, however, proves beyond all doubt that every N.T. writer was well aware of the fact, but had some modesty, a virtue not known to most of those who are unyielding to God and His Truth.

Rom. 1:3: "Concerning His Son, Him coming to be (genomenou) out of David's seed according to flesh." Here again Paul, for very good reasons, known to himself, avoids the common word "born," and uses an unusual word. Phil. 2:6-8: "Who, all-along-existing (huparchōn) in God's form, deems it not pillaging to be equal to God, but empties Himself, taking slave-form, coming to be (genomenos) in likeness of human beings, and in fashion being found as a human being, He humbles Himself, becoming (genomenos) obedient unto death, yet a cross-death."

Most singular it is, that this passage is all but ignored in the pamphlet we are reviewing. All that is stated is that remarks already made upon Christ's pre-existence in the divine mind and purpose cover this passage. Thus, the paramount passage in the New Testament which clearly indicates the pre-existence of Christ is got rid of. We must protest. That is not the method to employ in seeking for divine Truth.

We cannot possess that humility or humble-disposition which will cause us to deem others better than ourselves, unless we acquire that disposition which is and was in Christ Jesus. That disposition, however, did not find its origin on our earth. Was the Lord in God's form while He was on earth among men? Had the chiefs of this eon known Who the Lord was, had He appeared in the form of God, we may be very certain they would never have dared to crucify Him (1. Cor. 2:8).

But He came clothed in that humble disposition which is the loveliest characteristic of the God of Heaven. True humility has its root and origin in God Himself.

Not only did Christ Jesus in ancient times (as our quotations from the Hebrew writings shew) subsist in God's form, but we translate that He was "all along existing" thus. One of the most interesting Greek words in the Bible is this term, *huparchO* (UNDER-ORIGINate). We recommend a study of its occurrences as meaning something akin to "exist all along, be for a long time." Essential it is that some time element must be shewn. It signifies more than existence; rather existence for a time. The first part of the word (*hupo*, UNDER), may be suspected of bearing a signification like "out of sight" in some cases, or referring to that which is not prominent.

As the word is of some importance in this passage, a little study of other occurrences will be of great help. Jairus had long time been chief of the synagogue (Luke 8:41). We cannot render it that he "possessed the chieftainship of the synagogue," as *archOn* only means chief, and it is nominative, not accusative, which would have been *archonta*. This word never means belong or possess, which are very discordant ideas.

It is not only the one inherently smaller or lesser among you all who is great (Luke 9:48), but the one who long time has been so. Real humility is not a virtue to be acquired quickly.

The Rich Man of Luke 16:23, in the Unseen, was more than merely "existing" there. We could hardly say he was "inherently in torments." But we could say, and say concordantly, that he was "existing long time in torments." And that is just why he cried out.

What is stated regarding Joseph of Arimathea is not that he was "belonging to the council," or "belonging to the counselors," but that "a counsellor longtime" he was. That is to say, for a long time he must have been respected. He was a man good and just, and he had not concurred in their counsel (Luke 23:50-51). To render *huparchO* by "belong" or "belongings" is never correct. The meaning is rather to BE something LONG. Of David it is said in Acts 2:30, not that he was "belonging to the prophets," or that he was "inherently a prophet," but, "Being, then, long a prophet," or "Being then, for a long time a prophet." In other words, he was experienced in God's ways, well worthy of being hearkened to.

The ordinary versions at Acts 4:34 make good sense, but fail to shew that the owners of property or houses had been in possession of them for a long time. It is more difficult to give up what has been a treasured possession for a long time, than something newly acquired. An heirloom means something to an old family. The Greeks are a nation powerfully affected by the knowledge of their long history; and so are other old nations. Here we ought to understand the sense as being "whoever were long time acquirers of freeholds or of houses," sold them. To say that "whoever belonged to the acquirers of freeholds or of houses, selling them, they brought the price. . ." is to get the sense totally mixed up. That would indicate that slaves or servants disposed of the property of the owners.

It was no sudden burst of faith and spirit that enabled Stephen to endure so gloriously his martyrdom (Acts 7:55). It was not because he possessed the fullness of faith and spirit that he could look right into heaven and see God's glory, and Jesus. It was rather because he was "long time full of faith and holy spirit." We cannot say, he or anyone was "inherently" full of faith or spirit. But a believer can become full of holy spirit, if he obeys the divine directions—not otherwise.

A woman was once watching with pride a Scottish regiment on the march. Had she not reason to be proud of them, for among them was her son Jock, swinging along in his kilt. But alas, something was wrong with Jock's legs. He was out of step. But this fact was hidden from his mother. To her it was plain that the



soldiers were "all out of step but our Jock." How possibly could our Jock be the only one wrong out of a thousand? Ridiculous!

At Acts 8:16 all the versions are in step, except one. With small variations they all express the grammar of the Greek correctly. But the Concordant Version is badly out of step. Not only so, but it is letting down the whole regiment, and it is false. It is many years since I tried to get Jock into step, but he was rather rude to me, and it transpired he had a bad habit of being out of step. In fact, he could prove he was always right.

Peter and John were sent down to Samaria from Jerusalem, and prayed for the people there that they might get holy spirit. For so far it had not yet fallen on to any of them, "yet only, all-along-they-were (hupErchon) (ones) baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Here the sense of the word we are studying beautifully clears up the meaning of the passage.

Timothy's father not merely "belonged to the Greeks." But "one and all they were aware that all along he was a Greek." (Acts 16:3). By contrast, in verse 20 Paul and Silas are charged as being "all along Jews," announcing customs to which Romans could not assent; while in verse 37 Paul indignantly exclaims that he and Silas were "uncondemnable men, Romans all along."

In Acts 17:24 Paul informs the ignorant Athenians that the God who makes the world and all things in it, "This One, of heaven and earth being all along Lord, is not dwelling in temples made by hand." This was Paul's answer to the inscription on a pedestal. "To an unknowable (agnOstO) God." Could He be unknowable when all along He had been Lord of heaven and earth? The inscription did not claim that God was unknown. It admitted the existence of a God, but claimed that no one could know Him. The form of the Greek word proves this meaning.

In verse 27 we encounter this word once more. God wishes men to seek after Him, and grope so that they might, find Him "though to be sure, not far from each one of us all the time (or, all along), for it is in Him we are living and moving, and are." This is better than rendering "not far from each one of us is He inherent," as this is hardly good English usage, and might be difficult to understand. The Latin root of the word inherent means to "stick"—compare "adhere." The idea we should find for *huparchO* ought to be a time conception.

All the time God has not been far distant from the Race He created in His Own Image! That is the marvelous thought which Paul set before the wise Athenians. No need for the pedestal and its erroneous inscription! God was not so unknowable though He appeared to be hopelessly distant. He is very near everyone! And He has been so all the time, all along. Here was Good News for the Gentiles. And it is Good News for the saints today. For if God was always close to His Race, mankind, how much closer must He be to His chosen ones.

I can remember when I was groping after God. I could not imagine He was unfriendly, but at that time I did not know the truth of verse 27. Yet again, in verse 29, we encounter the term we are studying.

This time Paul makes the astounding revelation that human beings are God's Kin. "For of Him Kin also are we" (Tou gar kai genos esmen).

Not only so, but Paul adds "Kin, then, being all along of God, we ought not. . . ." It is entirely false to say we are "of God's Race" or Kin. Mankind **IS** God's Race or Kin. But because this mighty fact is made known by Paul, not to any ecclesia, but to religious unbelievers, it is seldom fully accepted. The feeling

still lingers in some, that the quotation being from a heathen poet (Aratus), the sense is heathen. But to this topic we shall later recur.

Great was the fury and turmoil in the large city of Ephesus when the artisans discovered that Paul was draining off their funds. So they rushed to the theatre, in maddest mood. For about two whole hours their indignation was so fierce that they could shout no more than "Great is the Artemis of Ephesians!" Their own Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana. But the town clerk was worried, as the crowd had caused a disturbance without any proper cause. So he argues with them and informs them (Acts 19:36) that all along they should have been composed and not committing anything rash, while in verse 40, he adds that all along there had been no single cause of the turmoil. Thus, rebuked firmly and cleverly for acting like fools, he dismisses them.

Those myriads of Jews in Acts 21:20 who believed more than possessed a zeal for the law. They were more than inherently zealous for it. The Greek word tells us that they were "all along zealous for the law." The same is said by Paul of himself in Ch. 22:3. We could hardly say that any Jew was "inherently zealous for God." But it could be true that Paul was "all along zealous for God." Nor can we properly speak of "inherent abstinence" (Ch. 27:21). What could this signify? The true sense is, "There being all along much abstinence." Compare verse 33, "you are constantly abstinent" for fourteen days.

Abraham was "long time existing—somewhere about a hundred years," when the promise was made to him (Rom. 4:19).

A man praying or prophesying ought not to have the head covered, being all along image and glory of God (1. Cor. 11:7). Paul heard that all along, or for long time, there had been schisms among the Corinthians (verse 18). This shews up the facts to have been worse than our versions indicate.

Paul had to say to Kephas in front of all, "If thou, a Jew being all along, gentilely and not Jewishly art living. . ." (Gal. 2:14).

Our citizenship, Paul tells us (Phil. 3:20), our home or homeland, our community or commonwealth, our realm (politeuma), is all along in heavens. So, it must be waiting for us. How like our God! He does not wait until the Body of Christ is complete, but all along has had our country ready waiting for us. Would that we were all along eager to get there! Some have sought to render the word we are studying (*huparchO*) as "originate," but if we said our homeland originated in the heavens, that might imply that it came down to earth.

In 2. Peter 1:5-7, the saints are told how to add virtue to virtue in methodical order. Then, in verse 8, Peter adds, "For these things being yours continually (or, all along, all through), and increasing are constituting you not idle nor yet unfruitful, unto the recognition (or, fuller knowledge) of the Lord Jesus Christ." What Peter means is that there should be a steady advance in these virtues. These fine qualities. ought to be ours all the time, and yet should keep on growing. It is one of the "rudimentary" teachings among believers that one must either move forward spiritually or slip back. But this is not invariably true. Some believers neither advance nor slip back; they roll about in the doldrums, quite content to do no more than merely hold their own.

The same idea is prominent in Ch. 3:11, "what manner of people must you all along be (or continually be) in holy behavior (plural) and devoutness (plural)."

The above examples are some of the main occurrences of *huparchO*, which is found over fifty times in the N. T. The sense we have given to it is much more concordant than found elsewhere, and fits every

occurrence as closely as English will permit. We would humbly recommend that you take your pen and alter all occurrences in your Bible. It is obvious that the word must be given a time value of some sort. Only in one version have we seen our solution adopted, and that is A. T. Robertson's Luke, where at Ch. 8:41 he reads, "Just then a man named Jairus came up who had long been a ruler of the synagogue." But Robertson does not use this rendering elsewhere in Luke, unfortunately. Dr. Bullinger's Lexicon and Concordance to the N.T. comes near the mark by explaining the word as referring to "original state and continued existence." Liddell and Scott, and other lexicographers, completely miss the mark, giving many so-called "meanings," all totally discordant.

We therefore acclaim Christ Jesus as having existed all along, in Old Testament times, in God's form, until He emptied Himself, and came to be in likeness of human beings. But, although we are told that in fashion He was found as a human being, let us avoid the error of saying He then became Man. This is precisely what Paul does not say. He Who was the anointable, the Christ, could never have been aught else but Man. For was not mankind made in His image?

Many a time have we seen this error that Christ became Man stated in the magazine "Unsearchable Riches," although the late Pastor Rogers did not fall into this error, saying that the Word became flesh, which expresses the truth. The one who appeared in Old Testament times always was seen in human form. This was no transitory form, but His permanent form. He was no apparition, no mere vision, but a real Human Being—God Himself in human form.

We shall now challenge any Unitarian friends to put forward a rational and reasonable explanation of the passage before us, Phil. 2:5-8. Do not shirk this passage. Do not say it does not concern you. Face it boldly, as the Subject of the passage faced death. But do not cut the passage out of Scripture, or assuredly, something will be cut out of your part in Life's Book. It is not the Circumcision writers who say that God is not to be mocked or sneered at, but Paul, your Paul (Gal. 6:7). If you were extremely intimate with one good human friend, who was completely trustworthy, you would trust him or her implicitly in everything—not merely in bits.

The fact that Unitarians ignore Phil. 2:5-8 proves that their case is more than weak. It proves they are not proud of their Creed. And it proves to be their defeat.

"For you are getting to know," says Paul (2. Cor. 8:9), "the kindly-goodwill (or, grace) of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing that, because of you, He becomes poor, being rich, that you, by that One's poverty, should become rich." We may be quite sure that it was not after His birth that the Lord was wealthy. He was not born with any silver spoon in His mouth. Had He been wealthy, He would not have needed to be a Builder (tektOn is rather a builder than a carpenter; perhaps a builder of wooden houses). This verse is quite in harmony with Phil. 2.

Upon John 8:58 our Unitarian has something to say. He thinks that to Abraham the Lord only existed in promise. Abraham could only look forward to the actual existence of the Messiah, as his own seed. He takes the statement as "Before Abraham was, I am," not "I was." The Greek, however, reads, "Ere Abraham's coming into being, I am." In verse 53, the Jews asked the Lord, "Whom are you making yourself?" They had just heard the Lord make an extraordinary claim, "If God were your Father, in that case you loved Me, for out of God I came forth, and I am here." (We prefer this rendering for *hEkO* instead of "I am arriving," which in English sounds as though He had newly arrived. Perhaps we might say, "and I have got here"). In verse 55, the Lord tells these Jews, "And you have not got to know Him, yet I am acquainted with Him." Note the sharp contrasts between the words used. The Jews had to get to know God through a process of learning (*ginOskO*), while the Lord knew God as it were instinctively, through perception (*eidO*). We contend that had Jesus been merely a very fortunate man

among men, he would necessarily have had to get to- know God in the same way as the Jews, just as we have to get to know God.

Furthermore, the Lord states, "Abraham your father exults that he should perceive (or, be acquainted with) My very own day, and he perceives it and rejoices."

Who was to tell him of Messiah's day? "And Jehovah says, Am I hiding from Abraham what I do?" (Gen. 18:17). If Jehovah knew that Abraham was to become a great and mighty nation, in whom all nations were to be blessed, and if he was so to order his household that they kept Jehovah's way in justice, is it likely that Jehovah would omit to tell Abraham about His own coming day of glory? The same One who appeared in bodily human form in Gen. 18 to Abraham now stands before the sons of Abraham in John 8:58. We commend the note here in the Concordant Version.

It is not the case that the Jews made any mistake in gathering that the Lord meant He existed before Abraham. Had He meant that He existed only to Abraham in imagination, as prophesied, He could easily have so expressed Himself. But He so expressed Himself that to the Jews he became guilty of blasphemy. Had the Lord meant to say He did not exist in person before Abraham, how ought He to have spoken?

Six times in His wonderful prayer in John 17 does the Lord address the Father. Never once, here or elsewhere, does He call Him "Our Father," (Matt. 6:9 is exceptional, "Thus then be praying YOU: Our Father, Who art in the heavens. . ."). Now this is strange. If the Messiah was a purely human mediator between man and God, one would certainly have expected Him to approach God as "Our Father." And we should certainly have expected Him not to utter anything so insipid or out of place as "the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

That fact would be far too obvious for words. But it was quite in order for the Lord Jesus to speak thus. In some ways He was equal with God (Phil. 2:6. *isa* may be a plural adverb). But the Unitarian Christ is never and nowhere equal with God. Every right-loving person feels it keenly when he or she is treated with gross bad manners. Such manners are an indication, like anger, or pride, and betray a sense of superiority towards the person abused. Our Lord's manners, we may be sure, were invariably perfect. In genuine humility there cannot be bad manners.

But what may we think of John 10:30, where the Lord said, "I and the Father—we are One"? If the Son and the Father in certain respects, are on an equality, there is nothing remiss in this statement. But if this son was only a human being, only a specially favored man, then his manners are atrocious. The Jews standing by took this statement to mean that Jesus made Himself God. Were they again mistaken? At ch. 5:18 the Jews sought to kill Him because He not only annulled the sabbath, but also termed (His) own Father God, making Himself equal to God. This means that they understood quite clearly that He made Himself God's direct offspring. This is the only case in the Scriptures where anyone is said to have called God his "own Father" (*patera idion*). Conversely, only at Romans 8:32 does God speak of His "own Son." No human being could speak of God as being his own Father. The sense of the word *idios* may be more closely grasped when we see that in the A.V. it has to be rendered sometimes by "apart," or "privately."

The word at Rom. 8:3 (God sending His own Son) is different, *heatou*, of-Himself. When the Jews sought to kill the Lord for making Himself equal to God, what did the Lord answer? "The Son can be doing nothing from Himself, unless what He should be observing the Father doing" (John 5:19).

Could any mere created being make such a stupendous claim? If the Son could do whatever He saw the Father doing, does not this set Him on an equality with God? Moreover, as to DO or make in Greek (*poiO*) signifies to carry through, to effect something, to produce a finished product, would it not suit a

Unitarian Christ much better were the word "practice" (prassO) instead of **DO** (poiO)? This would suit any imitative actions, trying to copy the actions of another. The Lord's claim here is virtually one of omnipotence.

Just set that Unitarian Messiah into Hebrews 1:3, and see what a tragically miserable figure he cuts. "Carrying on all things by His powerful declaration." Is not that omnipotence?

That Unitarian Christ must have been transmuted, before he could change from manhood to Godhead. "My glory I am not giving to another," says Jehovah (Isa. 42:8). Who, then, was the glorified One of John 17:5? "And now do Thou glorify Me, Father, beside Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world is, beside Thee." "That they may be beholding the glory, My-own-personal (glory), which Thou hast given Me" (verse 24). "Now is glorified the Son of Mankind, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13:31). "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son should be glorifying Thee" (John 17:1). If the Son is the effulgence of the glory of God (Heb. 1:3), and if God is not giving His glory to another, does this not prove that the Son must be God?

If Abraham "saw Calvary" in the offering of his own personal son Isaac, who is this Lamb we see in Rev. 5:11-13, Who gets such glory and universal worship? Whose Son is He?

Other Scriptures and other considerations and questions we must leave over to the next chapter. The subject of God's being ought to be of transcendent interest to all who love Him. Up till a certain point the disciples were puzzled about the Lord. But after He said a few very simple things to them, their difficulties suddenly vanished. Our earnest desire is to make things crystal clear to those who are in any way puzzled. There must be an answer to that eternal question which arises in the human heart, "Shew us the Father."

If you are wrong regarding the doctrine of the Father, you cannot be correct regarding the Son. If you are hazy regarding the Son, you cannot be clear about the Father: If the disciples could become clear and satisfied, so can you.

The doctrine of God must come first. A true knowledge of God is our most pressing need. You cannot attain maturity without it. You cannot supplicate God effectively without it. You cannot truly worship God if you do not know Him. And how can you proclaim the Good News of God if you are in a mental fog regarding Him? Might God send forth His light and His truth regarding Himself!

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 2

### Both God and Man

That God created humanity in His Image is a glorious truth about which we are in no doubt (Gen. 1:27). As the verb is in the "present" or descriptive "tense" in the Hebrew, this means that the action is viewed as actually taking place at the time mentioned. That is to say, Adam and his race were created in that Image. It is quite true, of course, we believe, that in New Creation all mankind will be re-created in that Image.

Of no other animal is it stated that it was created in that Image. Of mankind it is most clearly stated. Paul confirms this at I Cor. 11:7, by saying that a man (anEr, a male) exists all along (huparchOn) "image and glory of God." The man should not be having his head covered while praying or prophesying, for the reason just given. We may take it that the rule is no new one. It looks like a cosmic, universal, and eonian law of spiritual or religious etiquette and decency. This would confirm that ever since Adam's time, mankind has continued, in some measure at least, in God's image.

But what are we to understand by image? Perhaps this point has never been clearly elucidated. Some have maintained that a mortal image is meant. Well, this is true in some sense. We possess, varying degrees of conscience. To some 'extent' mankind can judge between right and wrong. Many human beings have bewailed their lack of rectitude.

Let us, however, take the evidence of the Hebrew word used in Gen. 1. You may be astonished, or perhaps astounded, if I insist that the Hebrew word *tzelem* always refers to a material, visible and physical image. According to Gen. 1:26, God says, "Let us be making Man in our Image (tzdem), according to our likeness (dmuth)." Whereas Adam, in ch. 5:3, begets children in his likeness, according to his image.

Tzelem occurs in the Hebrew of the Old Testament seventeen times. In the A. V. it is always rendered "image" except once at Psalm 39:6, where it is rendered by "vain shew." In the Chaldee of Daniel, it also occurs another seventeen times, always rendered by "image" except once at Ch. 3:19, where it is rendered by "form."

The word is used of God's image, man's image, molten images, images of things worshipped, images of mice and men. It is never once found as meaning a mental representation, or of spiritual qualities.

Dr. Bullinger, in his Companion Bible, states (Gen. 1:26) that this word "refers only to outward form, not to attributes." "The image and likeness is physical, not moral. Man fell and is a moral ruin, but some physical likeness to Elohim still remains. Cp. Gen. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9. No indication that that similitude was ever lost."

Yes; some physical likeness still remains. Are there not some people, whose natural dignity and beauty make one instinctively think of God?

Very obviously our Hebrew term is related to another word, *semel*, meaning FIGURE, occurring five times, again signifying physical figures or idols. This word, is so obviously related to the Latin *siml* (as in similar, similitude) that the fact hardly needs to be stated. In fact, our common English word same is also related.

Very little attention has ever been given to this fact of revelation. The subject has been shunned, because it has been deemed irreverent to think of Adam being created in the physical image of God. Is not God invisible? How can we picture an image of invisibility? Is not God infinite?

Whom do the Scriptures declare to be the Image of God the invisible? Immediately you refer to Col. 1:15. The Son is that Image.

Adam was created in the physical image of that God-Man of whom we wrote in chapter 1. That God-Man or Logos (Word) who existed all along.

If we are permitted to draw an inference, we should say, it is very likely that the visible appearance of Adam was, at first, the same as that of the Lord Jesus Christ, before anguish and suffering made Him seem prematurely old (John 8:57). While we cannot prove this statement, any other view seems to be unlikely.

There is something unsatisfying and unsatisfactory in the view that the divine Word only took human form occasionally, on apparitional visitations to men, just as we might imagine a ghost to appear. This view leaves much to be explained. It leaves difficulties unanswered. There is a feeling of incompleteness about it. It makes the "Secret of God" (Col. 2:2) a very difficult problem. Here Paul longs for the saints to come to a "realization of the Secret of God—Christ!" If God can only be elucidated or explained in and through Christ, then let us be very clear who Christ was and is.

An old Scottish preacher, when coming to a passage in the Scriptures which he did not understand, would say, "There are great mysteries here, my friends; let us look them boldly in the face, and pass on."

Some of these mysteries have been caused by the spate of erroneous views let loose upon the Church in the early centuries regarding the Person of Christ. Almost all believers today are still more or less under the spell of one or other of these errors.

The doctrine that the Word or Son of God did not become man until the incarnation has been the root of a vast number of half-truths and heresies.

Surely, we should be able to look in the face any and all revealed doctrine in the Scriptures. Throughout the centuries ecclesiastics, scholars and teachers have magnified or ignored some aspect of the doctrine of God. Each sect or school has picked out certain features which appeal to it, and built up thereupon its Creed. Each one thinks it is going upon the teachings of the Apostles, yet each one ignores certain clear statements.

Do you know of one body of believers that acknowledges the fact and the truth of Paul's statement contained in Acts 17:28, 29?

To illustrate our argument, we shall briefly describe some of the old heresies which sprang up through a partial understanding of revealed truth.

*The Gnostic* believed God was good, but maintained that Moral Evil is something independent of God, contrary to His purposes. That Evil is inherent in matter, and God, being infinite, could not directly act upon matter. God required to send forth agencies, angels or spirits, evolved from Himself, who became the molders of matter and created the worlds. As for Jesus Christ, how could He be God incarnate, as Infinite Being could never become a finite man? In the Colossian epistle Paul disposes of this heresy. Whereas the Gnostic set God at a great distance from man, and the Son at a great distance from the Father, the sacred writings bring God very close to man in His Image and Son.

*The Ebionite* claimed that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, in every way like unto other men, except that he was the best of men, a moral reformer, who would restore the primitive and true religion of mankind. His Jesus was, therefore, very like that of the Unitarian. Clearly, the Ebionite had no room for a Deity who appeared to men in human form.

*The Sabellian* maintained that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Were a threefold manifestation of one Person, who became Jesus of Nazareth, that is, Incarnate Triune Unity.

*The Arian* reckoned that the Son of God must necessarily be inferior to the Father, because of His sonship, and was therefore something less than divine.

*The Nestorian* deemed Christ to be but a deified man. It seems strange that while the Jew, well acquainted with his Hebrew Bible, with its clear accounts of the theophanies in human form, failed to recognize Jehovah when He came in flesh the ecclesiastical Gentiles who framed the famous Church Creeds in the fifth century, failed to comprehend the facts of Hebrew revelation.

*The Apollinarians*, however, probably came very close to the truth. Apollinaris was a very clever and well taught man, with a profound knowledge of the Scriptures. He was quite clear that Scripture never states that Christ became Man, but that He became Flesh. He believed that from the eons the Son of God had been divinely human, and recognized that when He appeared in O. T. times, He seemed to do so in a body of flesh. This appears to have led him to believe that Christ's flesh came down with Him from heaven at the incarnation. It is said that he denied that Christ was entirely human. But we must always bear in mind that the accounts of these early times have often come down from the pen of prejudiced opponents, who wrote in Greek or Latin, and not only so, but English translations of the works of these writers are invariably very discordantly rendered, Translators will render Greek words just in the same manner as the A. V. did, so that one can only get a confused idea of what these early Church Fathers did say or mean.

So far as the Christology of the early Church is concerned, final shape was given thereto at the Council of Chalcedon in A. D. 451, in the form of a Creed. This Creed contains two great fallacies, namely, that before His incarnation, the Son was divine only, and that as incarnate Son of the Virgin, He was the perfect Man. That is, He became Man in the incarnation.

We must now turn our attention to another puzzling problem.

How can God be both visible and invisible? Irenaeus it was who said the Father is the invisible of the Son, while the Son is the visible of the Father. If there is any scripture which contradicts this, we should like to know it and consider it.

Someone in the O. T. times visibly represented God, occasionally in plain human guise, but at other times with more or less of divine majesty. There seemed to be a well-known tradition that no human could be seeing God and continue alive.



In the N. T., we read much of One who in visible form represented God, and admitted that He was the Son of God.

Can it be that one invisible God has two visible representatives?

We are forced to the conclusion that the Figure seen by many in O. T. times can be no other Person that He whom we know in the N. T. as the Lord Jesus.

But what of that dread statement, "There shall no man see Me, and live"? (Exodus 33:20). Who is the speaker? Beyond a doubt it is the Word. For we read in verse 11, "And Jehovah speaks unto Moses face unto face, just as is speaking a man unto his friend."

Why, however, should Jehovah at one stage speak thus face to face, while later on His face may not be seen? The answer is, that Moses, after speaking face to face, was sufficiently intimate with that Friend, to ask humbly, "Cause me to see, now, Thy glory." Then Jehovah said, "I shall; I shall make all My goodness pass over thy face, and I proclaim in the name of Jehovah to thy face, and I favor whom I am favoring, and I shew mercy to whom I am shewing mercy. And He is saying, Thou art not able (la thukl) to see My face, for the human being is not seeing Me and he lives." Then Jehovah sets Moses on a rock and puts His hand upon him until He passes by in His glory. Then He removes His hand, and Moses sees His rear, but "My face is not being seen." Next day, Moses is ordered to ascend mount Sinai, to present himself on the summit before Jehovah. "And Jehovah is descending in a cloud, and is stationing Himself with him there; and He is proclaiming in the name of Jehovah" (Ch. 34:5). The next verse tells us that "Jehovah is passing by over his face and is proclaiming, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious. . ."

Twice here in verse 6 occurs in the Hebrew text after the name Jehovah, the Note-line, a thin vertical stroke, which the Hebrews call *Pesiq* or *Paseq*. The signification of this line is to call attention to a reading or word, which may be doubtful, suspected, or important. It corresponds to our *nota bene* (N. B.). The origin of this mark is thought to go back long before the Massoretic system.

It is known that in quite a number of cases the scribes altered the name Jehovah to Adonai. This happened four times in Gen. 18, at verses 3, 27, 30, and 32. It was considered to be grossly irreverent of Abraham to be standing face to face with the great Jehovah, and talking to Him. The same applies in Exodus 34:6. Probably the scribes had the feeling that the name Jehovah should not stand in this verse.

No human being is able to behold God in the blaze of His glory.

Where there is no glory, He may be seen by men.

It will be observed that Jehovah does not tell Moses, "Thou mayest not see My face," but, "Thou art not able" to see it. In saying, "Thou canst not see my face," the A. V. is ambiguous, at least in modern English, as we use the word can in two senses.

The common Hebrew word *yakal* (iKl) always refers to ability to do something, not to permissibility. Moses, therefore, had not the ability, the strength, to look upon Jehovah's glory, just as we are unable to stare at the sun in its glory.

What, then, about I Tim. 6:15, 16? Let us first get a literal and full rendering of this passage. "Unto the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, which (advent), in its own eras, He will be shewing the happy and only Potentate, the King of those having kingship, and Lord of those having lordship, the only One having

immortality, making His home light inaccessible, whom not one of mankind does perceive or is able (dunatai) to be perceiving, to Whom—honor and might eonian."

Here we meet with no future tense, but a present tense. No human being is able to look upon that glory. Once again, it is the human being who has not the power or ability to gaze at that glory.

Not one word is said about the future. What we know is that we shall be changed, and wonderfully changed. We do not yet know quite what we shall be, as we cannot even glimpse what a pneumatized body will be like. But if our bodies are to be conformed to the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21), we shall see a great deal which at present we cannot see. How grand it is that Paul, in 1 Tim. 6:16 wrote "is able" (dunatai) and not "will be able" (dunEsetai, as at Rom. 8:39). That leaves the door open. Those versions which read "can" here are misleading. Almost everyone reads this in a future sense, expressive of permissibility. Rotherham, Darby and the Emphatic Diaglott are correct, in rendering by "is able."

There appears to be no statement to the effect that God can never be seen.

Some have expressed a longing to behold the Father in some form, as it were looking over the shoulder of the Son, to see Another and more venerable Person. Such people have a feeling that they are losing something because the Father is invisible. For many years I have pointed out to them that if they cannot see in the face of Christ all they need for the present to know of God, there is something wrong. In an old book published in London in 1761, called "Universal Restitution a Scripture Doctrine," it is stated that "Christ is the very God of the eons." In Him, for the meantime, we ought to behold God to the full, as much as we need.

When the obscure times or eons finish, obscurity also will come to an end. But we really know next to nothing of what will then happen.

John tells us (1:18) that "GOD no one has ever seen." This, however does not tell us anything about the end of the eons. "Only-begotten God, Who, being within the bosom of the Father, HE unfolds Him." "Not that anyone has seen the FATHER, except Him being from-beside God. This One has seen the Father" (ch. 6:46). Once again, nothing is stated concerning the distant future. In 1 John 4:12 he says, "Upon GOD no one ever has gazed." Yet once, in Matt. 5:8, we do have a future tense, "Happy are the clean in heart, for they shall be seeing GOD." Strange it is that this same word (opsontai, WILL-BE-VIEWING) in about half of its occurrences, is used of those who shall be seeing the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24:30 etc.).

What impression must the Lord's words have made when He uttered these words? Just the same impression as they make now on the hearts of simple, humble souls.

At this point I hear someone quote the following statements, "There is no hint that this invisibility is due to human disability." "We shall never see Him, in a literal sense. . . . God is absolutely invisible. . . ."

I trust I have already demonstrated from the Scriptures, both from Hebrew and from Greek, that there is more than a hint that the present and past invisibility of God is represented as a human disability.

Not even 1 Tim. 1:17 denies this. "Now to the King of the eons, incorruptible, invisible, only God, — honor and glory for the eons of the eons." (Pray do not lower Him by calling Him the "only wise God"). This verse is structurally related to Ch. 6:16, and the two verses should explain each other.

While, admittedly, it is now true that God is invisible, who has the right to say we shall never see Him? Is not this an addition to Scripture? Admittedly, too, "God is Spirit." Spirit is, to us, some form of invisible power. But, if all creation, including all physical matter, came forth out of God, who is spirit, what is matter? Is it a mode of spirit? Is it Scripture which states that invisibility is one of the permanent essentials of "absolute" Deity?

Must we argue from 1 Tim. 6:16—"Who alone has deathlessness," that no other being in the whole universe can ever reach this happy state? Here is another statement which says not one word about the future.

The fact that God in these dark eons is "unknowable" (Acts 17:23, agnOstos) is surely not a proof that He will forever be unknowable. He is undoubtedly unknowable to most human beings now on account of their disability, whatever form that may take.

Our contention is supported by a note in "Unsearchable Riches" of 1933, page 196, dealing with 1 Tim. 6:14-16. It is claimed that this passage refers to God's Son, not to the Father. The argument is that our Lord has deathlessness. The statement concerns the Lord in His glory, not in His humiliation. No human being can perceive Him now, but "We shall perceive Him when we also are glorified."

For those who would welcome further suggestions upon matter being a mode of spirit, we would recommend perusal of articles in the magazine "Unsearchable Riches," "Creation and Destiny" (June 1917, page 210), "Creation out of Spirit" (October 1917, page 21) and "Evolution" (July 1925, page 242).

Then again, there is Matt. 18:10. These little ones have angels or messengers in heavens who are continually observing the face of the Father. Whatever this may mean, we may at least be sure it does not mean nothing. The Lord was referring to His Father in heavens, that is, the Invisible One.

Moreover, what of John 17:3? "Now this is (that) eonian life, that they may be getting to know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ." The verb here used refers to progressive knowledge, getting to know more and more by learning. For all we know, this might lead to "observing the face of the Father," whatever that may mean. It certainly implies true intimacy. If it will require eons of time to get to know God in the case of believers, how long will it take unbelievers, and when? No wonder we learn so little here on earth, when the real time for learning lies away in the future, about which we know so very little.

The fact that the Lord, in verse 8 states that the disciples got to know truly that from-beside the Father He came out, should cause us to pause and think. A visible material, tangible person came out from Invisible Spirit? He was the Image of this Invisible Spirit?

A serious charge has been laid against me. It has been said that I am seeking to humanize God. And this too, by those who know and admit that Christ is the God of the eons; who would admit that for the future He is permanently, so far as we can know, human; who would most probably not deny that in the past, when He did appear, it was always in human form. Further, there is the strange phenomenon that this One came to the only world of human beings in order to accomplish the one mighty act of sacrifice in the entire universe. Why was He so specially attached to Mankind that He came hither to die? Is it not because Deity is very much more closely allied and attached to humanity than to any other creatures of His?

Many years ago, a well taught teacher asked a meeting to give a reason for God's love. His own answer was, that there was no reason at all. God's love was causeless. With such a conclusion I could not agree. There is always some reason for real love.

God loves the world of mankind because they are His own race, His own kin. Those who think this view would drag down God do so because their faith is weak: they fail to visualize Man as he will be in the future, the crown and glory of God's creation.

But just here two dangerous texts are lurking to destroy our view.

We recollect that we have been told very clearly that "God is not a man" (Num. 23:19), with a somewhat similar statement in 1 Sam. 15:29. That seems to settle the matter. At one blow, much of the Old Testament becomes obsolete. The theophanies are found out to be wicked inventions, impositions. But perhaps we had better confirm "Not man God and he is lying and son mankind and he is changing mind." (La aish Al uikzb; ubn adm uithnchm). No language can surpass Hebrew for terseness, quaintness and simplicity. In English we would render it thus, "God is not man, and lying; and a son of mankind, and changing (His) mind." Rotherham and others shew the idiomatic meaning by rendering, "that he should lie," and "that he should repent." From the fact that God is often in the O. T. said to "repent" or change His mind or attitude or ways, we see that the statement means something different from what it appeared at first to be. Why not have a look at the context? Balak would have liked Israel to come under a curse. But Balaam is inspired by God to pronounce a blessing. God does not go back upon His word. His blessings and His graces are not to be regretted. It is in this respect that God is not a man. The subject of discussion between Balak and Balaam is not the fundamental being and nature of the Godhead. The subject is, is God changeable, fickle, like all men and women. Could He be won round to our side, could we get His ear, could we get Him influenced?

Similarly, in 1 Sam. 15:29, when Jehovah rejects Saul from being king, and the kingdom is torn from him. "And moreover, the Continuity (or Continuer) of Israel is not playing false, and is not changing (His) mind, for He is not a human to change (His) mind."

Balak would have had the continuance of Israel as a nation destroyed. But he was fighting against Israel's God, who is the Continuer of the chosen nation.

All of us human beings change our mind in many things, and must do so when we learn new facts. We have the right to do so. But there are some things about which we never change our mind.

God is not man in that He tells lies or changes His mind. He is not human in respect of being false and changeable. When He makes a statement, shall He not do it?

Let us always study Scripture contexts, and find out the object of the writer's statements.

It has been well said, "Man craves, not only for the spiritual vision of the unseen God, but for a face to face sight of a Visible God." Among the wildest and most simple races this will find expression in the most grotesque idol forms. But all the idols are more or less human. Man cannot even think of God without giving Him human form. A missionary in India once sent the following view to a religious publication in London: "We see the insufficiency of mere Theism, as propounded by the Brahmo Somaj movement, to satisfy the emotional nature of the Hindu; and how his philosophical nature must ever turn from all its abstractions to that popular side of his religion which, with all its degrading worship, enshrines the idea of an Incarnation, and witnesses to the instinctive craving of the human heart to see a humanized God."

What is the cause of the view that God and man must be kept so much apart? We should reply, without hesitation, it consists in ignorance of a few Scripture facts and statements, plus a Creed more or less based upon the confusion engendered by the early Fathers. The fact that the Father is Invisible Spirit makes it look at first sight as though He could not have, as His Permanent Image, a Human Son. Yet this is a prime truth of revelation. God's Image was, all along, in human form, when He was seen. And that is the form which at Phil. 2:6 is called 'God's form.' When it dawns upon our tardy comprehension that God's permanent, visible, human Image, who to us is the Lord Jesus Christ, possesses bodily features, we shall not be concerned to make excuses for those statements which ascribe to God human features and feelings. We shall no longer require to excuse our lack of faith by putting down statements to a figure of speech called anthropomorphism (human-form) or anthropopatheia (human experience or suffering). These figures have wrought effectively to make our God unreal and make Him distant. Expositors, by taking refuge in such figures, seek to get rid of any apparent human features in God. They must be ignorant of the fact that the Word ever was the great Anthropomorph. He was and is God's human form, and apart from Him we would know nothing whatever about God. Without God there could be no Divine Man, but it is quite as true that without the Divine Man, we should be without God altogether. The Visible God—He who was always Intermediary between God and man, is the Word or Logos, who speaks through the Old Testament. If He could speak face to face as man to man, with Abraham and Moses, why should not His eyes be upon the righteous and the wrongdoer, and His ears open to the cry of the afflicted? Would not the traditions passed down by these ancient worthies reach in due course some of the prophets of Israel? Would they not realize that this God-Man possessed human features, hands, head, mouth, ears, voice, and human feelings?

Why should it be, that when certain expositors come to a statement which describes God as being grieved or pained, or "repenting," they immediately mark such utterances as examples of Anthropopatheia, that is, God pretending, merely shamming, to possess human feelings? He is far above all that, He the "happy God," who cannot endure or suffer any unhappiness! He does not really suffer or feel any pain. It is only those made in His own image who are left to bear the pain and unhappiness! Strange it is, that His Son, who, we are told, is the "Emblem of His assumption" (Heb. 1:3), that is, Emblem of all forms or modes He ever assumes in order to display or reveal Himself, His Son did much suffering while on earth, but that suffering was no sham or pretense! Why should, the statements concerning the Lord Jesus be true and real, while similar statements in the Old Testament about God are only "figures."

Here is one statement by a writer who seems to deny that God ever appeared on earth in human form. "Men cannot understand any language that is not human. Hence the figure anthropopatheia is freely used, in which God is treated as a man. He is continually given human attributes and furnished with various members of the human body. We read of His eyes; His ears; His mouth; His lips; His arms; His hands; His feet. Messengers behold His face. Besides this He is given human feelings, and ignorance, and many other traits which humanize Him so that we may understand Him."

But suppose God has already humanized Himself? These statements are made by one who claims to be in the front rank as acclaiming that the Lord Jesus was God. He claims that the Word of the New Testament was the same Person as that Jehovah who appeared of old in human form, even eating in front of human beings, and holding converse with them by word of mouth. In the same article he attacks unscriptural methods and words, yet mentions no less than five times One whom he calls "absolute God." We know of no such expression in all Scripture.

Let us put the matter in another form. We are told, and it is quite reasonable to believe, that God never spoke or speaks to men except in and through His Word. If *legō* means "speak," then its noun, *logos*, means Speaker, or Word, or Expression. Christ expressed God, and did so all along, from beginning. Not only so, but this Expresser of God was in God's form, and in human form. So that for this Person to

perform human actions, and have human feelings, and use human speech, was equivalent to God doing so.

We have, however, more evidence to produce. It will never convince our Unitarian friend, but it may appeal to those who reverence God and His Word. Ask yourself this question. Into whose face did Moses look upon the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3)? You reply, "Jesus" of course, "the Lord." Perfectly true. But one thing seems very evident, that the Face into which Moses looked was that of no stranger. There is every indication that He had the Face of a very well known Person, with whom he had in olden times conversed. Moses and Elijah seem to have been quite at home in the presence of the Lord. The three spectators appear to have had some means of recognizing the figures of Moses and Elijah, and, no doubt their thought must have been that these two were once again gazing into that wondrous Face they had known so well in ancient times. How would it be possible for any Israelite to think otherwise? Had not Moses seen some of that transfiguration glory long ago? How could the disciples feel that they were in the presence of any other than that same wonderful Jehovah who had appeared on various occasions of old. The great Name means "He who will come to be," and here He Was. The Name Jehovah is usually explained as referring to the self-existent One, but that is not its meaning. It was a promise that One would come and actually dwell with His people. The words, "I am that I am" are really meaningless to us, and those who explain the Lord's statement to the Jews at John 8:58, "Before Abraham is coming to be, I am," as implying that the last two words referred to the ever-existent One, are badly mistaken. The statement in Exodus 3:14 reads, in the Hebrew, "I shall come to be what I shall come to be," and refers, not to the past, but entirely to the future.

John 17:1-5 is one fulfillment of the Name Jehovah. Here He is, as the Son of Man, coming in His kingliness, or kingly power. We do not require to say He was coming in His kingdom, because in our sense of the word Kingdom, He did not come thus. As is well known, the termination of the word *basileia* (kingdom) expresses an abstract quality. God's kingdom is His kingship, rather than His possession and His rule. His kingship is very different from that of men.

Let me ask, what would you do if you received a kingdom? Very few human beings would refuse a kingdom if they had the chance of one. Now turn to Mark 10:15. "Whoever should not be receiving the kingdom of God as a little child, may not at all be entering into it." What is the kingdom of God? His kingship. Other verses which may get an explanation in this way are Luke 1:33 and compare 1 Cor. 15:24; Luke 10:9,11; 17:21.

Kingship of course implies a kingdom over subjects, but we may be sure that Gods kingdom will be first spiritual and secondly material.

As the God-Man of the Old Testament theophanies must be identified with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration (as God could hardly manifest Himself in two different material and visible persons), it will follow that if the former possessed divine nature (which no one could deny), so must the latter. And it is not difficult to believe that the Lord possessed divine nature. Why, if any of us had as his father the Holy Spirit, and no other father, would it not follow that we would inherently possess the divine nature? Luke 1:35 hits both the Trinitarians and the Unitarians a sore blow between the eyes. This one verse alone ought to have prevented the doctrine these sects hold. Luke presents as the Father of the Holy One being born the Holy Spirit, or the Most High's power.

But Luke tells us a vast deal more in this one verse; something which theology so far does not appear to have made clear. In Matt. 1:20 the messenger of Jehovah tells Joseph that what in Miriam his wife is being generated (out) of spirit is holy. Here the verb is passive (*gennEthen*). But in Luke 1:35 the verb is not passive, but a middle form (*gennOmenon*). Surely, we ought to indicate this somehow. The versions

shew the following renderings: shall be born; is being begotten; is to be born; the begotten thing. The Concordant Version reads "the holy One Who is being generated also," while its 1944 revision alters this to "also the holy One Who is being generated," indicating that the last word is a middle by printing the final two letters in light type. This, however, says nothing about the meaning of such a middle form. The meaning is, plainly, that what was generating, Holy, shall be called Son of God.

In simpler terms, here was God, Holy Spirit, Himself generating within Mary, about to appear in flesh. This middle form gives the powerful impression that God alone is concerned in this wonderful transaction. He whom Miriam in verse 49 calls the Power (ho Dunatos) is alone the Actor. This Power was coming into existence in flesh.

While it is quite true that such a middle form can be used of the birth of ordinary human beings, no other person was ever able to claim as his Father the Holy Spirit at birth.

Do you know of any other human being, who, so to speak, ever came to the birth of his own accord, under his own power?

Some who deny the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus claim that other virgin births have taken place. But these so-called virgin births are all among plants, sea-urchins, frogs, shrimps and so forth. No other case of a human virgin birth has ever been known.

As the Hebrew writings clearly demonstrate that at one-time God did appear on brief and fleeting occasions as a Human Being, yet without tabernacling with men, why should it be difficult to believe that later He became flesh and tabernacled among men? "And the Word becomes flesh and tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, —glory as of Only-begotten from-beside 'Father'." (John 1:14). Not "from the Father," but something far more intimate, "from Father." No doubt in ancient times, during the theophanies, He had flesh just as in resurrection He had flesh, but now He becomes flesh, through a human process.

We are told that the "divine nature" of which Peter speaks (2Peter 1:4) is the future life of immortality, and that the Lord's miraculous birth did not give Him that divine nature, because if He had possessed it, He could not have died. We are asked also, "How could Christ die, as God is immortal, and angels cannot die?" "Christ was God's Son in the days of his flesh. . . and therefore mortal, before he became immortal at his resurrection."

Now, if Christ did not possess divine nature until His resurrection, this must deny that His Father was Holy Spirit. Peter, however, says nothing about the divine nature pertaining to the future life of immortality. Had he meant that, he would not have been so foolish as to add the final clause of the verse. It must be obvious to any careful reader that what he means is, that precious and very great promises have been presented to us, that through these you may become sharers in divine nature, (while) fleeing from the corruption which is in the world in excessive desire. Just as, in verse 3, His divine power gives all things suited for life and godliness, through the realizing of Him, so the saints may share His divine nature, provided they shun the corruptions of the world and live godly. Just as in John 1:9, the true Greek sense is, "It was the true light, which is enlightening every human being, (by) coming into the world," so here, the participial construction has the same force. John is not writing about "every man coming into the world," but concerning the light Who came into the dark world. Here was the Divine Radiance (Heb. 1:3) coming into the world, enlightening every human being, just as the sun does so.

Moffatt's paraphrase reads thus in 2 Peter 1:4: "that by means of them you may escape the corruption produced within the world by lust, and participate in the divine nature." Goodspeed renders thus: "so that

through them you may escape the corrupting influences that exist in the world through passion, and come to share in the divine nature. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness. . ."

At this point let us ask one question. Is it not a real living fact that we do possess some measure of divine nature? How is it possible to avoid taking on divine nature if one lives close to God and His word? If it is possible to 'be getting filled in spirit' as the Greek ought to be rendered at Eph. 5:18, and this glorious possibility is open to any believer who is obedient, ought not that to impart the divine nature to him? If we become like those among whom we live, or who attract us, we shall take on some of their nature, because we approve of it and admire it. If we worship God, if we discover in Him a vast attraction, if we wish to please Him, will we not become in some degree more like Him?

As for whether Christ was "mortal" or not, there must be a vast difference between the ordinary human being who can not avoid death, and One who could lay down His soul, and who had the right plus the might to take it again (John 10:18). No one was taking away His soul from Him, but He was laying it down from Himself. Literally, placing it from Himself. We submit that only a Divine Being could accomplish that. The Lord's death and His resurrection proves the very point the Unitarian denies. Closely allied to this thought is Rev. 1:18, "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. And I became dead, and lo, Living am I for the eons of the eons." Would any human being ever presume to declare that he became dead, yet lived again? The same speaker in Isa; 48:12, who says "I am He; I am the First, I also am the Last," declares in ch. 45:5, "I am Jehovah and there is none further; setting Me aside, there is **NO GOD.**"

We challenge anyone to discover the God of Israel, or the God of the Universe, anywhere but in Christ Jesus. It cannot be done.

It was not possible for Him to be held by death (Acts 2:24).

Do not the Signs of the Zodiac foretell the sufferings of a divine Victim? The story of the constellations has been made abundantly clear by Miss Frances Rolleston, Dr. Seiss, Dr. Kinns, Dr. E. W. Bullinger, and Mr. E. M. Smith. It is absurd to imagine that this Victim was merely a fortunate human being.

Mankind by itself could never have produced a Messiah—one fit to be Mediator between God and man, even though he had been miraculously born.

To invent a chimerical Christ will avail nothing. It is not the Savior we picture to ourselves who is going to deliver us. No one has yet been saved by the Unitarian Christ, because he does not exist, and even if he had ever existed, he could not save.

So far, two results have sprung from our present enquiry. We find (1) that our Lord Jesus Christ is **GOD** in a richer, fuller, and more glorious sense than we had ever imagined; and (2) He is **MAN** in a fuller and more satisfying way than we had thought.

In our next chapter we shall consider a few other very important Scripture terms and texts, such as Hebrews 1:3, which have not so far been studied sufficiently or along strictly concordant lines. We are more than convinced these studies will clear up difficulties which linger in the minds of many. There will be intense opposition from certain quarters, but we are quite prepared for anything that the Enemy may do, as our court of appeal must be the original Scriptures, which will not let us down.



# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 3

### Father and Son are Complementary

In seeking for light on our question, "Who Is Our God?" we must not ignore any very important statements. One of these is found at Hebrews 1:3. Beyond all doubt this verse has not been properly understood. Like all other important verses, a close study of it will assuredly yield great delight.

First of all, it will be helpful to state the renderings given by various versions, omitting the first few words.

Wiclif (1380): the brightness of glory, and figure of his substance.

Tyndale (1534): the brightness of his glory, and very image of his substance.

Geneva (1557): the brightness of the glory, and the engraved form of his person.

A.V. (1611): the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

Scarlett (1798): the effulgence of his glory, and express image of his substance.

C. Thomson (1808): an effulgence of the glory, and an impress of his substance.

Wakefield (1795): a ray of (God's) brightness, and an image of his perfections.

Darby: (the) effulgence of his glory, and (the) expression of his substance (i.e. essential being).

Bowes: the radiance of (his) glory, and the express image of his essential nature.

Diaglott: an effulgence of his glory, and an exact impress of his substance.

Young: the brightness of the glory, and the impress of his subsistence.

Rotherham (1872): an irradiated brightness of (his) glory and an exact expression of his essence.

Rotherham (1903): an irradiated brightness of his glory and an exact representation of his very being.

Revised (1881): the effulgence of his glory, and the very image (or, the impress) of his substance.

Concordant: the Effulgence of his glory and Emblem of His assumption.

20th Century: the radiance of the Glory of God and the very expression of his Being.

Moffatt, Goodspeed, Weymouth and Dr. Wand refer to the Son as reflecting God's glory. Moffatt, for the second member, has "and stamped with God's own character," while Dr. Wand has "bears impressed upon Him the very character of the Father." Goodspeed uses "the representation of his being," while Weymouth has "the exact representation of His being."

In case there is any prejudice against the word "person," let it be stated that this originally meant a mask, which disguised and turned one into a personage or character. Literally this Latin word meant something which one "sounded through," without his features being seen. The Latin word 'substance,' also, needs explaining. Like the Greek term found in Heb. 1:3 (hupostasis) it means, literally, UNDER-STANDING, that which underlies anything, a substratum.

For effulgence or radiance, Thayer prefers refulgence or reflection. The Greek word, *apaugasma*, requires some attention.

In his excellent compendium of 1,000 pages, "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah" (Edinburgh 1875), Dr. John Pye Smith of Sheffield (1774-1851) makes some very useful remarks on this word. He says the Son "is that to the Divine Father, which the solar light, incident on our world, is to the same light as the source of its emanation." He explains the terms as meaning off-shining or effulgence. He quotes from Philo, "The sanctuary is, as it were, an effulgence of the Holies, an imitation of the archetype." Philo thought the one was a perfect likeness of the other. In the apocryphal book, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ch. 7:26, we read, "Wisdom is the effulgence of unperceived light, and a mirror immaculate of God's active power, and image of His goodness." Another renders by "the outshining splendor from the inherent splendor." Another paraphrases by "a ray of light that comes from God to man," and says the word suggests light in motion. Nairne renders as "the stream of light from the innermost glory."

That is what Christ Jesus is. No ordinary or extraordinary man ever was such. He is God's Radiance, and He radiates His Father.

As for the word *charaktEr* (express image, impress, emblem, etc.) there is no real difficulty. This is explained as signifying the precise likeness, the exact correspondence, as of an impression with the seal, or of a coin with the die. "So the Lord Jesus, stamped with God's Deity, represents, reproduces, bears witness to that Deity." Dr. Bloomfield, famous Cambridge luminary, says the word means the die, the stamping-stool, used in coining, by which the figure to be expressed is stamped; also the impression made by a seal. As this cannot be aught but an exact representation of the die or seal, the word came to denote an exact and perfect resemblance, or counterpart. The Greek word, of which our English word character is an exact copy comes from a verb meaning to make an incision, make a furrow, to carve or impress or stamp. Closely allied to this word (*charassO*) is the Hebrew *charash*, which means to COVER OVER as in plowing; to cover over the tongue, and thus be silent. It is often rendered plow or hold one's tongue or hold one's peace. Once it is rendered "graven." The connection between Hebrew on the one hand, and Greek, Latin and Lithuanian on the other hand, is much closer than might be imagined.

It is helpful to consult an English dictionary regarding the word character, which meant originally a distinctive mark; any essential feature or peculiarity. We call a man a "character" when he makes his mark in some direction. He makes a strong impression on others.

There is one further point in connection with this word which ought to be noticed. Eight times in the Revelation the mark of the beast is the translation of *charagma* (CARVEeffect), a related form. What then, does the suffix *-tEr* in *charaktEr* signify? This suffix is generally said to refer to the agent who does something. Examples are the Greek words for father (pa-tEr; one who nourishes or protects); mother (mE-tEr); saviour (SO-tEr; one who saves). Otherwise, the suffix might be related to the word for KEEP (tEreO). This, however, would make salvation (sOtEria) into safe-keeping, while *sOtErion* would become God's safe-keeping-work or operation. This thought is put forth because close students have found that Greek *sOzO* seems to mean more than to SAVE. In Old English Wiclif put "the science of health" where we now put "the knowledge of salvation." The Concordant Version Concordance (page 295) defines this word as "keep or deliver from injury or evil" It might be worthwhile to render every occurrence of this word as "make safe" or "keep safe." One needs only refer to such verses as Matt. 9:21; Mark 5:23-34; Luke 8:36; Acts 2:40; 1. Tim. 2:15, to verify this fact.

The Impress or Emblem of God, then, is a Person, God's Agent. But instead of terming Him God's exact representation, it might be better to say, exact Representative, or exact Expresser.

The word emblem is weak in that it is not personal. It is defined as a picture, type or symbol. Furthermore, the Concordant Version rendering "Emblem of His assumption" falls short in that it presupposes acquaintance with sundry explanations and articles which make clear just what this obscure and unidiomatic expression means. Idiomatic English should be self-explanatory, at a glance. If you make an assumption, you assume something to be fact or true, taking something for granted without requiring proof. We may be quite assured that God does no assuming of this kind. The kind of assumption we require to keep in mind at Heb. 1:3 is the assumption of office, or of a role. God might assume various forms or offices.

That is, He might take these upon Himself, adopt them for a purpose. We refer to "Unsearchable Riches" for October, 1916, page 28, where it is stated that God "assumes various characters." We agree. But this meaning of assume is very different from the meaning given to the same Greek word in its other four occurrences. On page 27 of this article it is stated that the expression "assumption" fits each occurrence "as a key fits a lock."

True, a good key ought to fit a lock. But occasionally a key may lock up the truth and obscure it, while failing to open the door.

I am reminded of an episode a few years ago, when I descended many stairs to some dark office vaults. In one chamber, full of old books, a clerk and clerkess were searching ancient records. After looking in and giving greetings, I gently closed the huge ancient heavy door, turning the immense key. On returning after a brief time, conscience said I had better unlock that door. The massive key, however, resolutely declined to play its part, beyond making much noise. Happily, the two inmates maintained an imperturbable sangfroid and paid no heed. Upstairs to find the octogenarian joiner, who, armed with various tools, descended to strip off the door jamb, and thus compel an entrance.

Unfortunately, the key to the meaning of the very important Greek word (hypostasis) fails to fit the lock each time. Rather, it looks as though it had closed the door. For many it has closed the door to further study. Admittedly, there has been perfect concordance. In each of the five occurrences the Greek word has been represented by one English term, "assumption."

It is explained, however, that in Heb. 1:3, "the Son of God is the Impress of His assumptions" (plural). It is also stated, in connection with 2. Cor. 9:4 and 11:17, that Paul "has assumed that they were ready and

feared lest this assumption may not be true." Now to take on an office or role is not guesswork. But to assume that something will happen, which may not after all happen, is more or less guesswork.

But there is no guesswork, or uncertainty, in faith (Heb. 11:1). Faith must be something far grander than any assumption. Faith is produced by love and obedience, on our part. On God's side it is produced by His unfailing reliability. We do not merely assume that God will perform what He has promised.

Literally, faith (Latin *fides*) is the same as Greek *pistis*, that is, persuasion. Faith ought, in a very particular way, to be the possession of us Gentiles, as the prophetic name of Japheth is "Persuasion." It will be recalled that after Noah became drunken, when he had become a soil-man and planted a vineyard, due, not to any aberration on his part, but merely to the fact that climatic changes of vast importance and effect had suddenly altered all physical life on the earth, he had occasion to bless his sons Shem and Japheth. We might read Gen. 9:27 thus: "Elohim will persuade (margin) Japheth, and he will tabernacle in the tents of Shem." If Elohim can persuade the many nations of Japheth, He can persuade all mankind. And He will.

Let us, however, examine the highly important term, *Hypostasis*. There is no doubt about the difficulty of this word. The Latin Vulgate version (about A.D. 350) used the word *substantia* (substance). The Son is the figure (*figura*) or form of, God's *substantia*. Perhaps that is the closest the Latin could approach to the Greek. Each time the Greek original was rendered into another tongue, it was like cutting a loaf of bread. Only instead of a few crumbs being lost each time, generally substantial pieces of the truth got lost. Substance, however, was the exact representation of the Greek word *hypostasis*, and both mean UNDERSTANDING, in the sense of something standing under something else. Our idiom would be, that something underlies a certain fact. This Latin version was altogether concordant in respect of this word. In all five occurrences (2. Cor. 9:4; 11:17; Heb. 1:3; 3:14; and 11:1), and always reads *substantia*.

We would entreat your patience in the study of this word. It will be well worth while. This one expression, clearly understood, is sufficient to disperse all the fog and figments fabricated by Deists, Unitarians, Trinitarians, Socinians and Josephites.

Here are some of the dictionary "meanings" given to this word, which is only found used of God in this verse in the New Testament: —Beginning, starting point; groundwork, subject matter, argument; firmness, steadiness (of soldiers in battle); resolution, purpose; subsistence, reality, real being; sediment, solid part (in liquids); support, base, foundation (of a building). The true "meaning" of the word, however, will be found in a word which will cover all these expressions. Cremer's Lexicon (N.T. Greek) gives the following: — underlayer, prop, foundation, pediment; the matter treated of; the essence of a matter, in contrast to its appearance; courage, steadfastness. He quotes Artemidorus, "Having indeed an appearance (fantasy) of wealth, yet not of *hypostasis*" (i.e. of the real thing). Dr. Bullinger's Lexicon has: —"what is set or stands under, a substructure, what really exists under or out of sight, the essence of a matter in contrast to its appearance (Hence Christ, as the Logos, is the manifestation of Deity, the means by which we recognize the glory of God, and the manifestation of the Divine Essence)."

The word is found about twenty times in the Septuagint. In Psalm 69:2 it is found in a literal sense, "I am stuck fast in deep mire, and there is no standing." That is, nothing solid underfoot. Sometimes it is used of the foundations of houses and palaces. In Psalm 39:7, where the A.V. reads "my hope is in Thee," the LXX reads *hypostasis*, which has been rendered my "ground (of hope)." This is parallel to "mine expectation." The same idea comes out in Ezek. 19:5, "her hope was lost." In Psalm 193:15, where the A.V. reads "My substance was not hid from Thee," the LXX has *hypostasis*, while the Hebrew has *otzm*, which also means substance, or substantial; used specially of bones. In verse 17, the thoughts of God unto us are "how substantial." Otherwise the word is used of material substance, upon which life is supported.

Dr. Pye Smith renders in Heb. 1:3 by "The Exact Impression of his manner of existence" and says this seems to coincide with Col. 1:15, "The Image of the Invisible God." "Christ is the complete and absolute likeness, and the intelligible representation to holy minds, of the Divine Perfections." He quotes the views of other scholars regarding *hupostasis*, as meaning a real subsistence, the nature or essence of a being. "The Divine Essence, which is the same as God Himself."

All that is substantially GOD is exactly represented in the Son.

This is a most captivating thought. Not only so, but how it simplifies our whole theology. All that is basic in God's character and being is exactly mirrored in His Son. As Rev. Wilfred H. Isaacs paraphrases, "In Him, as in a word engraved, men read. . . the basic fact of all—God's deity." The Son is the exact and visible Impress of all that is spiritually real and substantial in God. Let us use the word substance not in any material sense, but purely in a spiritual sense. All that is fundamental in God, all that is essential to His nature, is viewed in His Image.

The Hebrews had become partners of the Christ, provided they held fast the beginning of the fundamentals, or the basic beginning, confirmed, unto a finish (Heb. 3:14). It is somewhat difficult to see how they could retain the "beginning of the assumption," as the Concordant Version renders. Bloomfield shews how *hupostasis* can here well bear the sense of confidence. They were to "continue to the end of life to exercise such confidence in Christ as they had at first," as such confidence properly denotes a foundation, or support for anything. Unfortunately, we are unable to discover in the Concordant Version, or in the aforesaid article in "Unsearchable Riches," or in the 1927 volume at pages 112-118, any explanation of the rendering at Heb. 3:14, which will make it intelligible and idiomatic English. Surely it must be something much more effective than any assumption (in whatever sense we are to understand this word), which these Hebrews were exhorted to hold fast, to safeguard them from the risk of becoming hardened in heart. Isaacs here paraphrases as "a partnership which we shall enjoy if we hold firm to the end those fundamentals which are the beginning." That is, "the beginning which consists in the fundamentals." Isaacs points out that in none of the five occurrences of this important word *hupostasis* is it necessary to interpret it as descriptive of a state of mind, while in Heb. 1:3 this is impossible.

For this reason in 2. Cor. 9:4 and 11:17 he rejects the usual rendering "confidence." In the former verse he thus paraphrases, "I was anxious to avoid the shame that would overwhelm us, to say nothing of you, if Macedonian visitors were to come with me and find you, for some mysterious reason, unprepared, the shame of grievous disappointment if this fact upon which my boast was built should fail me." This fact is found stated in verse 2. Paul was well aware of the eagerness of the Corinthians to render assistance, and was even boasting or glorying over them to Macedonians, saying that Achaia had been all ready for a year past. "Paul was not really boasting. He was merely assuming the character of a braggart." No; Paul was not boasting. But neither was he assuming the character of a braggart. When one Greek term (*kauchomai*) requires to be done into English by both "boast" and "glory," we are faced with the fact that neither of these can be an exact equivalent, for if either was sufficient, the other would not have been required. Perhaps the word means to exult, minus any idea of bragging. It may not go so far as jubilate, although this comes very near the sense.

In other words, Paul was perfectly entitled to exult in the eagerness and provision of the Corinthians. He was no more putting on an attitude of glorying than we would, did we exult in the kindly action of any Christian brother or ecclesia. This Greek word comes from a root which means to "laugh" (*kagchanO*) related to Latin *cachinnation*, loud laughter.

It may be noted that the Vatican MS and the Sinaitic (*prima manu*) omit the word boasting or glorying.

In 2. Cor. 11:17, it is not Paul who does the assuming, but his opponents. There is no mere "assumption of boasting," but rather his claims were grounded upon a solid basis of fact. His exultation had its *hupostasis*—something solid which underlay it. The fact that he had these solid grounds for exultation gave him confidence.

This brings us to the last remaining occurrence of the term we are studying, in Heb. 11:1. Here are the renderings of some versions:

**Authorized:** Now faith is the substance (or, ground, confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**Revised:** Now faith is the assurance (or, the giving substance to) of (things) hoped for, the proving (or, test) of things not seen.

**Rotherham:** But faith is, of things hoped for, a confidence; of facts, a conviction, when they are not seen.

**Darby:** Now faith is (the) substantiating (or, assurance, firm, conviction) of things hoped for, (the) conviction of things not seen.

**Cunnington:** Now faith is an assurance (or, title deeds) of things hoped for, conviction as to objects not seen.

**Weymouth:** Now faith is a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things, which we do not see.

**Bishop Wand:** Now faith is a conviction of the fulfillment of our hopes, and a continual reliance upon the unseen worlds.

Other renderings of *hupostasis* are: 20th Century; the realization; Goodspeed, Panin, assurance; Fenton, the standing-ground; MacKnight, the firm persuasion of the reality; Diaglott, a Basis; Lutterworth: the sure confidence; Charles Thomson: a confident expectation; Bloomfield, firm persuasion; Wakefield, a foundation; Scarlett, Bowes, firm confidence; Penn, the ground-work.

Here is Way's paraphrase: Faith is that attitude of mind which gives form and substance to things that are as yet but objects of hope, that which satisfies us of the reality of things as yet beyond our ken. Isaacs paraphrases thus: Our belief in God is also the firm basis upon which is founded our happy anticipation of good things to come, convincing us, as by evidence that cannot be gainsaid, of the reality of things that are out of sight. Isaacs condemns such a rendering as "Faith is the confident expectation that that which we desire will come to pass" as a "rather milk-and-water platitude, whether we regard it as a definition of faith, or as a statement of one of its functions."

In his Notes on the passage he suggests *hupostasis* should take the "things expected" (*elpizomenon*), distinguished from the "things or matters not being observed" by the absence of "matters" (*pragmaton*), as meaning, not the objective things hoped for, but the subjective hopes entertained, as Way does.

This would enable us, he states, by rendering *hupostasis* literally, to state usefully a psychological fact—that the believer's faith forms the foundation of certain happy conditions, one of which is the expectation of good things to come.

As Dr. Irons (Bampton Lectures, 1870), who connects Heb. 11:1 with the foregoing verse, says, "faith is that which sustains our hopes." Let us, however, gain a new understanding of Ch. 10:39, by tendering, somewhat literally, thus: Yet we are not of a shrinking-back into lostness, (apOleian), but of faith, unto winning of soul. Note the contrast: losing or winning. Losing what? Why, of course, soul. We are not among those who shrink back into a losing of soul, but of faith, so that we shall win our soul.

The soul may be lost or saved (Matt. 16:25; Mark 8:35-36; Luke 9:24). It may be found or lost (Matt. 10:39). In times of terror, it may require to be acquired. "In your endurance shall you be acquiring your souls" (Luke 21:19). That is much the same as the procuring or winning of soul spoken of in Heb. 10:39.

What does all this mean? That faith is that which will sustain the soul, like a firm foundation, all through life. To win or acquire the soul infers a process. It seems to infer a process of keeping serene or "cool." Soul (psuchE) is derived from a Greek word meaning cool or cold (psuchos), but we can hardly explain the connection.

That which these Hebrews specially needed was to preserve their equilibrium, to "keep cool," to win or procure or acquire their soul, when things seemed to be going all wrong. Only faith could accomplish that. When they felt like sinking in deep mire, faith was the sure foundation upon which they could stand and triumph. And it is thus also with ourselves.

We admit readily that we cannot furnish a single concordant word which will fit each of the five occurrences of *hupostasis*. But we have sought to submit the real concordant idea in each case.

As the word "is" in Heb. 11:1 is emphatic, we might paraphrase thus: "Now faith actually is, of things being expected, their substantial reality." Or better, we might say that faith means that.

Now a conviction is something far stronger than any assumption. Some versions instead of conviction read convincing testimony, convincing evidence, demonstration, a proving or proof, certainty.

If we expect certain events to happen, because God has said they will happen, how can faith be only an assumption that they will come to pass? The conviction regarding matters not seen must surely be based upon a solid foundation, a certainty. Is an assumption the same as a certainty? If faith springs from a record (or tidings), and the record is through a divine declaration (Rom. 10:17), where does the assumption come in?

With these remarks we return to Hebrews 1:3. Beyond any question this verse is one of the grandest in all Scripture. Not only so, but like every other divine statement, it is expressed in the simplest of terms. It was meant to be understood, but alas, how few have grasped its import. Our earnest desire is that all our readers may come into a deeper realization of God-in-Christ through this divine revelation. How has it been possible for all sorts of wrong doctrines to flourish when the unknown writer of the Hebrews epistle makes it so crystal clear that the Son is a radiant shining-forth of the glory, and an exact representation of all that makes up God, all that is substantially God, all that the very existence of God really means? How, in the face of such a statement, can men affront Deity by claiming that His Son is only human?

Perhaps, however, you are, or have been, in the same position as the disciples were in chapter 14 of John. Not just quite clear as to who the Lord was, and perhaps not in too much of a hurry to reveal your ignorance. It will be found that what the Lord told the disciples fits in exactly with all other statements in the Scriptures. Forty years of intense examination of the Scriptures in the original tongues have proven to the writer, how true it is that the Scriptures cannot be broken, how they all agree and dovetail into each other.

As a youth at school I had to learn woodwork. But alas, it was extremely hard work to get mortises and tenons to fit together. Nothing seemed to dovetail exactly. It was very much easier to pick up Greek, and very much more profitable.

There is no doubt that for a time the disciples were puzzled regarding the Lord. They could not but believe the mighty works which He wrought, which proved that He was from God. They had plenty of opportunity to behold His spotless character and life. But His connection with the Father was a mystery to them. And so it is still today with most believers.

He had told them He was going away and making ready a place for them, but would come again and take them beside Himself.

"And just where I am going away, you are aware of the way" (John 14:4). Thomas is the one who plucks up courage to enquire about the way. The Lord tells him He is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, and no one is coming to the Father except through Him. Thomas had expressed his total ignorance by saying, not "we are not aware just whither (or just where; hopou) You are going away," but merely "whither." "If you, had got to know Me," says the Lord, "My Father also in that case you had got to know. And henceforth you are getting to know Him, and you have been seeing Him."

Philip is evidently perplexed and staggered, and asks, "Lord, shew us the Father." Indicate to us the Father. The Lord replies, "So much time with you I am, and thou hast not got to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has been seeing the Father. How art thou saying, Shew us the Father? Art thou not believing that I (am) in the Father, and the Father in Me is (estin)? The declarations which I am talking to you, from Myself I am not talking. Now the Father in Me remaining, is doing His works." This rendering is intended to be literal, like the Greek, not idiomatic English. We would call special attention to verse 10, and the word "is," which is absent in the first clause. This would seem to indicate that the Lord was actually in the Father, yet the Father in a sense was in Him.

The disciples, however, do not yet seem to have been enlightened, and it is only in Ch. 16 at verses 27 and 28 that the mystery vanishes. "You have believed that I came out from-beside (para) God. I came out from-beside the Father, and have, come into the world. Further, I am leaving the world, and am going toward the Father."

It was just at this point that the difficulties of the disciples disappeared decisively. "Lo, now in boldness Thou art talking, and not a single proverb Thou art speaking. Now we are aware that Thou art aware of all things, and no need Thou hast that anyone may be asking Thee. In this we are believing that from God Thou camest out."

Now they knew just where their Lord and their Leader had come from. Not only from-beside (para) God, but from, away from God (apo).

Yet possibly the mass of believers now are very much in the dark as to who Christ really is, and what is His connection with God.

We therefore propose to give a few hints or suggestions which may help to clear up difficulties, which have mainly been caused by Trinitarian doctrines.

In Deut. 4:39 Moses makes it clear to Israel that Jehovah is the God in heaven above and on the earth beneath, adding "There is none further" (ain oud). After the giving of the Law, it is made clear (Ch. 6:4) that "Jehovah our God (is) Jehovah one." This ought to have been enough to fence out completely any



Trinitarian doctrine. It may be that the final doom of this doctrine is referred to in Zech. 14:9. In this chapter we learn that in the glorious day when Israel's God returns to earth, Jehovah's feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. "And Jehovah comes to be for King over all the earth; in that day it is coming to be Jehovah is One, and His name one." There will no longer be any doubt as to who Jehovah is. His coming is associated with such extraordinary physical convulsions, in the Land, and elsewhere (verses 4 to 10), that none will harbor any doubts. But God will prove that though many have come in His name, there is only one Jehovah, and that He is no Trinity. His name will be one. That does not mean that He will not have other names, because He has others. It means that He who bears that august name Jehovah is one Person, and only one.

Let it be our object now to realize that God is one. One textual critic appears to see something out of place in the twice repeated word "one" in this verse. Perhaps he has a lingering leaning towards a more trinitarian idea. So, he suggests instead of the word *achd* (one), the word for "awful" (*fchd*). But there is no need to make any change. It is quite true that the earth will have a wholesome awe in that day for Jehovah's name. It is a grand thing to possess a salutary awe of God. Present-day tendencies to make God to be the Author of moral delinquencies in His people and in all men are inclined to destroy that holy awe. Little wonder that those who teach this blasphemous fallacy become altogether out of touch with God in their lives.

All the difficulties respecting the doctrine of God have been due to the tendency to personalize both the Father and the Son. That is, to keep them both apart, as though they had separate personalities. It must be obvious that if God is One, He is one Person, not two or three. No doubt this tendency would be partly due to the gradual shift in the meaning of the Latin theological term, *persona* (a mask). As one has very well put it, in the Scriptures "no footstep has been seen of a divided Deity." The same operations are ascribed indiscriminately to Father, Son and Spirit. There is a beautiful indifference of title in connection with the divine acts. God creates (Gen. 1:1), The Son creates (Heb. 1:10). God's Spirit goes forth and creates (Psalm 104:30). The Lord was one Paraclete or Aider (that is, one who can be called in or called alongside; an Advocate), but promised another, who is the Spirit (John 14:16-18). Christ cast out the demons in God's Spirit (Matt. 12:28); in God's finger (Luke 11:20); while Jesus wrought powers and miracles (Acts 2:22). Our God and Father chose us in Christ before world-establishment (Eph. 1:4). Christ chose the disciples (John 15:16). In Acts 1:24 the chooser is simply Lord (i.e. Jehovah), Heart-knower.

The Trinitarian will tell us that the Second Person in the Trinity is incarnate in Christ. Paul, however, states (Col. 2:9) that in Christ "is dwelling all the fullness of the Deity bodily." Not only so, but all that divine fullness was well pleased, well satisfied, to dwell in Him (Col. 1:19). Fullness or complement means all that which makes anyone or anything complete. When we talk of a ship's complement, we mean the total personnel necessary for thoroughly manning the ship. In Christ there dwells a completeness of all God's characteristics and attributes, yet in bodily form. It was not one-third part of God that became incarnate. The whole Being and Person of God was incarnate. It is all God who is well pleased, well satisfied, through Christ to reconcile all unto Him.

Some have sneered at the idea of God's-Fullness-in-Christ dying on earth while His Father in heaven lived, as though the dying of Christ must leave the throne of heaven empty. No doubt Professor Goldwin Smith of the United States of America had somewhat similar feelings when he scoffed at the crude idea of the Eternal Being becoming the guest of a Hebrew sheikh (Gen. 18). Is God so limited that, as one has very well put it, He "cannot be enshrined in a lily without leaving the throne of heaven empty?"

Another objector says we must not talk of the incarnation of Christ, or of His "Deity." And that in spite of the very clear statement that the entire fullness of Deity makes its home in Him! We must be in error in

saying that the Logos or Word was Christ! At least, John states most clearly that the Word "becomes flesh." And of what is Paul writing to Timothy in his former epistle, Ch. 3:16 regarding the great secret of piety or devoutness? That secret is something to be learned through initiation by believers. It is most assuredly not a secret which is heralded among Gentiles. Christ and His salvation have been heralded among Gentiles, but no one yet has heralded God's secrets to them. I once knew an old worthy who said, when asked, regarding his subject matter at a talk in a Salvation Army meeting, that he would commence right away with the Secret of Eph. 3:3-6. But alas, God's secrets are for His broken and bruised saints only, not for the world.

"And avowedly, great is the secret of devoutness:—**HE WHO** is manifested in flesh, justified in spirit, viewed by messengers, heralded among Gentiles, believed in world-society, taken up in glory." He appeared **IN FLESH** (en sarki). That is incarnation. We do not require to bother ourselves by inverting the sense to mean that the flesh manifested Him. To appear or be manifested is not the same as to reveal. It is true that Christ's flesh veiled His divinity. Yet historically, He did appear in flesh. The true secret of proper conduct can only be found in a Person. God must be the source. All the statements in this supposed verse from an ancient hymn refer to Christ. It would be quite absurd to talk of a divine secret being taken up in glory.

We would present the following view of God as a help to understanding what must be more or less of a mystery to many. God is one Person. He is incarnate in Christ. On the side of God, the Father and the Son are One. But on the side of man, the Son stands off from the Father. The Son is the Visible of the Invisible. The Invisible is the Father. The Visible Son and the Invisible Father are One God. Christ is God in the plenitude of His Being. Yet He did not deem it to be an act of plundering, to be equal, in certain respects (isa, plural) with God (Phil. 2:6). He was equal in some respects, but in others He was not equal. It is strange that no Version so far appears to have indicated that this little Greek adjective is here plural, as it is at Luke 6:34; Rev. 21:16. At John 5:18 the singular form is found (ison), where the Jews claimed that the Lord was "making Himself equal to God."

In 1. Cor. 8:4 Paul makes it very clear that "no one is God except One." In heaven and on earth there may be gods many and lords many, nevertheless to us—One God:—(1) the Father, out of whom the all things, and we for Him; and (2) one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom the all things, and we through Him. God without Christ, must be incomplete. Christ without God, must be incomplete. God and Christ are complementary. Father and Son are complementary. The Son as a Radiance, or an irradiation from the divine glory (Heb. 1:3) does not mean that any other person could be that, or that He thereby existed apart from or independent of the glory. In verse 8 this Son is very distinctly and deliberately termed God. Of this Radiance it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon." Perhaps with Codex Vaticanus, we should omit the last three words. No one has yet explained what is "the eon of the eon." Literally the Greek reads, "Thy throne, (Thou) who (art) God, is for the eon." Greek does not possess two vocative cases, and there is no vocative here. Arthur S. Way's fine paraphrase reads, "The throne of Thee, who are God."

One more verse must be considered before we pass on to our next chapter. Acts 20:28 is apt to cause some confusion. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." How can we speak of the blood of God, Who is spirit? The matter is partly cleared up by the 1944 revision of the Concordant Version, which comes into line with the Emphatic Diaglott, Bowes (1870), Darby (1871), and Cunningham, which read "the blood of (His) own." Just one hundred years ago, Hein fetter had "by means of the blood that is his own." Generally, the word "own" (idios) is placed before its noun.

Thus, Heb. 9:12, "yet through (His) own blood." Heb. 13:12, "through (His) own blood." In these cases it is Christ's blood that is referred to. But in Acts 20:28, the construction is different and unusual, "through

the blood of the own." In order to make matters quite clear we would suggest "the ecclesia of God, which He procures (for Himself; Middle) through the blood of (His) own (One)." That is, through His Son's blood.

We must now devote some attention to the Word or Logos of John 1, in order to discover, if we can, the background to this peculiar expression.

Two important verses, from 2. Samuel and 1. Chron., must also be cited as witnesses, to shew what King David understood regarding the Coming One. These verses have for long lain in obscurity, just like Job 14:12-15, and it is time they were cleared up.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 4

### The Logos or Word

There is something arresting, something unexpected, something unusual, about the first chapter of John. We are suddenly introduced to a very unfamiliar subject. Who, or what, is the "Word"? Probably very few readers could give a perspicacious and satisfactory answer. As to the personality of this Word, there is no possible dubiety as we are clearly informed that "the Word becomes flesh, and tabernacles among us" (v. 14). He was God's Son.

John is the only writer who terms the Lord the Word, in this chapter and in Rev. 19:13. Elsewhere he refers to Him as the Christ, the Son, the Son of God, or the Son of Man. It will therefore be evident that subsequent to the first chapter, the conception of the Son of God as the Words recedes, and is no longer mentioned in the remainder of John's Gospel.

It will be our object, then, to discover, if we can, what was in John's mind when he penned the first fourteen verses of his Gospel.

The answer can hardly be found in other Scriptures, where the Greek word *logos* is merely used with its common meaning, as a spoken or written word. Yet to a certain extent, the usage of the Hebrew language will assist us. There, the word for "word" is *dabar*, which occurs perhaps over thirteen hundred times. In the A. V. it is rendered by 'word' 770 times, but it must be noted that in 215 cases it becomes "thing," while 52 times it is "act," and 63 times "matter," and 20 times "commandment." Is there any single English term which will embrace all these ideas?

To arrive at a satisfactory doctrine concerning God, we must use extreme verbal accuracy. Every false idea of God springs from careless phraseology. The Creeds are full of inexact expressions, largely due to the shift of meaning caused by translation out of Greek into Latin, or from Latin into English. And let us not forget that each one of us still carries about with him his own beliefs or Creed, whether he is aware of this or not.

Now, in the Hebrew language, just as a name was identified with the person who bore it, so that he was supposed to represent its characteristics, a word was bound up with that which was denoted by it. With the Old Testament writers, therefore, a word seemed to possess almost a concrete existence. The word was closely associated with the action or reality which followed its utterance. Words uttered by God were regarded as being endowed with dynamic power, as though they were *fiats*, (i. e. let it be done). Thus, "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made" (Psalm 33:6); "He sent His word and healed them" (Psalm 107:20); "So shall My word be . . . it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please" (Isa. 55:11). In Gen. 1 God's words are shown to possess dynamic power.

If, then, *dabar* signifies both the word and its resulting action, let us examine another form of this trilateral, *deber*, which means pestilence or plague. Where the divine regulations regarding the clean

(tabor) and the contaminated or unclean (tame) were not observed, God spoke by means of physical or moral malady, which expressed itself in plague.

The Lord attached great importance to the words which men use (Matt. 5:22; 12:36, 37). Immense forces may be set loose by means of words. One's words imply his actions. The words of the Lord will not pass away; they will continue to act until fulfilled. To receive His words means not only to accept them, but to enter into them and do them.

The rest of the acts of Josiah, and his kindnesses, and his deeds, first and last, are referred to at 2 Chron. 35:26, 27:1 where the Hebrew says "words." Rotherham reads "story," that is, words which describe acts.

Thus, it became very natural for the Israelites, when reading statements such as "He sent His word and healed them," and reading about the glorious theophanies of olden times, to understand that He who had appeared at times to them was God's Word, His Executive. Many actions, therefore, came to be attributed not to Jehovah, but to His Word. In their Targums (paraphrases of explanations) the Jews altered the name Jehovah more than two hundred times to "Word of Jah." These were in the Chaldee language, and the word used was *Meymra* (from amar, to say). To this *Meymra* or Word of Jah the Rabbis ascribed the creation of the earth. It was he who appeared to Abraham and to Moses, talking face to face with them. The Jerusalem Targum thus paraphrases Exodus 6:3, "And Jah appeared in His Word to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, in the God of heaven; and the name of the Word of Jah I do not make known to them." In fact, it became a Chaldee idiom to use this term *Meymra* as a substitute for an emphatic pronoun. In part, this was compensation for the disappearance of the name Jehovah, which the Targumists would not pronounce or write. Yet as the illustrious Walton writes, "The passages are innumerable in which actions and properties are attributed to the Word of God, as a distinct person." The Word, therefore, among the Jews came to signify an Agent of God.

It is said that Plato, the famous Greek philosopher (born 427 B. C.) invented some sort of trinity. At any rate, some of his ideas were very similar to those of the Hebrew Targumists. Of the creation of the world, he says God created through his Word (or Logos), and this invisible Word was the true image of God.

Whereas the Epicureans maintained that all things came into being by chance and without design, the Stoics and Platonists declared that everything was made by the *Logos*, that is, the divine reason or divine wisdom.

While Plato was making known his philosophy in Athens, the Hebrew Rabbis were writing Targums on their Scriptures. Thus when the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was made into Greek, two or three hundred years before the Lord came, the Jews of Alexandria in Egypt must have been well acquainted with the general doctrine of the Logos or Word.

It has been claimed that the Greek language is the real union of the Japhetic and Semitic modes of thought, and hence arose its peculiar fitness to be the vehicle of a revelation conveyed to Japhetic nations by Hebrew missionaries. Undoubtedly the Most High made no mistake in choosing Greek as the language of inspiration for the post-crucifixion Scriptures.

About four hundred years after Plato, appeared a very gifted and clever Alexandrian Jew, Philo Judaeus (born about B.C. 20), in whose writings the interchange of Hebrew and Hellenic thought reached its greatest development. By religion a devout upholder of Moses and the Prophets, but in intellectual training a Greek, his endeavor was to harmonize the interpretation of the Hebrew writings with his philosophic views. Each generation has its own modes and schools of thought (all more or less defective),

and Philo's aim seems to have been to cast the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures into Platonic molds. But as one might expect, in this he was not very successful.

Without some acquaintance with Philo's doctrines it is impossible for us to understand John's objective in his first chapter. Let us therefore examine some of his ideas. Due to his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, sometimes he sails wonderfully close to the truth. On the other hand, human speculation and philosophy often lead him far astray. His opinions are set forth at some length in one of the finest works on the subject, "The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah," by Dr. John Pye Smith, of Sheffield (born 1774). Unfortunately, this splendid compendium of messianology is now very difficult to obtain, like many other old and most useful works, and many of its facts are virtually lost so far as present-day believers are concerned.

Unfortunately, Philo is often very vague and confused. He did not seem to know his own mind. Sometimes his Logos or Word seems to be a Person; sometimes only an idea. The former thought was the Hebrew way of thinking; the latter was the Greek. It is very hard to find out exactly what was in his mind. As Liddon well says, Philo 'constantly abandons himself to the currents of Greek thought around him, and then he endeavors to set himself right with the Creed of Sinai, by throwing his Greek ideas into Jewish forms.' Evidently he wavers between the idea that God was One whom no man could see and continue alive, and a God who was stated in the Scriptures to have appeared in very truth in human form to some of the ancients and to Israelites. Probably he recognized that in later Hebrew history Jehovah became more and more a Deity who hid Himself from His people. At any rate, there is no thought which he reiterates so often as his view that this Deity is incomprehensible and invisible. To substantiate this idea he is ever ready to pervert the meaning of Scripture. He imagined that the true nature of God was just as unintelligible to Moses and the Prophets as it was to himself. Like many people today, he would one thousand times sooner renounce the meaning of the Hebrew text, than admit any visible appearance of Elohim in the early chapters of Genesis.

We must bear in mind that in Philo's day, the allegorical method was as natural and conventional as in our day is the critical or the devotional. Just as some today must allegorize or figurize Daniel and Revelation, so in the first century the art of allegorizing was everywhere rampant. It was still rampant later, in the time of Origen. It was an age of ideas, not of facts and of science. Philo is as devoid of the historical sense as an Indian philosopher. One clear proof of his loose methods of thinking lies in the fact that he constantly forgets what he has written only a page previously.

As one has well said, "The Jew and the Greek met together in Alexandria, and the strangest eclectic philosophy that the world has ever seen, was the result of their union. It was Judaism and Platonism at once; the belief in a personal God assimilated to the doctrine of ideas."

Here we discover a missing link, which will explain much of the terminology encountered in the writings of John and Paul and the writer of the Hebrews Epistle. Once we see the background of these writings, their objective stands out sharp and clear.

That Philo comes very near the truth in some respects cannot be denied. Acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures had taught him much. But he had failed to discover that Secret of God, which is revealed in Christ, without which all men must walk in the dark.

Is it not extraordinary that Philo should have considered his Word to be a Mediator, a Chief Priest, an Intercessor, a Firstborn? He even calls him the Paraclete, which means, one who can be called alongside, to render help or give strength and comfort.

His Word is even termed "the second God," but it may be that he uses this word (deuteros) as signifying duplicate or repeated, rather than a numerical second.

Man had so completely removed and bowed God out of the world that there seemed to be no God. In any case, what could a God have to do with a world or with evil? Somehow or other, God must be altogether separated from the world. Any visible appearance of God in Philo's time would have been very strange and discordant, very unconventional and disturbing, just as it would be in our day. It has been stated that in the Greek Septuagint, in eight out of twelve passages which describe theophanies, the text has been altered by the translators, so as to obscure the fact of a theophany.

Philo's Logos or Word was the answer to the seeming phenomenon of a lost God.

In part he had accepted the Stoic doctrine of the Logos or Divine reason, which was imminent in all things. He arrived at the theory that within the being of God there was a second Divine principle, which was God's Agent in the creation and government of the world. As ineffably holy, whose eyes are too clean to see evil, and who is not able to look on oppression (Hab. 1:13), God could not Himself be in any direct relation to the world, and had to act through an intermediary, who was the Logos.

Strange to say, unless Philo intends to represent his Logos as the coming Messiah, he does not mention the Messiah anywhere in his writings. He *could* not have been looking for the Messiah, because the Jews were awaiting a human deliverer only.

Now Philo ascribes to the Logos a vast range of activities. He is next to the Self-existent. He presides over all things. He is superior to the whole universe. He is the eldest of all objects that the mind can perceive.

He writes of God placing over the heavenly bodies "His own upright Word, His firstborn Son." Though no one may as yet be deemed worthy to be styled a son of God, let men be diligent to copy the excellencies of "His first-begotten Word, the eldest angel, who exists as a many-titled archangel." "For indeed, he is styled the Beginning, and God's Name, and Word, and the Man by way of image."

Again, he says, "Now God's shadow is His Word, which he uses as an instrument in making human society." In one place he writes of "God, the fountain of the eldest Word." Again, "This eldest Word of the Existing One clothes himself with the world as with a garment, for this Word of the Existing One is the bond of the universe, which contains and clasps together all its component parts."

One of Philo's arguments is that nothing mortal could be imaged after Him who is the Highest and Father of the whole, but only after "the second God, who is that One's Word." He says this "unperceived Word of God eonian is the very firm support of the universe." The Father who begets him is making him the unbreakable bond of all things. This "archangel and eldest Word" occupies the position of a mediator between the creature and the Creator, being at once "the suppliant on behalf of the disquieted mortal to the incorruptible one, and the ambassador of the Governor to His subjects." He is neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man.

Philo's God must have been like the God of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who encountered Paul at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17). Paul astounded these scholars by telling them that God all along was existing not far from each one of us. But the God of Philo was so far distant from the world of mankind that He could not come into touch with them. So Philo interposes a succession of "Powers" (dunameis) between God and His creation, so that the impassable gulf between a world of light and purity, happiness and immortality, and a world of darkness and sin, misery and death, may be bridged.

Philosophers had invented a succession of emanations from the Divine essence, to account for a purely spiritual Being having originated a material world full of imperfections. In this way they explained the origin of evil, and the destructive powers of nature.

The Gnostics reckoned Christ to be one of the higher intelligences who came to teach men how to find the way back to the bosom of the Pleroma or Fulness. They also taught a corruption of the primitive truth regarding the eons, making these to be angels which proceeded out from God at intervals of time. Cerinthus claimed that Christ was one of the glorious eons.

If Philo and his school had been very vague and confused regarding their Logos, John is exactly the opposite. Philo wrote reams about his Logos and got nowhere. John writes a few brief verses and tells us all we need to know. Like the other writers of the New Testament, he does not waste one word. All their statements are examples of precision and exactitude. They are very sure of their ground. And so are we. They do not state who their opponents are. These may have been many. Nor do they quote their theories. There is no baffling ambiguity or long-winded verbosity. A few terse and vigorous verses, that is all. Facts for faith to grasp must ever be set forth in the simplest of terms. God's truth is only for the simple and the unsophisticated. That is one of the chief glories of all the Divine writings.

Here let it be clearly understood that the inspired writers are in no wise indebted to Philo or the Gnostics or the Stoics, from whom they copy nothing. Whenever John has dealt with the widely spread doctrine concerning the Logos, he drops the subject.

John does not encourage us in the view that Christ, as the pre-existent Word of John 1:1 was so non-existent that David's pen had to speak for him. The expression "in beginning" does not tell us when that beginning was, but it evidently goes backward into the past as far as mankind can imagine. This must have been before Creation, according to verse 3.

In that beginning the Word WAS, which cannot mean anything else than that He existed. And He existed face to face with God. At 1 John 1:2 Farrar renders by "face to face with the Father," and such a rendering for the Greek word *pros* is quite legitimate. Alford suggests the French expression *chez* as a good equivalent, as though the Word was "at home with God." Certainly, the references he gives support this rendering of *pros*, which strictly cannot be rendered by 'with.' (See Matt. 13:56; 26:55; Mark 6:3; 9:19; Luke 9:41; 1 Cor. 16:6,7; Gal. 1:18; 4:18).

While living in the city of London some time ago, I had to pass every evening a church which displayed a placard which read as follows: "Unitarianism is Christianity in its simplest, profoundest, and most common-sense form."

Unitarianism has solved nothing and satisfied nobody. Instead of simplifying the truth, it has made the Scriptures very difficult to many souls, and closed them to faith. Unitarianism has no God to proclaim, because it has not the Christ of reality and fact; it lives entirely upon *ideas*, as Philo did.

We are not captivated by the notion that the expression "And God was the Word" refers specially to the God seen in ancient times. The whole of John's first verse ought logically to have reference to the beginning mentioned. What John makes clear is that the Word was not the result of a long concatenation of Powers or Emanations or Eons evolved from God, but was Himself, in a sense, God, and was at home with God.

If John had intended us to understand that the God seen in Old Testament times was the Logos, he would surely have stated this logically and clearly. The fact is true, but John is writing here about the Logos as



He was "in beginning." What John does tell us is that the Word was no less than GOD; the Word was no angel, or eldest angel. Some of the Jews maintained that Christ was the highest of the eons. The writer to the Hebrews curtly destroys such silly ideas by stating that the eons were made through the Son (Ch. 1:2). He then goes on to shew how much the messengers are inferior to the Son, and how all of them had to worship God's Firstborn.

Surely there is but One of Whom it may be said that He was "at home with God," that He couldn't go "into (eis) the bosom of the Father," and Who is "God only begotten" (John 1:18).

Could any statement in Scripture be more explicit than Heb. 1:8, which is, literally, "The throne of Thee, (Thou) who (art) God—for the eon"? In verse 10 the same Divine One is shewn to be the founder of the earth and the heavens. Paul tells us in Col. 1 that in the Son were created all things in heaven and on earth, which are also through Him and for Him. John states very clearly and bluntly that "everything through Him (the Word) came into being" (ch. 1:3).

When Philo stated that the Creation came into being through God's "eldest angel" or Word, he most certainly did not mean that it was created *in view of a future Prince*, who was still to come. Philo's Logos performed the "dirty work" of creation so as to keep the hands of God unsullied by coming into contact with evil and matter.

Some have sought to "prove," when it suited them, that the Greek preposition DIA, when followed by a genitive case, may mean "on account of," or "because of," as it does signify when followed by an accusative case. In the former case it must mean, and always means, "through," or "by means of." The Emphatic Diaglott deliberately corrupts the sense at Heb. 1:2 by reading "*on account of* whom also he constituted the Ages." Because everything was created *for* the Son, some have carelessly assumed that the Son was only the pattern of Creation, not the Agent and Executive who carried it through.

Among the evil things which, to the Gnostic mind, God could not come into contact with, being Spirit, was gross material flesh. To the Gnostic it was sheer heresy that a Divine One had appeared of old on earth in an assumed body of flesh and blood. But John does not trouble to argue the point. "The Word becomes *flesh*," evidently permanently, and this fleshly One can possess a vast glory, and the fulness of grace and truth. Peace is made through His *blood*, and reconciliation is in His *body of flesh* (Col. 1:20,21).

So far was God from being unspeakably distant from mankind, or unconnected with physical matter, that He sends *His own Son* to mankind in likeness of sin's flesh, as One coming to be in humanity's likeness, or outwardly resembling humanity (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7).

It has been shewn that even Philo's Word had very close relationships with God. Philo evidently looks on him as Divine, and says he was begotten of the Father. Now John, who gently corrects a few misconceptions in Philo, goes further than Philo, shewing that the Word was even closer to the Father than Philo taught.

But when we maintain that John terms the Word "God," someone brings forward an objection from 1. Cor. 8:6. It is claimed that here we have two distinct "Persons." The argument is, that One of these two is God, while the other is something else. Sometimes this verse is understood as some kind of definition of the Deity, although the chapter is concerning idols and idol sacrifices.

"Nevertheless, to us—one God, the Father, out of whom the all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom the all things, and we through Him."

Shallow reasoning will say, that because the latter "Person" is only called "Lord," therefore He cannot be God. But Lt. Col. Turton pointed out in his very methodical and useful book, "The Truth of Christianity," that if this distinction were pressed, it would imply that the Father was not Lord, which surely Paul did not mean, and no one would assert.

Philo, however, claimed for his Word one office which the Scriptures endorse. He writes that the Logos was given the preeminent gift of standing as a Mediator as though on the boundary lines between the creature and his Maker, to determine matters between the two parties. "I have been standing between the Lord and you, being neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten as you, but in the middle of the extremes being a pledge for both."

"For there is one God," says Paul (1 Tim. 2:5), "and one Mediator of God and human beings, a human being, Christ Jesus." How is He a Mediator (mesitEs)? Because He is suited to negotiate between God and man, and can act on both sides. What does this Greek word mean? It is explained as a "middle being" "one who is in the middle," "a go-between." In Modern Greek it has also come to mean a "broker". Now a broker is a middle-man merely.

Standing between God and man there is a middle-being, one who necessarily must partake of both God and man. Can this be the Unitarian christ? By no means. The unitarian christ is far too insignificant to fulfill this glorious office. Not only insignificant, but grossly impertinent. If his respect for the Father was such that he could say in public, "I and the Father are one," then assuredly his manners rule him out completely as an aspirant for the office of Messiah. He is a figment of the imagination, whom not even the Unitarians properly respect. Only one who was Divine could have uttered such a remark, without being guilty of a glaring breach of etiquette and manners.

Nor could it ever be said of the Unitarian Christ that he: was "Jesus Christ—yesterday and today the same, and for the eons" (Heb. 13:8). That is surely the language of God, not of men. If these eons lie in the future, the evident implication is that the "yesterday" speaks of past eons. If the Lord Jesus Christ had no "pre-existence" in any form in ancient times, in what sense was He "the same" in the past yesterday as He is in the present, and will be in the future? "For a thousand years in Thine eyes are as a day of yesterday that is passing" (Psalm 90:4). Compare also 2 Peter 3:8. Truly if the New Testament glitters with the appellation "Father," it also glitters with proofs that Jesus Christ was Divine. To close our chapter, we present one more.

H. G. Meecham in his excellent book, "Light from Ancient Letters" (1923), dealing with ancient Greek Papyri, shows that the expression "Son of God" was ascribed regularly to the Caesars. This explains why the centurion and those with him at the crucifixion exclaimed "Truly, *God's Son* was this!" They were witnessing the death of One far mightier than any Caesar. In the first century, also, Meecham points out the title *Kurios* (Lord) was quickly taking its place as the designation of the deified Emperor. Paul, however, invested the term with a deeper and more spiritual meaning, while abhorring its application to earthly emperors. This will explain Phil. 2:11, "acclaiming that Jesus Christ is LORD. . ." With the New Testament writers there could be only one Lord. See Jude 4, "disowning our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." To the saints it was anathema to ascribe this title to the deified Roman rulers. Far from the use of the word "Lord" in 1 Cor. 8:6 demonstrating that Jesus Christ could not be God, because the Father is called God, it is one of the finest proofs that, in the language of the times, the Lord Jesus *was* God. Cobern, also, in his "New Archaeological Discoveries," shows that the application of the word *Kurios* to Jesus Christ seems to have been a distinct ascription of deity to Him, "since the title *Kurios* could be used only after the Caesar had been acknowledged as God."

Let us add that this word *Kurios* regularly stands in the Septuagint as the equivalent of the Name Jehovah, while in the New Testament, in quotations from the Old Testament it always stands for Jehovah.

And what other man in all the universe ever revealed Jehovah, or displayed His characteristics as being pre-eminently the God who manifests Himself?

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 5

### The Great Name Jehovah

In order to help us arrive at the true import of the Name Jehovah, it will be useful to examine first of all a verse which has caused a great amount of discussion for centuries. Many commentators have pronounced Exodus 6:3 as very difficult of explanation. Others have been very ready to seize on this verse as manifesting a distinct contradiction in Scripture. "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by (the name of) God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

It is submitted that the Hebrew text, with its beautiful simplicity, is well able to elucidate itself, and that there is no real difficulty.

In his Hebrew Bible (Pontefract, 1810), Boothroyd quotes the opinions of various scholars that the latter part of the, verse should be read as a question,— "and by my name Jehovah, was I not known unto them?" We have found it wiser, however, never to take a statement in the Scriptures in the form of a question unless there is some indication in the original text to support this exegesis. Moreover, such an interpretation makes the statement appear somewhat fatuous and undignified.

Quite recently, another suggestion, involving a radical alteration in the Hebrew text, was set forth in the November 1945, issue of "Unsearchable Riches." It was suggested that in place of *nudothi* (I am known; I was known) we ought to substitute *nurothi*, to which is given the meaning "I was evil." It is quite true that in the *current* Hebrew script the letter, R is fairly similar to the letter D. But unfortunately for the theory, there is no manuscript authority for the proposed change. And even if it was the case that the superficially sanctimonious Jew altered the word out of a false reverence for Jehovah, why should this be the only case, where Jehovah is said to bring, or not bring, evil on anyone out of fifty examples cited, in which he made such an alteration? Besides, can it be true that the patriarchs did not know Jehovah as the dispenser of evil? Abraham must have been tremendously impressed and affected all his life by the terrible doom of Sodom and her neighboring cities. Their awful fate was an evil which must have left its mark on his spirit and soul all his days. It was Jehovah who rained down brimstone and fire out of the sky upon the cities.

Jacob, too, looked upon life as an evil experience. "Few and evil come to be the days of the years of my life" (Gen. 47:9), he tells Pharaoh.

To the novel suggestion put forward that we should read, "yet by My name Jehovah I was not evil to them," there are, however, much stronger objections. Such a theme is quite out of harmony with the whole context and proceedings, more especially so, when we observe that to read *nurothi* would mean, "I was (not) *made* evil." This word belongs to the Niphal conjugation, which is generally understood as a passive. Besides, the verb (*roo*, to be evil) nowhere else appears in Niphal form. The proper form representing "I was evil" or "I caused evil" would be *erothi*, as in Num. 16:15 (neither *have I hurt*) and 1. Chron. 21:17 (*I have done evil*). These are Hiphil or Causative conjugation forms. In fact, at Ex. 6:3 in place of "I was known" (*nudothi*) the Septuagint and some of the other ancient versions read the equivalent of "I made known" (*eudothi*).

The Old Testament in English published in 1917 by The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, although it cannot be credited with much originality or exactitude, reads, "but by My name Jehovah I made Me not known to them." Here the Middle Voice sense is beautifully expressed in fine English, after the manner of the A.V. at Eccles. 2:4-8.

At this point we present a literal translation of the verse, putting it into the past tense. "And I Was appearing unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob in God All-sufficient, and My name Jehovah I was not known to them." It will at once be noticed that although the word "in" (usually rendered "as" or "by") occurs before "God" the Hebrew does not shew it before "My name." Almost every English version is obliged to add a word here. Various commentators suggest that the Hebrew has lost a letter B (i.e. "in") before "My name," but there does not appear to be any MS. authority for this.

Let us observe how some of the well-known versions tender. **Young:** And I appear unto Abraham. . . . as God Almighty; as to My name Jehovah, I have not been known to them. **Darby:** And I appeared unto Abraham. . . . as the Almighty God; but by My name Jehovah I was not made known to them (or, I did not make Myself known to them). **Rotherham:** I appeared therefore unto Abraham. . . .as God Almighty-although *by my name Yahweh* was I not made known to them. **R.V.(margin):** and I appeared unto Abraham. . . . as God Almighty, but as to my name JEHOVAH I was not made known to them.

It is significant that the Greek Septuagint does not use the common word for "make known," but reads, "I did not make evident" (edEIOsa). What the Hebrew text appears to intimate is, And My name Jehovah I made Me not known (or, evident) to them.

Beyond all doubt the patriarchs used the great name Jehovah, but did they understand all that it signified? As this name is a rather peculiar one for anyone to bear, it is very likely that its meaning was not at first clearly understood. How many even today understand what it signifies? The common explanations, such as "The Existing One," are ridiculous and very unsatisfactory. Even the Jews do not understand what the name of their Deity means. In fact, they have long shunned the Name, which is not surprising, as a *manifested* Deity they have never yet desired.

The first human being recorded as having uttered the name was Eve. The question arises in our minds, whether she knew something about its meaning, when she exclaimed, "I have acquired a man—Jehovah." Or might it be that she said, "I have acquired a man—him coming into being (or, coming into manifestation)," to give the name its probable meaning.

Or was the name born and coined when her first-born was brought forth? We cannot answer these questions. The fact that the first three chapters of Genesis speak of Jehovah Elohim is no evidence whatever as to the name by which Adam addressed God. It is not even evidence that Adam and Eve knew these names at all.

When we call a friend by his name George, we do not think of him necessarily as a Farmer or a Landsman: when we say Andrew, we do not have in mind a grown Man; Walter does not immediately bring to mind a Powerful Warrior; nor is every Adolf a Noble Wolf.

Let us bear in mind that Hebrew names compounded with Jehovah, such as Jonathan and Joshua (or Jehoshua), are to be understood as containing the personal name Jehovah. Jonathan means "Jehovah gives," not "A Giver is coming into being."

We may then ask, did the patriarchs take the divine name literally, and understand its import literally? When men began, in very early times, to call on the name of Jehovah (Gen. 4:26; cf. 26:25), this does not

necessarily imply that they knew exactly what the name meant, and what reference it had to the distant future.

For it is very evident that the name Jehovah, so long as it may be used, is a name of futurity—"He Who is coming, or coming into being." It speaks of God's appearance, His parousia with men. It speaks of His activities for men, the great events which He will bring to pass. It speaks of His covenants, what things He promises will come to pass. Pre-eminently does the great name tell of ever increasing manifestation of God in Christ Jesus.

No one can tell definitely what is the origin or primitive meaning of the English word "God" or the German "Gott." We know the current meaning, but cannot explain it. Probably at one time the word Jehovah was similarly used, until God unveiled the real import of the name to Moses.

The Rev. A. H. Finn, in his magnificent book on "The Unity of the Pentateuch," which tears into shreds the ridiculous inventions and imaginations of the self-styled "Higher Critics," regarding the documents of the Pentateuch, points out that in the four passages in Genesis where the title El Shaddai (God Almighty) is used (17:1; 28:3; 35:11; and 48:3), it is intimately connected with the Covenant blessing. "Is it not then, at least possible that this connection of the Name with the Covenant indicates the true import of Exodus 6:3?" He adds, "The meaning would then be, It was as El Shaddai, God Almighty able to bless and multiply, and not as Jehovah, the Self Existent, that I made My Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now that the blessing of fruitfulness and multiplying has already been fulfilled, I make My Covenant with Israel as Jehovah, the unchanging I AM." After referring to Exodus 3:13, 14, and the likelihood of the people enquiring after the name of the God of the fathers, he says that a fuller meaning now became attached to the name Jehovah, a more complete unveiling of its significance in answer to the query, "What is His name?" "Why may not the statement 'By My name *Jehovah* I was not known to them' mean simply, 'I was not fully *known* to them'?" He shews that this limited sense of "know" is not unheard of in English, as in the prayer from the Cross, "Forgive them, for they *know* not what they do." Here the obvious meaning is "they understand not. . ."

The patriarchs used the name Jehovah, but did not and could not perceive what was bound up in it, and what its real signification was.

The same thoughts are well expressed by other writers. Thus, Dr. Geddes, in the eighteenth century, renders as follows: "I am the LORD; who manifested myself to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God the OMNIPOTENT (Shadi); but my name IEUE (He that will be), to them I did not manifest." Hengstenberg (Pentateuch) says "by my name JEHOVAH" is equivalent to "in my *character* as JEHOVAH." He says the enquiry by the Israelites after the name of God would have had no meaning if the name were regarded as a mere name, and not as a designation of the nature of God, as He stood in relation to His people. Because at first the reality is designated by another form—"I am that I am" (*ehyeh asher ehyeh*, Exodus 3:14. Literally, I shall become what I shall become). "This passage treats not of the promulgation of the name JEHOVAH, but of the revelation of God as JEHOVAH." In Exodus 3:16 it is explicitly stated that Jehovah was the God of the patriarchs. He was now to show Himself to be "JEHOVAH in all His glory in the full manifestation of His nature." "From being EL SHADDAI or ELOHIM, He became JEHOVAH. EL SHADDAI is the undeveloped JEHOVAH; JEHOVAH is the potentiated EL SHADDAI."

When seeking to discover the true import of the name Jehovah, it is important to bear in mind that the title El Shaddai, which occurs about forty times, is used in pre-Israelite times, or by non-Israelites. Fully thirty of the occurrences of Shaddai are found in the book of Job, who lived outside of the Land, and probably prior to the time of Exodus 6:3.

The meaning of the word Shaddai is not very clear. There is not enough clear evidence to prove that it means "All Sufficient." In Job the usual Greek equivalent is simply *Kurios* (Lord), while El Shaddai is *Kurios PantocratOr* (Lord All-Wielder). Sometimes the Septuagint only has *Theos* (God). Occasionally it has *hikanos* (sufficient or competent). This is the regular expression found in the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

Regarding the meaning of the name JEHOVAH, there is profound ignorance, which is quite inexcusable. In the first place, we may state categorically, that this name cannot mean "He who was and is and will be." Those who aver that Hebrew possesses no time tenses ought not to put forward such a meaning. There is in Hebrew no word which means "He is," or "He will be" or "He was." A further reason is that in Hebrew there are no compound words of this nature, made up of two or three parts of a verb. Besides, the verb from which the name is generally derived does not express *being* or *existence*, as nearly everywhere stated, but *coming to be*, or *becoming*, which includes the thought of coming or appearing, and *manifestation*.

The Human Being who in ancient times appeared on earth as God seems on occasion to have had a body of flesh like ordinary men. Yet according to John 1:14, this Word or Logos now "becomes *flesh*." What was in ancient times the fleshly form occasionally assumed, now *becomes* the permanent form. Not only so, but He "*tabernacles* among us." If God could assume a form of human flesh in Old Testament times, in a moment, or at will, why should He not be able to become flesh permanently through incarnation?

If according to Gen. 1:2, "the earth becomes waste and sterile," the inference must be that it was not so previously. It became what it was not before. It turned into something different.

Rev. 1:8 may be a paraphrase of the name Jehovah, but it is no exact translation, for had it been, the Greek word *ginomai* (become) would have been used. The name Jehovah represents the third person singular of the verb *Hayah* (old form Havah) in its "present" or pictorial tense. This would signify "He is becoming," or "He will come to be." It must be related to the form found at Exodus 3:14, *Ehyeh*, which can only mean "I am coming to be." If the statement here means "I am that I am," then it is utterly meaningless and we are none the wiser. Doubtless God is the "Great I AM," but we may be sure His objective is not mere existence, but His continuous self-manifestation in Christ Jesus in the ages to come. It may be true, as one writes, that "when God's doings cease to surprise us and contradict all our notions, we may be sure that God has got nothing to do with them."

In this life, all our spiritual wealth comes alone by *faith*, and God gives only to faith. God has made ready marvels which eye does not perceive, or ear hear, and which cannot even come up into the human heart (1. Cor. 2:9). That is God as the God of *manifestation*. That is God as JEHOVAH. Let us believe His word.

Rotherham has a very fine note on the name Jehovah in the Introduction to his translation of the Old Testament (1897). He shews how the present spelling was unknown before the year 1520. He thinks the Name was meant to be understood, and asks, "Does not 'name' in the Bible very widely imply revelation? Jehovah's Name is continually adduced by Himself as His reason for what He does and what He commands: 'For I am Jehovah.'" Israel and the Nations are placed under discipline "that they may know that I am Jehovah." He thinks the expression found in Ex. 3:14 means "I will become whatsoever I may become." Similar verses are found at 2. Sam. 15:20 and 1. Sam. 23:13, where he would render the second verbal form as a subjunctive. The whole seven pages of this note ought to be carefully studied. His view is that the Name "becomes a most gracious promise; the Divine capacity of adaptation to any circumstances, any difficulties, any necessities that may arise, becomes a veritable bank of faith to such as

love God and keep His commandments. The formula is a promise, the promise is concentrated in a Name. The Name is at once a revelation, a memorial, a pledge."

Others think the two verbs in Ex. 3:14 should be rendered alike, thus, either "I am what I am," or "I shall become what I shall become." But neither of these tells us anything. If God be what mankind understands Deity to be, He should not require to prove His unchangeable existence. Moses here was instructed by God to tell the children of Israel, "EHYEH sends me unto you," that is, "I-shall-come-to-be sends me unto you." Or, if the word is a Causative, the name would signify, "I-shall-bring-to-pass,—I, the-bringer-to-pass, sends me unto you." Herein was the guarantee that God was about to rise and accomplish great things for His People. God was about to reveal the incipient magnificence and power which is bound up in His Name Jehovah. God was fully able to do exceedingly abundant above all that the Israelites might ask or expect of Him, if they would only trust Him.

It is often stated that the answer occasionally given by the Lord to His questioners, "I am," is a reference to Exodus 3:14. This is certainly not the case. The idiomatic meaning in John 18:5, 6, 8 is undoubtedly "I am He," as Goodspeed and others have well demonstrated. The words BE and BECOME ought to be kept apart. The Lord did not say (John 8:58), "Before I came into being, Abraham was," as some would have us believe. He said, "Before Abraham is coming into being, I am (He)."

The Jews had argued that God was their Father. The Lord replies, "You have not got to know Him (*egnOkate*; that is, by learning and study), yet I am perceiving Him (*oida*; that is, know Him by perception)." This was something no human being could ever say. According to John 17:3, eonian life means "that they may get to know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ." Getting to know God will take a long time, but *perceiving* Him can be instantaneous.

Alford has a fine note here (John 17:3), "The knowledge of *God and a creature* could not be eternal life, and the juxtaposition of the two would be inconceivable."

The Lord continues (John 8:56), "Abraham your father exults that he may perceive My-own-personal (*emEn*) Day, and he perceives it and rejoiced."

Can this refer to anyone but Messiah? "I am He" says the Lord. The reaction of the Jews to this startling statement shews just how they took His words. They had no doubt about His meaning.

If this can mean that the Anointed One was before the days of Abraham only "pre-existent to the Father's mind," we might well ask, whose Face was it that Abraham recognized and apparently knew quite well at the Oaks of Mamre (Gen. 18:1-2)? Right away does he single out one of the three "men," who he addresses as Yahweh. Here is eloquent proof that he who was called "Friend of God" (James 2:23) possessed that holy boldness which is begotten of a lowly and humble spirit, which alone can become intimate with God.

In an article in 'Unsearchable Riches' of date March 1934, pages 111 to 122, entitled "The Incommunicable Name, Jehovah," there is brought forth what is called a "triple-timed interpretation" of the name. It is explained as containing the three 'time' ideas of He was, Being, and He will be. The Hebrew verb Hayah (otherwise *eue*) is said to mean BE or BECOME. We must protest, however, that its meaning never is BE merely. The Name Jehovah has nothing to do with mere existence. By artificially putting together three parts of three Hebrew verbal forms of this word, the writer produces the form IEUE or Yahweh, which is no past form at all, but the future or present tense form. By doing this he claims, "we automatically obtain the name Jehovah."



While it is stated that Hebrew verbs contain no real-time tenses, in effect this is reversed by a new rule, that "the *context* of the indefinite may show it to be in the *past*, but *never in the future*. The *context* of the incomplete may be in the *future*, but *never in the past*." It is stated that this has been tested in thousands of cases, and seems to be quite satisfactory.

Emphatically we protest that these rules are entirely erroneous, and are the result of wishful thinking. An easy method of putting the theory to the test is to use Dr. Young's Old Testament, as in every case he renders an aorist or indefinite verb in Hebrew by an English past or perfect. This has the drawback that the English often reads badly. Or the Newberry Bible may be used with advantage. In it the aorist verbs of the Hebrew are marked by a preceding dot, although the text is that of the Authorized Version.

Thus, in Zech. 13, the scene is entirely in the future. The chapter concludes with God's Eonian Nation acknowledging One as "Jehovah my God." Four times within nine verses does the A. V. say "And it shall come to pass." Each time in the Hebrew this is *we-hayah*, "and it comes to pass," which Dr. Young renders by "And it hath come to pass," or "And it hath been." This is the indefinite or aorist form, marking the *fact* of a *future* action. The action is not being painted or described, but merely stated as a fact.

In the next chapter, the predominance of indefinite verbs, to describe future events, is very pronounced. Right up to verse 16 there is hardly any other form of verb used. Dr. Young renders in v. 4 "And stood have His feet, in that day, on the mount of Olives," and in v. 9, "And Jehovah hath become king over all the land."

Similarly, in Isa. 2:2, 4, 11, 17, in a scene referring to the "latter end of the days," the verbs are in the aorist; although the mind is dwelling on the future. Many examples can be found in Genesis, as at 2:14; 3:22; 4:14; 6:3; 6:14, 21; 9:13-16; 18:19.

As for the incomplete or present verb form used in a context dealing with the past, Newberry points out that in the first chapter of Genesis, there are only nine aorist forms, but no less than forty-five of the incomplete forms, none of which refers to the future.

It might be added that the above "triple-timed" explanation of the name Jehovah is copied bodily and boldly from Newberry's note.

The facts which we seek to bring to light regarding the true meaning of the name Jehovah are denied by some who claim that *only the Father* is Jehovah. It is claimed that the Lord Jesus had no right to the name Jehovah. Such people are either very shallow thinkers or they have simply not examined the Scriptures. Thus, for nineteen hundred years scholars have known that the Greek LXX equivalent of the name Jehovah, namely KURIOS ("Lord"), when used in the New Testament as a personal noun, without the definite article, as at Heb. 1:10, means JEHOVAH. Other examples are found at Rev. 1:8 (How can the Father, if He is ubiquitous invisible Spirit, be said to be "coming" and be seen?); Rev. 4:8 (where the same applies, and the Lord Jesus is again called the All-Wielder).

We would refer readers to a fine article in the March 1928 issue of "Unsearchable Riches," entitled "Who is Jehovah?" for further information. Apparently, this has never been read by the Editor of an English monthly named "Fellowship," which is stated to be "For the Truth Seeker." In a special issue of this monthly for September 1949, it is stated that "Nothing justifies us in applying the name Jehovah to our Lord and Master, Jesus." It is also claimed that the Father and the Son are not one in person, because both persons are recognized, and the Father is always given the first place in praise and honor. Now it is quite true that the Scriptures speak of both Father and Son, but never once as distinct *persons*. Fatherhood is

one aspect of Deity. So is Sonship. When the Lord said, "I and the Father are One" (John 10:30), He proved their unity by *not* giving the Father first place.

Let us take another look at 1. Cor. 8:6. Here the Lord Jesus Christ is *conjoined* with the "One God, the Father," as He through whom the "all things" proceed from the Father. What is the subject of the passage? Paul is dealing with false—or idolatrous *worship* and sacrifices, and with the gods and lords many who were the objects of men's devotion. Christ therefore here is a legitimate object of such worship and devotion, and if He was not thus worshipped believers would have been involved in the very idolatry which Paul was condemning.

"Fellowship" maintains that the "philosophy of the Atonement" can only be properly understood, as we see the distinction between "Jehovah the Father" and the Lord Jesus. This is exactly the opposite of the truth. We can only grasp the marvel and the depth of the "Atonement" when we see that God is One Person. But we hope to demonstrate this later.

We were very much pained to read Brother Edgell's words, which lower the majesty of our Lord and virtually nullify His glory.

If the name Jehovah refers to God's self-manifestation surely it is pre-eminently applicable to the Lord Jesus.

In Isa. 64:1 the agonized and vehement prayer, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down. . ." is addressed to Jehovah, and it is the feet of Jehovah which will stand on the Mount of Olives in a coming day (Zech. 14:3-4).

God's Executive, His Son, "He who brings to pass," must be Jehovah, because He it is through whom "all things come into being" (John 1:3), and He it is who manifests or unfolds God (v. 18).

In his famous book, "Varronianus" or "The Philological Study of the Latin Language" (Cambridge, 1860), Dr. John W. Donaldson says, "The name Jehovah has reference to the fact, that the God of Revelation is the God Who *manifests Himself historically*, so that while Elohim is the Beginning and the End, Jehovah is the Middle, that is, *God manifested in the world*, and therefore always in process of being or becoming by his acts of redemption and creative power."

In his very scholarly and devout "Essays on Sacred Subjects" (Edinburgh, 1889), the Rev. William Russell comes to the same conclusions regarding the name Jehovah. "The ground notion is that of *manifestation*—of God's becoming all that His purposes intend, and His promises indicate, in accomplishing the great victory over evil which He had announced to our fallen progenitors." It was only in connection with their recovery from the Fall that the Creator made Himself known as *Jehovah*—"He that is to be manifested."

He also asks, "Why may not this earth, which, alone of all worlds, has been honored to bear the footsteps of Incarnate Deity, become also the region where He shall exhibit the richest manifestations of His glorious presence, and from which He may possibly send forth, by the ministry of His redeemed, communications of His love and regard to the farthest bounds of creation?"

One of the most original and thought-provoking books we have ever read is called "Questions Awakened by the Bible," by Rev. John Miller of Princeton (1877, Philadelphia). There are three chapters, each full of extraordinary interest, "Are Souls Immortal?" "Was Christ in Adam?" and "Is God a Trinity?" Just as Dr. Dale has told of his great delight when he discovered that the Christ was really ALIVE, so Miller tells

of his joyful amazement to discover the meaning of futurity indwelling the Name Jehovah. He renders Isa. 42:8, "I am HE SHALL BE; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another." Ch. 44:11, "I, even I, am HE SHALL BE; and besides Me there is no Savior." "This is the Whole Jehovah, and yet Jehovah confessing that it must needs be that He come in the flesh." In other words, we might render this as "I am He that will manifest Himself." Elsewhere he describes Jehovah as "One God, apart from any distraction till He becomes Emmanuel—and then, One God, tabernacling in the flesh One God, Father, Son, or Spirit as we may choose our rhetoric—One God, complete in the divine decree from all eternity—but One God completed in Emmanuel, fitted by assuming flesh for the salvation of the world; building upon that enfleshed Jehovah all creation; and not talking as though God were the Angered, and Christ were the Merciful."

As Koelle writes in "The Goal of the Universe;" Jehovah, as the Immanent, the God of Revelation, the God of history, descends to the ways of men. Sometimes He hides His face, sometimes He makes it shine. God is One even when He looks like Two, the transcendent and the immanent, the Distant and the Near.

Why is it that Jehovah has ever longed to manifest Himself more and more to our guilty and unworthy race of men? Because the divine ideal has always been *sonship to God*, for the race made in His image. God desires a vast family, imaged after Himself. In order to affect this, He evolves from Himself His own Ideal of perfect Sonship. "I came out from-beside the Father," says the Lord (John 16:28). This Ideal was something *within* God (not something evolved by sinful mankind), proceeding forth to become the life of the world; the expression and realization in human form of that which was ever in God. That is why sonship towards the Father was the distinct and unique feature in the Lord's consciousness. Only as Man could God be manifested in a world wherein man is His chief creation. In the "mode" of Son He becomes Creator so that this glorious Sonship may be attained by the race. This is the satisfying thought which can justify the creation, with all the groaning and travail of the creature. The Holy One reaches generation and incarnates (Luke 1:35) as the Divine Ideal and pledge of every man's sonship to God. His appearance is the pledge of something far grander than even reconciliation of the universe (Col. 1:20). That is why He spoke of Himself as "The Son of Mankind." He identifies Himself with the race as its representative, as the expression of what the race will yet be. At one and the same time He is the Logos or true expression of Man and of creation, towards God, and the Logos or true expression of God Himself towards mankind.

We submit that such a grand view of God's self-manifestation in His Son will satisfy every craving of the heart and every problem of the reason. Jehovah Elohim, God in human form, made some whit inferior to messengers, shorn of His glory and majesty, appearing as a humble slave, living the ideal divine life, dying for you and me and everyone, so that an Ideal Mankind might yet be the crown and glory of all God's Creation.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 6

### The God of the Ages

We have been asked to criticize certain writings by those who differ from ourselves in some respects, and to do so should prove very beneficial. One of these is a booklet by Mr. R. H. Judd, entitled "One God: The God of the Ages," published in Oregon, U.S.A., in 1949.

We rejoice to find the author stating that "The Faith that cannot be supported by an intellectual and rational basis is valueless," and "God's Word is 'true from the beginning.'" The "accuracy of Moses" he commends. We rejoice too, in his statement that "human science of yesterday is not the science of today." Most people appear to imagine that "science" cannot retrograde through the human pride it engenders, and fail to perceive that the science of today will assuredly not be the science of tomorrow.

In the former half of the booklet, there is little that one might wish to criticize, and there is much useful information about the ages, and the various names of God. We do not, however, believe that in the Scriptures the first occurrence of any word or phrase possesses any gubernative efficacy. Should not every occurrence indicate its general usage? That is the true doctrine of concordance. Nor are we impressed by the silly argument, that "God is not a man," with which we have dealt in chapter 2. To argue that the Prince of Jehovah's host (Joshua 5:13-15) could not be Jehovah Himself, is like averring that Wellington could not be the generalissimo of Wellington's army. At any rate, Joshua falls on his face earthwards and worships this Prince. Exactly the same word is used of the common worship of God or Jehovah in the Old Testament. And why, we might ask, was the ground holy whereupon Joshua was standing, if he was only bowing down to any Army General or an Angel?

We are told further, that this "man" could not have been Jesus Christ, "because Jesus Christ *did not become man* until he was born of Mary." It is true that He who was known as Jesus Christ did not appear in *flesh* until He was born of Mary, but nowhere are we informed that Jesus Christ or Jehovah *became* Man.

The writer is referring to "the supposed 'theophanies' of the Old Testament," and evidently rejects the statements by the inspired prophets that these were appearances of God or Jehovah.

If God's Word is true from the beginning, why not accept it all in humble faith-obedience? The heretical person is he who "picks and chooses" which parts of Holy Writ he is willing to assent to,—an utterly dishonest procedure. If we *really* wish the whole truth, let us give chief attention to those parts of God's Word which seem strange, difficult, or incredible.

Isaiah (ch. 2) describes the greatest of all the theophanies. Men will in that day enter into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of clay, "from **JEHOVAH'S** awful face," when He "rises to terrify the earth." The great day of Jehovah's wrath is come. Rev. 19:11-16 describes the coming of the Prince of Jehovah's Host from heaven. John presents no picture of any puppet human representative of Deity. Whoever views this august and terrifying scene will be forced to the conclusion that it is the very apocalypse of Deity.

Enoch also foretold this awful coming (Jude 14-15), He says Kurios (meaning in Greek, without the definite article, Jehovah; usually rendered "the Lord") comes among His holy myriads to effect judging against all. But if this Lord was merely a glorious human being, he made the "mistake" of saying these irreverent people talked hard things "against him." Should he not have said, "against *God*?"

Here we have another of those many beautiful and subtle proofs that the Lord Jesus was not only Man, but, in some way, God also.

The appearances of God upon earth in ancient times are too integral a part of history and revelation to be lightly passed over, as though they were legends. With regard to The Word or Logos of John 1, Mr. Judd believes that "John's prelude embraces *all* the 'words,' 'sayings,' 'promises,' God spoke concerning the Christ," from Gen. 3:15 onwards. Yet he soon modifies this, by shewing that in modern Greek the common people use the word *logos* popularly and unofficially as meaning "delegate" or "representer." The Logos who became or *turned into* flesh undoubtedly represented God, expressed God, and we should say also, *explained* God. Logos is a word which explains something, besides representing the thoughts of the speaker. Here the very first occurrence of *logos* in Matthew (5:32) helps us. The A.V. is forced to read, "saving for the cause of fornication." Other versions have, "on account of," or "for the matter of." The C.V. has, "outside of *acase* of prostitution," but this is far too vague, and too discordant. We might say that "The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13) is God's explanatory statement. This is entirely in harmony with John 1:18, He who elucidates, unfolds, or, literally, is the Exegesis of God.

It is quite true as Mr. Judd writes, that the Lord "fulfilled all that was *spoken* of Him by God," but that is not the reason why He is called the Word.

The next argument is that if Jesus pre-existed His birth by Mary as a living organized Personality, such Personality must have ceased (died) before the birth of the second Personality could be consummated. This is supported by the statement that Christ died *once*, or "once for all," and the proof given is found in Rom. 6:10; 1. Peter 3:18; Heb. 9:26. Now what Rom. 6:10 tells us that Christ died *to Sin*, or *as regards Sin*, once for all. Peter says that He "Once for all, *concerning sins*, for our sakes, died, a Righteous One for the sake of unrighteous ones." Heb. 9:26 is quite irrelevant here.

Why, however, must it be assumed that a change of manner of existence implies death? Why must there be cessation of being? Mr. Judd flings away his entire case when he is obliged to resort to a rendering such as "Who (like yourselves) being in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6). Can it be that is all the statement means? Paul tells us that Christ Jesus was all along in God's form, evidently in certain respects equal with God, *nevertheless* (alla) He empties *Himself*. If this means anything at all, it means that it was *One existing in God's form* who emptied Himself. If we wish to know what God's form was like, the theophanies will tell us.

There is no hint whatever in the Scriptures that the Lord was a wealthy man while on earth, or that He gave away a vast amount of money. Even had He done so, how could that have made the saints in Corinth rich? Paul tells us plainly that "because of you He becomes poor (epiOcheusen), that *you*, by the poverty of *that One*, should become rich" (2. Cor. 8:9).

Apparently, if I am in the form of a man, I cannot be a human being. Because we are told, "Who being in the form of God" is equivalent to assertion that Christ was *not* God; for that which is in the form of another can never be the other itself. Which, of course, is to beg the whole question.

"It was Jesus Christ," we are told, "who emptied Himself, and *not one who was to become Christ*." The emptying is thus explained, "Any man 'empties' himself when he gives up his own will to the will of

another." There follows a reference to "a hypnotist," Would it not be far more in line with truth if any man who have Himself up to the will of God became *filled*? If we are emptied of anything, it is of self and sinful tendencies. *Was the Lord ever thus emptied?*

This One who existed all along in God's form, we are told "took upon him the form of a servant." Here the Greek becomes strangely puzzling. "Form of slave **GETTING**" (labOn). Getting, taking, or obtaining slave form. Is that the ordinary or common language of mankind? "Coming to be (genomenos) in likeness of human beings." Where shall we read such an expression on our birth certificate? Was it possible we might have come to be in any other likeness? And when was it *found out* regarding us, that we were in fashion as a human being?

But Mr. Judd gives the show away. "Being found in fashion as a man. . . ." (Phil. 2:8) he would thus paraphrase, "Being, or recognizing Himself in human form, namely in the human *scheme* of things. . . . and realizing therefore that He was mortal. . . . He humbled Himself. . . ."

Surely here he is writing about a Divine Savior. Every ordinary or extraordinary human being does not need to realize that he or she is mortal.

Mr. Judd devotes nearly fifty pages to "Difficult Passages" in the New Testament and the Old Testament. He is delightfully candid to admit such difficulties, and gives the impression that his own explanations often have not satisfied him. It is no idle boast for us to state that these difficulties do not bother us at all. Everyone of them will disappear the moment we come to see that we must not equate Christ with God. If, however, we say that Christ was God in human form, the truth is clear. He was God subject to the limitations of conditions. The Father, we assume, is the Invisible, not subject to conditions.

If we as saints of God become very receptive of His truth, and thus full of His Spirit, is there not a sense in which we might say that God is incarnated within us? But when we observe One whose will was not only *wholly* surrendered to God, but whose whole personality was filled by God *from the very first*, might we not say that God was indeed present in Him as fully as it is possible for God to be present in a human form? With such a complete receptivity of God such a Man must surely possess a link with the Divine as well as with Mankind. This relationship with the Divine, present in our Lord from the very first, must surely also take us right back to the Eternal for its origin and explanation.

As for any difficulties in connection with God in Human Form discarding His glories for the time being and incarnating as a Child, we might reiterate the question, "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" Is such an event more difficult than raising all the dead? Sometimes I think the most "difficult" task that lies before God is to make His own people to be all of one mind.

In Luke 24:31 we are told that the Lord "vanished out of their sight" (A.V.). The Concordant Version, is more literal, "And **HE** became unapparent to them." The Greek word, however, is not *aphanes* (C.V. Heb. 4:13 "not apparent"), but *aphantos*, which means "unappearable." As the verb is rendered by "disappear," we would be justified in saying that "He Himself became disappearable from them." That is, He had the power to disappear completely. Now that is not less wonderful than disappearing into childhood. Holy Spirit came on to Mary, and the Holy One generates. (Luke 1:35).

Mr. Judd himself admits that the manner of entrance into life of the Lord "was not normal" in that Mark begins with the statement "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*." He says the last four words allude to this manner of entrance into life. "Had Mark been writing of the birth of any other person, no such expression would have been made." This is very true, and we rejoice to see Mr. Judd's honesty. Evidently, he realizes clearly that no other human being is capable of laying claim to the august

title, "**THE** Son of God." You are a son or daughter of Adam, but you are not **THE** son or **THE** daughter of Adam. The laws of the Greek Definite Articles have been clearly stated, as in John N. Darby's booklet on the matter.

Nor would any ordinary man think of calling himself "The Son of Man," as the Lord often did. It is absurd to announce as a truth that which is a truism, never denied by any human being. Both of these titles, **THE** Son of God, and **THE** Son of Man, announce that the Lord was more intimately associated with Deity than any man could be, even though sinless. The unlimitedness of the love of God is proven by the fact that He does not spare even His **OWN** (peculiar; idiou) Son, but gives Him up on behalf of us all (Romans 8:32). The giving up of a merely faithful man, even though sinless, would have been anything but a demonstration of God's love.

As the Son of Mankind, the Lord Jesus was a perfect revelation and representation of what mankind should be and yet shall be. As the Son of God, He is a perfect revelation and representation of God to mankind, in so far as God can be revealed in human form. The life of the Lord on earth was the expression in time of what must have been eternal within God, just as His self-emptying must have been timeless also. As an exact facsimile of all that is basically God (Hebrews 1:3), in human form, how could He be other than God?

Never does He require to tell Israel or the world that He had been appointed the Messiah. Everywhere He carries about a veiled but Godlike dignity and a hidden majesty. He is an authoritative Teacher not like other men who have founded religions, but by virtue of His own unique personality and origin.

Never does He class Himself along with His disciples. He proposes Himself as an object of faith. He spoke as though Divine authority became Him, in the same manner as God speaks in the Old Testament. He shewed Himself as the pattern of the true life. He shuts out any effort to approach the Father except through Himself. How true it was that "Never talks thus a *human being*" (John 7:46).

Never is there any consciousness of moral inferiority; of the need of forgiveness, of a closer walk with God. Only One who proceeded forth directly out from God could have uttered the celestial speech as found in Matt. 11:27, "No one is recognizing the Son except the Father, nor is anyone recognizing the Father except the Son." Once again, such language carries us into the Eternal.

Truly, the difficulties which cause some to reject Christ as being God (in human form) are far harder than any difficulties in accepting His divinity. It was just as natural and easy for God Almighty to appear as Man as for God to create man, and create him in His own image. Any lower conception of Christ has always been found inadequate to maintain the spiritual life.

If the title "The Son of Humanity" signifies that the Lord is God's Ideal and True *Man*, why should not the title "The Son of God" signify that He is man's Ideal and True *God*, though in human form? Was any other human being ever generated of Holy Spirit? (Luke 1:35). If He is not Divine, then He is not Human. And if He is not the True Human Being, then He cannot be Divine, and we know nothing about God.

Mr. Judd avers that because the Lord Jesus is a Man, and often called a Man, any possibility of His pre-existence is precluded. "He described Himself as '*a man* that told you the truth' (John 8:40), and many times He took to Himself the title of 'the Son of Man.' Paul called Him 'the man Christ Jesus' (1. Tim. 2:5)." We have already answered this from the scriptural fact of the theophanies in the Old Testament. This, however, is unacceptable to some who say they believe the scriptures. I wonder whether they would listen to a profound scholar, Professor James Y. Simpson, of Edinburgh, in his startling book, "Man and the Attainment of Immortality." His view, after shewing how God has been carrying on the universe for

ages, is that "throughout the untold ages of organic history, God *was becoming* man." In the sphere of religious thought, "nothing more profound or challenging has ever been uttered by human lips than the statement that '**GOD IS LOVE.**' It gives a complete philosophy of religion. For if God is Love, then since Love must needs express itself in action and have that to which it can go out in mutual fellowship, it would follow that the age-long process that divine self-communication and impartation that constitute creation—began, in order to produce a plurality of human souls. It is therefore not one single act of divine Kenosis, or self-emptying and self-limitation with which we have to deal, for all creation is a process of Kenosis." God has been becoming man in order that man may become as God. Love is the most characteristic feature of personality, and means the desire to share experience. The whole creative movement, therefore, is an expression of God's personality, directed towards the development of a vast family of beings in perfect union with Him and completely free, and so enriching and completing the experience of Him who fills all things.

How we wish Mr. Judd could have entered into the Greek of John 8:40-42. Why does the Lord say to the murderous Jews, "Yet now you are seeking to kill *Me*, a human being who has talked to you the truth which I hear from-beside (para) God"? He does not call Himself a man (Greek anEr), but a human being (anthrOpos). Was there no point in His stressing the fact that, after all He had said concerning His Father, he *was* human? Those who claimed to be Abraham's seed sought to kill the Christ. But this Abraham himself certainly did not. How could Abraham, about nineteen hundred years earlier, have killed this same Man who confronted the Jews? Is it not very clear that the same Person who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18, was now present before Abraham's seed, though in somewhat different conditions? "One Father, we have, the Deity," answered the Jews. "If the Deity were your Father, in that case you loved Me, for *I*, out from the Deity came forth, and have got here" (egO gar ek tou Theou exElthon, kai hEkO).

All that Nicodemus could say was, "We are aware that from God (apo Theou) Thou hast come, a teacher." He knew not that the Lord came forth **OUT FROM** the Deity.

If the Lord was not the one "coming out of heaven" (John 3:31), then He is assuredly not in heaven now, in spite of Acts 1:11 and John 3:13. There is no statement that He came down in the same form, human form, as He ascended. The Angel said to Miriam, "Holy Spirit shall come on to thee, and Most High Power shall overshadow thee (Luke 1:35).

If the Greek preposition *ek* (out of) signifies origin, can we be wrong in saying that the Son originated in the Father? In connection with John 17:5, Mr. Judd remarks that there can be no doubt that any person bearing the name of "Jesus" and the title of "Christ" was not in existence "before the world was." We agree that these names were not known then. Yet God, presumably, has always existed. Has He always been known by His name Jehovah? If not, will this mean that God never existed? The God who appeared openly to Abraham and others did not call Himself the Christ, or Jesus, but he could not have been the invisible Father. He who appeared must have been God's Image and Logos. In John 17:5 the Lord is praying to the Father. "And now glorify *Thou Me*, Father, beside (para) Thyself, as regards the glory which I had before the world's being, beside (para) Thee." There was a Father then, so obviously, there must have been a Son. There cannot exist Fatherhood without Sonship. Therefore, the Son had a glory beside His Father, before human society came into being.

Mr. Judd once again gives himself away when discussing the statement of Thomas, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). He reasons that Thomas failed to distinguish between the Risen One and His Father. Christ was "the representative of God" to Thomas only, because He had been raised from the dead. Of course, the Christ was the Representative of God, but in human form, and suffering limitations, though fully displaying the love of God and His moral glories. But how any good or even sinless man can be the representative of Invisible Spirit, Mr. Judd does not explain. Surely the Visible Representative of



Invisible Spirit would need to be Divine. Moreover, Mr. Judd says not one word about the Lord's tacit commendation of the statement by Thomas. Much of Mr. Judd's booklet testifies to the great difficulties he encounters in endeavoring to believe his own teachings and theories. While he commends the verification of translation and contexts, he struggles along under the burden of many very false renderings, due perhaps to a total ignorance of the tongues of inspiration.

As an example, when dealing with John 1:10, he says that "The Sinaitic Version translates—'The world was made because of him.' "This is quite erroneous, as there is no Sinaitic *Version*. It is the Sinaitic manuscript of the fourth century, which reads *in Greek*, the equivalent of "The world because of Him came into being." This reading is by *prima manu* and the earliest corrector of the MS. The important corrector who came later alters *di' auton* into *di' autou*, which all other MSS. shew, meaning, "through Him," or "by means of Him," which is exactly the same construction as is found in verse 3, where the venerable Sinaitic MS. shews no various readings or corrections. Having spent four years collating every word and every minutest variation in the Sinaitic MS., I am well aware of the ease with which errors can creep in, often quite absurd errors.

On another page Mr. Judd quotes the Authorized Version of Col. 1:16, and points out correctly that "in Him were all things created." The A.V. reads "by him" at the beginning of the verse and at the end. Mr. Judd leads us to believe that we ought to read "in Him" both times. He omits to state that the close of the verse says "all things *through* Him (*di' autou*) and for Him have been created."

What does "through" signify? Just by, or by means of. Let us take one simple case. In Acts 12:9 Peter could hardly realize that "what is coming to pass by means of the messenger (or, through the messenger) is true." Was the messenger quite idle? Did he *do nothing*? Was he only a machine? God was undoubtedly acting, but so was the Messenger.

In the first chapter of Hebrews there is a contrast. Not between Angels and God the Father, but between Angels and the Son of God. Verses 8 and 9 are addressed by God toward the Son. The same is true of verses 10 to 12. Verse 10 states very clearly, "**THOU**, originally, Lord, dost found the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands." Surely this should banish any doubt as to who is the Creator.

If the arguments of Mr. Judd are correct, we should have expected Col. 1:17 to say that the universe hangs together, as a definite consistent whole, in the Father, not in the Son.

God has been operating His immense purpose of heading up the universe of beings in heaven and on earth in the Christ in line with the plan of His will (Eph. 1:10, 11). Theology, and bad translations, have destroyed the outline of this great plan.

In a way, God's incarnation in the world has been gradual. It was no sudden intervention in history. In a way, it is part and parcel of God's Creation scheme. There has been a continuous Divine operation with a view to God's entrance right into humanity, as flesh and as visible. This will be seen to be entirely in line with His Name **JEHOVAH**—God *manifesting* Himself in the Old Testament times as Human, then in New Testament times *appearing* as Flesh, while later on He will *tabernacle* with Humanity (Rev. 21:3). Mankind is and shall be God's chiefest creation, and thus it was only in human form that God could manifest Himself in the world of mankind. When at last that Holy Thing, that Holy One, generated (Luke 1:35), life in its highest and Divine form appeared, "that eonian Life which, indeed, was face to face with the Father, and was manifested to us" (1. John 1:2). Christ is the realization and expression in human form of that which was eternal within God. In and through the Creation God attains His Ideal. In the mode or form of Son He becomes Creator so that sonship might be the ultimate of that Race made in His image.

Just as in ancient times God spoke to His people Israel in many modes, so at the final stage of these days He "*talks*" (i.e. with a human tongue) to us in a Son" (or, in Son; son-wise; Heb. 1:1, 2).

It is this manifestation of God in the race in human form that vindicates and justifies Creation, with all its subsequent groaning and travail. That ideal sonship which was real and imperative within the Divine Father had to find expression in mankind. The Creation was rooted in, and brought about by that ideal within the Father. The Fatherhood and the Sonship within God speak: "Let us make Man in Our Image." Man, as the glory and crown and the last word in Creation.

If, then, this Sonship or Son within God was the Ideal in which Creation was conceived and brought forth, this Son cannot be a *different* Person from the Father, but He is God in the mode of "Son." Christ is the manifestation of God in the ideal of filial relationship towards Himself, an ideal and a relationship conceived and originated entirely by God and not by mankind; something which mankind by itself could never have produced or even thought of.

Among men God could not appear except under limitations. On Sinai His Majesty was forbidding, awesome, terrifying. In His transcendence God makes His home "light inaccessible" (1. Tim. 6:16; literally "light un-toward-able.") But as Son, and Man, the greater the limitations, the closer and nearer can He come to us. That is why God comes to man as Son. That is why the Lord is called Immanuel, that is "With us-the Deity."

Some have objected to the term "limitation," but is this, after all, different in effect from saying that the Lord emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7)? Was not the Man of Sorrows of Isaiah 53 One subjected to very severe limitations? Dumb like a sheep before its shearers, just as before He came, He had been shorn of the glories He had in God's form.

Rather than ask: how could Christ, considering His ignorance of certain things, the humiliations of His earthly life, and His likeness to our miserable and weakly constitutions, actually be God, we ought to ask, How could He be *other* than God, how could God have come down among men otherwise, in a form that could die. How could God on the New Earth dwell with man if not in Christ and as Son?

Some of Mr. Judd's arguments are manifestly very weak. For example, he writes seven pages upon Matt. 28:19, which verse "is generally regarded as an unanswerable one in favor of the trinitarian doctrine." Yet at the finish we are astonished to discover that he has not accounted for the formula. Obviously, there is a trinity of some kind, but he fails to explain why the three are mentioned.

There are many other points in his booklet which we might criticize, but unfortunately, he makes this to some extent useless, by relying too much upon scholars and versions and human authority, instead of upon the actual Words of God.

Truly, indeed, there is only one God—the God of the Ages. But it is *Himself* that this God has manifested in the Christ, not some other *separate* Person.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 7

### Is God One Person?

We now reach what is perhaps the most difficult problem in all theology. Are the Father and the Son separate and distinct individuals or persons? Too long has this problem been quietly shelved by those from whom we expected illumination. That there are certain distinctions in the New Testament is undeniable. We must take the words of the Lord as we find them. The universal tendency has been to make Him more than He says, with the infallible result that His glories have been dimmed. It can never be of true faith to seek to improve upon the divine record.

Among mankind a son is always separate and distinct from his father, and it is assumed that in regard to God the same law applies. Yet we must keep in mind that in humanity no son is the exact image or duplicate of his father. He reproduces features from his mother, and not only so, but from a long line of ancestors.

God delights in human diversity. Every one of us is unique, and God requires our uniqueness. He is the Great Differentiator who teems forth His own peculiar Race in such diversity that no two individuals are exactly similar. Sometimes the humble believer, or even unbeliever, will ask, How can I know that God loves me, and requires me? Proof that we are of God's creation, and that He requires every human soul, may be found in the extraordinary fact that each and every human being is unique and diverse. No two human faces are entirely identical, no two voices are the same in tone and timbre, no two human gaits are quite the same, while the handwriting of each person is distinct.

God's Son, however, is unique in a very different sense. He is an exact replica, in visible form, of all that is inherently or substantially God, the invisible (Heb. 1:3). This being so, we may reasonably affirm that the Son is the visible of the invisible. In other words, the Father and the Son are complementary. No man may see anything of the Father except in the Son. No man may believe in the Father unless he believes in the Son. That is to say, however much the Father may seem to be differentiated from the Son, we cannot have the one apart from the other. We cannot have God without both Father and Son. We cannot even contemplate God without thinking of both Father and Son, or of the Father in the Son. The Son could not have existed apart from His Father, while the Father would have been no Father at all without having His own Son. As Dr. Fairbairn writes in "Christ in Modern Theology,"—The two are so associated as to be indissoluble; the correlation involves a unity, which yet does not become identity. He is in the Father, the Father in Him; and to see the Son is to see the Father, for they two are one. Their being is so concordant that the Son can do nothing of Himself; and as the Father has worked hitherto, so He works."

There is a sense in which, as the Lord said, "I and the Father—we are One" (John 10:30). Because, as He declared "I came forth out from God, and have arrived here" (John 8:42). He proceeded forth, or emerged, out from God. Sonship, as an ideal, must have existed within God ere He could become a Father.

If the Son is in some way God, or in some respects equal with God, yet a separate and distinct Person from God, then it follows there are two Gods. But a Biunity of Divine Persons is no more scriptural or

reasonable than the Trinity of orthodoxy. Those who condemn the tritheistic Trinity ought not to maintain that there are two separate Persons called God. It was largely because the idea of a tritheistic Trinity arose among the early Church Fathers, due to the Latin language superseding and displacing Greek, that Mohammedanism arose, and became one of the chief opponents of the Christian faith.

Thomas not only called the Son of God "Lord," but also "God," and was neither reproved nor corrected. The disciple who tells us this must have agreed with the opinion of Thomas.

It is this Biunity or Ditheism which produces endless distraction and uncertainty in the minds of well nigh every believer. There arises a constant and unsatisfying dualism of Christ AND God which prevents the heart and mind from attaining rest and peace. This is specially in evidence at meetings and in churches, in prayers and hymns. Have we not all heard earnest people praying, first to the Father, then to the Son as though He was another Person, unable to explain why they pray thus? It is evident that such people have not attained the simple truth of God in Christ. Not God **AND** Christ, but God **IN** Christ. Many such honest souls there are, afraid to admit their perplexity, their want of satisfaction, their distraction, just as many partake artificially in the Lord's Supper, at the wrong time of day, in the wrong order, and get no benefit beyond the unhealthy feeling that they have done their duty.

Such distraction tends to push into the background more or less either the Father or the Son. Due to apparent dualism, the vision of God as He actually is, becomes obscured.

Let us be done with all artificial observances and habits and ideas. God wishes none of them, and the sacred writers encourage none of these things. It is not for us to dwell foolishly in the dreamy land of Alazoneia (make-believe, imposture, pretentiousness; 1 John 2:16; James 4:16).

In the Son of God we ought to behold God Himself fulfilling and discharging His own righteous law, giving Himself, sacrificing Himself, suffering Himself, so that His beautifully articulated purpose of the eons may be consummated. It was no outsider or commoner whom God called upon to put into execution His plan for the universe. It must be God Himself Who accomplishes this, and not at all a person distinct or separate from God. When the Son came forth out from the Father, it was as though God, in some sense distinguished from Himself, came forth into the world and the universe, not a separate person from God. Not merely a God-filled man, but God Himself actually in Christ. Christ must be a genuine and effectual Mediator—one who unites in Himself both Godhead and manhood, so that as God finds in Him the true Man, man may find in Him the true God. Every human being, therefore, who becomes united with Him by faith, thereby becomes united with God.

In Christ God is visualized as Son, standing in relation to God as Father. In the final stage of the days, God talked to the Hebrews in a Son, or, in Son, as the Greek puts it (en huiO; Heb. 1:2). Young suggests "in (the person of) a Son," but this is misleading. Rotherham somewhere makes the excellent suggestion of "only." God talked "only" in the mode as Son. He came and talked as the Son of Mankind, the universal Son of all mankind. It is this universality of His that renders absurd any idea that He had ordinary human parents, for had He had ordinary human parents He would have possessed a distinct human individuality of His own just like all other men.

As the Son of the Deity (ho Theos), Christ is not the Deity, but is Divine. This is carefully brought out by John in chapter 1:2. It is a mistake to translate by "and God was the Word," unless we take the word God as very emphatic and in an adjectival sense. In order to make idiomatic English, it is necessary to translate as "and the Word was GOD," or as Moffatt, "the Logos was divine." Were the proper sense "God was the Word," then, to be truly consistent, we must render John 4:24 as "Spirit (is) God," or "Spirit (is) the Deity." But in idiomatic English we must say, "God is SPIRIT."

Some have objected to the term God the Son, as being unscriptural. Yet it is not unscriptural, so long as we think of this Son as being the Divine one, not the Deity. The Lord certainly never claimed to be the Deity. Perhaps no one would object to the expression the Divine Son, as His Father was Holy Spirit, yet the expression is not scriptural.

For those who think there are two distinct Persons revealed in the New Testament, it will be worthwhile to study the position as regards the Old Testament. There we are told of the God upon whom no man could gaze and live. Psalm 139 tells us of God the Omni-percipient, from whose Spirit we are unable to flee, who knows our every word. Knowledge of this kind is too marvelous for us; it is inaccessible, and we are unable to attain to it (verse 6). So we are thrust back upon pure faith. That is God as the transcendent One, who knows no limitations, who originates all creation.

Yet the Israelite was well aware that God had appeared occasionally, and in human form, even in the guise of frail humanity (Gen. 18:2). But what Israelite has ever claimed that in his Hebrew scriptures two separate Divine Persons may be discovered? "Jehovah our God-Jehovah one" claimed the pious Israelite, and he believed nothing else. Those individuals who encountered the Visible God never thought of inventing such an idea as a Second Person in the Godhead. He was simply known as Jehovah or Elohim. He was the visible aspect of the invisible God. Were there two separate and distinct Persons in the Old Testament known as Jehovah? If not, why can we not be as rational as the Jew when we turn to the New Testament?

It is very necessary for every believer to distinguish between God as the invisible, who transcends all limitations, out from whom are all things, and God the visible, in whom coheres all creation, who reveals God to His people, through whom are all things. But we must not press this distinction so far as to postulate two separate Divine Persons in anything like the human sense of the word person. In Christ we do not see a different Person from God, but God Himself, revealing the boundless and never-ending perfections of His nature as One who is at the same time Divine and Human. In this flawless Divine Son the Father approaches us and gives us Himself. Only in the Son may we see and recognise the Father, and only thus can Holy Spirit possess us and operate within us. Only in such a spirit may we avoid the endless distraction there is in prayer when we pray to two separate Persons, one in heaven and one present everywhere. Little wonder that so very few believers pray and can pray, when they are in a complete fog regarding the God they seek to approach. Prayer to the Father which ignores the Son, the Son who is both Divine and Human, misses its mark, and gets nowhere. All that God does become to us, He becomes in His Son. Only in the Son is the Father revealed; only in the Son does the Father come to save and bless us; only through faith in the Son, and that union with the Son which faith produces, can we have access to the Father.

Evangelical orthodoxy has gone far astray in pressing the doctrine that the Man Jesus Christ was Himself actually God, instead of maintaining that God was IN Christ, so far as Infinite Being could express Himself in a finite form. We ought to visualize GOD HIMSELF in Christ, rather than seek to prove the Deity of Christ. Bitter controversies have arisen through the Church laying undue emphasis upon the Person of Christ, instead of upon the revelation of the Father in Him. Thus, Christendom has been permeated with a dualism of Christ and God, which produces endless confusion and doubt. As a spiritual personality, Christ is one with God.

We must view the acts of Christ as the acts of God, the sufferings and extreme humiliation of Christ as those of God Himself, the love of Christ as the supreme love of the Father. One eternal indivisible Divine personality all along, limited by His humanity, yet making that humanity the expression of His Deity. Truly did the Father sacrifice Himself in the gift of His Son. Only GOD could have revealed such deep love, and only in such Divine humility,—not a person separate or distinct from God. Had Christ been

only a human being devoted to what he believed to be God, His life and sufferings could never have been any revelation of the love of God. Should we endeavour, apart from the personal Christ, to seek for a short cut to God, the result must be that faith becomes feeble, and the joy of the divine presence fades out of our consciousness. If we would worship God, it is not some vague idea we must worship.

We must find communion with a real Divine Presence—God in Christ. Only this real unity of Person can give perfect spiritual and mental peace and rest. And it is only in Holy Spirit that we can realize this wonderful unity of the Father and the Son. And in the Lord Jesus we discover the manifestation of God as being in Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Some, who ought to know better, have sought to drive a wedge betwixt Father and Son by averring that though the Man of Sorrows suffered continually while on earth, His Father has ever existed in the realm of perfect bliss incapable of feeling pain or sorrow. Were this in fact true, Father and Son must needs be two distinct Persons. Even those who maintain that the Son is the Emblem of all the roles that the Father assumes (Heb. 1:3), all the characteristics in which God appears, are guilty of this perversion. Because He inhabits light inaccessible, and is the happy and only Potentate, the only One having immortality (1 Tim. 6:15-16), it is facilely assumed that God cannot undergo suffering.

Paul bore witness to the Jews from the prophets and Moses, not of a conquering Christ, but of a Christ capable of suffering.

For that is what the Greek word means (pathEtos, Acts 26:23). But Israel had no place for a suffering Messiah, just as many today have no room for a suffering God. A good human father would always suffer were his son in agony, but God must remain altogether impassive under all circumstances. Yet we are told that the suffering Son is the exact Image of His Father!

Why it is that the fact of God's love seems today so unreal, so fictitious, so artificial? Why does it not galvanize His people? Simply because God is so often viewed as impassive, and thus somewhat indifferent, if not distant. The spectacle is presented of an unnatural schism within the Godhead—the Son appeasing the Father's wrath.

Do you think that God could be happy, could be The Happy God, without undergoing great suffering? Can even any human being know real happiness, without having suffered? Such happiness would be pure selfishness, therefore very impure happiness. We recollect that the Greek words for "suffering" (paschO, pathos, pathEma) all contain also the idea of experiencing. True sympathy means suffering along with others, but also experiencing the pain or sorrow.

Are not the finest saints those whose lives are full of vicarious suffering for other saints, or for their fellow-men, or their country? This was the principle in Israel long ago, when the seers and prophets so identified themselves with the sins of the race in suffering-sorrow that they bore them up to God and sought God's mercy. Their lives had to be full of sorrow before they could sufficiently sympathize with the erring race. Typical was Hosea, with his loose-living wife. His home life was sad and he was broken-hearted. In his own domestic tragedy he beholds the tragedy of Israel. "How shall I give thee up?" cries Jehovah of Ephraim, as no doubt Hosea had exclaimed of his erring wife. Does he not feel that Jehovah also suffers as he does, because Jehovah's wife, Israel, keeps on sinning and playing with other gods?

A relative of mine once sneered at the Bible because God instructed Hosea to marry Gomer. But how else could God's Prophet realize the enormity of Israel's sins? Husband and wife are one flesh, therefore he, the righteous one, felt he was as guilty as Israel.

In a similar fashion The Son of Mankind, the unique Son and product of Mankind must have understood His close relation to a guilty race. Though without sin, He identifies Himself with the race.

If, however, Christ suffered while God remained in a state of sublime bliss, Christ could be no revelation of the love of God. Nothing can suffer so deeply as real love. God's vast love for the world did not make Him give up His Son so that the Son by undergoing the suffering might obviate any suffering on the Father's part. It WAS God, who, in Christ, was "throughout-changing" a world, or, who was engaged in a thorough world-changing operation (2 Cor. 5:19). The past tense here indicates something which transpired upon the Cross. This might dispose of the notion that God is now "conciliating" the world.

If God can feel and display wrath, can He not feel anguish? Righteous wrath can produce anguish, and deep suffering can produce a holy anger.

Truly it is a magnificent conception which Du Bose has given us in stating his opinion that God completes His Deity in the Incarnation and upon the Cross. Could it be otherwise? As Hitchcock says in his most useful book, "The Atonement and Modern Thought," concerning Christ. "The dualism implied in the expression 'GOD and Man' with an undue emphasis on the 'and,' veils the fact that He was GOD acting and suffering in and through and as man—the same eternal, indivisible, Divine Personality all through, conditioned by His humanity, but making that humanity the expression of His Deity. His sufferings have, therefore, a tremendous significance, not only because they are the sufferings of the Creator for His erring creation, but also because they are the sufferings of the Creator in His traving creation."

Seeley, in "The Great Reconciliation" (1893) expresses the matter thus: "The purpose of God was. . . that He—the unconditioned God—would add to His Deity a nature conditioned 'in all points like as we are' (Heb. 2:17; 4:15), and live for a while as a man under the conditions under which other men live. We sometimes miss the full meaning of this union between the Creator and His creatures, through distinguishing too fully between the Persons of the Father and the Son. Human fatherhood begets a son that is a separate individual, and we are apt to think this should be true in the case of Divine fatherhood. But it is not so, or Christ could not have replied to Philip's request, 'Lord, shew us the Father,' with the startling words, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (John 14:8-11). No man could truthfully use those words in speaking of his human father, because of the reality of the difference between the two individuals. We must believe that in some sense of the words, however mysterious, Christ and the Father are One."

In the creation the ultimate purpose of God must have been the realisation of His own perfect Divine life in human form. This is what He manifested in His Son. We discover in the Incarnation of God as Son the ruling principle of Creation. The universe was created through the Son and for Him, therefore for all Mankind, because He is THE Son of Mankind. That the Divine One should appear in human form is not only far from inexplicable or difficult to believe, but it is a moral and physical necessity for the world's development.

'When God conceived of the Creation, He did so in the Son. His ideal was sonship. But that Son was not a different Person from God as Father, He is God as Son, God in the mode or character of Son. Only in Christ do we find God manifested as God; only in that Son do we find the Father manifested as Father. No wonder that the centurion got a startling revelation of God, when he exclaimed (Mark 15:39), "Truly, this human being was God's Son." On the Cross he beheld not only a poor and weak human being, but also God. No wonder a poor Negro woman said of the Cross climax that, "it was to be expected," because it was what was most like God. So different from a well-known Negro in the United States, who was continually reading the Bible and claiming that he could always talk to God.

When a friend of mine asked him whether he knew the Lord Jesus Christ, he was dumb and flustered. His approach to that God was by way of his own visiting card, not through God's Son and he claimed that he received many answers to his prayers.

As one has well said, a real incarnation of God must be a becoming in mankind, and all real becoming is through a gradual process. The incarnation took ages to attain fulfilment. No other generation in Israel could have produced all the factors necessary for the Lord's life on earth. It was only when the fulness of the time arrived that God sent out His Son coming to be out of a woman, coming to be under law (Gal. 4:4). Very probably, no other generation of Israel was so utterly wicked and so full of its own self-righteousness, that it could be so insane as to kill the Lord of glory.

This process of becoming, on God's part, is, as we have seen, altogether in line with the meaning of the Name Jehovah. It was Jehovah, He who comes to be, He who comes to be closer and closer to mankind, who at last "becomes Flesh," arriving in human form.

But Jehovah is never two Persons. "Jehovah our God Jehovah One," was a prime truth among the Hebrews.

In a future article we hope to shew that the Incarnation affords the only satisfactory explanation and interpretation of the universe, and also of mankind and mankind's place in the universe. The universe is built upon it and around it. Surely such a stupendous event must be an act of God, and of God alone, and of the only God.

We shall now approach the matter of God's personality from another angle. Many years ago I heard a lady ask the leader of one of the Reconciliation sects, What are we saved from? The simplicity of the question stunned him, and he could give no answer. No wonder, because many have been the theories of the atonement or of salvation. Theology cannot furnish a complete philosophy or a satisfactory theory of salvation. Nor can the evangelical sects. Nor does Scripture provide a theory. But it gives something very much better. It gives the necessary facts, and it produces the salvation itself. The Lord Jesus is our salvation. He is in Himself all that salvation is or means. He is perfect holiness, therefore our sanctification. He is perfect righteousness therefore our righteousness. He is the life, therefore our life. Consequently, if we are in Him, we have salvation.

If, however, the Christ had only been an individual man picked out of other men, a specially favored human being, who, through obedience attained to righteousness and life and glory, would He not have been merely a picture or a revelation of what all men ought to be? Where would be the living bond between Him and us? What would there be to allay any feelings of jealousy on the part of other human beings? Why should one particular individual human being be picked out from the mass of mankind?

Paul was given to us as a pattern of the Lord's entire patience towards those about to be believing for eonian life (1 Tim. 1:16). Perhaps better, a pattern-process (hupotupOsis), because real patience is a process. Paul stands before us as a concrete example of this. God delights in using concrete examples. Instead of giving an elaborate disquisition on faith, He gives one concrete example—Abraham.

Who is it, then, that displays GOD to us? Does not Paul direct us to the illumination of the process of knowledge (gnOsis) of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? (2 Cor. 4:6). He is, as it were, God made concrete to us, so far as God can reveal Himself to mankind. As Douglas White, a medical doctor, states in his book, "Forgiveness and Suffering" (1913) the object and mission of the Lord was to shew to man, "projected as it were, on to the screen of human life, the hidden life of God; to unveil to man's



inward eye the face of God; to prove to man that God's heart is a wounded heart, yet a perfectly forgiving heart, because a heart of unextinguishable love."

It is GOD whom we are to grow to know in the face of Jesus Christ, not some one distinct from God, or an outsider. In human form He displays and reflects the heavenly radiance of the Sun of Righteousness.

History reveals its most climacteric event in the Heart and Mind behind the Creation *humbly becoming Flesh*, as the Explanation or Logos of God, and undergoing death for Sin, thus meeting man's most desperate needs and fervent longings, and transcending man's highest aspirations.

As Du Bose writes, "We speak of the incredible and impossible self-lowering or self-emptying of God in becoming man or in undergoing the death of the cross. Is the act in which love becomes perfect a contradiction or a compromise of the divine nature? Is God not God or least God in the moment in which He is most love? Where, before Christ, or where now otherwise than in Christ, and in the cross of the Divine, suffering together with and for man, where in all the story of the universe was or is love so love, or God so God!" ("The Gospel in the Gospels").

Elsewhere Du Bose writes, "No one who rises to this height can tolerate the idea that His humanity was but that of an individual human person in whom God exceptionally revealed His presence and power. The Lord of Glory was not an individual man in God; He was all humanity in God, because He was God Himself in Humanity." Again, "I unhesitatingly recognize in Him . . . no single man filled with God, but the fulness of the Godhead present and operative in all humanity. The humanity in Him is mine and every man's; the divinity in Him is God potentially present in every man for salvation and efficiently present and saving in every man who believes." Again, "It is not so much particular statements that prove the degree and manner of God's being in Christ, as the entire phenomenon of Christ Himself whose *ergon* (work) or actual operation in the world was to be His most exact definition and His most perfect credential." Yet again, "The life of God was manifested in Christ not by mere declaration of it, but by the very life lived and exhibited to men; so the Fatherhood of God is revealed not by anything Christ tells us, but in the concrete and visible reality of His sonship perfected before our eyes."

Who is our God? Just He who makes Himself known in the face of Jesus Christ. In Him intense love for every soul of Adam's race is complete and inextinguishable, because in Him divine humility was perfected. Apart from deep humility no one can live or experience the unfading love of 1. Cor. 13. Because He, the Mighty One, stooped to the lowest depths, He is also the utterly loveable One, taking us very close to His heart and making His face to shine upon us.

In future chapters we hope to deal with the extraordinary title of the Lord. "The Son of Mankind," which has been so imperfectly explained, and also we must return to the Logos doctrine. Nineteen hundred years ago two of the main themes of the Evangel concerned the "Son of Mankind" and the "Logos" or Word. In this twentieth century thinking people are concerned much with two problems, the increasing social problem of the world, and the upshot of the problems of Science. Now both these problems are to be explained by understanding how and why the Lord Jesus is "The Son of Humanity," and by understanding the implications of the Logos doctrine in so far as He is the Logos, or explanatory statement—of God, of Mankind, and of the whole universe. Science should know that there cannot be any complete break between matter and spirit, because the Logos of old has bridged them.

We hope to put our readers in possession of the facts which must have been clearly understood in the first century by the saints to whom John wrote, who, an eminent scientist states, were intellectually superior to the most of modern scientists.

At any rate, we trust we shall be able to recover new and fresh and stimulating facts of revelation, which will have the effect of banishing much of the unreality and artificiality and sophistication of present day theology and teaching.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 8

### The Son of Humanity

What a wealth of truth lies in this common title which the Lord so often called Himself. Very few times does He call Himself the Son of God (John 5:25; 10:36; 11:4), but on about fifty different occasions does He call Himself the Son of Man or Humanity. The expression occurs almost exclusively on the Lord's own lips. The apostles do not seem to use it, although Stephen uses it in Acts 7:56.

Many today hardly trouble to enquire into the implications of this title; the words seem too simple to require any explanation. Yet they are fraught with consequences at least as widespread and far-reaching as the glorious fact of Col. 1:20.

The Jews were evidently puzzled by the Lord's common appellation as is shewn by John 12:34, where they ask, "Who is this one, the Son of Mankind?" Not only so, but it is very probable that the disciples did not understand, at least at first, the import of this name.

Even when the Lord asked His disciples (Matt. 16:13), "Who are men saying the Son of Mankind is?" it is by no means clear that they understood what this expression meant. Peter, undoubtedly, answered the question truthfully, but it might be he answered a question the Lord did not ask or mean. Or did he seek to cover up his ignorance by substituting a statement which could not be gainsaid?

Note in Luke 9:20, where Peter answers the Lord's question by saying "The Christ of God," while Matthew also gives the information that Peter said, "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of God the Living One," that the Lord charges them to tell no one this fact, but He does say that *the Son of Mankind* must suffer many things and be killed and rise again.

Note also that the scene here is the district of Caesarea Philippi, right on the very northern confines of The Land, 120 miles away from Jerusalem, all but in Gentile territory. Note that the Lord was about to make His way to Jerusalem to face His agony and death—His death not only for Israel, but for all men.

It has been stated that nothing can bring out the devil in a wicked person more than the spectacle of a Sinless Man. It is quite impossible for us at present to comprehend the phenomenon of such a Man in the world. But the disciples experienced Him. The chiefs of the nation, however, must have been infuriated and maddened by His spotless and pure life. They failed to convict Him of any sin. The world ever scoffs at holiness.

But there was another factor which must have embittered the chiefs of Israel. The common name which the Lord used of Himself was something which the religious Jew could not tolerate. That Israel as a whole was totally and inherently unfit for the Kingdom of God is proven by the attitude of the throng in Jerusalem in Acts 22. Only when Paul tells them he had been appointed to go "unto Gentiles afar" did they lose control of themselves, and demand that he should live no longer.

Whom then is this Son of Mankind? He is nothing less than the unique Son of solidaric Humanity. He is a Representative of the whole race just as much as Adam was. The title belongs to the whole race of

mankind, just as the Lord belongs to the whole race. For the Lord so often to claim that He was **THE** Son of all Humanity was something the Jew could neither understand or allow. It was like reducing the religious Jew with his eonian divine privileges to the common rank of the outsider, the Gentile dog. Wishful thinking made the Jew look for a Messiah full of nationalist aspirations, who would overcome the hated Roman yoke. But Jehovah can always do what men do not expect. He sent a Messiah who was and is a worldwide Saviour, able to throw off the universal yoke of Sin.

In fact, we may say that the Lord's continual use of the name, The Son of Mankind, was a constant protest against the Jew's secular conception regarding the Messiah, which tended to nullify His message.

Observe also, when the chief priest questions the Lord whether He is the Christ, the Son of God, the Blessable One (Matt. 26:63; Mark 14:61), although He admits it, He immediately reverts to His more common name, and informs the Sanhedrin that in the future they will see the Son of Mankind sitting at the right hand of power, coming on the clouds of the sky. There must be a deep meaning in this. Why should the Lord, while admitting that He was the Son of God, make so much of His other title? Why did He lay so much emphasis upon this aspect of His life and being?

Some writers maintain that this was in order to guard against the error of denying the Lord's humanity, which crept into the primitive Church very early. As the Lord manifested many unequivocal proofs of Divine power, it was clearly necessary that He should remove any misconception regarding His manhood. Ordinary sons of Adam do not find it necessary to demonstrate that they are sons of mankind. It would be superfluous for any human being to lay claim to the fact that he was a son of humanity. But it was not this that the Lord claimed. With perfect confidence and a complete lack of any ambiguity, He sets Himself forth as being **THE** Son of Humanity. If this implies anything, it means He was the unique Son of the Race, the special Human Being. He stresses His Sonship-His Sonship with relation to His own Father God.

Other writers have pointed out that the term "The Son of Mankind is really equivalent to the "Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15). The two expressions signify much the same—the offspring or descendant of humanity.

If the title were a Messianic one, then we must explain why the Lord asked His disciples whom men said The Son of Mankind was, and why the Lord was asked (John 12:34) to explain the term.

It will be helpful to observe that the title continued all through the Lord's ministry, but ceased entirely after the resurrection (except for Stephen's mention of it in Acts 7) That is to say, the title refers to the Lord's lowly life of suffering on earth, and ought to be explained thereby.

Let us then briefly examine the features found associated with the life of the Son of Mankind. The Lord is no compound or double being, consisting of divinity, and humanity, sometimes acting as God and sometimes as a man only. He was not on earth living the transcendent life which the Father lives. He lived the lowly life of a man fully dependent on God, suffering the privations of a pilgrim. He was the Ideal Man, in whom the Divine conception of Humanity was fully realized, the True Man, in whom God's righteous and perfect standard was fully attained. He has *authority* on the *earth* to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24. Note that each writer carefully emphasizes authority and earth; also Greek does not distinguish between pardon and forgiveness). He is *Lord of the Sabbath* (Matt. 12:8). His appearance to establish the glorious kingdom of God will be like flashes of lightning from the sky (Luke 17:20-24). It is before the Son of Mankind that all the Gentiles will be gathered, when He sits upon His throne glorious (Matt. 25:32). The same Son of Mankind had nowhere to lay His head (Matt. 8:20). Happy are those who are spurned on account of the Son of Mankind (Luke 6:22). Although the Son of Mankind came eating

and drinking (just like other people), yet they said He was a heavy eater, a glutton (Matt. 11:19), here we must be careful to distinguish between the two Greek words for eating; *esthiein* means to eat lightly or moderately; *phagein* means to eat a full meal). Thus the Son of Mankind was not an ascetic. It was as Son of Mankind that He came to serve and give His soul a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Because He is a Son of Mankind, the Father gives Him authority to be doing judging (John 5:27).

As a youth Jesus progressed in wisdom and stature and favour (or agreeableness) with God and men (Luke 2:52). Just like other men and women, He toiled and travailed, hungered and thirsted, sorrowed and wept, suffered and died. He was obliged in all things to be made like the brethren (Heb. 2:17), so that He may become a *merciful* and faithful Chief Priest. He had to be perfected or matured through sufferings (v. 10). In no verse is His real and genuine humanity more clearly set forth than Hebrews 2:10,—in order to lead many sons into glory, the Inaugurator of their salvation had to be *matured* (teleiOsai) through sufferings. No mere simulacrum was He. He had to be tried in all respects, by way of likeness to us, yet apart from sin (Heb. 4:15). Yet *God* is incapable of this kind of trial (James 1:13). Only as Man could the Lord be tried thus. From what things He suffered, He learned obedience (Heb. 5:8). His entire life on earth had to be a life of pure faith and utter dependence upon His Father, as is shewn by His constant practice of prayer. All His works were performed as The Son of Mankind. Even though He was full of Holy Spirit and thus without sin, capable in a unique manner of experiencing the presence and power of God. He did not evince a wisdom or knowledge which could be described as more than human. Had He shewn on earth omnipotence or omniscience as belonging to Himself, His real humanity would have been destroyed. *It is the absence of these features which make His humanity so real that He can truly be The Son of Humanity.*

Some have been stumbled and staggered by Matt. 24:36, "Now concerning that day and hour no one is aware, neither the messengers of the heavens nor the Son; except the Father alone." Dr. Bullinger (1837-1913) could not accept this statement as it stood in our Bibles, and had recourse to the argument that the words for "except" (ei mE, if not) signified "if not" Christ was the Father.

We must not, however, in studying the vast subject of God and His Christ, seek to improve upon the sacred revelation. If we seek to put the Lord higher than the Scriptures do, we shall only abase Him, and cause confusion. His unparalleled humiliation it was that led to His mighty exaltation. Christendom has been plagued by those who wish to fortify and improve upon the Scriptures. The reason why the Lord while on earth did not possess omnipotence or know everything is clearly stated by Paul in Phil. 2:6-8. Christ Jesus, existing all along in God's form, was not usurping the place or power of God by being, *in some respects*, equal to God. On the contrary, He empties *Himself*, taking slave form, and coming to be in humanity's likeness. Obviously, He laid aside temporarily His powers. While on earth He is seen as Man, and that is why He calls Himself so often The Son of Humanity. At the same time, God was in Christ. God could be in Him just as in the coming day God will be fully within ourselves, while in the coming age He will be everything within everybody.

While we must not expect to see, in the Lord's life on earth, any complete revelation of divine almightiness or perfect knowledge, yet He fully displayed the divine love and righteousness.

In order to be the organic Head of all Humanity, He had to be a true Man, one in whom the Divine Idea realized itself consciously in human form. That is why in His consciousness His sonship towards God was so prominent. In Him God as Son realized His divine life in human form. God's Ideal for the Race was sonship, because Fatherhood implies sonship. This Ideal existed within God and for God. This was the motive power behind the creation. Mankind is to be set over all the works of God's hands (Heb. 2:7). God is not dealing with mere fragments of the Race of Man, because Man is God's Kin or Race.

Note the change which took place at the resurrection of the Lord. "There is given to Me all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). It is better to read *edothE* thus rather than "was given," as a form *edosthE* would be impossible in Greek. It is an aorist form, timeless.

After the Lord's victorious ascension to heaven, Paul could write that in Him is dwelling the entire fulness of the Deity, bodily (Col. 2:9). The Lord received back that of which He had emptied Himself. While He was on earth His glory consisted of the fulness of grace and truth (John 1:14). In Him was nothing disagreeable or unkindly, nothing of falsehood. Grace and truth had been known before He came, but through Him came into being the fulness of grace and truth.

As a Man on earth the Lord had to walk entirely by faith in God. We must do the same, every step of the way. He grew in wisdom, just as any man utterly dependent upon God would do. Through His genuine and deep humility and meekness He came to understand what was in man, and thus what is not in man. Only those who know themselves and their weakness and shallowness can perceive the vanity which is in others. Because He was meek and humble in heart (Matt. 11:29), God could illuminate His path in due season. The same will happen to all believers, in some measure, who leave their lives in humble dependence on God. Flashes of illumination will come into the mind just at the right time, which cannot otherwise be accounted for.

Almost from the beginning Christendom has sought to lay too much stress on the person of Christ, instead of on the revelation of God in Him. From this has arisen the dualism of which we have complained, which can destroy inward peace. The Nicene Creed sought to conserve that it was **GOD**, none less than God, who was manifest and incarnate in His Son. The early believers indeed beheld **GOD** in Christ, the God who was the moving Spirit and sole principle and power in His life, the God to whom the Lord ascribed everything.

But at the same time, they perceived in the Son of Mankind that which God meant man to be, that which all along God had been aiming at, mankind as His sons, wholly after the Spirit, wholly filled with God. Man, conceived of by God as His Son, comes into manifestation in the fulness of time, and in that life God expresses Himself in human terms. He is Man altogether in union with God, one with God, and from the first possessed by God.

Surely it cannot be aught but error to put Christ in the place of God. To do so is quite contrary to His own teaching. In a great deal of religious literature, we find much made of "Christ," whereas very often "God" is hardly mentioned, or if He is mentioned, the subject is dealt with separately. This is altogether wrong, and it is strange that this is not more clearly recognized. Our religion is called the Christian religion, and therefore it has become Christocentric instead of Theo-centric. God, our Father, ought to have the same value for us, and relationship to us, as He had in the case of His Son.

Those who seek to heap honors upon the Son of Mankind, which He ascribed to His Father, force upon their faithful followers a faith which is fictitious and futile. Well do we remember, close upon thirty years ago, a teacher who claimed for the Lord "full Deity," whatever that meant, also the title "The Great God and Savior," and "The Almighty God." It was maintained that the Lord had "every attribute of Deity," being indeed "absolute Deity" and that on earth He claimed omnipotence. But when he was quietly asked by a questioner, "Did the Lord then pray to Himself?" he was completely nonplussed and had no answer.

Some fine believers have real honest doubts regarding God and Christ. Our aim is to seek to help them to a reasonable belief. We read the Gospels, and observe a Man who acts in everything as a God-filled Man, without a trace of sin, always speaking of God as something other and greater than Himself, praying to His God and putting His trust continually in God, sent by God to do His will, living as a human being,

then dying as surely God is unable to die. Can it be that He is actually Himself the God He proclaims, trusts, obeys, and worships?

What higher honor Can we in this life attain than to possess the humble disposition described, nay, enjoined on us, in Phil. 2:1-8? In decent society, he who can beat his breast and apologize gracefully and graciously takes the highest place.

Christ's highest glory lay in His utter humiliation and humility. But it was as the Son of Mankind and the Son of God that He stepped to the lowest place, not as the Father. Some have even said that it was as a humble Penitent that the Son of Man went to the Cross on behalf of the Race, but perhaps this thought is not to be found in the Scriptures. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; that Jesus is "Lord" and "The Son of God" and "The Son of Humanity." Paul tells us that God was in Christ. It is God who will be all in all at last, not Christ.

If we cannot be content and satisfied to think of Jesus as *Lord*, we must be wiser than the Scriptures, wiser even than God Himself, and we must be suffering from serious spiritual malaise.

As some have put it, we dare not create antagonism between faith in Jesus and His own Creed.

It may be true, as that most original and startling writer Du Bose says, that in the Incarnation God completes His Deity. But there is a sense in which the same is true in that grand event described in 1 Cor. 15:24-28, where the Son Himself, by giving up the kingdom or kingship to Him who is God and Father, and becoming subject, exalts His moral glory as nothing else could do, and enables *God* to become all in all.

Extraordinary thought, that God should thus as it were complete His Deity through a Man, through Manhood.

Were the Incarnation of God in Christ unrelated to the rest of history, instead of being the culmination of a long Divine process, it would be incredible. But, as the culmination of God's timeless scheme, it answers satisfactorily the questions, Why Mankind? and What is Man? It gives explanation to the Universe, for is not Mankind to be placed over the works of God's hands (Heb. 2:7)? The writer of this verse did not trouble to say that only some humanity would be placed over God's works. Mankind is viewed as one solidaric unity, whether in Adam or in the Son of Mankind. Like Adam, the Son of Mankind epitomizes the whole Race. All Mankind is summarized in Him. When God incarnated once for all as Son in humanity all men became potentially His sons. Christ was and is not only God in humanity, but He is, and shall yet place, all humanity in God.

That mankind is one and always has been one may seem difficult for many to believe. Yet consider that the Lord evidently believed this, when He took to Himself the name of being the Son of Humanity. The secret of the "Atonement" was the self-identification of the immanent and indwelling Christ with the human race. As the Son of Man He represents the whole race before God. The moral solidarity of mankind forms the basis of an atonement which is universal.

How true it is that none of us is living to himself (Rom. 14:7). Not a single life can be quite isolated or unrelated to others: Society could not exist without a network of duties and responsibilities, influences and relations. Even if we do not belong to or love the world we cannot get away from it. We are unconsciously involved in all the evils and follies of past generations, and not only so, but our own generation will pass on probably worse follies to its successors. Children suffer for the sins of their parents and even their forebears. One wicked or corrupt person can bring untold misery on many innocent

souls. In this life, sin does not always take toll of the real sinners, but often it punishes others. Good and evil are everywhere mixed up in this life. Mankind is one tree, one household, one race. No human being can cut himself loose from all others. When a community becomes degraded, it drags down the individual; and when one individual becomes degraded, he can drag down the community. Noble souls often suffer vicariously for others. The Lord did so, and yet there is a sense in which He was not to be separated from those who crucified Him, because He too was of their race. His identification with the race really intensifies the oneness of mankind presupposed in the atonement. Men and women may be far apart in language, colour, religion, nationality and ways of living, yet He who shared their common humanity can bring them all near to each other in spirit.

Was the Incarnation the culmination of a long Divine process? This view may seem new and strange to many. It was when the fulness of the time came that God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4:4). That means that this event could not have happened sooner. We can readily believe that the life of Christ was an expression in human time of that which was inherent always in God. The Cross manifests in time God's timeless love. Why should not the self-emptying of Christ Jesus also have been a timeless event? Some minds have been revolted at the idea of a sudden Kenosis (emptying) by Christ to become a Child.

We ought to look upon the Incarnation as the fulness in manifestation of God's creative work, the fulness of the Divine creative process. The first human then the second Human. But do we mean then, that the Lord was a creature? Assuredly not. We are repelled by the ignorant folly of those who can only see Him as a creature. His human body, of course, was part of the physical creation. But if He was and is the realization and expression in human form of that which was inherent or eternal within God, then He is no creature. The Divine thought and mind and life which were expressed in His Son pre-existed within God. The humanity in which God manifested Himself has its origin and source in God.

We must also consider the spiritual development of Israel, from the time of Abraham to the time of the Lord. The soil had to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah. He could only have appeared in a generation which was earnestly looking for Him. For all we know, the Magi from the East (Matt. 2:1) may have been very pious Israelites. It is unthinkable that the Messiah could have appeared in a nation which worshipped demons, such as may be found in India or Japan. There may have been much devout prayer in the pious and righteous remnant in Israel that God would send His Messiah. The Captivities had cured the nation of its idolatry, and the hateful Roman occupation had made the people groan as never before for deliverance. We may be sure the necessary atmosphere was present, into which the Lord could be born and grow up and attain manhood.

Nations do not produce geniuses all in a day. The special genius of a nation is gradually developed from generation to generation. In England, Shakespeare could not have been produced in any other generation. The same can be said of any great man. Had we ourselves been born one thousand years ago, we should have been very different, in a great many ways. Development, whether political or religious, is handed on by inheritance.

The Lord was as a root out of a dry ground, but His spiritual environment must have been of the right kind. In a way, the spiritual development of the nation attained its fruition in His birth.

Today, the Jew ought to behold in the Christ the very culmination of his own ancient Hebrew faith and ancestry. He ought to recognize the same God as gave the Law, and spoke in the prophets, coming to Israel in lowly human form as the revelation of the secret of God.

Just as mankind was conceived in the image of God, so the human can become the manifestation of the Divine. All along God must have longed to enter the human race. The prophets of Israel had seen the



Divine plan dimly, because the spirit of Christ was in them, and they looked forward to Him. Probably they grasped much more than we imagine. Some of them had beheld wondrous and sudden appearances of Jehovah, in the form of a Man. But if He was about to enter right into mankind, as a descendant of Adam, He must be born as a Child and grow as a Child and learn as a Child. Only one nation could have produced a Mary and all the necessary religious and theocratic background for His training and education.

At last, in the fulness of time, the grand Divine Idea realizes itself consciously in human form. He who was continuously delineated in the Hebrew Scriptures as the one who would in due time manifest Himself, at last comes right into history. God realizes Himself as the Son of Humanity, and Man realizes that He is the Son of God.

Who is this Son of Man? He is the unique and only Son of all humanity as representing all mankind before God. Never yet has humanity had any *corporate* interest in itself. But God in Christ has—and His interest is timeless, eternal, and unlimited. Any other view must be an insult to Him. To aver that one human soul could remain in lostness permanently is virtually to deny the true import of the Lord's title "The Son of Humanity." That name is a guarantee of what God will yet accomplish. If it is verily true that God *loves the world*, there must be Divine, imperishable love for every member of Adam's race—that race which *God Himself entered* as The Son of Mankind. Did He not come into the race to *save* it?

The Kingdom of God—does that not signify simply *God Himself in humanity*, God permanently incarnate in mankind in Christ, God eventually tabernacling in mankind (Rev. 21:3), leading up to the glorious Finish or Consummation of 1 Cor. 15:28, when God is all things in the universe of mankind?

Only in manhood, as Man, can God become intelligible to us. That is the measure of His self-revelation, but it is a manhood raised to a level not otherwise known to us, though a human level. Christ, the true centre of the whole race of man, our only link with the Father, is God self-conscious of and in His humanity.

The disordered and broken heart of humanity can only be set right and comforted through beholding in the Son of Mankind a truly human heart—even the very heart of the Father Himself; God's great human heart, hurt and sore through the sin of His creatures, causing sinful men and women to realize the measure and the awfulness of their own guilt and shortcomings.

Here we discover the root and the kernel of that glorious Good News which can bring every sinner back into the Father's heart.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 9

### The Logos or Word, Part 2

Our former chapter on this subject (Chapter 4) was only introductory and very elementary, dealing mainly with the views of Philo.

We must now probe a little more deeply into the meaning of the Greek term **LOGOS**, and enquire accurately into its precise and concordant significance. The Logos doctrine is one of the weightiest in the whole Bible. You cannot understand the doctrine of the Godhead apart from this. It is the keystone which holds other doctrines in place. Everyone knows what a word means in the English language. It is a single term or expression. The Greek word Logos, however, never signifies one single grammatical word. Even in 1. Cor. 14:19 where Paul writes about talking five "words" with his mind, rather than ten thousand "words" in a tongue, he does not mean individual words, as we are so apt to think. The Greek word always means a statement, a statement which explains something. In Modern Greek a single word is a *lexis*, from which we get the term lexicon. Paul meant five statements, or ten thousand statements. These might be long or short. Gal. 5:14 informs us that the entire law has been fulfilled in one word, that is, "Thou shalt love thine associate as thyself"—six words in the Greek. Whereas, the whole "book" of Acts is one word, because Luke calls his earlier Gospel "the former treatise" (C. V. The first account). Acts is his later treatise or "word". His Gospel contains 24 chapters, with 1,151 verses, and in Greek not far off one hundred thousand single letters. His two treatises or accounts are therefore *explanatory statements*.

Let us apply this rule to 2 Tim. 1:13. "Hold fast the form of sound words." Some have stumbled here through lack of strict concordance. The C.V. reads "Have a pattern of sound words," but it sublinear is more correct in shewing "sayings." Of course, sound statements must be couched in sound terms. But Paul does not state that only those terms used by him may be utilized.

While we believe strongly in being as concordant as possible when dealing with terms found in the Scriptures, it is sometimes the case that being too concordant may result in some of the meaning of a Greek or a Hebrew word being lost. If we confine the meaning of the Greek word *logos* to word, account and expression, we shall not arrive at the full truth; let us then examine the wider *scope* of the term, as expressed in the British A.V. This will help to throw up or reveal the actual sense of the Greek term.

In 50 cases it is rendered by "saying." "This is a faithful saying" (1. Tim. 1:15; 4:9). "These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:9). Yet we could not aver that He who became flesh was the Saying (John 1:1). Eight times the word is rendered as "account," and this comes close to the sense required. The Town Clerk of Ephesus was worried in case he had to "give an account" of the disturbance, for which there had never been any real cause (Acts 19:40). It was more than a word he might have to render; it was more than a saying; it was not only an account, but it was an *explanation* he might have to give, and that would not be easy.

The Lord asked the religious leaders in Israel "one question" (Mark 11:29). This also comes very near the sense. He wanted from them one statement, and a statement which explained something. Whence was the baptism of John? Anyone can see how inadequate it would be here to read saying or expression. In Luke 20:3 the A.V. has it "I will also ask you one thing."

The Pharisees sought how they might entangle the Lord "in (his) *talk*" (Matt. 22:15). Literally "in statement," or "in a statement." If only they could prove Him wrong in one statement!

Peter asked Cornelius "for what *intent* ye have sent for me?" (Acts 10:29). Peter wanted a reason, an explanation. Apparently, he could not understand why a Gentile should approach him. Twice indeed in the A.V. *logos* is rendered by "reason." 1 Peter 3:15, "a *reason* of the hope that is in you." "Word" would not do here; neither would "expression," nor is "account" sufficient, as this might only mean a description. But we ought, one and all, to be able to give a very realistic *explanation* of the expectation which we hold.

At Luke 5:15 the A.V. tells us "But so much the more went there a *fame* abroad of him," and at ch. 7:17, "And this *rumor* of him went forth throughout all Judaea." What rumor of Him? That "A great prophet is raised up among us," and that "God visits His people." That was how the throng *explained* the Lord and the miracle He wrought.

But what are we to make of Romans 9:28, "a short *work* will the Lord make upon the earth"? Some of the more modern versions use here the word sentence. Dr. Wand, "God will execute a precise and summary *sentence* upon the earth." Moffatt, "The Lord will carry out his *sentence* on earth with rigor and dispatch." Goodspeed, "The Lord will execute his *sentence* rigorously and swiftly on the earth." Cunningham, "for a *sentence*, accomplishing it and shortening it, the Lord will execute upon the earth."

In chapter 4 we sought to shew how the Hebrew term *dabar* (a word) meant both the statement made and its result. Is not that the true meaning in Rom. 9:28? Isaiah's prophecy means that the Lord's decree or statement once issued, will bring about its irresistible result, which will be self-explanatory. To the Hebrew, *deber* (pestilence) was God's utterance, which explained to him that something wrong had taken place.

A fine Welsh writer states that neither Latin nor any modern language supplies anything really satisfactory as the true meaning of the Greek word *logos*. Perhaps there is no single English word which can contain it. All we can seek to do is to supply the thought. At Rom. 9:28 the Concordant Version renders by "For the Lord will be doing a conclusive and concise *accounting* on the earth." But the Word of John 1:1 was not an *accounting*. The Scriptures are not an accounting, yet they are God's Word.

Christ Jesus is God's Statement concerning Himself, His explanation of God, of Mankind, and of the entire universe. He is the utterance of God, and the result of God's utterance shewn in action.

Lest any reader might be bored by the study of mere words, let it be stated that the power of accurate and sound terms is enormous to the believer. We cannot arrive at true thoughts apart from accurate terms. In Old Testament times God's Spirit fell on the prophets, apparently suddenly at times, and with great power. But since the written, revelation of God's mind and truth in the New Testament, and the Incarnation of God into the human race, God's Spirit can only fill a believer or influence an unbeliever, through His written revelation in words.

Any good English dictionary contains hundreds of words which incorporate the Greek word *logos*. A dialogue between two persons consists of questions and statements and answers, and might be quite a long talk. Biology means a statement and explanation of subsistence (not merely life, but subsistence). Ethnology is a statement and explanation of Nations and races.

It is not merely the preaching of the cross that is foolishness to those who are getting lost; nor is it the word or account of the cross that is stupidity. It is the *explanation* of the cross that seems totally

meaningless to most people (1. Cor. 1:18). Yet it is exactly this explanation which to those who are getting saved is God's dynamic (*dunamis Theou*). That is why we are so eager to seek to explain Who it was who suffered on the Cross. Who but an all-wise Deity could have thought out such a scheme, weak, useless, and unmeaning to those outside the door, but vitally essential and full of interest and power to those within the room?

Let us briefly examine the other place where the Lord is called "The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13). Why should He be so called here? Because He is seen as coming out of heaven to execute judgment upon the nations. His sudden coming will bring home to the nations that there is a God. In other words, the secret of God will no longer be any secret to the world. That secret will be finished (Rev. 10:7). God's long silence will be completely broken. Messiah will come in flaming fire, as God's executive, His all-powerful Word, God's explanation of Himself. God's Word fulfilling itself and revealing God. All earth's long and weary history will suddenly find its explanation. Mankind will understand the mystery of its existence. The heavenly beings will look on in amazement and learn secrets they have long wished to understand. Christ's unveiling will be a manifestation and explanation of God affecting the utmost bounds of creation.

The doctrine of the Word or Logos appears to have been communicated to early mankind in some form. According to Brugsch, to the ancient Egyptians God was a Spirit dwelling in His cosmic house which He had furnished and built, and Thoth was His Word or Explanation, through whose voice all had been created.

The truth imparted by Noah, however, was soon corrupted, though it may have lingered with individuals. But from the time of Abraham and the nation of Israel, the stories of the theophanies became woven into the national history of Israel, and spread into the surrounding nations. As we have shewn, the name Jehovah signifies God as manifesting Himself, ever manifesting Himself historically under some new relation. "I shall become (everything) that I may (require to) become."

Yet even Israel appears to have lost the meaning of the Name. It was left to John to bring into light once more the ancient doctrine of the Logos. But soon the Church entered a very dark period, followed by the rise of the Roman Church, and the displacement of the Greek tongue by the Latin. This shift to Latin corrupted every important doctrine, and Protestantism groans under this blight to this day. Instead of the word Logos in John 1:1, appeared the Latin *verbum*, the precise meaning of which is very different.

Perhaps it is only within the past fifty years or so that the Logos doctrine has been partly recovered. Yet where do we hear much about it in meetings or churches? Assuredly it is one of the most important teachings in Scripture.

John sets forth the Lord Jesus as the key, the clue, the explanation of God and Man and Nature, and the Universe. And moreover, this key opens up the truth contained in many scriptures.

Most human beings go through life and hardly seem to ask themselves what they are doing here, why they are alive at all, whither they are going. The idea of a God is shunned. A very fine character said to me, "It is better not to think of death at all." Such souls cannot give a reason for their existence. Yet the Logos doctrine explains all these problems.

For far too long has Science sought to belittle mankind, by making man to be of no importance. The era of Darwin meant that the universe was really dead and without any true meaning. Mankind had no higher ancestry than the ape or the jelly-fish. This has led to mankind losing confidence in itself, losing moral

courage, abandoning moral standards, and yielding to evil. Luke traces the origin of mankind right back into God Himself (Ch. 3:38). But Science would not have that—anything else rather.

More recently, however, Science has been giving attention to that most striking fact in nature—individuality. Within mankind, observe how the wonderful and beautiful sex principle divinely makes for endless variety. We cannot shut our eyes to that endless variety in all nature, variety that could only have been planned and produced by a God who desires and *needs* that vast variety. The value to God of the individual must be extraordinary.

Another thing which Science has at long last discovered is that anthropomorphism is no longer the frightful bogey it once was. Let us ponder the vast import of this. As an eminent writer puts it, "Is not the fear of anthropomorphism the greatest bluff of all time, negating not only the practice of prayer for the believer, but the validity of thought for the thinker?" ("Man and His Meaning" by J. Parton Milum, Ph.D.). Surely if God has come right into our human race, He has given it a dignity that it never possessed before. The Sacred Writings shew us Mankind eventually enthroned in Christ under God. Those who are continually harping upon: the present unworthiness and worthlessness of mankind, ought to concentrate upon the mighty words of Psalm 8:4 or Hebrews 2:6, "What is a human being, that Thou art mindful of him. . . .?" It is not that God is going to place Mankind over some of the works of His hands, but over the works of His hands, *all* His works. Nor do the prophets visualize only a fraction of mankind thus engaged. Christendom has grossly debased God's Truth by according to Him a peculiar preference for dealing in fractions. It is the creation (past and present, *ktisis*, still going on) which was subjected (Passive Voice) and is still being subjected to vanity or worthlessness, not of its own wish, but on account of Him who subjects it, in view of its complete deliverance (Romans 8:20, 21).

He around whom all the Scriptures revolve, who is the clue to all their secrets, the explanation of all problems concerning God and the world and history, envisaged humanity in its entirety, and identified Himself with the essential and universal human. And just as this unique and cosmic Son of Mankind came forth out from the Father, so He derives the race made in God's image from the same transcendent source.

Science has belittled and lowered mankind, because to ignore God is necessarily to belittle mankind. The old mechanical view of the universe ignored the individual and arrived at its laws by means of averages. This was a fatal blunder, because no real advance in knowledge was possible until the individual exceptions were weighed and considered. The same is very true of Bible concordance. Sometimes the English key fails to fit every lock of the Hebrew or Greek word. The single exception will oblige us to try another key.

The great message of the Incarnation is that the true human is also divine. The ancient fathers of the Church were quite unafraid to declare that God assumed our flesh as Man in order that mankind might partake of the divine nature. That is how they understood the Greek Scriptures.

Science would fain bridge the vast gulf between spirit and matter. But how? History reveals that this has already been done. For what seemed to be an impassable gulf was completely bridged when the Logos *became flesh*. Here is a wonderful story far more marvelous than the finest fairy tale. Here in a flash we find Mankind related to the entire universe, and very closely related to God. He assumes a body of clay just like our body of humiliation.

The scientist's conception of physical evolution must proceed from the simple to the complex, from the poorer to the richer. But John's view was infinitely more scientific: He visualizes the Creator bringing into being the universe through travail and privation. It was not out of nothing that God created all things, but

out of Himself. Some would declare that the whole process of creation is a self-emptying like that of Phil. 2:7. Within the Deity there exists both an active and a passive mood. As the passive He could suffer and undergo privation.

Let us briefly take a look at a Hebrew term which is intensely scientific. In Gen. 14:18-22 we read that "Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest for El Elyon (God Most High). And he is blessing him and saying, blessed be Abram for El Elyon, possessor of heavens and earth." But no Hebrew could possibly understand the word "possessor" here, for *qanah* (which may be related to our words win and gain) invariably signifies to acquire, and to acquire through effort or sacrifice or labor of some kind.

El Elyon acquired His universe through sacrifice or effort? Why not? *Were not the Incarnation and the Cross closely bound up in the Creation?* But let us examine the very first occurrence of this word in the Bible, at Gen. 4:1. Here Eve exclaims "I acquire a man—Jehovah." It was something more than merely getting, obtaining or receiving a man-child. Very often the word is rendered by buy or purchase. But we may be sure that Jehovah never bought the universe, any more than Eve bought Cain. Where in Proverbs we read about *getting* wisdom or understanding, as in 4:5, 7; 19:8, we ought to read *acquiring*. And is it not generally the case that real wisdom and understanding have to be acquired, often through pain and sorrow and privation of some kind?

"Buy the truth and sell it not" is a commonly quoted statement (Prov. 23:23), which if acted upon strictly would greatly impoverish certain concerns. But the Hebrew tells us "Acquire *truth* and do not be selling." To acquire truth is a lifelong task. We must ever be disciples-learners. Often this may entail intense mental travail.

If, as Dr. Tennant writes, "The Cosmos is no logical geometrical scheme, but an adventure of divine love," it is an adventure which has brought upon God eonian travail. All genuine love must have its travail. Every mother who brings forth a child in travail experiences a little of the divine travail in creation, and learns more about the heart of God than all Science can tell us.

Paul had to travail with the Galatians until Christ was formed in them (Gal. 4:19). If that is not our attitude to one another, then we do not possess the Christ spirit.

We have stated that the primitive Gospel was deeply concerned with two outstanding themes, which center round the ideas "The Son of Mankind" and "The Logos." What do we mean by that? We mean that both of these appellations are terms of universality, terms closely related to every creature. Just as every human being is a wonderful microcosm, a small world in himself or herself, so also solidaric humanity is one vast macrocosm, or big world in itself. But just as the destruction of a vital part of the microcosm terminates its existence, so also Mankind is no longer a unity before God if it becomes partly lost permanently. God-in Christ has assumed the closest link with solidaric humanity that was possible. But He cannot be the Son of Mankind or the Logos towards merely a *part* of the Race of Man. We humans possess all the faults that the very wickedest men and women possess, even if only latent and incipient or dormant. The knowledge of that fact ought to make us yearn for the deliverance of the entire Race from its thralldom. Did not the complete sinlessness of the Lord produce within Him an intense longing for the complete salvation of the whole Race of which He was a member?

In the present day, two of the most urgent problems among thinking people are concerned with the social and ethnic question, and the outcome of scientific discoveries or speculation. Can it be possible that *an adventure of divine love* should be the solution of both of these problems? Do we not have here the themes of The Son of Mankind and the Logos? The old question, "What think ye of Christ?" is no longer of mere historical interest alone. Some may attempt to believe that He has never existed or been here. But

all thinking people recognize the dire necessity of One who will be well able to cope with seething and ceaseless international unrest and bitterness. If God does not somehow intervene, the nations must inevitably perish. Almost all the more civilized nations are living extravagantly or riotously. Before long, there will be no wealthy nations left on earth. "Whither Man?" has become a terrifying problem.

"Whither Earth?" is another urgent problem. Strange it is that men can view the energy of the physical universe as running down, until eventually the Earth is destined to meet its doom in collision with some other planet. What crass credulity, when such shallow thinkers never enquire how the universe came to be wound up. Could they but recognize that the mind which indwells man the wonderful microcosm is but the reflex of the much mightier Mind of the Creator, and that God is as much an individual and a Person as man is; and that the Mind and Heart, the Will and Love, which built the universe, has assumed flesh, *our flesh*, and become joined to our human race, with the corollary that He must in due time return to mankind.

Christ Jesus is the Divine explanation or Logos of mankind, and reveals why man exists. Man exists for God, and through the Logos is organically related to the whole cosmos of creation. But this basic unity has been completely obscured by the Scientists, who imagine that the Universe cannot contain any higher intelligence than man himself. Such is the stifling objectivity of a shallow and superficial age. One can partly understand the urge of puny man to create God somewhat after his own image, because, after all, the human mind can only be in some ways the mirror or reflex of the Mind that created man. Otherwise the human mind cannot be accounted for.

The scientists grope blindly for contact with a Mind that is transcendent, but; do not know how or where to discover Him. Human society and governments grope for some form of authoritative power which will prevent mankind from destroying itself. The answer in both cases is Christ Jesus, the unique Son of Mankind, the unique explanation of God.

We cannot improve upon William Porcher Du Bose, in "The Gospel in the Gospels" (1907). "That Jesus Christ was a divine manifestation, revelation, or expression—of which there could be no doubt—could not but lead to the question: of what is He the expression? He is the *Logos* or divine expression of humanity. He recapitulates in Himself not only the whole nature but the whole life and destiny of man. He is the *Logos* of creation, the revelation and anticipation of the end or final cause of all things. Consciously or unconsciously, by reason or by instinct, the New Testament anticipates in the most remarkable degree that sense of unity which is the first principle of modern science. The unity of the natural and the spiritual, that matter exists for mind, necessity for freedom, the earth for man, and finally man for Christ as Christ for God—that is all from beginning to end a drama of evolution as scientific as it is rational and religious. And Jesus Christ is the *Logos* of God, so far as God is in any way whatsoever revealed or expressed at all. Whatever be the historical source and origin of the logos-language of St. John, I think enough has been said to show that the truth which finds in it its final expression is one legitimately developed within the New Testament itself. Christianity has its own theology, cosmology, and anthropology, and the unity of all these is the truth expressed in its Christology. We state that truth when we say that Jesus Christ is the *logos* at once of God, of the Cosmos, and of Man. God, outside of Himself, is revealed only in the 'all things' which we call His creation. The creation, so far as there is any end or meaning in it, is interpreted only in man. The final cause or reason for being of man finds no adequate expression but in Jesus Christ. Let God, the cosmos, man, and Christ, be fully understood in the light and in terms of one another, and we have that complete science which will alone explain all, because nothing less will include all."

The old Logos doctrine of Philo and the Jews was an endeavor to correlate what were considered the discordant principles of the universe, to bridge the wide gap between the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, the unknown and the known, so that somehow God might be brought nearer to

man. We human beings can only think of facts or doings which are related in some way to things found in our own experience. Anything outside of that would be terrifying, say the sudden apparition of an angel. Human inventions and discoveries are reached by the same method whereby we climb a stair, one step at a time, or occasionally two steps at a time. That is why many theories of the Atonement have come short. It cannot be explained by the analogies of human experience and thought.

Even the limitations of scientists have been rather severely descanted upon by one of themselves, Sir Arthur Eddington, who staggered them by the following disclosure, "All the laws of nature that are usually classed as fundamental can be foreseen wholly from epistemological (i.e. expert, scientific) considerations. They correspond to *a priori* knowledge, and are, therefore, wholly subjective." Then he adds, "The fundamental laws and constants of physics are wholly subjective, being the mark of observers sensory and intellectual equipment on the knowledge attained through such equipment."

The Scriptures, however, present us with One who is not only very closely related to ourselves, but very closely related to God. He is the Explanation of God and we can see God in Him. But He is also the Explanation of Mankind, and in Him we behold Man as he will yet be. In other words, He brings God near to us and takes us close to God. In the Logos become flesh we find a whole complete Gospel. God's ways are past finding out. No human being could ever have thought out a plan so complete and so perfect.

The truth ought to be fearlessly faced that the "Gospel" as commonly preached is an extraordinarily unimpressive and flimsy message. Many years ago, I listened to an open-air effort to produce Good News in a town in the North of Scotland. The effort was most painful and dismal, and evidently the speakers knew they came very far short. It is not enough to tell sinners that "Christ died for us." Finally, the leader asked whether anyone had a word to say. I stepped forward and endeavored to state some facts which magnified God and His purposes, but ere long the leader angrily shouted me down as an emissary of the Devil.

Let it be faced that the "Gospel" as commonly presented to-day fails to awaken a true sense of Sin. Moreover, it usually fails to produce righteousness. "Jesus paid it all," therefore it matters little what one does, especially when one is told that God is ever ready and willing to lavish "Grace" upon him. When the Son of Mankind returns to earth, will He find the Faith anywhere? When He returns will He find a real Gospel anywhere?

It is all very well to stress the future reconciliation of all, and this ancient teaching has never since the days of the Apostles been wholly obscured. It might be vastly better, however, for the present to recover and proclaim the powerful primitive Good News, for which the world hungers. This cannot be done apart from the Logos doctrine, which underlies all the Good News from God. It explains many difficulties, clears up obscure passages of Scripture, and co-ordinates all the main doctrines of Scripture as nothing else can. It produces a boundless and unfailing satisfaction with God's grand scheme to bring back to His Fatherly heart the entire Race made in His own image, through His Son.

Understood in the light of God's Son as being the Explanatory Statement of all history, all humanity, and all creation, Romans 5 (all humanity declared righteous) takes on new luster; so does 1. Cor. 15 (all humanity made alive in Christ's resurrection; God everything in everybody); Eph. 1 (the Universe recapitulated in Christ); Phil. 2 (the self-emptying and the exaltation); Col. 1 (His fulness reconciles the universe); Col. 2 (the Secret of God: Christ); Heb. 1 (The Son is the perfect representation of all that is substantially God). Little wonder that many think the great mass of humanity will be lost and lost eternally.

They have never yet seen the Glory of God's Son.



# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 10

### The Humanity of the Lord

If we fail to understand aright the humanity of the Lord, we shall never obtain a proper view of the Father. All through the centuries from the time of the Apostles the tendency has been to exaggerate certain features or minimize certain features. It seems to be well-nigh impossible for most human beings to cut a straight course through the Scriptures.

We must take the words of the Lord as we find them, and believe exactly what He says concerning Himself. Should we attempt to place Him higher than He does, we shall only succeed in lowering both Him and His Father.

We cannot get away from the plain fact that the Lord is always depicted during His life on earth as entirely and completely human. He did not come to press His claims as being the Son of God. But He did insist on His claim to be the Son of Humanity.

And it is in the perfection of His humanity that we discover His divinity. Or, to put the matter in other words, we come to realize how impossible it was that anyone but God Himself could ever have become the kind of human being that Christ was. We ought not to search for tokens of His divinity outside of His divinely perfect humanity. "No one has at any time seen GOD" (John 1:18). That is, God **AS GOD**. It is God as *only-begotten* who unfolds the Father; it is His humanity, His flawless humanity, which reveals God.

According to 1. Tim. 3:16 the secret of that devoutness which is essential to the saint who is a pillar and base of the truth in God's house consists of Him who was manifested in flesh. The perfection of His devoutness *as a human being* revealed His divinity.

If it is true that His flesh veiled the majesty of God's power, it is certainly true that it revealed the extraordinary humility of God. Only in His Son's humanity could God reveal His humility and His great love.

Those who believed upon the Lord while He was on earth, did so on the ground of what He was as a human being. His whole appearance was a distinctively human one. Never did He claim respect or allegiance on the ground of being something more than man. Even after His resurrection, Peter could say, "Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man (andros; male) demonstrated to be from God for you by powers and miracles and signs, which God does through Him. . . ." (Acts 2:22). Paul tells us that as death is through a human being, so also resurrection of dead people is through a human being (1. Cor. 15:21). Paul also emphasizes that the one Mediator of God and mankind is a human being, Christ Jesus; one who is wholly or completely human, of our own race (1. Tim. 2:5).

All the accounts of the Lord's actions will demonstrate that He performed them as a human being; a sinless and perfect human being so far as righteousness was concerned. Yet He was not a man who at the same time was living and acting as God. He lived and performed His miracles through His intense faith in the Father. He who is of the faith the inaugurator is also its perfecter or maturer (Heb. 12:2).

No one could say that it is through the obedience of One living as God that the many shall be constituted righteous (Rom. 5:19). Whom could God obey? The obedient One was thoroughly human. Similarly, as it was through one sideslip, reaching all humanity, reaching condemnation, thus also it is through one righteous standard (*dikaioma*), reaching all humanity, reaching a declaration of righteousness of life (Rom. 5:18). I have used "reaching" for the Greek *eis* (unto, for) to endeavor to make the sense more vivid. "The Son of Humanity" after His resurrection. Paul never calls Him this, but calls Him "The Son of God." It is true now, that "in Him is dwelling all the *fulness* of the Deity, bodily" (Col. 2:9).

It is frequently claimed by those who see only fragments of the truth concerning the Lord, that He only became the Son of God at His resurrection. This question is set at rest by Matt. 26:63, 64. Yet it is perfectly true that He then became the Son of God *free of His former limitations*. Just as we ourselves shall ere long be free from our groaning and travailing, from the slavery of corruption, and rejoice in the freedom of the glory of the children of God, at our unveiling as the sons of God (Rom. 8:19-23).

The Lord must many a time have read the Second Psalm. I sometimes wonder what He thought concerning the seventh verse. The statement seems enigmatic, surrounded as it is with warnings to the nations that lawlessness will only bring them trouble and lostness. Is it a stern warning to the nations that Messiah is now mighty whereas once He was in weakness? What we must do in such cases is to discover the full train of thought in the mind of the writer, and somehow connect up with the whole passage those words which to us seem so out of place.

It is in the manhood or humanity of the Lord that we see God. He came to exhibit manhood to God. It was through His human faculties that He could be related to any man or woman; that He could suffer and feel the depths of pain, and undergo trial. It was through His manhood that He could undergo death. Some have wondered how "God could die." It was God in human form, God voluntarily come down to a human level, who died.

It is still through the Man Christ Jesus that we approach God.

That is why it is so easy and simple, more than easy, for you, as a sinner, to approach God. It is easier for you to approach God in Christ, than to approach your nearest or dearest friend.

The Incarnation was and is a Theophany; the greatest of all the Theophanies, because it was in the lowliest and humblest form. But the Incarnation was and is also an Anthropophany—Man has appeared, in perfect and sinless form. Surely any human being who can remain at a distance from such a God must be in a most sorry plight, and yet God waits for him with inextinguishable goodwill.

One of our big difficulties in connection with the humanity of the Lord is that very often we are not sufficiently unsophisticated to realize clearly that He was not merely acting a part like an actor in a play. Are we not inclined to picture to ourselves that always in the background there stood by another, bigger, more powerful self, restrained from assisting or interfering in the sufferings of a weaker, limited and frail self?

Do we not look upon the final Agony and Passion with an air of unreality, almost as though it had been rehearsed or at least planned out and thought out long before? Away with such wicked thoughts! It is

assuredly not under such circumstances that we should discover a mere simulacrum of intense suffering and sorrow.

We who come short so easily and so constantly cannot realize that the Lord, who never missed the mark and came short, had to resist constantly unto blood. The fate of the universe hung upon the result of His lone and weary fight. We do not strive unto blood. We do not realize the evil of every sin as He always did. We are often indifferent as to whether we hit the mark. He always hit the mark and never fell short. Not only so, but into the battle He had to go burdened by our manhood. He had to keep within manhood's capacity. That was the measure of His limitation.

When he exhibited astonishment and wonder, were these real or artificial? Were they "put on" for the occasion? The Lord marveled at the unbelief in His own native place (Mark 6:6). He marveled at the faith of the centurion (Matt. 8:10). If the disciples in the boat marveled at the sudden calm, why should not His wonder have been as real as theirs?

Christ is the **TRUE MAN**. He is true to manhood, at its very highest and noblest. His human faculties are real. Even now, any act of bold faith on the part of His people must bring Him genuine delight, if not true wonder. Through His self-emptying, Christ Jesus took a place lower than any human being, thus bringing God nearer to us than He could have otherwise come. The lower He stooped; the nearer He brought God to us.

Because the Lord's manhood was so real and true and perfect, His divinity is made real to us. It took the disciples a long time to realize this fact. In Him Man fulfilled Himself, realized Himself, just as in Him as Man, God realized Himself and revealed Himself. In nothing did the Lord ever violate His humanity by acting as though He was God or knowing facts through divine knowledge instead of human knowledge.

Even as a Child of twelve years, He did not display a divine wisdom such as would so astonish His hearers as to cause them to doubt that He was merely a young Child. His wisdom was wonderful, but natural, though not supernatural. His life must be a genuinely human one in all its stages. Only in the consummation of His manhood may we realize in Him the perfect incarnation of God.

So entirely human did the Lord seem to His own brothers that they did not believe in Him (literally, into Him; John 7:5). This would have been impossible had He been living in unlimited exercise of divine powers. It may seem strange to us that John the Baptist in prison should have undergone serious doubts concerning the Christ, but it may be that he was somewhat influenced by the failure of the brothers to recognize who the Lord really was.

Even the disciples, thoroughly accustomed to hearing the Lord speak upon all sorts of topics, with all their experience of His miracles, viewing every day a life which they must have found was spotless, never ceased to regard Him as truly human. When He sought information, they did not reply that He knew the answer already.

In fact, He was so human to them that when He was arrested by the soldiers, His own disciples forsook Him and fled, deserters (Matt. 26:56).

Perhaps the charm of His perfect humanity, through which He showed complete consideration and kindness to all whom He encountered, blinded them to the reality and significance of His miracles. It may be that the miracles seemed to them like interferences by God, which disturbed the normality of life. Only after the resurrection did they get their eyes opened wide to recognize who He was.

Until then the disciples failed to grasp His purpose. They I could never realize that He must die. Human thinking is largely governed by one's wishes. Right up till the Cross they thought He wanted to establish a human, material, political kingdom.

Paul has told us to be putting on the new humanity (Eph. 4:24), literally, to be putting it on for ourselves. The word is in the Greek Middle Voice, and has this meaning. Normally, people put on their own clothes. Others cannot put on our new humanity for us. In Christ we see the true life of man clearly indicated for all men. The true man appeared in Him, The Lord maintained and attained that standard of righteousness as a man entirely dependent upon God, a man who had to resist even unto blood, waging a ceaseless contest against sin (Heb. 12:4). No one would dare to think of God, *as God*, attaining a righteous standard.

But God, in human form, as Christ Jesus who emptied *Himself*, for whom a body was adapted when He entered into human society (the kosmos, or world; Heb. 10:5), had to enter into the whole experience of humanity from childhood onwards, living a genuine human life, learning what obedience was through the things He suffered, being made perfect through His sufferings.

The development of His divine life through His humanity had to be progressive. He must have learnt to read the Scriptures of the Hebrews. In course of time His mother must have told Him that Joseph was not actually His father. It is suggested that this probably happened about the time when He reached twelve years of age. Already the Child had attained great understanding (Luke 2:47). But there is not a scrap of evidence to shew that He knew Himself as the Deity. On the other hand, what was uppermost in His mind was the Father. "Had you not perceived that *in the things of My Father I must be?*" By that time He certainly knew who His Father really was. But Mary and Joseph did not understand what He was talking about. His first recorded utterance is of vast importance, as indicating His true relationship to God, in Sonship.

Then we read in the same passage that Jesus progressed in wisdom and stature, and goodwill (or, favour, agreeableness) with God and human beings. In other words, He, like ourselves, had to pick up all His knowledge as He grew older. Things were revealed to Him at the proper time. He could never have been truly and thoroughly human otherwise. As He read and pondered the Scriptures, He must, many a time, have come upon statements which He realized referred to Himself. One can imagine His feelings as He read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and came gradually to realize that it was concerning Himself. So also with hundreds of other passages.

To us Gentiles it is a standing puzzle that certain statements appear suddenly in the Hebrew text in quite enigmatical form embedded in context which appears to have no connection therewith. Such statements may have served some purpose in arresting the attention of the Lord as He read them. For example, Hosea 11:1 "I . . . called My Son put of Egypt." The Lord was supremely conscious of the fact that He was the Son of the Father.

What must His thoughts have been as He read Psalm 40:7, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Thy will, O My God." He must have come to see that the whole book spoke of Him.

No doubt in His early life He must have come to see how He differed notably from all other human beings; He never missed the mark; He both kept and maintained the Law. That does not mean, however, that others recognized His sinlessness. The truly humble soul in this age is seldom recognized. In this world one gets the minimum of credit for any genuine altruism. Sinners are by no means searching for

fine characters, but rather excuse their shortcomings by discovering others who are or seem worse than themselves.

But in course of time, when the Lord came publicly before Israel, His spotlessness brought out the full fury of their hatred. Often must He have read, they "hate Me without a cause" (Psalm 35:19), and wondered how this could ever be.

Then again, He must have known and understood the true contents of the name Jehovah, as One ever manifesting Himself and revealing Himself. How was He going to manifest God to Israel or the world? In His sinless human life? Or could it be that the Scriptures said He must die?

We shall understand the Gospels much better if we read them over again in the understanding that He came to perceive coming events just at the proper time. It may be that even for a time He thought the Nation would repent and accept Him. Probably only at His baptism did He fully realize that He was Israel's Messiah. Then He came to realize that He Was to be wounded in the house of His friends, and slain by His own race. These are thoughts that one seeks to put out of mind as long as possible. No one willingly relishes the thought of being wounded in the house of his friends. Over the past fifty years much has been written concerning the Kenosis doctrine of Phil. 2:7. Christ Jesus, existing all along (huparchOn) in God's form, did not deem the being equal to God (in certain respects; Gk. *isa*, plural) as an act of usurpation, but on the other hand, He empties *Himself*, taking slave form. It must be noted that it is not stated that God emptied Him. It was a voluntary act; He empties *Himself*. In order to avoid the truth of these simple and plain words, budding expositors have tried to make the whole passage mean anything but what it says. We must warn readers of the writings of such lawless people, who are really communistic at heart, that is, lawless. Freedom to worship God as you may please is being taken to mean freedom to make His word mean anything you please. We would urge readers to reject any novel and exotic claims made by those who think they can possess superior knowledge while they are totally deficient of a sound acquaintance with the Greek language.

Let it be noted that the term Kenosis is not a scriptural one. We are not informed whether the emptying was a process (kenosis) or a resulting condition (kenoma), and it does not really matter, so long as we recognize that the Lord Jesus, up till His resurrection, was in that condition.

The case of King Nebuchadnezzar is anything but a parallel. Yet it helps us to see how a great human king, who certainly did not empty himself, was emptied and humbled by God, becoming like one of the beasts of the field for seven years (Dan. 4:30-33). It will be noted that his understanding returned to him, while he got back the glory and dignity of his former position.

Scripture is most useful in explaining Scripture. It has long been pointed out that the lack of knowledge shewn by the Lord regarding a certain coming day (Mark 13:32) is easily explained by His having emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7). Perhaps, another statement will also help us. Acts 13:33 (and also Heb. 1:5; 5:5) tells us "Son of Mine art **THOU**; *I* to-day have begotten Thee." Each time the words in the Greek are identical, and each time the statement refers to the resurrection of the Lord. I have sometimes been told by men who pride themselves upon their love of concordance that the emphasis in Greek is of no importance. Yet these same people, when talking, use emphatic words almost in every mouthful and do not perceive they are doing so. The emphasis in the Greek or Hebrew is of the utmost importance. We might understand the statement thus, "It is Son of Mine that **THOU** art; it is *I* to-day that have begotten Thee (and I alone)." When the Son of Humanity was born as a Child, His Father was Holy Spirit, and His mother was Mary. Two parties. But now at His resurrection, the Father alone begets Him. He rises wholly human, but now He is no longer under the restraints and limitations of old, as "All authority is given Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). No longer is His special name "The Son of Humanity", no longer

according to "the flesh," but according to "the spirit." For our sakes the Lord had to be a True Man, fully Man, living the life of a human being, not the life of God.

We have sought to shew that Christ was God in human form. At the very least He could not have been less than that. If He was God, even under limitations and restrictions, the problem of pre-existence, so difficult to many, is already settled. If Christ "came out from God" (John 16:27), He must have had the same pre-existence as His Father had. Just here, in this passage, we find that the disciples at last seem to be grasping whence the Lord had come. But the question may be asked: did they fully understand what the Lord told them? The Lord said, "I came out from the Father, and have come into the world" (v. 28). Here the word for from is not the common *apo*, but *para*, which means beside or alongside. Yet in verse 30 the disciples express this somewhat differently, "In this we are believing that *from God* Thou camest out." Here the word for from is *apo*, which usually indicates distance or space, out from or away from. Nicodemus said much the same, "We are aware that from God (*apo Theou*) Thou hast come, a teacher." The little word *para*, however, so common in English, has a much more intimate meaning, when followed by a genitive case. It would seem to stand for the idea contained in our word "personally." I would suggest that what the Lord told the disciples in John 16:28 may have been "I came out from the Person of the Father," or, "I came out from the Father directly." *Para* is used almost entirely in connection with persons. Anyone who will go to the happy trouble of making a close examination of these two Greek prepositions with a concordance will be amply rewarded, and will acquire volumes of useful information. None of our modern versions has been able to express the difference suitably. Thus, in John 17:7, "Now they have got to know that everything whatever Thou hast given Me is from (*para*) Thee." That is, the disciples and all believers were a *personal* gift to the Lord from His Father.

Some have said that The Differentiator has become a publication for scholars. Well, let God be true, and every leader more or less a scholar. *We are all disciples*, that is, learners.

Another big difficulty with some is the natural question: why did the Lord seem to have no recollection of having created the universe? Why is it that only John contains brief references to that glory which the Lord had with the Father intimately or personally (*para*) before human society (the world) was (John 17:5)?

Might it not be, that when He emptied Himself, He deliberately excluded from His mind all recollection of the past, so that He could descend to the level of the race among whom He came to live? We repeat, He lived upon earth as a humble human being, entirely dependent upon God. As a Babe, He could have been *no true human Babe* had He possessed recollections of a former life in glory, reigning as the All-Wielder of the universe. One would not naturally speak of a King emptying himself of his glory; rather would he abandon it or renounce it. The Lord must have emptied Himself of something more than glory or rank. He must have commenced life with an ordinary human outlook, so far as education and learning went. This He could never have done had He from the beginning possessed all knowledge.

Whence then did He gain His knowledge of a previous state of glory? Might I humbly and reverently suggest, that just as perhaps He only saw clearly and fully at His baptism that He must be Israel's Messiah, so probably at a certain point must He have recognized that He who appeared in ancient times as representing God in the theophanies could have been no other than Himself, in different form.

Similarly, in John 8:58, the Lord had come to see that it must have been He who stood face to face with Abraham, when Abraham shewed exultation that he would see Christ's own personal Day. It could have been no other being. The Jews knew perfectly well what the Lord meant when He said, "Ere Abraham is coming into being, I am."

He, however, whom Abraham encountered, in human form, was named Jehovah, which is peculiarly the name of God.

But can we find any proof in the Gospels that the Lord was ever conscious of Himself as being God? This question may seem very revolutionary, nay, staggering. Could the Lord have been *really* God (in human form) without being *consciously so*? He was conscious of His right to exact from men complete surrender and devotion to Himself. But towards His Father He was as humble and full of real awe as we should be, being for us a perfect pattern of true humanity.

We recognize that others called Him the Son of God. He did not disown this title, as it was true, but it was very seldom on His lips, as compared with His own common title, the Son of Humanity. As God's Logos He had become Flesh and was completely human. When He emptied Himself, it was certainly not of manhood; it must have been of certain Divine qualities or features.

It may be that the truth of His complete Divinity was temporarily veiled from His knowledge. That, however, would only enhance the wonder of His life, revealing in the miracle of that life as a humble human being the distinguishing features of very God. Possibly, to us, who recognize His Divinity, His Cross shines in a clearer light than it did to Him, then perhaps dark with mystery.

Steeped deeply in youth in the Hebrew Scriptures, He could hardly have been unconscious of the possibility that God's Kingdom could only come into being at the cost of such an awesome tragedy as is outlined in Isaiah fifty-three that His own nation, God's Chosen People, should murder their own Messiah. From the possibility of such a devilish national crime He must have shrunk. Can that be in part the reason why He veiled His teaching in parables, why He was reserved in regard to His claims, so that He might not provoke Israel into that frightful crime by repelling them?

Yet He came to recognize that He must die. There was no other way. Israel might have attained the Kingdom through simple faith, but now He surrenders voluntarily and gives Himself up to die in an act which only incites them to man's crowning crime against God. How the Lord's human soul must have shrunk from giving Himself up, knowing that there must ensue a frightful orgy of devilishness let loose, a pandemonium of unrestrained vice and injustice and mockery and impiety. Such a death and all it implied and produced must have caused Him torture beyond all reckoning.

But because He was God incarnate—even though He may not have recognized that fact—conscience made Him set His face as a flint to meet the incredible unbelief of wicked men, permitting them to wreak their vicious will upon Himself. Only thus could pure holiness act. It must have been a deep sense of God's utter holiness and His loathing of sin which impelled His Son to resolve to fulfil now what Isaiah had written concerning Him. He knew Himself as a root out of dry ground—unnaturally dry ground; despised and forsaken of men. His appearance more disfigured than any man's, devoid of any outward dignity or beauty. No wonder He seemed aged to the Jews (John 8:57). No wonder that after He rose two disciples failed to recognize Him, because He was so wonderfully changed (Mark 16:12).

He knew that as a lamb He would be led to the slaughter; that by an oppressive judgment He would be condemned; that Jehovah would cause Him to be crushed.

Mere punishment can never be an adequate expression of the utter opposition of God's holiness to human wickedness. Pure holiness can only deal with such sin by receiving upon itself the full assault of the malignant human will. Christ's own laws of the Kingdom laid down that ill-treatment or abuse by an outsider was not to be resisted, nor was retaliation to be made (Matt. 5:38-41). One must submit, because only thus can one who is utterly antagonistic to wickedness and has none of it in his own heart obtain

satisfaction. Active resistance or opposition will not destroy the evil desire. The true believer will be little concerned about any hurt inflicted upon himself by the malignance of a wicked person, but will be greatly concerned about the offender's condition.

The Lord's standard of moral perfection is found at Matt. 5:48, "**YOU**, then, shall be perfect, as your Father, the heavenly (Father), is perfect." But as regards obstinate or malicious sin, God's holiness could not be satisfied by any lower form of opposition to sin than by permitting voluntarily His bitterest opponents to vent their utmost spite and hate upon Himself. That was the *only way* that perfect love and perfect holiness could act. That was why the Lord had to die. God might quite justly have slain all the murderers in a moment, as they deserved, but He shewed a more excellent way. His Son, by dying through the malignant spite of men, enabled the Father to express Himself as totally opposed to sin. Divine righteousness must oppose human wickedness and utterly condemn it in the only way which was altogether adequate. By suffering sinners openly to vent their evil spite and malice upon God Himself, Christ satisfied God's holiness and His righteousness.

In this incredible and unique manner God becomes the Author of our salvation—in human form. Because He could in no other way have suffered death. That is how He becomes to us Jehovah Tzidqenu, "the Lord our Righteousness," and how we become the righteousness of God in Christ.

In our next chapter we must consider the grandest and most staggering marvel of all time or history, the self-emptying of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:7), commonly known as the Kenosis. In a grand sweep this self-emptying takes in all Creation, the introduction of human society on earth, the Incarnation, and the Death of the Lord. All these mighty events are parts of one picture, one process. Without a clear grasp of the meaning of the self-emptying, we can have no dynamic Gospel to herald to sinners, because the Kenosis lies at the very root of the Atonement, and is part of it.



# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 11

### He Emptied Himself

All of us long to see a revival of God's work on earth. We should like to see the whole Divine truth pressed home vigorously on every side. In truth there is urgent need of this. The extraordinary powers of the Reformation of four hundred years ago have ebbed away.

A few years ago a Scottish minister wrote that "In Europe and America there is not a man who can preach." I suppose he meant no one had a Gospel worth preaching.

Almost forty years ago two widely publicized and prominent Evangelists from the United States came to Britain. One had charge of the singing and music. The other made continuous appeals to his audience to "Come to Jesus" to "believe," and to "accept Christ." Very little direct appeal to the Scriptures was made. It seemed to be assumed that the listeners were well acquainted with the Bible story, and all that was required was to make an appeal to them. Young people were herded into enquiry rooms, hardly aware why they found themselves there. For six weeks I gave assistance each evening as a steward, until utterly disillusioned by the entire absence of anything like a real Gospel. Here was an artificial endeavor to imitate the power of Moody. But what a travesty of the Good News of God!

While it is true that some Good News is being proclaimed in many places, and while it is undeniable that the Scriptures can breathe the truth into the seeking soul, no truly dynamic Gospel now appears to be anywhere proclaimed. Let us be quite clear that if God does have a Gospel for mankind, it cannot be less than dynamic. Indeed, the Gospel was very dynamic after the Resurrection of the Lord. Where now is the power that can make the hearts of men and women bleed? Where is the power that can cut them to the heart? Does it not appear that some vital power is missing? Sometimes in the human body a very small change in habits or diet or occupation will release a great fund of strength and new life. Far too many people render their bodies useless or weak or prematurely old through a diet which the Hebrew Sanitary Code would never allow.

So in the spiritual world. One very small fact can make a world of difference to our ideas and our life. Many can believe that the Lord came from (apo) God; that He came from-beside (para) God; but those who cannot believe in the "pre-existence" of the Lord ought honestly to face the truth of John 8:42, where the Lord makes it quite clear, "If God were your Father, in that case you loved Me, for **I, OUT OF GOD** (ek tou Theou) came forth, and have got here." The sons of Belial whom He was addressing had claimed they were not begotten out of (ek) prostitution. If Christ's origin lies *within God*, how can anyone argue honestly that He did not pre-exist just as long as God has existed?

We suggest that the roots of the Good News go back to Phil. 2:6-8. Already we have demonstrated that the Greek word used in verse 6 of the existence of Christ Jesus (huparchO) means, in the case of God, to exist all along, and in the case. of human beings, to exist for a long time. Paul states that Christ Jesus (note the name) existed all along in God's form, nevertheless, He empties **HIMSELF**, taking slave-form, coming to be in humanity's likeness. If anyone can supply a more concordant rendering of the Greek word

than exist all along, or, exist for a long time, we are most eager to know what it is. That the frail Man—who was born as Jesus never existed in God's form does not require to be demonstrated. To aver that Jesus in some historic sense emptied **HIMSELF** while He was on earth would be childish. The word **HIMSELF** is very emphatic in the Greek. It seems to imply a complete emptying of something. Can we discover what it was of which He emptied Himself? No other passage mentions this self-emptying. The answer ought to be found in the context.

In the Greek language, the participles are more wieldy and versatile than in English. Suppose we rearrange John 1:9 and read it thus, "Coming into the world, the true Light is enlightening every man." A Greek would understand this to mean, "By coming into the world, the true Light is enlightening every man." You might say, "I got a splendid view, climbing a mountain." The two statements are closely related. By climbing a mountain, one gets a fine view.

Let us then read Phil. 2:7 over again. "Nevertheless, He empties *Himself*, by taking *slave form*, by coming to be *in likeness of human beings*." In the next verse, we shall note that the word Himself is not emphatic. "He humbles Himself, (by) becoming obedient unto death, yet a cross-death."

Why have we been given in the Old Testament glimpses of the Theophanies? Just so that we may realize what it was that the Lord of Glory gave up when He emptied Himself. He gave up His glorious form and position, condescending to the limitations under which human beings live; quitting the divine mode of existence and assuming the human mode of existence. If anyone doubts this, let him turn to any page of the four Gospels, and he will find abundant proof. As opposed to an occasional and transitory Theophany, the permanent incarnation of the Word can only maintain its true character provided the Incarnate becomes a genuine and real human being. If He had not divested Himself of the divine glory, but continued as God, then Christ would have been essentially God, not a real Son of Mankind at all. The fact that He emptied Himself and incarnated Himself shews that He was no ordinary human like ourselves.

His voluntary Incarnation implies His voluntary self-emptying. The change from Godhead to Manhood in flesh must be by way of limitation or reduction or renunciation of some kind. It would be sheer presumption for us to argue that such a process of self-humiliation is impossible in the case of God. Did not the Lord, in John 17:5, pray the Father to restore to Him that glory which He had alongside the Father before the world (human society) was?

It was God, pre-existent, who emptied Himself the Incarnate was Man. We must not, dare not, reason that God's "immutability" is such that He cannot become the humblest and lowliest Person in His own universe. If we humans possess any true humility and modesty and meekness, we may be sure it is implanted by God. God therefore must possess these same qualities.

Often has real Love to change its modes and its methods to attain its aims. But does not this prove the essential unchangeableness of Love?

At the time when the Creeds were formulated in the early centuries the doctrine of the Divine immutability was maintained in a very extreme form. The early Church Fathers drew most of their scientific wisdom from heathen philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle. We ourselves are continually subject to change, while yet we remain ourselves all through life. God will always remain God, but would we dare to argue that while the angels of heaven are thrilled when a sinner becomes reconciled to God, such reconciliation leaves God utterly impassive and unmoved? Our reconciliation to God must bring Him real pleasure so that in some way He is changed.

It has been looked upon by some as derogating from the glory and dignity of God that Christ became flesh like mankind. But surely His paramount glory was that He exchanged equality with God for equality with men. The Church Fathers imagined they heaped more honor upon Him by ascribing to Him while on earth a Divine life as real and actual as His human life. But in so doing, they obscured His grandest feature. His knowledge-surpassing love for mankind. Because His love for us shines with greatest lustre if for our sakes He exchanged the riches of Divine existence and all its glory for the meanness and poverty of human life. It was no exaggeration that the Son of Mankind had nowhere He might lay His head (Luke 9:58). He was not living on earth the life of God, but the life of a Man.

In his very informative book, "The Greek Language" (1931) Basil F. C. Atkinson states that the Greek word *morphE* ("form") has been used from the time of Homer in the sense of outward form or appearance. He continues, "Much discussion of the kenosis, or emptying-out of the attributes of Christ at incarnation, might have been spared, had the disputants realized rather more deeply the history of the word *morphE* or noticed the force of the reflexive *heauton* (Himself), the statement being that He emptied, not His attributes out of Himself, but Himself out of one *morphE* into another." In passing we ought to state that on the same page this writer shews that in Rev. 3:14 He who is the "beginning of the creation of God" is more truly the "first cause" or "first principle" of God's creative process, and a "first cause that partook of the essence of the object, being in some sense indissolubly bound up with it." This is altogether in line with what we have sought to show.

Many have been stumbled by the idea of the Divine one emptying Himself and becoming born as an infant. A son is the result of generation, but the product of creation is a creature, not a son. The Lord Jesus is called Son of God because His Father was Holy Spirit. The Word becomes flesh through the Divine act originating in the Virgin Mary the rudiments of a new human life. Such a generative act was as spiritual as any act of creation is.

Here we require to bear in mind that even when plants or animals are reproduced that which generates the vital principle of the new life or organism is not the sperm as a material element, but that spiritual, intangible, life-dynamic which is contained in or associated with the sperm-matter. Every time a seed germinates there is, as it were, a new act of creation, involving both mystery and miracle. One might dissect the sperm-matter and have it analyzed chemically, but the vital germinating force consists of such a spirit nature that it cannot be laid hold of or recognized. The new organism comes to life through the invisible, immaterial power inherent in the seed, not merely through the material elements of the seed.

No one, therefore, should be bewildered by the conception of the Child without a human father. The messenger said to Mary, "Holy Spirit will be coming over on to thee, and Power (*dunamis*) of Most High shall be overshadowing thee; wherefore also that generating Holy Thing shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Such a conception is no contradiction of the laws of nature, but is quite in harmony with the close relation between spirit and matter which has always existed.

The fact that the Lord had to grow up and learn through suffering, and that He was subject to the law of mental and physical development, is clear proof of HIS having relinquished His Divine mode of existence.

While the Lord knew that He was both the Son of God and the Son of Mankind, it is quite evident that He did not press His claim to being the Son of God; in fact, He seems to avoid this title, while continually referring to Himself as the Son of Mankind. We should keep in mind that with the self-emptying and the incarnation—timeless wonders, coming into history the pages of revelation begin to sparkle with two new grandeurs, Divine Fatherhood and Divine Sonship. God is now viewed as possessing these two relationships.

Some have therefore suggested that the Lord, while on earth, was not aware, or fully aware, that He was God. Of the fact that He was uniquely the Son of Mankind He was very keenly aware. He was fully alive to the fact that God was His Father. He came to know that He came out of God. But could He truly think of Himself as being God in His state of self-emptying? Could He think of Himself as being God while He felt Himself to be a "worm and no man?"

We do not require to press that certain knowledge was concealed or hid from the Lord until He acquired it. Many subtle little touches in the Gospels prove this. According to Matt. 9:4, Jesus was "perceiving" (eidOs) the sentiments of the scribes, when He forgave the paralytic. Yet at Mark 2:8 it is stated that Jesus was "recognizing" in His spirit what they were reasoning about. The word here is *epignous*, which means getting *fuller* knowledge. It does not refer to perfect knowledge. It is not a term we could apply to an all-wise Deity.

Might it not be the case that the Lord was truly God Incarnate in Human Form without actually being so consciously? We repeat this question, because the suggestion may, after all, be true. It was suggested over forty years ago by Prof. A. G. Hogg of the Madras Christian College, in his book "Christ's Message of the Kingdom," one of the deepest and most vivid and reverent thinkers of our age.

To state the matter in another form, could the Lord properly have recognized that He was God when He admitted His ignorance concerning a certain future day and hour (Matt. 24:36)? Would not the fact that He was not aware make Him feel how human He was?

Some have maintained that all creation, past, present, and future, is one long process of Kenosis or self-emptying, an eonian process of impartation and self-communication by God. Because in creation God must limit Himself by giving up some of His freedom. Adam and Eve were doubtless created perfect specimens of the human race so far as they were flesh. But God did not create them perfect specimens morally or spiritually. Such perfection cannot be attained through an act of creation. Look at the fruit on trees, or plants. They have to grow to reach maturity. So have we. As a human being, even the Lord had to be "perfected" or matured through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). We could not have obtained eonian salvation unless He had thus been perfected (Heb. 5:9).

That grand brief statement, "God is Love," proves among other things that God must have limited Himself and parted with some of His freedom. Is not real love a very binding thing? Does it not require utter humility? Does it not imply, in God, that He must communicate Himself to His creatures? To have fellowship with His creatures He must Come down to their level, and thus limit Himself.

Jehovah is the *Becoming* One, He who *manifests* God, God as immanent (remaining in or near), adapting Himself to the limitations of His creatures. At the same time God is the Transcendent One, so far above everything else, unchangeable. God could say, not only "I am," but "I become." But we humans can say the same in our own little sphere. There is something enduring or permanent about us and in us, even though in other ways all through life we go on changing. That which in us endures throughout life transcends those features and moods in us which shew change.

In nothing does our God so totally transcend all the gods of the nations as in the self-emptying of Christ Jesus. The same applies to all the great leaders of the nations, and all founders of religion. Nearly all the leaders in politics and religion seek human fame and greatness and wealth, along with popularity. How tardy and unwilling are men and women, even the best of them, to believe that in this age what among men is exalted is *abomination* in God's sight (Luke 16:15).

All the many so-called Gods and Lords of antiquity failed in one very important quality—they lacked genuine humility. Had they been truly humble, they would inevitably have gravitated towards Jehovah's holy revealed truth or His prophets. Some of these are mentioned before the Flood in Gen. 6:4, the Nephilim or "Marvels," and the Gibbors or outstanding ones, men of name or renown.

Men and women strive after position and power and importance and wealth and fame. But the possession of these is no sign of God's blessing in this age. He who came out of God flung all these things aside. He who *all* along existed in God's form made Himself of no reputation, impoverished Himself so that we might be enriched.

But let us not read 2. Cor. 8:9 as though it meant His impoverishment leads to our becoming in any way affluent. His long process of self-emptying and His humiliation ought to lead to our greatest spiritual enrichment. What more blessed state spiritually can we attain in this life than Paul describes in Phil. 2:1-8?

When we survey the wondrous Cross, it is not enough to see merely the death of the Prince of Glory. We must also view His almost incredible life in slave form, in unparalleled humiliation. We must perceive the origin within God Himself of the most humble being, the Son of God. Often one wonders, when we sing that verse,

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all.

whether we really mean it? Yet the verse is *wholly true*. We aver that we follow Paul. Yet when we come to Phil. Ch. 2 we read or sing, but stop there.

Loveable readers, until we are imbued with that spirit, we shall accomplish little for God. If Christ Jesus did not preexist within God, then there was no self-emptying; and if there was no self-emptying, then there is no mighty dynamic in Christianity. We cannot adequately behold the vast love of GOD, unless we behold His part in the self-emptying. Perhaps we are unable to take in properly the love to us of Invisible Spirit. Yet we are told it is the love of Christ that passes knowledge.

Some of our readers are unable to comprehend God as being both infinite and invisible, and as God in human form. Yet it may be stated that King Solomon must have encountered the same problem. The Hebrew was essentially a seer, not a philosopher. In his sacred writings he could make out, more or less dimly perhaps, two lines of prophecy converging upon the Son of God and upon the Son of Mankind. In 2. Chron. 6:18 and 1. Kings 8:27 Solomon asks the question which the modern scientist ought to put, "Can be it true that God will in very deed dwell with man upon the earth that God whom the heavens do not contain and cannot contain?" It must be evident that King Solomon had come to know that Jehovah—God in manifestation—would in due time manifest Himself on earth in human form. Whatever may be the proper meaning of the Hebrew term here used (*kool*), it is found oftenest in the iterative or *Pilpel* forms, expressive of repetition. The meaning seems to be like sustain, endure, keep going, hold together. Jeremiah was "weary with *forbearing*" (Ch. 20:9), or "weary with *holding in*" (Ch. 6:11). The word is used of sustaining with food, carrying on with sustenance.

At any rate, Solomon saw that the very immensity of such a God was no reason why He should not dwell on earth as Immanuel (with us God).

Doubtless Solomon learned much on this matter from David. According to 2. Sam. 7:19 and 1. Chron. 17:17, Jehovah had regarded David according to the estate of a man of high degree, while David asked "is

this the manner of man, Adonai Yahweh?" Here we must make corrections. Both estate and manner are in Hebrew *thur*, the meaning of which is "law." In Chron. Young reads "as a type of the man who is on high," while Rotherham has "according to the rank of manhood, and hast exalted me." In 2. Sam., Rotherham reads "*This* then is the law of manhood." It is suggested that for *thur* we substitute the much more intelligible *thar*, the meaning of which is "form." The Greek reads *horasis*, "vision," "appearance." "Thou hast looked upon me as the **FORM**, or **VISION**, of The Man." The man of "high degree" might possibly mean rather "the Man from above" (m-ole). It may be that David understood Jehovah to be according him a glimpse or adumbration of the Man who was to come. David was undoubtedly in various ways a remarkable type of Christ.

The same contrast between God as very distant and God as very close may be seen at Jer. 23:23-24, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." The statements are undoubtedly in the form of questions, as shown by the question mark (Hebrew, *ha*) at the beginning of the statements, not at the end. But the word for God is in the construct form, so that Leeser may be correct in suggesting, "Am I a God for those near at hand. . . and not a God for those who are afar off?" More literally, "Am I God of him who is near. . . and not God of him far off?"

The statement that Jehovah fills the heavens and the earth is indisputable. Yet when He came and talked with men, "in Son," there was very little room on earth for Him. He who died on a Cross was assuredly not filling heaven and earth.

This leads us to a brief study of the terms "empty" and "fill." Herein lies a most fruitful field for study. Extraordinary it is that so many fine publications, which have carried on for many years, seem to have totally neglected to expatiate upon the grandest event in all time and history—the self-emptying of Christ Jesus.

The word *kenos* is quite well rendered "empty," and we can suggest no improvement. We have the term in our word cenotaph (empty tomb), which is a monument to one who is buried elsewhere. Slaves were lashed and sent away, empty (Luke 20:10, 11). If Christ has not been roused, our proclamation and even our faith are "empty." We are not to receive the grace of God "for an empty thing" (2. Cor. 6:1). We are not the ones who should be seduced with empty words or statements (Eph. 5:6). In the old Testament the word is used oftener of physical emptiness. The Israelites were not to appear before Jehovah "empty," that is empty-handed (Ex. 23:15). It is used of empty pitchers (Judges 7:16). The Ark was not to be sent away empty (1. Sam. 6:3). The bow of Jonathan returned not empty (2. Sam. 1:22). Job found his days empty (7:16), and there are few who have not had the same experience. In the Egyptian Papyri, "empty" camels were unladen ones.

Christ Jesus emptied *Himself*, divested Himself of the form of God. As one has said, He "sequestered His greatness." This was purely a voluntary act. We are not told that the Father emptied Him. But it was God who highly exalted *Him* (Phil. 2:9), giving Him the highest name in the universe.

The Lord got back the glory which He had beside the Father ere the world was (John 17:5), yet it was a glory unspeakably enhanced. It is true now that in Christ is dwelling the whole fulness or completeness of the Deity bodily. But for anyone to argue that this was true while the Lord lived on earth, is to aver that Deity's fulness permitted ignorance suffered continual privation, and underwent death. Just here we must rightly divide the word of truth.

The perception of these very simple yet most important facts would have prevented Philip Schaff (Encyclopaedia, 1883) from taking objection to certain forms of the "Kenotic" doctrine, such as those of

Gess and Godet. Schaff would seek to limit the self-emptying of the Lord, on the grounds that "it, contradicts the essential unchangeableness of God!" This is like arguing in a circle, for surely if Christ Jesus is Divine, His self-emptying, of whatever nature it was, must have affected Deity profoundly. The Kenosis was, even if only temporary, a most profound change within God.

Dr. C. Ryder Smith, in "The Bible Doctrine of Salvation," says that if we put the fulness of the Deity alongside the emptying of Phil. 2, "we have the antinomy of the Incarnation." Upon Col. 1:19, 20 he says, "Here there are two universal postulates of Scriptures: that there is something wrong with the universe as we know it, and that man and the universe go together. Paul claims that it ensues that, when man is altogether reconciled to God, so will the universe be. Their perfecting is ultimately one perfecting (cf. Rom. 8:19 ff.), for Christ, being Head of a new mankind, is thereby Head of a new universe."

We ought to expect antinomies and paradoxes within God and in the Scriptures, as we ourselves contain many of them.

Some have enquired why it is the fulness or complement in Christ that appears to reconcile the universe (Col. 1:19, 20).

It was when we were still sinners that we found that Christ had died for our sakes. Much rather than, being now declared righteous in His blood, we shall be saved through Him from the indignation (Rom. 5:8-9). It was through the death of His Son that we were conciliated to God, and much more, shall be saved in His life (v. 10). It is through His blood that we have deliverance, the forgiveness of our fallings-asides (Eph. 1:7). It is in the blood of Christ that we were made near (Eph. 2:13). We were reconciled in His body of flesh, through His death (Col. 1:22).

All these statements refer to the Lord's achievements while He was on earth, in His self-emptied state, in slave form. Though He then possessed the fulness or completeness of grace and truth, it is now that all the fulness or completeness of the Deity is dwelling in Him, bodily. It is now that He is highly exalted, and given the Name that is so mighty that in the Name of Jesus (the name of His self-emptied state) every universal knee shall bow, and every universal tongue shall acclaim that **LORD** is Jesus Christ, "unto glory of God-Father" as the Greek puts it (Phil. 2:9-10).

Some of the versions read in Col. 1:19 that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." No doubt the statement is quite true, but had Paul meant to say so, he could have written the necessary words. As it is, he says nothing here about the Father. We go back to Wycliffe (1380) with his quaint Old English, "for in hym it plesid alle plentee to enhabite." Tyndale (1534), however, brings in the same reading as we find in the 1611 version. The Rheims (1582) as usual, is very like Wycliffe, "because in him it hath well pleased, al fulnes to inhabite."

Quite a few of the more modern versions provide us with the rather surprising statement that it is the fulness which accomplishes the reconciliation of the universe. Thus, Charles Thomson (1808), "Because all the plenitude was pleased to dwell in him, and by him to reconcile all to himself." Rotherham (1872), "because *in him* was well-pleased all the fulness to reside, and through him to reconcile fully the all things unto him." Moffatt, "For it was in him that the divine Fulness willed to settle without limit, and by him it willed to reconcile in his own person all on earth and in heaven alike." A similar construction is found in Hayman, Goodspeed, and Cunningham. The Concordant Version reads "seeing that the entire complement delights to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile the universe to Him. . . ." Perhaps the word "complement" may not seem clear enough to some. The Greek word (plErOma) seems to indicate completeness or completion.

But let us observe that all this fulness or completeness delights (1) in Him to dwell, and (2) through Him to accomplish a vast work of reconciliation.

This is a task which the risen, ascended, all-glorious Christ can easily accomplish, in the irresistible *fulness* of His might. Peace has been made by the blood of His cross, while He was in weakness and humiliation. But what can His mighty power, as One no longer self-emptied, but possessing the entire *fulness* or completeness of the Deity, not accomplish? If it is the majestic fulness or completeness of Christ Jesus which will reconcile, and not merely reconcile, but literally, "change-throughout-backwards" (apo-kat-allassO) all everywhere who need reconciling, does not this imply that all will become filled with the fulness of God? That the event refers to a vast reconciliation in the future seems proven by the mention (1) of those in the heavens, and (2) of the saints whom He reconciles *now* (yet in His body of flesh, through His death).

A similar thought is present in I. Cor. 15:28. Schaff's Commentary says "God, in the most absolute sense—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—will be all in the entire new creation." Christ gives up the kingdom or kingship to Him who is God and Father (v. 24). "A last enemy is becoming idle (katargeitai; Middle)—Death." Then the Son Himself who has been reigning as **MAN**—becomes subject, steps down, so that **GOD**—God in contrast with **MAN**—becomes all in everyone. When His fulness fills all His beings, the goal will be reached, final and complete fulfilment of the meaning of the wonderful name Jehovah. He has *become* everything to all His creatures.



# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 12

### The God of Sinai

The paramount difficulty with some of our readers is that they are unable to see how God is One. It is natural that many should look upon Father and Son as two distinct and separate Persons or Individuals. It is freely admitted that Father and Son are Two, but to declare them two Persons only creates difficulties, and would destroy the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. In our chapter 7 we sought to show that even the Old Testament reveals a certain two-ness within God. God was so all-glorious that no one could look upon the glory of Him who met Paul near Damascus. We have shown that the same God in the Hebrew Scriptures appeared at times in common human guise, talking and partaking of human food with men, who continued living. He appeared to Adam and Eve, who heard the voice (or sound) of Jehovah Elohim walking about in the Garden (Gen. 3:8). Voices and sounds do not normally walk about. Moreover, Adam and Eve hid themselves. From the voice? No; but "from the presence of Jehovah Elohim."

There is no hint here that Jehovah Elohim was invisible, or merely spoke from the sky. Abraham and Moses also talked with God face to face. Stephen states that it was "the God of the glory" who appeared to or was visualized by Abraham (Acts 7:2). He who usually dwelt in glory unapproachable condescended to appear to Abraham in lowly human form.

Who would reason that there were two Persons or two Gods in the Hebrew Scriptures? One visible and one invisible? Would it not be true rather to say that visibility and invisibility were two *aspects* or *characteristics* of Deity? The true Hebrew did not possess the privilege of being allowed to argue about the existence of God. Genesis takes God for granted. Besides, their traditions had taught the Hebrews that God had spoken to Adam and Eve, face to face. The Old Testament is destitute of any attempt to discriminate between two Gods, one visible and the other invisible. The Hebrew believed that these two aspects were those of one Deity. Is there in all the Old Testament *one single hint* that God the invisible and God as visible to human beings was Two Persons?

Luke 24:31 tells us of a new phenomenon which was due to the resurrection. Whenever two of the disciples recognized the Lord, He disappeared from them. Literally, "disappearable **HE** became from them." A. T. Robertson renders as "he vanished from their sight," but in a note says He "became invisible." He was now free of all human restrictions and had been invested with all authority in heaven and on earth. Do we not here have an approximation to the God invisible of the Hebrew Scriptures?

We would press our argument, that if the Hebrews could understand God as being both the transcendent (invisible and unapproachable) and as the immanent. (visible and near at hand), why should not a similar relationship satisfy us to-day, in the fact of Fatherhood and Sonship? This two-ness may help to clear up that strange verse, Gen. 19:24. Why is Jehovah mentioned twice? Are there here two Jehovahs? According to the primitive Hebrew text, in verse 18 Lot is standing before Jehovah, pleading for safety.

When he and his wife and two daughters are safely into Zoar, we read, "And *Jehovah* causes it to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah sulphur and fire from-beside Jehovah from the heavens."

Sometimes it has been argued that because the Lord shrank from drinking the cup and facing the hour (Luke 22:42; Mark 14:41 ; Matt. 26:39,42), He must have been a different "Person" from His Father. The matter has been partly pointed out in *The Differentiator* (March and May 1950) the Greek word *theō* signifies very much what our English "wish" and "want" do. As a true and real Man, it was only natural that He should not *wish* to undergo that dread hour or drink that bitter cup. But otherwise He *would not have been truly human at all*.

Would it not be infinitely better to understand the apparent conflict as revealing the intense storm which must have been raging within the very heart of God himself? Are we ourselves not sometimes subjected to such an agony and struggle, which would pull us both ways at one time? All God was behind the atonement. He must have suffered incredibly more than any human being could suffer.

Nothing could be more absurd and irrational than to imagine that such a mighty event as the Atonement was carried through by God—invisible spirit—plus one specially chosen human being who was not derived directly from Holy Spirit. Only God could have settled the Sin question. No outsider could have helped Him. Christ was no outsider in any sense. In chapter 3 we sought to shew that Christ is the exact representation of God's substantial reality. Apart from Christ we cannot even contemplate God at all. If ever we endeavor to see God elsewhere than in His Son we lose God altogether, and lower His Son correspondingly. You will never find God by looking behind the shoulders of His Son, or trying to climb around Him so as to approach the Father. God, as spirit, is not a Person in the way we understand the word. Spirit in Scripture is "invisible might." Spirit is invisible and it possesses vast power. When the Hebrews thought of "spirit" (*ruach*), they also thought of a strong wind, as wind and spirit are one word in Hebrew.

We have no right to look for another Person behind or above the Son. Christ is our only guide to this other "Person" whom you are seeking. You cannot find God anywhere else. If you wish to find the Person of God, or His personality, look into the face of His Son. This is a very simple theology. We cannot make it simpler. Moreover it satisfies and gives great delight. It honours the Son.

We have shewn that Jehovah means God in manifestation. God becomes personal to us alone in His Son. Without such manifestation God remains invisible spirit, not A spirit, as that would localize Him.

In 1. Cor. 8:6 Paul makes it clear that to us there is one God, the Father (i.e. invisible spirit), out of whom are all things, and we for (or, unto) Him); and one Lord, Jesus Christ (i.e. a personal human being) through whom are all things, and we through Him. Very significantly Paul adds, "But not in all is there the knowledge (of this)." Alas, very few are clear concerning God and His Son.

God, as invisible spirit, is the source of all creation. All has come out of Him, even His Son (John 8:42). Invisible spirit to us becomes concrete and knowable in Christ Jesus, but in no other way. All things are through the Lord, Jesus Christ, who has bridged over the tremendous chasm which to us seems to separate spirit and matter. The Greek word *dia* (through) originally meant "between." The Son is the Agent *between* invisible spirit and mankind.

God, as invisible spirit, is Father in the sense that He is the origin and source of all creation.

Very vividly do I remember while walking along the rocky banks of a river many years ago the profound shock I got on realizing that God is *spirit*. Till then I had tried to think of God as Another, someone who stood behind or beside His Son, a little older looking perhaps.

Paul was writing about idols in 1. Cor. 8. An idol is a human representation of a god that had no reality. The idol was meant to be the god's counterpart. But the idol was not a separate person from the god. The idol was one with the god it represented, and the god was worshipped on the idol. The god was meant to be seen in the idol, but most of the idols were ugly and repulsive enough.

Christ and God are complementary. The Father and the Son are complementary. We cannot have the one without the other. Christ is the visible of the invisible. God is the invisible of the visible Christ. Christ is the Image, the perfect Image, of God. But why should that make Him another Person?

Let us now consider another aspect of God's two-ness. Sometimes we term a man a "character" because he possesses many characteristics. He is versatile or many-sided. His polarities may be pronounced. This may make him difficult to understand. To man he may be a lifelong riddle.

Such apparent polarities or antinomies we ought to expect in God. The Jews were continually being puzzled by the Lord's paradoxical statements (e.g. Luke 5:26; "We perceive paradoxical things to-day"). Who was this plain, ordinary-looking man who could both forgive sins and cure a paralytic on the spot?

Our studies on "Who is our God?" would be very incomplete if we did not endeavor to shew the connection between Christ Jesus and the God of Sinai. Connection there must be, if only for the reason that in Exodus 19:9, 18-20, we read that Jehovah came down in flaming fire and smoke, which at once makes one think of Him who comes down in flaming fire in 2. Thess. 2:8. It is understood that God the Father, being invisible ubiquitous spirit, never thus localizes Himself, or renders Himself visible, unless in His Son.

We are there logically shut up to the belief that the Jehovah who came down upon Sinai was He who afterwards exchanged the form of God for slave form. Pulsford has said that "Jesus was in the bosom of the great and terrible God of the Old Testament; the great and terrible God of the Old Testament is in the Lord Jesus of our New Testament."

Incessantly we encounter books by shallow scoffers who liken the awful God of Sinai, the God who brought the Flood upon the earth, the God who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, to a cruel, vindictive, blood-thirsty monster. But how can such people be acquainted with righteousness? These are the people who would let murderers off scot-free and at the same time persecute those who bewail the vices of the land.

Yet observe how intimate and friendly was Jehovah with Abraham and Moses; just as He still is with His own people who honor and fear Him.

Sometimes it happens among ourselves that the man or woman who seems superficially to be most forbidding and austere turns out upon better acquaintance to possess the softest of hearts and the most considerate of natures.

Superficially the God of Sinai was altogether terrifying and unbearable. Even Moses was terrified and trembling. The glory and majesty which enveloped perfect holiness and perfect righteousness and perfect truth were too dazzling for human eyes to gaze upon. The object of this awesome theophany was that the nation might fear God and not sin (Ex. 20:20). All men must learn this lesson before they can appreciate

God's grace. Jehovah could not on Sinai reveal His heart. Joseph for a time could not reveal his heart to his brethren, but seemed very stony-hearted. Yet all the time his heart was bursting. He could hide his heart, just as God on Sinai did.

But on the Cross the heart of God was no longer hidden. The God of Sinai has stooped to the lowest place in His own universe. Is it logical to believe that the Face seen on Sinai (Ex. 24:10, 11) was different from that seen on the Cross? On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses evidently recognized the Face he had seen long before. And surely Abraham, when he sits down in the Kingdom in days to come, will do likewise.

All through the centuries Christendom and the Church have been led astray through the seeming paradox presented by the terrible God of Sinai so emptying Himself as to appear as it were like a lamb dumb before its shearers. Yet we all admit God can work wonders. Is not this the biggest marvel in all history, in all the world? One requires a vast amount of credulity to believe that the Babe sitting upon Mary's knees was consciously ruling the Universe at the same time. The Lord had to progress in wisdom (Luke 2:52). He "got to know" or "grew to know" (eginOsken) what was in man (John 2:25), through that percipience which comes of deep humility and close contact with God's Spirit. Such knowledge was extraordinary and most uncommon, yet it was human knowledge. All this proves that we must take Matt. 24:36 and Mark 3:32 exactly as it stands. Dr. Bullinger was a most reverent and devout scholar and expositor, but sometimes his exegesis of the Greek was at fault. The Lord stated that He did not know when He would reappear from the sky, or when the age would terminate. No one knew the date, neither the messengers or angels nor the Son—except the Father. The word "except" is in the Greek "if not" (ei mE). Dr. Bullinger felt obliged to explain this as meaning "if not Christ was the Father." He could not believe Christ had limited knowledge. Such a statement by the Lord, however, would not have been satisfactory, especially when Matt. 24:36 reads "except the Father alone."

Had the Lord known that very important date at that time (which some to-day think they can fix), it would no doubt have tended to upset the course of His remaining days upon earth, and the lives of His disciples. It has been suggested that He was unable to respond to the query of the disciples in Acts 1:6. Yet we must remember that He was now in resurrection life, invested now with all authority in heaven and on earth. What would have been the good of telling His disciples that the restoration of the Kingdom was delayed for two thousand years?

I have indicated that the Lord must have acquired much of His information from the Hebrew Scriptures, through which God spoke (Heb. 1:1). From His own observation He must soon have discovered that Israel was for the time being hopelessly insensible. Especially in the Psalms He must have discovered gradually that they spoke concerning Himself. Yet in these Hebrew Scriptures He must have come to understand many passages which to us are still obscure. For example, what made Him seem skeptical regarding the faith, in Luke 18:8, "Moreover, the Son of Man coming, consequently will He find faith on the earth?" Did He find this predicted in the Old Testament? If so, where? And whence did He get the important prophecies found in Luke 21, which covered "eras of Gentiles"?

It should be a most fascinating study could we commence with His uttered prophecies and seek to discover their sources in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Our endeavor in these chapters has been to build up a picture of our God which will be found in harmony with *every* germane and vital revelation concerning Him. The sects of Christendom have produced an impossible and absurd hybrid—one who could act like a frail human being one moment, and as God Almighty the next moment.

We shall repeat our question, which so far no one has been able to answer. How could the Lord, while He was on earth, be conscious or realize that He was God, or possess, as some put it, "full Deity," if He admitted that His knowledge of coming events was limited? Would not His admitted lack of knowledge conceal from Him for the time being the clear consciousness that He was, what we with all our heart and soul and mind believe He was, God manifest in flesh?

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 13

### Is God Subject to Change?

The subject we are now about to consider would hardly have been permitted or tolerated fifty years ago. But since then a considerable literature on the subject has sprung up, and many wrong views of God, due to the influence of Latin theology and the hell-fire teaching of the Reformation, have been satisfactorily reconsidered.

We ought, in fact, to suspect every doctrine regarding God which was the product of the Dark Ages and the Reformation, because in those days there was no exact use or understanding of Scripture terms.

One example will illustrate this. In Daniel we read a few times in chapter 7 of one termed "the Ancient of days." This description of the Deity springs from the Greek Old Testament translation, made about two thousand, two hundred years ago. Since then no one appears to have thought it worthwhile to prove that this, rendering was correct. It was our great pleasure twenty-five years ago to discover that the Hebrew word used did not mean "Ancient" at all, but involved rather the idea of change or changing. But of this more hereafter.

When I was a child at school, about the age of eight, I had to learn by rote a statement of the Presbyterian creed called "The Shorter Catechism." Very soon I forgot every word of this, but beyond a doubt this formidable statement made one fear God, whoever He was. It commenced by saying that God was "infinite, eternal and unchangeable." Budding theologians of eight years could only think of God as the Great Unknown or Unknowable, utterly distant from mankind.

That God is infinite and eternal we are quite prepared to accept, because if He were not, He could not be God to us. But that He is not subject to change in any way we stoutly deny.

A theologian informs us that the Kenosis theory (Phil. 2; the self-emptying of the Lord) contradicts the principle of the unchangeableness of God (Powell, in "The Principle of the Incarnation"). That is to say, he denies a very important truth because he has accepted a sheer falsehood. Yet we might answer, that the same one who emptied Himself, also *died*. He who subsisted in God's form exchanged it for slave form as a human being.

Let us examine those few passages which are said to speak of the unchangeableness of God.

Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ—yesterday and today the same, and for the ages." It will be noted that the word for "same" also signifies "Himself" (autos). He is always Himself. Nothing more is implied. When He gives up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father (1. Cor. 15:28), He will still be Himself, but He will not be exactly the same as He was prior to that point. Similarly, in Heb. 1:12, the heavens "shall be changed, yet *Thou* art the same" (again autos). That is, the Lord will still be Himself. He cannot perish or wax old.

James 1:17 is thought by many to indicate that with God there is no "variableness," because the A.V. of 1611 used this term. The R.V. of 1881 is even worse, as it informs us that with God there "can be no variation." Rotherham reads, "With whom is no alternation, nor shadow cast by turning." The New World

version reads, "with whom there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow." In this verse God is called "the Father of the lights," that is, the heavenly lights, the well-known lights. With the Hebrew, light was a favorite theme. Psalm 97:11 tells us that "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," but this should really read, as is very well known, "Light bursts through for the righteous, and for. . . ." (zrch for zro). Cf. Psalm 112:4, which reads "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The true meaning of the Hebrew word (zrch) however, is to break through, burst through, shew through. And is it not true of all of us that often in our ponderings and heart-searchings light does suddenly burst through, most unexpectedly? "God is *light*, and a dark phase (dark spot, dark area, dark period) in Him there is none" (1. John 1:5. Here the word for dark is *skotia*, but in the next verse it is *skotos*, which signifies darkness in general, complete darkness). James 1:17 says not a word about variableness of character or nature, but refers to illumination.

Mal. 3:6 is perhaps the strongest text upon which the unchangeableness of God is hung. "For I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The argument is that the Messenger of Jehovah will return to Israel, and purge out the evil ones. He is the Messenger-Executive (or Agent, Undertaker; Heb. *mlak*) of the Covenant, and it is because of God's Covenant with the fathers, from the days of whom Jacob had been going astray (v. 7), that these sons of Jacob had not been quite "finished off" as the Hebrew really says. The word *kalah* is used of the seventh day, when "God *ended* His work" (Gen. 2:2). That is, He then finished it. But we could not say He "consumed" it. This verb is used of the finishing of works, days, years, speaking, harvest, and anger. Because of His Covenant, Jehovah could not change in respect of His promise regarding Israel. We must take into reckoning the whole context. The Greek Septuagint reads "I have not changed" (ouk ElloiOmai). The Hebrew word used (shanithi) obviously comes from the verb Sh-N-A meaning to change or alter, not from Sh-N-H, meaning to repeat, reiterate. These two words have been to some extent confused in Hebrew, because they were similarly sounded. There is no need for the suggestion that Mal. 3:6 says "I do not repeat," because this bears no relevance to the rest of the passage.

Not only is there no term in Scripture which declares that God is altogether unchangeable, but there is one very important word in the Hebrew Scriptures, used quite frequently, which certainly states that He is capable of changing His mind or attitude. Let us boldly and cheerfully face whatever the Scriptures have to tell us, without attempting to turn off the meaning into the opposite sense. The day for condemning the ascription of human characteristics to God under the excuse that these are only "anthropomorphic"—that He is only pretending to possess human feelings and characteristics, is gone. God made man in His own physical image. It was a very human Jehovah in front of whom Abraham made his passionate appeal for Sodom in Gen. 18. The curse of anthropomorphism has made much of the Bible meaningless to many of God's people. Let us believe implicitly just what God has told us, without informing Him that He really means: something quite different.

"Whenever He is said to repent it is the figure of speech in which God assumes human attributes in order to reveal His attitude. Ignorance and failure lead us to change our minds and actions. The progress of His purpose leads Him to alter His dealings. As a result He seems to change His mind" (Unsearchable Riches, page 234, 1927).

That is to say, when the Hebrew word *nacham* is used of God, it really signifies "seems to change the mind," or "seems to repent." Gen. 6:6 would then read, "And Jehovah seemed to repent that He made man." 1. Sam. 15:11, "I seem to change My mind that I make Saul king." Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should seem to change His mind. .." Amos 7:3, "Jehovah seemed to change His mind over this; it will not come to be, says Jehovah." Jonah 3:9, 10, "Who will get to know God will turn and seem to change His mind, and turn from His fierce anger, and

we shall not perish? And God sees their works, for they turn from their evil way, and God is seeming to change His mind concerning the evil which. He said He would do to them, and He did it not."

The Hebrew Scriptures speak thirty-three times of God "repenting," or changing His mind or attitude. But unfortunately for the above theory, the word is used quite a few times with a negative. What then will the meaning be when we read that God does not repent? Take Psalm 110:4, "Jehovah swears, and will not seem to repent, Thou art Priest to obscurity. ..." Or Jer. 4:28, "For I speak, I scheme, and I am not seeming to repent, and I am not turning back from it." We ought to consider the synonyms used along with the word "repent," to see what story they tell us. Gen. 6:6 states that Jehovah was "grieving Himself unto His heart." Are we to understand this as meaning that He was only pretending to grieve, that He was only putting on an attitude which He did not really feel at all? But why make all this "anthropomorphic" pretence when there were apparently no human witnesses of His grief?

Many have been stumbled by a single verse in Matthew (24:36), where the Lord admitted He did not know when a certain important event would take place. For many years this verse troubled me. I found it hard to believe. Yet without this one statement, how could we ever understand the kenosis or self-emptying of the Lord, mentioned in Phil. 2? Some have tried to make the verse in Matthew mean something else, but with no success. After all, is it more difficult to believe that God can change His mind or attitude, than to believe that for a time, while He was on earth, the Son of Man did not have complete knowledge? Let us believe the Scriptures exactly as they stand, or we shall go astray.

We human beings are so made that we cannot go through life without a certain amount of change. Generally we enjoy change, and it does us good. Yet many of us do not enjoy sufficient variety, and suffer accordingly. Human beings are in marked contrast to the grazing sheep or cow, which go through their lives with the minimum of variety. But God has made man different, and as man was made in the divine image, it means that his Maker enjoys and understands change.

There is nothing derogatory in saying that God enjoys change, or can change His ways and His methods and His mind. This does not make Him weak, or changeful, or capricious; but it means that the Creator of the infinite variety found in Nature and in the universe is capable of infinite enjoyment thereof. It is unthinkable that in the ages to come God will not be able to produce incessant new interests and changes with which to delight His creatures, and Himself. It is evident that Abraham believed he was sufficiently "God's friend" to take upon himself to approach Jehovah face to face with regard to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, when he heard that it hung in the balance. Immediately he confronted Jehovah, and made his impassioned pleas. One would do much for a friend, but for a very close friend, would not one do well-nigh anything in reason? Abraham knew full well what the wicked cities deserved. Why then did he approach Jehovah at all? Was it not that he might prevail upon Him, and get Him to *change His mind*? Did he not know that even he, dust and ashes, yet had some influence with Jehovah? Perhaps he had heard Jehovah telling the two messengers why Abraham had been called and chosen, and asking whether He should hide from Abraham what He was about to do (Gen. 18:18, 19). Abraham must have thought that there was some possibility of getting the doom of the cities averted. It was no unchangeable and indifferent Deity that he approached. We must face the fact that Jehovah appeared here in thoroughly human form, and exhibited truly human feelings. He was not acting a part, put on for the occasion. God could never thus deceive those whom He calls friends.

The chief philosophical obstacle to the answering of prayer lies in the ancient heathen dogma that God is unchangeable. We call it a heathen dogma, for were not all the so-called gods of the nations dumb and blind and senseless, incapable of any change beyond gradually crumbling away?



Another common description of God is "The Absolute," which indeed often implies One who is out of all relations with His creatures, unknowable, impassible. Such a description, used in this wrong sense, has been well termed "pure verbal jugglery." God is truly the Absolute when all His creatures find in Him their existence, their reason, and their relationships. Yet in the far future, it is unthinkable that such a God will not continue to be the God of the *individual*, to all His intelligent creatures. God having deliberately planned an infinite variety of human beings, evidently wishes to delight Himself in this variety. This would imply on His part a special and individual interest in each one, with whatever adjusted activity on His part as His loving kindness required.

C. Ryder Smith, D.D. in "The Bible Doctrine of Man" (1951) states that "there is something of ultimate value in change—for history is the process of change. The antinomy emerges that God is 'changeless' so far as changelessness is of value, and that He 'changes' so far as change has value. (Of course, we ascribe both 'change' and 'changelessness' in some degree also to man because of his 'personality.' A man is both 'the same man' as he was ten years ago, and 'a different man.') May it not be that under 'space,' the other category in history, similar claims may be made?"

A. C. Bouquet, D.D., in "The Doctrine of God" (1934) writes that "it is quite proper to speak of Deity as immutable, but only in the sense that He is not capricious, but ever true to the laws of His own being." After quoting Mal. 3:6 he continues that within God's primordial nature "there may well be a process of self-realization or self-expression which is of the character of duration and process and so involves an element of becoming. In this sense, though in this sense only, may we speak of the progressive mutability of divine experience. . . He who has *complete* control of His own potentialities, and can be and do what He will whensoever He will is not *changed* by His actions." He then quotes Prof. W. S. Urquhart of Calcutta University, "If we identify God with Absolute Value, we do not diminish that value by thinking of temporal process as not yet completed, even for God. . . we may without irreverence think of God as Himself evolving, differentiating Himself according to the laws of organic growth, but with far greater specification. . . . We may regard God as entering into the world of time through the creation of human personalities, whose freedom He will not retract. . . . The end will be the Kingdom of God, the realm of the completely triumphant spiritual, and into this kingdom we shall bring all that we have truly won in the temporal struggle, and shall find our places as free personalities, each one of us discovering in the Kingdom of God the Kingdom of His Own spirit."

"Thus there will be joy in heaven over one sinner changing his mind, more than over ninety-nine 'righteous' ones—those who have 'no need of change of mind.'" (Luke 15:7). Joy always brings some change, and the implication here is that God joins in this joy and change. As Dr. Ryder Smith says, upon such repentance by the sinner, God can now do more for His child.

Even science cannot explain logically why the nature of every living thing is that it changes while it remains the same.

Says G. H. Langley in the 1937 volume of The Victoria Institute, dealing with the subject of "Change and the Eternal," "All space-time experience. . . is a drama revealing the functioning of the Eternal" Also, he speaks of God as "the changelessly-changing source of all becoming, who would Himself change if He ceased to be the author of change."

The late Prof. James Y. Simpson, in "Man and the Attainment of Immortality," says "Matter may be regarded as the result of the elimination of freedom from a certain portion of the experience of God. In the fulness of His experience He is transcendent. Mutation is characteristic of that which is becoming, of the process, of God as Immanent. God is, we have said; the World becomes. He is the Being in the Becoming—that is, God as immanent. But He is not exhausted by the process: He *is*—that is God as

transcendent, as simultaneous. It is peculiarly difficult to represent. the situation clearly to ourselves, yet we get a hint of it in our own personality, and man being a genetic product of the process, there is no illegitimacy in arguing from man to the character of the process. If we make God in our image, it is because He first made us in His. Now every human individual can say of himself, 'I am, and I become.' There is something of him that is not subject to the law of change in the degree in which this is true of the physical and certain mental aspects of his being. Now that which is persistent through these changes—that self-identity or measure of individuality that gives him a sense of transcendence to the rest of himself—is the basis on which his existence and his freedom rest, and his freedom is his power to create and initiate change. The consciousness of transcendence comes out also in self-consciousness—in the ability to separate himself as subject from himself as object. The activity of God as Transcendent is internal, within Himself, or with the spirits of just men made perfect, for the meaning of communion is activity without change. On the other hand, His activity in relation to the cosmic process and the gradual development of beings towards greater freedom and perfection is in time, durational, and in that limited sense God is becoming, becoming man, a limitation that is removed as men become perfect. God has been becoming man in order that man may become as God. He became man in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos. So in thinking of the Transcendence of God we strive to represent and express to ourselves His persistence through change, His wisdom and fulness of power."

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 14

### The Ancient of Days

What are we to understand by this expression, "The Ancient of Days, found in Daniel 7:9, 13, 22? The translation appears to have come down from Jerome's Latin Vulgate version, which reads *antiquus dierum*, which has much the same meaning. Since Jerome's day, no one appears to have questioned his rendering or suggested anything answering more faithfully to the Chaldee, which reads, athiq yomaya, or athiq yamin.

Coverdale (1535-1550) rendered as follows in Dan. 7:9, "I loked till the seates were prepared and till 3 old aged sat him downe."7373

Dr. Driver thought the expression was a figure of God as if He were an "old man." And so most people naturally think. The Companion Bible suggested "the everlasting One." Perhaps the only original, reading since the Bishop's Bible of 1572 introduced "the auncient of dayes" has been that of Ferrar Fenton, who reads "the Splendour of Time." This is picturesque, but it is not translation.

The Vulgate translation does not go back to the Chaldee, but to the Greek Old Testament, which reads *palaios*, meaning old.

Now it is both impossible and absurd 373to think of God as being or becoming old. Such an idea is refuted by Heb. 1:10-12. While the Lord was upon earth, He certainly did look much older than He really was, to be taken for close on fifty years old. But after resurrection He must have seemed as youthful as every child of resurrection will be.

The general basic meaning of the Hebrew word *athaq* is to change, alter, vary, transfer, or remove. When the Son of Man comes He will either be the Changer of Days or the Changed One of Days. In a very true sense He will introduce a vast change when He abolishes Man's Day and brings in the great Day of Jehovah. No change in all history will have been so vast, so sudden, and so far-reaching. The Apocalypse or Revelation tells how Man's Day will terminate, and be replaced by Jehovah's Day. Daniel 7:9 is evidently related to Rev. 1:14, while Rev. 1:10 finds John no longer taken up with the things of Man's Day, but "in spirit in the Lordly (or Imperial) Day," that is, the Day of the Lord.

Although perhaps no term is found in Revelation corresponding to Daniel's expression, "Changer of Days," one might say the whole twenty-two chapters detail the process whereby Man's Day is brought to its ignominious end and the New Age introduced.

The Hebrew word *athaq* in all its twenty occurrences is seldom properly rendered in our ordinary versions. As a verb it is rendered "become old," "wax old," "leave off," "copy," and "remove." As a noun or adjective it is "ancient," "durable," "drawn from," "arrogancy," "grievous things," "hard things," and "stiff." This wide disparity shews that the true meaning was lost in most cases. There was little difficulty, twenty-five years ago, in retrieving the original idea contained in the word. In the closely related Assyrian language, the word was much more commonly used (*etequ*) and Delitzsch's Assyrian Dictionary shewed its meaning as defined by move, remove, march, push, promote, displace, advance, draw near. In each word, it will be seen, there is, both change and motion.

In the following examples from the King James version we find this idea of change and motion:—Gen. 12:8 Abram "*removed* from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-El." Gen. 26:22, Isaac "*removed* from thence, and dug another well." Job 9:5, "Which *removeth* the mountains, and they know not." Job 14:18, "The rock is *removed* out of his place" (cf. 18:4). Job 32:15, "They *left off* speaking" (margin, removed speeches from themselves). In our parlance, they "changed the subject."

There is little doubt that the Greek Septuagint hit upon the rendering "become old" at Job 21:7 and Psalm 6:7 because this seemed a natural enough rendering. Job 21:7, "Wherefore do the wicked live, *become old*, yea, are mighty in power?" Psalm 6:7, "Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it *waxeth old*." Yet the wicked or wrongdoers do not require to become old in order to become mighty. We suggest that there comes a change in their fortunes or circumstances, making them mighty. In the latter case, "Mine eye is troubled from vexation; it is changed because of all mine adversaries," would be a closer rendering.

A most interesting and illuminating case is found in Prov. 25:1. "These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah *copied out*." The Septuagint uses a Greek word meaning "copied out" or transcribed, but the real meaning is probably what Professor Naville thought, that the proverbs were transcribed from the cumbrous old cuneiform or wedge-shaped Babylonian script into the current square Hebrew script of the time of Hezekiah.

In Psalm 31:18 the word *athaq* is used in connection with things spoken. "Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak *grievous things* (margin: a hard thing) proudly and contemptuously against the righteous." Young reads "ancient sayings," which does not make good sense. Rotherham reads "arrogantly," which is not concordant. The lying lips misrepresent, by speaking what has been *altered*, a variation of the facts. Do we not find this a very common failing in humanity? Few people try to stand conscientiously in the shoes of a speaker or writer and follow him in his method of thinking.

In Psalm 75:5 we read "Lift not up your horn on high; speak not with a *stiff* neck." Ginsburg and Kittel would read "Rock" for neck (merely pointing the Hebrew word *tzur* differently). Rotherham reads, "Nor speak of the Rock with arrogance." Perhaps we should read, "Nor say there is changeability in the Rock," or "Nor speak of the Rock in a changeable manner." Those who do not love truth generally mangle the facts, or garble statements. Nothing is easier than to pervert or exaggerate the truth. In Psalm 94:4 we read, "How long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak *hard things*, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?" The reason why the utterances are so hard to bear, is that truth has been changed into lies. Misrepresentation is a most cruel art. The same thought is found in 1. Sam. 2:3, "Let not *arrogancy* (margin: hard) come out of your mouth," Then follows "For Jehovah is a God of knowledge," and thus knows what is the truth.

Anyone can see the absurdity of the above false terms, as it would be impossible to apply the terms hard, stiff, arrogant, grievous, to the coming Messiah, in Daniel 7.

In Prov. 8:18 we read, "Riches and honor are with me; (yea) *durable* riches and righteousness." Young says "lasting substance," while Rotherham says "lordly wealth." But the true concordant sense is wealth in variety. In Isa. 23:18 we read of "*durable* (margin: old) clothing." Young reads, "a lasting covering," while Rotherham reads "stately apparel." The true meaning is variety of covering, just as we would speak of a change of raiment.

Another instructive example is found at Isa. 28:9, "Them that are weaned from the milk, and *drawn* from the breasts." Young correctly has "removed." There is a transfer, a change over from one state to another.

In one case the Greek translators of the Hebrew were unable, to find an equivalent. 1. Chron. 4:22 reads, "And (these are) *ancient* things. The Septuagint merely leave this as they found it, *athoukiim*, which is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew; actually a change over from one script to another. Without knowing it they illustrated the real meaning of the word. We ought to read, "And the words are transcribed, or transferred," carried over from one ancient script to a more modern one.

One further point requires to be settled. If the Ancient of Days is really the Changed One of Days, or the Changer of Days, meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, how are we to explain verse 13 of Daniel 7? "One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him." Can it be that after all the Ancient of Days is the Father? This can hardly be, as we are unable to think of Invisible Spirit, God the Father, being in motion and travelling from place to place, if He is ubiquitous. "Do not I fill the heavens and the earth?" (Jer. 23:24).

Here is how we should read Dan. 7:13, "I am observing in the visions of the night, and lo! with the clouds of heaven One is coming, like a Son of Man; (I am observing) even until the Changed One of days arrives, and before Him they bring it near' (that is, the beast). Compare Rev. 19:19-20, where the beast and kings, with their armies, are gathered to wage war against the Horse-Sitter, and the beast is taken or arrested. In verse 11 Daniel beholds until the beast was slain, and he appears to be reverting to the same matter when in verse 13 he says, "and they brought him near before Him." In this chapter Daniel is chiefly occupied with two outstanding marvels, the monstrous beast and his wild doings, and the awful unveiling of the Changed One.

We must now inquire whether there was any reason for the Greek Septuagint rendering the Hebrew word *athiq* by a word meaning "old." This Greek word, *palaios* has to do with that which is antique. The paleologist is a student of antiquity. It will be observed that there is a considerable resemblance between the Hebrew word and the Latin word, *antiquus*. Suppose the Latin word is derived from the Hebrew word? Or it might be cognate with it. All languages reject through time certain combinations of letters or sounds. The Hebrew tongue did not find the sound *anth* easy to pronounce, so dropped the letter N and in its place doubled the th, to make the word *anthah* (meaning thou) sound as *aththah*. Enosh, meaning man or mankind (as "weakly") has its feminine form *ishshah*, instead of *enoshah*. The plural pronoun (you) is now *aththem*, in place of *anthem*. The Hebrew word *athiq* might originally, therefore, have been *anthiq*.

One can see a connection between the ideas of "change" and "antiquity," because the things of antiquity are generally different from the things of today. The changes of time render things antiquated.

We note in passing that the basic thought in the Greek terms for "conciliate" and "reconcile" is change, or "otherness."

When the great Changer comes to earth, we can think of nothing that will not in some measure be altered.

God is so immense, so infinite, that mankind is unable to comprehend Him, and often unable to entertain the thought of such a God. Yet man requires that God must ever be partially unknowable and beyond his grasp. In other words, man demands a God who is infinite. Yet the strange paradox is that man demands something else: he needs a God whom he can see and with whom he can become acquainted, whom he can freely worship and delight in. Such a God we find in Psalm 139, one who seems so distant and so immense, and yet one who knows all our movements, even the very words in our mouths, and comes closer than a brother. This Psalm reveals a great secret—how God can be One and yet Two. As *God*, He is so utterly transcendent, yet as the *Son* of God He comes so close.

But in that tremendous day when the Changer of Days comes, no one will be in the slightest doubt as to who He is. Jehovah, the God of heaven, comes to earth in great majesty and might. The transcendent and the immanent seem to be now one. "And Jehovah comes to be for King over all the earth; in that day Jehovah is coming to be One (or, proving to be One), and His name one." (Zech. 14:9).

Let us then rejoice in hope. That glorious day is almost two thousand five hundred years nearer than it was in Zechariah's time. Would that it might come soon!

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 15

### Each One of Us Has His Own Creed

Very soon after our 10th chapter appeared (December 1952; *The Humanity of the Lord*), it was my good fortune to peruse a very fine paper in the 1937 volume of the transactions of The Victoria Institute or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, entitled "The Person of Christ. Doctrine of the Two Natures," by Henry R. Kindersley, B.A.

As some of our readers have found the doctrine made known in Phil. 2:7 difficult to grasp, because it has so seldom been taught, it may be helpful to study the views of another.

Our author begins by shewing that the doctrine of the two natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ—Perfect God and Perfect Man—has occasioned a great deal of questioning and been responsible for much defection from the orthodox Faith.

"It is asked how it is possible that the Perfect Godhead, with all its inherent powers, could exist in full function in the nature of One who was Perfect Man, with all the limitations which humanity entails. How can anyone *know* all things, and at the same time *not know them*? So

stated this amounts to a contradiction in terms.

"Many of those who were troubled by these difficulties hailed 'evolution' as a possible avenue of escape (even if only 'by way of avoidance' and not explanation), always in the belief that the persistent search of the Scientists might be trusted eventually to discover the missing evidence which up to date has restricted 'evolution' to the category of pure speculation. The logic of 'evolution' demands that in the interests of 'uniformity' belief in the Godhead of Jesus Christ—the keystone of the Christian religion—must be abandoned.

"The next step was inevitable, and the Modernists, denying His Godhead, and ignoring the power of God, have lowered the Jesus Christ of the Gospels to the level of the fallen offspring of Adam; and consequently, His recorded utterances are declared to be frequently in error, though His general teaching is said to be true! This is the Modernist's reading of the doctrine known as *Kenosis* based on the words of St. Paul in Phil. 2:7. The modernist view is that 'the Christ Spirit' descended upon Jesus, the 'natural' son of Joseph and Mary. This novel doctrine of course plays havoc with the Gospel narratives.

"The Creationists, who stand for the Orthodox Faith, as enunciated in the Creeds, could not remain unaffected by the difficulty presented by the doctrine of the 'two natures' in the single Person of Jesus Christ; so, in order to admit His Humanity, they had to concede the 'veiling' of His Godhead. If disposed to advance cautiously in this direction, nevertheless they felt themselves supported by the words of Scripture—the veil, that is to say, His flesh' (Heb. 10:20).

"Now if, *on New Testament authority*, it can be shown that in Jesus Christ the inherent powers of Godhead, in everything affecting His incarnate state, were *wholly veiled*, it is not difficult to believe that a great body of Christian opinion might be won back from the materialism which the logic of 'evolution,' accepted on trust as something more than a theory, would seem to induce; always provided that such

veiling does not in the smallest degree invalidate the simple meaning of His words and actions, even as it surrenders nothing of unquestioned faith in His identity as 'the Only Begotten Son of God.'

"The 'veiling' which is now in mind, *would seem to have been complete, amounting at His Incarnation to a temporary abeyance of His powers, wherever the retention of His own divine powers would militate against the full realization of His adopted Humanity.* At the same time, the retention by Jesus Christ of His Divine powers in the spiritual world (the power to forgive sin, etc.) would obviously not derogate in any measure from His voluntary abnegation. It is in this sense only that the expression 'wholly veiled' is intended to be used in this connection.

"In a whole-hearted belief that the Bible not merely 'contains' but is '*the word of God,*' this line of thought is offered in humble reverence, which—new, perhaps, to some if not to all Bible Students—has helped to clear away doctrinal difficulties presented by the necessity of interpreting the Creeds which throughout the centuries have buttressed the Church of Christ. If it sacrifices one single fundamental point of the orthodox Faith, as enunciated by the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds, then this thesis must be treated as illusory.

"Our Lord's repeated reference to Himself (eighty times in the Gospels) as '*The Son of Man,*' justifies us in seeking the whole import of this title. What deep satisfaction it brings, and what glorious light it sheds on the great purpose of God, to realize that His Incarnation provides the manifest example of *The Man* who fulfills and restores in Himself the lost opportunities of the original innocent Adam, and of a sinless and triumphant *Humanity!*

"Assuming that the Great Plan of Renunciation was 'foreordained' before the Foundation of the World, and assuming that we agree that some of the absolute attributes of the Godhead in Christ were '*veiled*' in His Incarnation (e.g., His subjectivity to physical hunger, thirst, etc.), then *the degree of 'veiling' is the point at issue.* Have we not strenuously held to the view of a very *partial 'veiling'* only because, to concede the *total 'veiling'* as previously defined (the 'emptied Himself'—*heauton ekenOse*—of Phil. 2:7) seemed to surrender the only ground on which His supernatural life could rest? How else were His miracles worked, and how else was His infallibility secured? To answer these questions is the purpose of this paper.

"Certain statements of Jesus Christ have always puzzled the Church, and not least among them His declaration—'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you' (Luke 17:6). And again, 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove' (Matt. 17:20). In other words, Jesus Christ assured His Disciples that the most prodigious powers were available to *humanity* through the agency of faith. The Creationists are bound to give full value to these words or else to abandon their position to those who regard them as expressions of mental rhapsody.

"Here again, as elsewhere, it is wonderful how the Bible can be relied upon to explain itself. On close study, we are impressed by the fact that for the second time in the Gospels (Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6) *the mustard seed* should be chosen to illustrate Christ's meaning. Certainly, most people have thought the meaning of His words to be—'If men had faith as *little* as a grain of mustard seed, they could move trees and mountains.' This interpretation, however, seems to contradict the experience of Christians, past and present, even as it misses the point of the words, 'O ye of *little faith.*' But another meaning may be found capable of explaining passages that are otherwise difficult. Both the Gospels named had previously recorded the parable of the Kingdom of Heaven, which in its wonderful growth was likened to the growth



of the mustard seed, which, from a tiny seed, if sown in good ground, could become 'a great tree' (see Matt. 13:31; Luke 13:19).

"Was not the meaning of our Lord, when revealing to His disciples the powers of faith which were to be open to them and to His Church, just this? If they had faith like the mustard seed (of whose wonderful power of growth He had previously spoken), *then when faith has reached a growth corresponding to the 'great tree'*—the perfected growth of the mustard-seed they would be enabled to work miracles. It is worth noting that Jesus did not say 'faith *as little* as a grain of mustard seed.' In both illustrations the point was the *marvelous growth* of which the grain was capable.

"St. Paul, too, seems to take this view of Christ's words 'Though I have *all faith*, so that I could remove mountains' (1. Cor. 13:2). Among these wonderful powers were the following: Superhuman power over the forces of nature; power to predict future events; power to read men's minds; power to receive and reveal the great truths of time and eternity. Both before and after His Resurrection, Jesus declared that His faithful disciples should be the possessors of these powers; but their employment was to be preceded by prayer and fasting. Nowhere in the Gospels does our Lord suggest that these supernatural signs were other than the fruits in humanity of *the well-grown tree* of faith. 'Why could not we cast him out?' Jesus said unto them, 'Because of your *unbelief*' (Matt. 17:19, 20).

"In the Old Testament, where some of these powers were exhibited, we can mark the long preparation of Moses, Elijah, and others before they were called upon and enabled to use them. This brings us to the central point of our suggestion—*With the 'omniscient' and 'omnipotent' powers inherent in His Perfect Godhead 'veiled' in His Perfect Humanity—all the powers specified were derived by Jesus Christ immediately from The Father, as One in closest communion with The Source of all power.* Christ's repeated assertion of this fundamental truth is unmistakably clear: 'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works' (John 14:10). 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself' (John 8:28). 'The Son can do nothing of Himself' (John 5:19). 'I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge' (John 5:30). 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me' (John 11:41). 'Many good works I have showed you from My Father' (John 10:32). Very striking too are the following: 'All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you' (John 15:15). He certainly had not revealed all knowledge to His disciples; no human brain could sustain the knowledge of all the physical contents of the universe. 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels' (Matt. 26:53). 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me' (Matt. 26:39).

"Prayer, silent or uttered, is sometimes recorded as preceding Christ's working of miracles, *e.g.*, the miracle of the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14:19), and that of the raising of Lazarus (John 11:41).

"Compare these inducted powers with the power of the risen Christ released from His human limitations. 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth' (Matt. 28:18). After His Resurrection there is no record of His praying to His Father for guidance and relief (Matt. 26:39) or 'giving thanks' (Luke 22:17). There was no need, since all power was given unto Him.

"In 'the Son of Man' faith unimpaired by sin had no room to grow. Graduated to suit His physical abilities, at each stage of His human existence faith in Him transcended the 'great tree'; for example, it amounted in manhood to certainty of knowledge of His Father: 'I know that Thou hearest Me always.' Perfect Faith reciprocates perfect communion, and through perfect communion with His Father, He was supplied where necessary with the supernatural powers which were 'veiled' at His Incarnation, enabling Him *as 'Man'* to say to the dead, 'Come forth,' and to the sick of the palsy, 'Take up thy bed and walk.' This view can account for the 'infallibility' claimed for Jesus Christ equally with the miracles which He wrought, while

hampered by the conditions of His adopted humanity. Nowhere do the Gospels say that Jesus Christ during His existence on earth before His Resurrection was either 'omniscient' or 'omnipotent'. It is not less than horrifying to imagine that Jesus Christ could have *acted* the part of a helpless babe in His Mother's arms, or *pretended* to grow in knowledge.

"Corresponding powers, He promised, should be possessed by the disciples, when their faith had grown to something approaching the dimensions of 'the great tree' of the mustard seed. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also!' (John 14:12),—the increase of faith spells a closer communion with God. All of these powers were to be at the disposal of the Church, provided the necessary conditions were present:—

(a) The seed of Faith grown to a 'great tree' in close communion with Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, approaching His own perfect communion with the Father.

(b) The thing desired must be in accordance with the will of God: the life of Christ was One persistent desire to do the will of His Father.

(c) Necessity for the miracle must exist; Jesus Christ never worked miracles to satisfy curiosity. On His own showing, His miracles were wrought to reveal Himself to those who might be looking for Him. Drawn directly from God Almighty, such miraculous powers would seemingly be commensurate with the magnitude and urgency of the crisis or necessity which called for them. Physical trees and mountains can never be moved capriciously merely to demonstrate the possession of such power by men. Yet in a portentous crisis 'Nature' responded to man's appeal when the sea divided to save Israel from the host of Pharaoh, and when the earth opened to swallow up Korah and his rebel company; and again, when fire descended upon 'the altar to the Lord' built by Elijah On Mount Carmel. The water, too, became wine, and the five barley loaves and the few small fishes increased to an adequate supply to feed the hungry thousands; physical proofs to His disciples, like those who were sent to John the Baptist, that there stood One among them, whom as yet they knew not, who was indeed 'He that should come.'

"St. Paul throws a flood of light on the problem of the *perfect humanity* of Jesus Christ by speaking of Him as '*The Last Adam*' and '*the second Man*' (1. Cor. 15:45, 47). *The First Adam* was moulded from the dust of the ground, and into the lifeless shape God breathed the breath of life; and 'Man' was made 'in the image' of God. The material and human part of the '*Last Adam*' was graciously housed in the Virgin Mother, and this *lifeless form* received the Life of the 'Only-Begotten Son of God.' Jesus Christ was thus truly the 'second man' Adam, with functions like Adam's—wholly human; a perfect Man, endowed with free will; sinless like Adam at his creation, and tempted like *unfallen* Adam, from His birth to His grave. ('In all points tempted like as we are yet without sin'). His agony in the garden, and His cry on the Cross testify to His life-long endurance of temptation; but *Jesus Christ 'the Son of Man' triumphed—where the Man Adam fell.*

"His *death* on the Cross was to avail for the washing away of sins, and His *life* was to be the great example of the perfect 'Man' born in *innocency*, with *free will* to obey or disobey; fulfilling in every particular to its climax the *will* of The Father: *while in Himself—His Person, His Individuality, His Identity*—He was able to show men 'The Father,' since in His Incarnate Godhead He was as ever 'One with the Father' **GOD ALMIGHTY.**

"Thus, without having recourse to metaphysics (*e.g.*, distinctions sought to be drawn between His conscious and subconscious mind), we can say with clear understanding that Jesus Christ was '*truly Man*,' as well as '*truly God*,' with the superhuman powers of His Godhead over the natural universe '*veiled*,' while His *natural powers* (as distinct from those unlimited miraculous powers drawn from the Father) were the normal, limited and hitherto unrealized powers of the *unfallen* Humanity.

"The 'veiling' was the first act in the great scheme of Christ's renunciation: yet 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. 2:9). Yes, '*bodily*' (Incarnate); for by His Incarnation 'the Son of Man' yielded nothing of His claim in the fullest sense to be 'the Only-Begotten Son of God' (John 3:16, 18). His Identity with the '**I AM**' of eternity would not be lost or even affected by the 'veiling' of His Divine powers in His Incarnation. That this *Identity* was not impaired by His Incarnation is well attested in the Gospel narratives: from this we may believe that at an early age He realised, though, perhaps only dimly, *who He was*: 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' Would not His Mother have prepared Him in some degree for this awe-inspiring knowledge? The full realisation at any rate must have come at His baptism, when the Voice proclaimed *to Himself*, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Luke 3:22; Mark 1:2; cf. Matt. 3:17).

"At His Transfiguration the manifestation of His Godhead was made also *to His three disciples*. 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him' (Matt. 17:5; also Luke 9:15). These words in singular and unique recognition of His Deity issued from God the Father. Then, in further proof, the following quotations confirm His own personal claim, 'I give unto them eternal life' (John 10:28); 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30); 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (John 14:9); 'Before Abraham was **I AM**' (John 8:58); 'and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds' (Mark 14:62); 'I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6:44); 'The only-begotten Son' (John 3:16,18); 'Who can forgive sins but God only? . . . but that ye may know that *the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*' (Mark 2:7, 10).

"These last words are of special value in this connection, indicating that our Lord regarded the power to forgive sins as a Divine prerogative, and as exceptional to one living on the earth. It was a spiritual power, apparently retained from the 'veiling,' and exercisable in virtue of His Godhead. From His own words and actions we gather that it was a power distinguishable from the 'signs (which) shall follow them that believe' (Mark 16:17). The retention of this spiritual power by the 'Son of Man' was obviously not in frustration of the fulfilment of His perfect Humanity. Later on, after His resurrection, and after *all power* had been given to Him, in heaven and on earth, when He had breathed on His disciples, He *bestowed this wonderful gift on them* as delegates through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

"Lastly, and carrying the most convincing proof that '*Deity*' was claimed by the Lord Himself, is the evidence that He accepted worship without questioning its propriety: 'There came a leper and worshipped Him' (Matt. 8:2); 'there came a certain ruler and worshipped Him' (Matt. 9:18); 'then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying of a truth Thou art the Son of God' (Matt. 14:33); 'Behold Jesus met them saying, All hail! And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him' (Matt. 28:9; also 15:25; 28:17; Mark 5:6). This attitude is in marked contrast to that of His Apostles, who, while exercising supernatural powers over the material world, together with that special power to forgive sins, bestowed on them as delegates by the risen Savior, yet emphatically repudiated the worship of their fellow-creatures, which would imply their inherent possession of Divine status (St. Paul, Acts 14:15).

"To accept the view outlined in this essay, claiming for its sole authority the words of Holy Scripture, seems to find at once a comprehensive and illuminating explanation of the *infallibility*, and the *supernatural power* of the 'Son of Man' in His complete Humanity (making a reality of His Temptation in the wilderness; the congruous climax in reversal of the human tragedy in Eden and after), without sacrificing in any measure His Identity.

"Christ's *infallibility*, like His *supernatural power* as 'The Son of Man,' flowed, spontaneously to His requirements, from His unbroken communion with God the Father—a communion to which fallen 'Man' through his developed seed of *faith in Jesus Christ* might aspire to approach.

"It should be clearly understood that this belief is far removed from the views of 'modernism,' and its interpretation of the doctrine of *Kenosis*. The doctrine so interpreted, while it denies the claim of Jesus Christ to be 'the Only-Begotten Son of God,' presents Him as the 'natural' Son of Joseph and Mary—a richly gifted Man, 'evolved' like the rest of mankind, from the atom through the beast, and from His lack of knowledge often in serious error in His teaching. Denying, too, the Christian belief in His Virgin Birth, 'modernism' refuses to credit His exhibition of supernatural powers, and the Modernist is only logical when he also rejects the Gospel accounts of His Resurrection. Prof. T. H. Huxley was right when he said: 'Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to accept the Bible'—and the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, is centered in Jesus Christ. The views of the extreme Modernists are the only logical outcome of belief in the theory of 'evolution,' which Dr. Inge in his '*vale*' addresses 1934 said, 'now dominates all our thought. Theology, like everything else, must grow and change' (Church of England Newspaper, September 21, 1934). That this view is shared in general by the leaders of 'modernism' is confirmed by Bishop Barnes in his sermon at Westminster Abbey in May 1927, and by Prof. Bethune Baker in the November number of the *Outline*, 1929. *Evolution is indeed the 'dynamic' of the whole Modernist outlook*, in which the Christ of the Gospels is a fabulous figure, and His Cross a needless tragedy. 'In the light of modern knowledge,' which is an expression constantly in use by Modernists, may generally be taken to mean, 'from the standpoint of "organic evolution."' For the Modernist, 'sin,' in its Biblical sense attributable to Adam's fatal fall, does not exist; it is in all its aspects merely evidence of a lack of knowledge due to Man's present imperfect stage in his imaginary progressive rise from the beast to the throne of the Universe.

"Judged by the Creeds, the grievous error in the Modernist's view of '*Kenosis*' does not seem to lie in the assertion that Jesus *of His own initiative 'did not know' and 'could not act'* outside the inherent capabilities of His adopted Manhood, but, *basing its logic on 'evolution,' a theory which denies to God the power to intervene in the affairs of men and nature, 'Kenosis'* inevitably led to the modern apostasy, that the recorded utterances of Jesus Christ are unreliable. 'Glaze the facts as you will, Jesus remains deluded' (Modern Churchman, October, 1928).

"Criticisms of the view here propounded, which are based on the wording of the Athanasian Creed, fail to realise that those portions of the Creeds which deal with the mystery of the dual natures in Jesus Christ, were addressed entirely to answer the question—'What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?' In short, the Creeds are concerned with Jesus Christ's *Identity*, and do not touch the central theme of this essay, viz., the degree of 'veiling' of His Divine powers which His Incarnation—a true Humanity—demanded. The theory here presented, on Scriptural authority, removes any ground for an interpretation of Phil. 2:7 which could justify the Modernist's theory of *Kenosis* and its destructive inference that 'Jesus Christ remains deluded,' and renders the text clear and intelligible in the face of the Creeds of Christianity.

"If Jesus Christ was not the 'Only Begotten of the Father'—the 'I AM' of Eternity, as He claimed to be, then by Jewish law He was justly condemned for blasphemy (Lev. 24:16), and His Cross, the central point of the Christian religion, carries no more merit than the crosses of the two thieves; and Christianity, robbed of its power, ceases to live.

"In the fashionable corner of the field of philosophy, comprehended in the expression 'the dominance of mind over matter,' or 'the subordination of the material to the spiritual,' we may discern the feeble and fruitless efforts, from the purely rationalistic human standpoint, to penetrate the 'terrain' of those supernatural 'powers' which by His perfect communion with the Father were available *in an unlimited degree* to 'the Son of Man,' and given the fully developed Faith (a seemingly impossible achievement to a 'Christian' world, living so short of 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ') might be powers at the disposal of His Church today."

It will be seen that our author comes very close to the views which we have expressed in The Differentiator on Phil. 2:7. While we cannot, of course, accept the Creeds as inspired, let us say this much: that if they were rendered into English *concordantly* and *consistently*, they would not differ very much from the Scriptures. The men who translated the Creeds into Latin and other languages, by using inexact terms which suited their own ideas, and by giving the original terms a verbal twist, are far more guilty than the original makers of the Creeds. Let us never forget, that although we may reject every Creed, each one of us has his own Creed.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 16

### God Reveals Himself in His Son

When I wrote chapter 10 (The Humanity of the Lord), I was not acquainted with the writings of Professor F. Godet, the celebrated French Swiss commentator, upon the Kenosis, or self-emptying of the Lord. His views are to be found in his Commentary on John's Gospel, in a discussion upon the Logos or Word of chapter 1.

Godet was one of those illustrious "helps" whom God has built into His Church, and all that he has written is well worthy of deep consideration.

In his well-known commentary on Romans, he devoted quite a few pages to ch. 5:12, citing, out of honesty, the explanation given by Gess "In Adam death came upon all moral corruption, as a consequence of which all since have sinned individually." Godet himself did not think this is what Paul had in mind, but says, "In this way it would seem to us simpler to give to *eph hO* (upon which) the neuter sense: *on which, in consequence of which*, all have sinned. Only this meaning of *eph hO* would be, we fear, without precedent." This is quoted to illustrate his honesty, even when he could not see the standpoint of Gess.

Our aim must be to arrive at truth as closely as possible, without troubling about precedent. Both Godet and Gess came very close to the truth concerning Phil. 2 and the Lord's self-emptying, and in this case they certainly did not trouble about precedent, as they were pioneers.

Godet discusses the serious objection which arises from the impossibility of reconciling the pre-existence of Christ with His real humanity. If the Lord pre-existed, must that mean a difference of essence between Him and His brethren? How would it affect His character as the Son of Mankind or His redemptive office?

Says Godet, "Undoubtedly the communion of the Son with the Father is not merely moral; He does not acquire His dignity of Sonship by His fidelity; it is, on the contrary, pre-supposed by everything He does and says; His fidelity maintains, but does not produce, this original relation; it is the unacquired condition of the consciousness which He has of Himself. But on the other hand, it must be owned that, as to the superior knowledge which Christ possessed, it could not be the continuation of a previous knowledge brought by Him from above; otherwise it would not have that progressive character limited to the task of the moment which we recognize in it, and which stamps it as a truly human knowledge. And as to the moral task of Jesus, it would no longer, on such a condition, have anything human in it; for where would be the moral struggle in the case of the Son if He still possessed that complete knowledge of the divine plan which He had eternally in the Father's presence?"

Godet then disposes of the critic who concluded that in John's Gospel there are two Christs placed in juxtaposition one truly human, as taught by Jesus Himself and the other three Gospels, the other Divine and pre-existent, that of John. In attempting to solve this difficulty, Godet admits that we come to "the most arduous problem of theology." But in order to solve it, he does not seek the reconciliation of Scripture with any orthodox teaching, but rather the harmony of Scripture with itself.

And it is just here that Godet shines. Instinctively, he follows the one path that honors God most. Implicit faith in God recognizes that His Word must be and is perfect, down to the smallest detail. In the *fulness* of God's Word we shall find the truth. If we wish to know just who the Lord Jesus Christ was, we must have all the evidence, not merely fragments. A friend who denied that the Lord was in any sense God, when pressed repeatedly to declare who was that Human Being who on occasion appeared in olden times to Adam, to Enoch, to Moses, to Abraham, and others, who recognized Him as Jehovah and worshipped Him, at last answered that the Person was "God the Father"! That very Being who, Paul tells us (1. Tim. 6:16), alone has immortality, inhabiting light inaccessible, whom not one of mankind perceives or can; be perceiving.

Godet then asks, whether Scripture, while clearly teaching the eternal existence of the Word, at the same time teaches the presence of the divine state and attributes in Jesus during His life on earth. He points out that the formula of John 1:14 is incompatible with such an idea. The expression "The Word becomes flesh" speaks certainly of a divine subject, but as reduced to the state of man, which does not at all suppose the two states, the divine and human, as co-existing in it. Such a notion is set aside by exegesis as well as by logic. The *impoverishment* of Christ (2. Cor. 8:9), His voluntary *self-abasement* (Phil. 2:6-7), equally imply His renunciation of the divine state at the moment when He entered upon human existence. The facts of the Gospel history are entirely at one with those apostolic declarations. Jesus no longer possesses on earth the attributes which constitute the divine state. Omniscience He has not, for He asks questions, and Himself declares His ignorance on one point (Mark 13:32). He possesses a pre-eminent prophetic vision (John 4:17, 18), but this vision is not omniscience. No more does He possess omnipotence, for He prays, and is heard; as to His miracles, it is the Father who works them in His favour (John 5:36; 11:42). He is equally destitute of omnipresence. His love even, perfect as it is, is not divine love. This is immutable. But who will assert that Jesus in His cradle loved as He did at the age of twelve, or at the age of twelve as He did on the Cross? Perfect relatively, at every given, moment, His love grew from day to day, both in regard to the intensity of His voluntary self-sacrifice, and as to the extent of the circle which it embraced. It was thus a truly human love. "The grace which is by one *man*, Jesus Christ," says Paul for this reason (Rom. 5:15). His holiness is also a human holiness, for it is realized every moment only at the cost of struggle, through' the renunciation of legitimate enjoyment and victory over the natural fear of pain (John 12:25, 27; 17:19a). It is so human that it is to pass over into us and become ours (ch. 17:19b). All those texts clearly prove that Jesus, while on the earth, did not possess the attributes which constitute the divine state, and hence He can terminate His earthly career by claiming back again the glory which He had before His incarnation (John 17:5).

"How is such a self-deprivation on the part of a Divine Being conceivable? It was necessary, first of all, that He should consent to lose for a time His self-consciousness as a *divine subject*. The memory of a divine life anterior to His earthly existence would have been incompatible with the state of a true child and a really human development. And in fact the Gospel texts nowhere ascribe to Jesus a self-consciousness *as Logos* before the time of His baptism. The word which He uttered at the age of twelve (Luke 2:49) simply expresses the feeling of an intimate relation to God and of a filial consecration to His service. With a moral fidelity like His, and in the permanent enjoyment of a communion with God which sin did not alter, the child could call God His Father in a purely religious sense, and apart from any consciousness of a divine pre-existence. The feeling of His redemptive mission must have been developed in His earliest years, especially through His experience of the continual contrast between His moral purity and the sin which He saw staining all those who surrounded Him, even the best, such as Mary and Joseph. The only healthy one in this caravan of sick with whom He was travelling, He must early have discovered His task as a healer of humanity, and have inwardly consecrated Himself thereto without any reserve. Besides, there is not a saying, not a deed in the gospel history, which ascribes to the infant Jesus the consciousness of His divine nature and of His previous existence. It is to the apocryphal gospels that we must go to seek this contra-natural and antihuman Jesus. According to the biblical account, the Logos, in becoming incarnate, did therefore really put off His consciousness of His divine being, and of the state

corresponding to it. This self-deprivation was the negative condition of the incarnation. Here are the positive conditions of the fact; it is enough to compare them with the well-known features of the Gospel history to judge whether they have been really fulfilled:

1. Man was created in the image of God, as an intelligent, free, and responsible being. Such, therefore, was the limit of the abasement to which the divine subject stooped; for He must descend to the level of man, not beneath him. He lowered Himself to the state of a human personality, destined to work out His development under the conditions determined by man's destination to the divine likeness.
2. The fundamental feature of God's image in man being aspiration Godwards, and receptivity for the divine, this characteristic must be predominant in the human development of this radically divine personality.
3. The limits of our individuality impress a *relative* character on the receptivity for the divine belonging to each of us.

But, in consequence of His miraculous birth, the Logos, while entering into humanity, reproduces not the type of a determinate hereditary individuality, but that of the race itself in its essence and generality. His receptivity for the divine, His religious and moral capacity, is thus not merely that of any individual man—it is that of the whole species which became concentrated in His person, as it had once been in the person of the father of the race. He will thus be able to receive from above not only what each individual, but what the whole of humanity, is fitted to receive and possess from God. And if this collective receptivity is absolute and infinite, in a word, like its object, —the man who concentrates it in His person will infallibly attain to the power of saying, '*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,*' and to possess in Himself 'all the fulness of the Godhead' (John 14:9; Col. 2:9). 4. Finally, if humanity is eternally destined to share the divine state, in other words, if the *true man*, in the divine idea, is the *God-man*, the highest aspiration of the Logos in His human life must have been first to realize in Himself this participation of humanity in the divine state, —this is the meaning of *recovering His glory*,—and then to make all His brethren sharers of it by reproducing in them His glorified humanity. Such is the realization at the gift of us which the Father has made over to Him (John 17:2), the accomplishment of our eternal predestination (Rom. 8:29). On such conditions the entrance of a divine subject into the human state, and His development, do not appear to us to contain anything contradictory."

Godet then proceeds to attempt to mark out the phases of the terrestrial development of the Lord from this point of view, also the mode of His gradual restoration to the divine state. Here we enter into some of the deep things of God, factors which ought to form *an integral part of the Gospel as proclaimed to-day*, but of which we hear almost nothing. Here we reach *the dynamic of the Gospel*—the well-nigh incredible self-abasement and self-emptying by Christ Jesus of the features of Godhead, necessary for the accomplishment of the Atonement, followed by His attaining and maintaining on earth God's Righteous Standard (Rom, 5:18), leading to all humanity obtaining life declared righteous (Rom. 5:18), leading further to the Lord's mighty exaltation and worship by every knee and tongue in the universe (Phil. 2:9-11).

It is not enough to proclaim conciliation. It is not enough to proclaim the Reconciliation of all. Once upon a time the doctrine of Eternal Punishment lay heavily upon many sinful souls, as it still does on some. What we must do is to press home to sinful men and women until they are shocked and horrified, how it was their wrongdoing and their indifference that obliged Christ Jesus to stoop to the depths at degradation and infamy, shame and ignominy, odium and obloquy, loneliness and forsakenness, until He felt Himself to be "a worm and no man" (Psalm 22:6), He, in whom now dwells all the fulness of the Deity bodily.

For these reasons I press the prime importance of Phil. 2:6-7, verses which prove the Unitarian to be totally at sea, because he has no real use for them, or for *such a Savior*. Godet continues, "By the birth of such a being as a member of the race, as *Son of Man*, humanity becomes restored to its normal point of



departure; it is fitted again to enter upon a development which has not been falsified by sin. Up to the age of thirty Jesus fulfils this task. By His perfect obedience and constant sacrifice of self He raises humanity in His person from innocence to holiness. He does not yet know Himself; perhaps in the light of Scripture He begins dimly to forecast what He is in relation to God. But the distinct consciousness of His dignity as Logos would not be compatible with the reality of His human development and the accomplishment of the task assigned to this first period at His life. This task once fulfilled, the conditions of His existence change. A new work opens up to Him, and the consciousness at His dignity as the well-beloved Son, far from being incompatible with the work which He has still to carry out, becomes its indispensable basis.

"To testify of God *as the Father*, He must necessarily know Himself *as the Son*. The baptism is the decisive event which begins this new phase. Anticipating the aspirations and presentiments of the heart of Jesus, the Father says to Him: *'Thou art My Son.'* Jesus knows Himself from that moment to be the absolute object of the divine love. Henceforward He will be able to say what He could not say before: *'Before Abraham came into being, I am.'* This consciousness of His dignity as Son, the revelation of His eternal essence, awareness of His previous fidelity, the background of all His subsequent manifestations, is His possession; it accompanies Him everywhere from that hour. At the same time *the heavens are opened* to Him; His eye pierces into the luminous abyss of the divine plans. He there beholds at every moment all that is necessary for the accomplishment of His Messianic task (John 5:19, 20). He can *speak* now, for He can say: *'We testify what we have seen.'* Finally, humanity becomes elevated in Him to *spiritual* life, the advent of which all, the earth demanded an organ like Him: *the Holy Spirit descends upon Him*; with the propagation of this higher life before Him, Christ feels Himself from this moment Master of all things, and starts on His career as the Messiah and Savior of the world.

"Yet His baptism, while restoring to Jesus His *consciousness* of sonship, did not restore to Him His *filial* state, the *divine form of God* belonging to Him. There is an immense disproportion between what He *knows* Himself to be and what He is really. Therein there will be for Him the possibility of temptation; therein the work of patience. Master of all, He possesses nothing. No doubt He lays out on His work treasures of wisdom and power which are in God, but solely because His believing and filial heart is constantly appealing to the fatherly heart of God.

"It was by His ascension that His return to the *divine state* was accomplished, and that His position was at last raised to the level of the *self-consciousness* which He had from His baptism. From that time He was clothed with all the attributes of the *divine state* which He possessed before His incarnation; but He was clothed with them *as the Son of Man*. *All the fulness of the Godhead* henceforth dwells in Him, but humanly, and even as Paul says, **BODILY** (Col. 2:9). Ten days after His personal assumption into the *divine glory*, He begins to impart it to His church by the communication of the Spirit, who renders her capable of being one day made a partner in the *divine state* which He enjoys Himself. The Parousia will consummate the work thus begun. The first word of history: 'Ye shall be as gods,' will thus be the last. Living images of the Logos from our creation, we shall realize at the close of our development that type of *divine human existence* which we at present behold in Him."

Godet then states the true formula of the incarnation, as embodied in John's Gospel, thus: *The Logos realized in Jesus, in the form of a human existence subject to the law of time and progress, that relation to God of perfect dependence and filial communion which He realized before His incarnation in the permanent form of divine life.*

Godet next deals with the relation of the Logos to God prior to the incarnation, and finds that Paul, in 2. Cor. 8:9 and Phil. 2:6 expresses a conception of the pre-existence of Christ exactly similar to John's, and identical in substance with John's teaching, though using terms quite independent of those used by John. When Paul calls the pre-existent Christ the *Image of the invisible God*, he says the same as John does in

designating Him the *Word*. These two expressions contain above all, the idea of an operation accomplished in the depths of the divine essence; God affirming, with an eternal affirmation, all that He thinks, wills, and loves, in a being who is the word of His thought, the reflection of His being, the object of His love, His Word, His Image, His Son. And this word is a living being, a person who—if we could apply to God an expression which is only appropriate to man—should be called *His realized ideal*. "Let us imagine an artist giving life to the masterpiece in which he has embodied all the fulness of his genius, and having power to enter into personal relation with it: such is the relation between God and the Word. This Word can only be *divine*; for *the highest affirmation of God cannot be less than God Himself*. He must be *eternal*; for an affirmation which belongs to the being of God cannot have had a beginning. This Word being God's absolute *enunciation*, His only saying, His primordial and sole utterance, in which are contained all His particular utterances, every subsequent word which will re-echo in time is primarily contained in Him, and will only be realized through Him; He is the *creative* word: "In Him all things consist" says Paul (Col. 1:17). In pronouncing the word, or, what comes to the same thing, in begetting the Son, God has expressed His whole being; and it is this Word who, in His turn, will call all beings out of nothingness. They will all be His free affirmation, as He Himself is that of God. By means of the universe, the Word displays in time the whole wealth of the divine treasures which God has eternally put within Him, Creation is the poem of the Word to the glory of the Father."

This notion of the Word as a creative principle is therefore of the greatest importance in its bearing on the conception of the universe, which is thus made to rest on a basis of absolute light which secures its final perfection.

As the Word become flesh, Christ Jesus is the absolute revelation and communication of God to humanity, eternity come down into time, all the treasures of God brought within the reach of faith. After this gift of the Father, there is nothing *better* to wait for.

For the help given by the godly Godet I am most grateful. It should enable us more easily to link up some of those deep but often hard to be understood passages, such as John 1:1-5, 14, 18; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:16-20; Heb. 1:2-3; and Rev. 3:14; 19:13, shewing how precisely all Scripture harmonizes, and how marvelous is the scheme by which our God reveals Himself in His Son.

# Who Is Our God?

## Chapter 17

### Shall We See God?

In the November-December 1950 issue of *The Differentiator*, chapter 2 of the series on 'Who is our God?' dealt with the visibility and the invisibility of God.

In Exodus 33:20 Jehovah told Moses, "Thou art not able to see my face, for the human being is not seeing Me and goes on living." In plain English, "You cannot see Me and live." Yet verse 11 tells us that "Jehovah speaks unto Moses face unto face, just as a man is speaking unto his friend!" But when Moses asked Jehovah in verse 18, "Shew me Thy glory," no human being could gaze at that Face in glory. Where there was no glory, He could be seen of men. It was not "Thou mayest not see My face," but "Thou art not able" to see it (la thukl). The common Hebrew verb (yakal) always signifies ability to do something, not permissibility. Moses had not the ability or strength to look Upon Jehovah's glory, just as we are unable to stare at the sun in its glory.

Will a time arrive when human beings will be able to gaze upon God in His glory? Shall we see God the Father?

1. Tim. 6:14-16 must be carefully studied. Paul charges Timothy to keep the precept, (being) unspotted, irreprehensible, "unto the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; which, in its own eras, the happy and only Potentate will be shewing, the King of those having kingship and Lord of those having lordship, the only one having immortality, making His home light inaccessible, whom not one of mankind does perceive or is able to be perceiving—to whom honour and might eonian."

Here man's disability is shewn to lie in the present, not in the future. We can meantime only imagine the vast capabilities of our new spirit bodies. How thankful I am that Paul did use here the future tense, as he did in Romans 8:39, where we discover that no creation of any kind "*will be able* to separate *us* from the love of God."

Therefore 1. Tim. 6:16 leaves the door open. There is hope that we may yet see God. Versions which use the word "can" here are misleading, as this makes one think either of the present or the future. Rotherham, Darby and the Emphatic Diaglott correctly read "is able."

There appears to be no statement that God can never be seen by human eyes.

Some friends have expressed the desire to see the Father, feeling that they would miss something if they did not. Others have a feeling that we should look over the shoulders of the Son and behold another and more venerable Person.

Yet for the meantime, it is sufficient for us to see God in Christ. As an old book published in London in 1761, "Universal Restitution a Scripture Doctrine" said, "Christ is the Very God of the aeons."

We learn from John 1:18 that literally, "GOD no one has ever seen." This is to say, "God as **GOD**." "The only-begotten God, who, being within the bosom of the Father, **HE** unfolds (Him)." This means that the Son, and He alone, Who always had access to His Father's bosom, can explain God. As Napoleon put it,

"No man has seen God, except God." This access to God is parallel to what we find in John 1:1, the Word or Logos was toward (or, face to face with) God, and therefore could see God. Ch. 6:46 says, "Not that anyone has seen *the Father*, except the One being from-beside God." The Son, having been beside, within, and face to face with His Father, knew God and had seen Him, *This One* has seen the Father." John puts matters somewhat differently in his first Epistle, Ch. 4:12: "At GOD no one ever has gazed." The final word here makes one think that glimpses of God might be obtained under certain conditions, and this is what we find occasionally in Old Testament times.

None of the above references say anything about the future. Yet once, in Matt. 5:8, we encounter a future tense, "Happy are the clean in heart, for *they* shall be seeing God." In case anyone should think the verb here only means seeing in a spiritual manner, we must point out that the word (*opsontai*) is exactly the same as that found in Matt. 24:30; 28:10; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; and John 19:37, where the Son of Man is seen visibly. The same word is also found in Rev. 22:4, "and they shall see His face." When the Lord left our earth, His disciples were "looking" on, and a cloud "under-got Him" and He was taken up into the heaven or sky (Acts 1:9-11). He will be seen visibly when He returns.

Somewhere I once read, "We shall never see Him, in a literal sense. . . God is *absolutely* invisible." I have also been told, "There is no hint that the invisibility of God is due to human disability to see Him."

The fact that according to 1. Tim. 6:16 the Lord "alone has immortality" does not necessarily imply that His own people will never possess immortality. In Athens Paul came upon an inscription addressed to "An Unknowable God." The Greek word used here means not only unknown, but unknowable. He is still to most human beings unknowable because they will not seek after Him. But must this mean that He will always be unknowable, and to those too, whom He has created specially in His own Image?

## GOD'S IMAGE AND FORM

In most of the occurrences in the New Testament of the expressions the image or the likeness of God, this refers not to what mankind was in the beginning, but rather to that which the believer has already begun to be, and what he will yet be, through Christ. There are, however, two passages where we find direct quotations from Genesis 1:27, and these refer to all men as they exist now. Dr. C. Ryder Smith deals with this matter in his recent very helpful and analytical volume "The Bible Doctrine of Man" (Epworth Press, London, 1951). He asks the question, "What is meant by the *phrase* 'the image of God' in the New Testament, when it refers to all men?" In 1. Cor. 11:7 Paul unites the text where God is said to 'make man (male and female) in His own image' with the text where He is said to build one of Adam's ribs 'into a woman' (Gen. 1:27; 2:21).

"Here the Apostle is clearly speaking of *every* man, good or bad. To interpret 'image' of anything like 'moral and spiritual likeness' would be quite alien to a passage where the Apostle is defending the contemporary custom by which men went unveiled and women veiled in public. His argument bases on the *physical* difference between men and women, and while he silently admits that women share God's *eikOn* (image) with men, he discriminates between the sexes under 'glory.' As in LXX. *eikOn* means a 'form' that can be seen. This interpretation involves the continuance of the belief that God Himself 'has a form.' Today this idea is supposed to be confined to the less intellectual kind of men, but the present writer believes that it was universal among the first Christians. It would be out of place here to discuss the subject but there seems to be no Biblical text that says that God is invisible—in the sense that there is in Him nothing that can be seen."

Dr. Ryder Smith goes on to shew that at Sinai the Israelites had seen no form of God (Deut. 4:12), yet there were exceptions in the case of Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel. While John wrote that "God is spirit"

(4:24), and said that no one has even seen *God* (1:18), he also mentions His form or appearance (eidos; 5:37), and this expression means something that can be seen (Luke 3:22; 2. Cor. 5:7). Our author continues:

"Similarly, the phrase 'the unseen (aoratos) God' can be taken to mean, not that God is invisible, but that no man has ever seen Him (Col. 1:15; 1. Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). It is as though the sun, whose light is everywhere, were never seen. The interpretation of *eikOn* as something visible, though never seen, is possible also in the phrase 'the image of Him that created him' (Col. 3:10), which refers to Gen. 1:27 without quite quoting it."

The second direct quotation is then dealt with (James 3:9), "With (the tongue) we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made after God's likeness (homoiOsis)."

"This Greek term does not occur elsewhere in—the New Testament, but 'moral and spiritual likeness' does not suit the context, for James does not mean 'We curse men although they are good!'"

The writer then states that although the N.T. teaches that men ought to be like God in *character*, and that when a man begins, through faith, to be like Him in this way, there begin to be changes in his 'form' too, this does not appear in the passages that refer Gen. 1:27 to *all* men, whether believers or not, as they are *now*. These passages interpret the text, like the LXX, to refer to man's *outward form*; and this 'form,' which was originally like God's, has not been *altogether* lost through sin.

If then, God possesses a form, we should imply that He has a 'body,' and belongs to the material universe. It may be that the early believers understood that God's form was physical but not material. Probably this will be true of our own glorious new bodies. The Lord had such a body.

## THE DIVINE OMNIPRESENCE

Dr. Ryder Smith also presents a new conception regarding God's omnipresence, as follows:

"With the belief in a God who cannot be seen there usually goes the belief that 'God is everywhere.' The texts most commonly quoted are Ps. 139 in the Old Testament and John 4:24 ('God is spirit'—i.e. a 'spiritual being') in the New. But the Psalmist's meaning seems rather to be that wherever He goes God speeds thither before him. Even if he flees to Sheol, or, what for him is farther away, 'to the uttermost parts of the earth,' God has forestalled him. This concept—that God can be anywhere He wants to be 'in a flash'—suits other Old Testament passages, both early and late (e.g. Judges 5:4; Psalm 18:10; Ezk. 1:14, 28). The Johannine text is not incompatible with this, for under both *pneuma* and *ruach*, 'spirit' is like a moving wind rather than the omnipresent air (e.g. Ezk. 1:4, 20; Acts 2:2, 4; John 3:8). The text in John means that, wherever men 'worship God in spirit and (therefore) in truth,' God is there."

Dr. Ryder Smith thinks that this account of the unlimited mobility of God is a better approximation to what is meant by His transcendence of space than the idea that He is omnipresent. The word "eternity" is used in connection with the transcendence of time, and it is often maintained that because God works in history, and even more because in Christ He entered into history, there must be something of ultimate value even in time and history, even though it cannot be defined. This means that there is something of ultimate value in *change*, because history is the process of change. There emerges the antinomy that God is 'changeless' so far as changelessness is of value, and that He 'changes' so far as change has value. It is then suggested that under "space" similar claims may be made. But space has no term corresponding to "eternal" or "eternity." Perhaps there is something of ultimate value in space as well as in time, because the doctrine of the Incarnation means that God entered into both. This would mean that there is something

of value in 'form' as well as in 'change,' for just as time is known in change, so space is known in 'form' or 'shape.' A second antinomy follows, that God has no 'form,' so far as there is value in formlessness, but that He has 'form,' so far as there is value in form. It is not reasonable to hold a doctrine about 'time' and refuse to apply it to 'space.'

Reverting to John 5:37, perhaps the writer from whom I have been quoting should have been more cautious here. The A.V. reads "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." The assumption would be, that God has both a voice and a shape or form. That He uses His voice we know. The true sense, however, will be found in Rotherham's first edition (1872): "Neither a sound of him, at any time, have ye heard; nor an appearance of him, have ye seen." Most other versions have preferred conventionality to accuracy. The Greek here omits two Definite Articles, deliberately. The common English rendering certainly implies that God possesses both voice and form or appearance. But it is not stated here that God has, or has not, a form, Phil 2:6, however, does prove that God possesses a form; that is, an outward appearance, though the Greek word here is *morphE*, not *eidōs*. The Greek text tells us, literally, that Christ Jesus was "existing-all-along (huparchōn) in God's form," prior to His becoming Flesh. There is no Definite article here either, but there is no dubiety as to God possessing a form.

Every occurrence, or lack, of the Greek Definite Article is of some importance, often of vital importance.

### **MATTHEW 5:8**

"Happy are the pure (or clean) in heart, for *they* shall see God." This is an echo of Psalm 24:3 and Hebrews 12:14 (without holiness shall no man see the Lord).

Now John 14:9 relates how the Lord said to Philip, "So much time with you am I, and you have not been getting to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father, and how are *you* saying, shew us the Father?" That is to say, whoever has seen the Son, has beheld something of the Father. And the more one sees of the Son, the more of the Father shall he see. He who beholds Christ in His glory, will come more and more to see the glory of God Himself. "Beloved, now are we children of God; and *not yet* was it made manifest what we shall be: we know that, if perchance it should be made manifest, —like him shall we be, because we shall see him according as he is. And every one that has this hope on him is purifying himself according as *He* is pure"(1. John 3:2-3, Rotherham). When we see Christ as He is, and *in Him God*, shall we not be, as James Morison puts it; "in the most glorious of the presence-chamber of God?"

This marvelous process seems to reach its consummation in 1 Cor. 15:22-28.

### **CHRIST GIVES UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD**

Augustine thought that the subjection of the Son to the Father meant that the Son would guide the saved to the Contemplation of the Father. Chrysostom's idea was that it meant the Son's full agreement with the Father. Beza thought it signified the presentation of the elect to the Father. Theodoret said it was the manifestation whereby the Son will make the Father fully known, to the whole world.

But Paul means something quite different. What is in question is the delivering up of the *Kingdom*, in which the chief function was judgment. The Son could not deliver up to the Father His *mediatorial* function, for obvious reasons: His subjection to the Father has been taken as a contradiction of His divinity and His pre-existence, not to mention the Trinity dogma. But the expression Son takes in both the idea of subjection and of equality of nature. He was begotten of Holy Spirit, yet He was the son of Mary, and thus human. His Reign, with the object of reaching a definite result, had to be

temporary. Once the end was gained, He returns to His normal position, relative subordination to God the Father.

The subjection of the Son could be no loss to Him. It was not that He descended from the Divine Throne, but rather, His own subjects are raised to the Throne along with Him. See Rev. 3:3, 21. We are "Heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ" (Rom. 8:17), sharing with Christ the Divine inheritance, the possession of God Himself."

This subjection of the Son does not imply His absorption in the Deity, so that His own personality disappears. Absorption is not subjection. The Son returns to the state of submission which He had left in order to fill the place of Messianic sovereignty, for the reason that, when God communicates Himself to all directly, the Son ceases to be Mediator of God's sovereignty. Having restored all to God, the Son effaces Himself, so that the Father may take His place. In former times God manifested Himself to the world in Christ; "the all and in all is Christ" (Col. 3:11). But now, at the consummation, God can, without the Son's mediation, reveal Himself directly to His saints and dwell in them. His saints have reached the perfect stature of the fulness of the Christ (Eph. 4:13), and their position is equal to His. God will be all in them just as He was in His Son. They will have attained at last the perfect stature of the fulness of the Christ (Eph. 4:13).

One might have expected, in 1. Cor. 15:28, the words "that the Father may be all in all," seeing that the Son has just been mentioned. Yet Paul deliberately uses the term "God," in order to shew that he means God in all the fulness of His being and power; as Father, the source of all, as Son, revealing Him, and as Spirit, communicating Him. When that glorious stage is reached, it will be with that Divine fulness that He will dwell in the whole tree of humanity. Anyone who is acquainted with arithmetic or logic knows that the first death can never be the last enemy.

In the Old Testament theophanies or manifestations of God there was only a transitory appearance, which left the relation between God and man as external as before. Thus it was necessary that the theophany be consummated by an Incarnation. He who in former times had been seen only in a transitory theophany, now *tabernacled* with His disciples (John 1:14), in visible form. In Rev. 21:3, however, we find that "the tabernacle of *God* is with mankind, and He will go on tabernacling with them." The implication must be, that somehow or other God will then be visible, as indeed, Ch. 22:4 states, "they will be viewing His face."

Clement of Alexandria, who died around 220 A.D., held so firmly by the humanity of Christ that he regarded the Incarnation as the basis and archetype of what was in a measure possible for all His followers. In the fact and doctrine of the Incarnation he saw the bridging of the gulf, hitherto impassable, between man and God. He saw in it also the consecration of the history of humanity as the ever-operative sphere for the activity of the Word, and the consecration of every son of man by presenting to him the possibility of becoming a son of God. Clement understood that God's tabernacling with mankind meant a permanent theophany.

# THE END