

THE GODHEAD

Elder Samuel Trott

The Godhead

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SON OF GOD & GODHEAD.

Brother Beebe: - As in the 7th number of Signs, for this year, there are two communications which call for some reply from me. I presume you will indulge me in such reply. But also on further investigation, I think, brother Clark's previous communication requires some more extended notice than I took of it in my recent letter. I must, therefore, request the permission to thus notice it previous to replying to the other. From the unaccountableness of the circumstance, that it is fifteen years or more since I first published through the *Signs* my views relative the sonship of the Son of God and to the popular idea of three persons in the Godhead. I have had repeated occasion to argue these subjects since through the same channel, and have uniformly preached in accordance with those views; and that brother Clark, during all that time, has been holding social and brotherly intercourse with me, preaching with me, &c., without any intimation that he considered my views heretical. And from the fact that during that period he has been a reader of the Signs, and must have known that the very ground I occupied was that of sustaining the doctrine of the essential, self-existing Godhead of the Son of God, in opposition to the apparent denial of that doctrine by some of the positions of the popular system, he has now, without showing any direct ground for it, come to the conclusion that *I deny the divinity of the Son of God*. I am led to enquire, whence this new born zeal and these conclusions in opposition to my views? From its connection with Rappahannoc Association, and the *formal dissent contemplated*, as he says, *in that body from those points* on which we differ, I am led to conclude that something is designed; and lest this should be a separation from me and any with whom I may accord on these points, I have thought it desirable that our distinct views on these points might be presented to view in connection, that they and others may know about what they are aiming to make a split. It is for this that I ask this indulgence of you and the readers of the Signs. There is a preliminary point on which we appear to differ, which I will first notice.

I hold that the Scriptures, being the revelation of God, must be true in all their parts, and therefore wherein they mark distinctions, by words or by connecting circumstances, those distinctions should be strictly regarded in all our consulting of them. Brother Clark will contend for the observance of such distinctions in some things. He will not admit that sprinkling or pouring is baptism because the words used and the circumstances mentioned in the Scriptures clearly point to immersion distinctively as baptism. But in reference to the subject before us, there are distinctions definitely pointed out, as between a *father and a son*, which they disregard. Further, I believe that no contradiction can exist in pure truth. As the Scriptures are the pure truth of God, there can be no real contradictions in them. Hence, whenever we hold a system which involves the language of the Scriptures in contradictions, we ought to remember the injunction of Paul, "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom.3:4). May this injunction have weight with us and lead us to reject our system as false rather than by implication represent the Scriptures as containing falsehood. Brethren, are not these positions consistent? If they are, please bear them in mind as we proceed.

Now to come to the points of difference. They contend that God exists as *three persons and one God*, that these three persons are alike equal and alike the self-existent God, but that they exist by distinct modes of existence, that the Father exists of Himself that the Word or Son exists by the generation of the Father, being begotten of Him, and that the Holy Ghost exists as He proceeds from the Father and the Son. This I presume will be admitted to be a simple and candid representation of their views. Now to this system I conscientiously object, that it presents palpable contradictions, and that as they represent this as the revelation of God, they charge Him with these contradictions. They say that the three are alike

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eternal, self-existent and independent, and yet that the Father alone has an underived existence, and that the other two exist by a derived existence and depend on the existence of the other; the Son on the existence of the Father, and the Holy Ghost on the existence of the Father and the Son. Can they then be alike independent in their existence? If I say of two persons, one is the father and the other is the son, do I not distinctly convey the idea that the one existed as a person before the other, and that the latter's existing as a person is a consequence of the previous existence and action of the former; and hence while the father's existence did not depend on the previous existence of the son, the son's existence did depend on the previous existence of the father? Now when they say there are three persons in the Godhead, and of these three, as persons, one of them is the Father, and of another, He is the only begotten Son of this Father, what reason is there that the same declaration made concerning these two divine persons does not tend to convey the same idea, as to the previous existence of the one, and the subsequent and dependent existence of the other, as in the case of two men? When, therefore, they contend that the one is the Father, and the other His Son in relation to their personal existence in the Godhead, how can they, without a plain contradiction to that declaration, say in reference to the same personal existence, that they are alike eternal and independent in their existence? Is this *letting God be true, but every man a liar*, in charging these, and several other contradictions in this system, to God's Word? Again, I object to this system because that by making the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost three persons in the Godhead, they make them to be three distinct individuals, for what less does the term person mean, than an individual being? This, I think, at best is dividing the Godhead more than I believe the scriptural revelation of the one God will admit. But when we carry it out, that they contend that each of these persons is distinctively God, as each is a distinct individual, there must be three individuals existing by distinct modes of existence, and, of course, three Gods. Brother Clark says of the Apostles, that they were not *afraid of making a plurality of gods by maintaining that the Son of God was Jehovah*. Neither am I; but the Apostles never taught that the Son of God in His Godhead was a *distinct person* from the Father, so that his remarks are altogether out of place. When I was led to look at these inconsistencies, and contradictions in the Nicene system, I turned to an examination of the Scriptures on that head, and I found that they by no means sustained that system. I found that God has revealed Himself as three, and so as three, that distinct things are affirmed of each; but not so as three as to infringe upon the unity of God. Hence it is said, "These three are one." Hence, whenever God is spoken of He is spoken of as the one God, that is absolutely God, whether in reference to the Father, the Word or Son, or the Holy Ghost. Therefore, I conclude that each in His distinct relation is the one God, having all the fullness of the Godhead in that relation, whether as Father, as Son, or as the Holy Ghost.

I found that the Son is declared in the same person in which He is spoken of as Son to be absolutely God and one with the Father; yet that as Son He is uniformly spoken of as personally distinct from the Father and subordinate to Him; as that He is begotten of the Father, and which, as before noticed, conveys by the expression clearly the idea of a priority of existence in the Father. And things are affirmed of Him as Son which cannot consistently be affirmed of the Godhead as such. He says of Himself, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do," &c. John 5:19. Could it be affirmed that as God, He could do nothing of Himself? Again, it is written, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," &c. Gal.4:4. Could it be said consistently with the unity of God that God sent forth God made, &c.? Yet these and many like things are said of the Son. I, therefore, believe that the Son possesses in Himself such a distinction from the Godhead as is thus marked by the declarations of Scripture. Not that He as Son exists distinct from God, but that as I have said and as the Scriptures affirm abundantly, that in His Person He is God, whilst He possesses that which is begotten of the Father in personal union with His Godhead as the Word, which constitutes Him personally distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

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This distinct and begotten or produced existence, which constitutes Him as Son in distinction from the Father, I find not only revealed in the declaration that He is the Son of God, but also in that *life* which is declared to be in the Word in the beginning, for it reads, "In the beginning was the Word," &c. John 1:1; and in verse 4, "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men." The declaration that this life was in *Him* certainly conveys the idea that it was something distinct from His essential existence as the Word or God. And if thus distinct, it must be a produced existence; and as a produced existence, it could be in Him and not destroy His Godhead.

In turning to Col. 3:3 & 4, we find it said of the saints, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Is not this the same life which is the *light of men*; said to be hid in God as that life was in the Word? And this life is Christ, and Christ is the Son of God Mt. 16:16. Hence it is said of the *Word*, when He was *made flesh* John 1:14. "And we beheld His glory." As the glory of the invisible God? No, but "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Thus, the believer's life is identified with Christ, and Christ with the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. Consequently, the Son of God, as such, is the life of the saints and the head of them in that life. How else could they be born of God, seeing He is the *Only Begotten* of the Father, unless they were begotten in Him as a head, as we are the creatures of God and being created in Adam. As brother Clark says, Is there anything *like grandsons about this*? Whilst we have in the Son the Godhead in all its fullness as existing in the Word, we have also the life of His people, thus constituting Him one with the Father, and one with His people, and yet possessing a personal distinction from each, in distinction from the Father, He is begotten of Him and is the life of His people, in distinction from His people, He is God. He is, therefore, just such a person as could act as Mediator between God and men. Without His being thus distinct, in person, from each, He could not sustain the office of Mediator. "Now a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, but God is one," says Paul Gal. 3:20. And again, I Tim. 2:5 - "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," not the *man Jesus*, but the Christ as well as the Jesus. Hence, as He had an existence in the beginning which was distinct from Him as God, and this existence is the Christ, we see that from the beginning we had an existing, living Mediator in the Head of the church. As Paul represents, as above, that the Mediator must be a person distinct from the *one God, and from men*; according to the system of our brethren, which represents Christ as existing only as God, and therefore as the one God, until about eighteen hundred years ago, there was no actually existing Mediator until then. If for four thousand years God could hold gracious intercourse with many of the fallen posterity of Adam without an existing Mediator through whom they were to commune with Him, I cannot see why such communion might not still be continued without a Mediator. But such a thing could not be. Paul says, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which *was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*" II Tim. 1:9. How could this be if there was no life of believers, no Christ in existence until about eighteen hundred years ago?

The views which I have advanced have been charged with *Sabellianism*. But any candid reader of what I have written will see the falsity of such charge. They will see that I believe just what the Scriptures say, that "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one" I John 5:7; that is, that God exists as *three*, but so as *three*, as to be absolutely *one*, and therefore, not three persons or individuals.

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I have been charged with *Arianism*, so brother Clark charges me with denying the *divinity of the Son of God*. He says he has made it deliberately, but I must say he has made it wantonly. I cannot view it in any other light, though I presume he designed no such looseness. What I have written will, I think, show the entire incorrectness of the charge. I will, however, add that brother Clark, I think, will admit that the Word was made flesh, or became a perfect man, without in the least destroying His essential Godhead. Why then could He not exist with the life of His people, and therefore a begotten life in Him, and as personally one with Him without destroying His divinity? However, it is enough to sustain me against such a charge, that, in the same declaration of Him, in which it is said, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men," it is also said, "The Word was with God, and the *Word was God*." John 1:1 & 4.

Again he appears to think there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant the idea of Christ's being anything else than God and man. Strange! Does brother Clark harbor the idea that God in His word has carelessly used descriptive and distinctive names and terms, where there are no distinctions designed? Is not the Lord Jesus Christ in the Scriptures declared to be God and Jehovah, and the Son of God, and man? Are not these three distinctive names, and is there nothing distinctive intended by them? Does not the name Jehovah imply absolute, independent, and self-existence? Does not the term Son, as used among men, and generally in the Scriptures, distinctively imply a begotten, and therefore dependent existence? And does not the term, man, imply a fleshly existence? Was He not a Son before He was *made of a woman and made under the law*? I cannot believe that our Lord is revealed to be what He is not. Why then are these three distinctive terms so often used of our Lord if He does not possess the three distinct existences thereby designated? Can brother Clark answer these enquiries so as to make them harmonize with the truth of Scripture declarations and yet so as to deny His distinct existence as the Son of God? In John 1st, as already noticed, we have the three natures, "The Word was God;" again, "In Him was life;" again, "The Word was made flesh," verse 1,4 & 14. In Isa. 9:6, we have A child born and a Son given, are not these distinct? And again, His names are *The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace*. Are not these names descriptive? I presume brother Clark could not say that the name Everlasting Father being given to the child born and the son given implies He is distinctively the Father in the Godhead. Brother Clark will probably shuffle these queries off by saying the subject of God's existence is a mystery. True it is a mystery, but does this imply that we should, by our constructions put upon God's word, involve it in contradictions? There is a material difference between mystery and contradictions. It is nowhere written, *great are the contradictions of godliness*. Contradictions in his system I have already pointed out, the above hint therefore will be sufficient. I have thus presented my views as contrasted with the popular system, by which it will be seen that I, in common with the advocates of that system, hold that God exists as three, and that these three are one, and so one, that either of the three is, in His distinct relation, the one God. They hold that there are three persons in the Godhead. I deny that, but say that the Son is a proper and distinct person from the Father and the Holy Ghost, in relation to His sonship; but that He does not exist in His sonship separate from His Godhead, any more than He does as man, so that in His distinct personality He is God, Son of God, and Man. They hold that His sonship relates to His Godhead, so that He is no otherwise God than as He is begotten of the Father; I deny this as contradictory to His being equal with the Father, and to His being the independent and self-existent God; and in distinction, I hold that His sonship consists in His being begotten of the Father as the Head of His church and life of His people and that they thus, in their spiritual life, were begotten in Him and proceed from Him, and that He is the "first born among many brethren" Rom. 8:29. And now brethren, is there anything heretical, anything anti-scriptural in those points wherein I differ from you, anything contradictory to the Son of God's being absolutely the Jehovah, whilst He is the Son of God, and Man, possessing these existences distinct from His Godhead,

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yet inseparable from it, and personally one with it; any diminishing of His capacity to act as the one Mediator between God and men? If there is, then clear yourselves from the heresy by separating from me. But beware how you encourage splits among us, when that from which you would separate is sustained by the word of God. I am willing to join issue with brother Clark in an *appeal to the saints of the most high God*, which it is that denies that the Son of God is the Jehovah, he who says He is begotten of the Father as God, or I in contending that He is unbegotten, unproduced in His Godhead; and whether I any more diminish His essential Godhead by contending that He exists as the life of His people as well as man in His personal union with His Godhead, that he does in admitting that He exists as proper man in like union with His Godhead. Whilst having joined in this appeal to the saints, I would not forestall their decision, but wish them to consider and speak candidly if they are disposed to do so, and say which more denies the idea of absolute self-existence, he who contends that it is an unbegotten, underived existence, for this is the point; I would beg indulgence to lengthen this communication by stating what I believe to be the actual difference between me and brother Clark and other brethren whom I could name, and that reduced to the shortest span. It is simply this, that I believe that Christ actually existed from before the foundation of the world, in union with His Godhead as the Head and life of His people, and they deny His so existing, and therefore in effect, deny His actual existence as the Christ and Mediator until He was born of Mary. Also, we differ in the reference of His sonship, they referring it to His Godhead and I referring it to His existence as Head and life of His people. This is the amount on this subject; it, to be sure, extends itself to the subject of regeneration as to what constitutes that. Whether this be a sufficient ground for a split I leave them to judge for themselves. My opinion and my feelings are that it is no cause for a split or for hard feelings; but as I do not wish to intrude upon their fellowship after what brother Clark has developed by crowding myself upon their churches, or associations, I shall stand aloof, till invited.

There are one or two other things in brother Clark's communications which I wish to notice. He charges me with having *proscribed all the saints from the apostles' days down*. How have I proscribed them? By making my views on this subject a test of fellowship? I deny the charge. The first instance of my publishing my views on this subject, through the Signs, was to defend them from the charge of heresy, which certain brethren had made against them, as advanced in conversation and preaching; and in most cases since, in which I have discussed the subject through the Signs, it has been in self defense from similar charges. In these communications I have protested against making our different views on this mysterious subject a test of fellowship, or a charge of heresy; so long as the essential Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ was maintained. If, by the charge, he means that I have been too harsh relative to the views of others, I probably am guilty. I feel that I am deficient in the graces of meekness and humility as well as in every other christian grace. There have been some occasions for producing excited feelings. When the subject of the sonship of Christ, as I now view it, was first opened up to my view, the revelation of Him in the Scriptures seemed so to harmonize in relation to His being the Jehovah, and to His subordination as Son, and in reference to His relation with His church and people, that I thought surely Old School Baptists would receive the Scripture testimony on the subject. But what have I met with from them, as a general result, but charges of heresy, and of bringing forward *new things* to make a split and lead a party, &c. Again, when I consider the origin of the system, as such, of three persons in the Godhead, and of the sonship of Christ as generally received by Catholics, Protestants and Baptists; for brother Clark is not correct in saying I have proscribed all the saints from the Apostles' days. The Apostles never taught that there are three persons in the Godhead, nor that it was as God the Son was begotten. Mosheim says, speaking of the affair of Anus, and of the council of Nice, A.D. 325, until then "nothing was dictated to the faith of christians in this matter, &c. Hence it happened that the christian

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doctors entertained different sentiments upon this subject, without giving the least offense, and discoursed variously concerning the distinctions between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” (See in his church history his account of the Arian affair and the council of Nice.) When I say I consider the character of the majority of the Bishops composing this council, the decrees they established, as well as the creed; that they sanctioned Constantine’s assuming as emperor an authority in religion, and that from this council emanated the first professed christian persecution against christians; first against Arians, and then against Donatists and Novations, with whom was evidently the true church, I am led to the conclusion that here was developed the Beast in his first assuming the seat and power of the dragon; and therefore that the creed and decrees of this council will go down with the Beast. See also Jones’ account of this council, and remarks in his church history. Hence, I have felt impatient at seeing Old School Baptists holding so tenacious to the creed of that council, and in its spirit branding all as heretics who dare to differ from it. I may, therefore, have spoken too severely on this point. I give not the above account to reflect upon brethren, but as a matter of well authenticated historical fact, to show brother Clark that he was too brash, regardless of candor and of facts in his sweeping charge.

Brother Clark also admonishes me relative to the effects of my discussions. How many have been edified by them is not my province to decide. But I know that the multitude are not always on the side of the truth. I have probably as great an itching, naturally, for popularity as others; and I do highly regard the fellowship of brethren, and of brother Clark and those who appear to have been with him in this stand against my views. But I have not been trained in my experience to a popular course. In my early experience I was constrained by a regard to Scripture testimony to break off from my connection with the most numerous and influential denomination in New Jersey, and to hunt up a few despised and scattered members of a Baptist church in that vicinity, before unknown to me, and ask them to admit me to baptism and connection with them. And as they had no preacher, I had to go to the city of New York (thirty miles), and request a preacher to visit them and baptize me. My travel ever since has been in the same course. Again and again have I had to leave the many to go with the few; but it has not been my lot to leave the few and adhere to the many. And does brother Clark suppose that at this time of life I am to be induced, unless by being convinced of error, to cease to advocate what I have conscientiously received as revealed truth for the sake of being with the majority? With Jeremiah I may conclude that I was *born a man of strife and a man of contention* Jer. 15:10.

Brother Clark on I Cor. 15:45, and brother Williams, I will, if permitted, attend to in another communication.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia,

April 17, 1850.

S. Trott.

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On the Sonship of Christ.

Brother Beebe; - This subject, the sonship of Christ, is one of no trifling importance, in our rightly understanding the great doctrine of salvation. Could we be led to a clear apprehension and reception of the scripture revelation on this point, without blending anything of human wisdom therewith, it would be a precious privilege.

I would here entreat my Old School brethren not to be alarmed though in presenting what appears to me clearly the testimony of scripture on this point, I should give some views not generally received by the professing world, until they have calmly examined the proofs presented, and compared them with such as may be suggested as supporting different views. If after such examination, they find that in this, and in the preceding communication relating to the *existence of God, as three and one*, I have mistaken the voice of scripture, they will do well to show the mistake.

When we look into the scriptures in reference to this subject, we find the sonship of Christ therein presented to view as threefold; as the Son of man, the Son of David, and the Son of God. Each of these demand some attention, in a careful enquiry on this subject. But the examination of the two former, I intend shall be brief, and indeed of the third also, so far as the importance of the subject will justify.

1st. - *What is implied in Christ's being called the Son of man?* The term, son of man, we find repeatedly used in the Old Testament. Sometimes in reference to mankind at large, as denoting their *vanity, vileness, mortality, &c.* See Num.23:19, Job 25:6; Ps.146:3, among other texts. It is a term particularly appropriated to Ezekiel as a prophet. It is said he is so called about eighty-nine times in his prophecy, and Christ about eighty times in the four gospels. I have however not counted for myself. Why Ezekiel is so peculiarly designated, I know not; unless it was to point him out particularly, as typical of Christ, as the Son of man; in its being his lot to prophecy about and in the time of the captivity of his people for their transgressions, and his having representively to bear some of those punishments he was directed to denounce. See chap's. 4, 5 and 12:1-7. Christ is twice, if not thrice, designated by this term in the Old Testament. Ps.80:17 & Dan.7:13. In most instances in which the term is used in the New Testament, the Lord, I think uses it Himself, of Himself. But the enquiry is, why does He so denominate Himself? It is evidently not to designate Him as literally the posterity, or as having come into Adam's place or anything of that kind. For in regard to His assumption of humanity, the scriptures are particular in guarding against the idea of His being literally the son of man. In this point of view He is revealed as the seed of the woman. Gen.3:15. Isaiah also prophesied: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Chap.7:14. And the angel in answer to the enquiry of Mary on this point describes His production thus: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." He adds, "therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:34,35. Here His humanity in distinction from being the son or offspring of man, is declared to the *Son of God*. But the term *Son of God* here I do not understand as denoting the same as His being the *Begotten of the Father, &c.* The term here I think corresponds with the same term as applied to Adam, (Luke 3:38,) and is designed to denote that His manhood was, as was Adam's, produced by the immediate creating power of God, without the intervention of secondary causes. Hence His not participating in human depravity. Perhaps Christ's being called the Son of man may be designed in part to denote Him as the *heir of the world*, for as Abraham's seed, He is the *heir of the world*. See Rom.4:13; compared with Gal.3:16. In thus contemplating Him, we must view Him as in connection with His body the Church; and in this point of view, we shall see Him to be the only heir of

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creation; He in His church being the whole substance and object of creation and that for which the world stands. Hence all things were *made for Him*, as well as *by Him*. Col.1:16. But in a more particular sense, the Lord's portion is His people, and Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. Deut.32:9. That however which I think is more directly intended by Christ's being revealed as the Son of man, and what constitutes Him more manifestly the Antitype of Ezekiel, was His inheriting, in consequence of inheriting Jacob, their *law standing, their sins, infirmities, sorrows, death, and curse*. "For as much as the children," (the *children God had given Him*, but who were the natural heirs, the begotten sons of man,) "were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death," &c. Heb.2:14. Herein was He most astonishingly manifested as the Son of man, in being *made under the law, made sin, made a man of sorrows, made a curse, &c., &c.* Hence it is, that whilst He is so repeatedly called the Son of man in the Evangelists, He is no where, that I recollect, so called in any other part of the New Testament.

2nd: Christ's *sonship as the Son of David* is the next subject of our enquiries.

We find Him repeatedly addressed as the Son of David. But Christ indirectly, though clearly, rejects the idea of being the Son of David, on one occasion, that is, of being so in the sense in which the Jews understand the Messiah would be David's son, namely: in a natural sense. Mt.22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37. Hence it cannot be that it was as being a *natural descendant* of David, that He is called the Son of David. It is true that this name, as does the name Son of man, relates to His being manifested, in the flesh, and to His being of the *seed of David*; that is, as the Apostle explains it, being "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom.1:3. But I think a due consideration of the scriptures which I will shortly refer to will satisfy the candid enquirer that the sonship of Christ as the Son of David related particularly to His exaltation in human nature as the King of Zion, of Israel; and as the Covenanted Heir of the throne of Israel, as being that seed of David more particularly intended in the covenant God established with Him as mentioned. II Sam.7:4-16; 23:5; Ps.89:19-37. It was necessary that He should be "made of the seed of David," and be born in Bethlehem, the town of David's nativity, that He might be visibly manifested as this Covenanted seed of David, as that "Righteous Branch whom the Lord should raise unto David." Jer.23:5. But that Christ's sonship as the son of David consisted in His being the King of Zion, having His dominion established in the earth, and over the nations of the earth, is evident from the fact, that all those prophecies which speak of Him as the offspring of David thus describe particularly His reign. See Ps.72; Isa.9:6,7 & chap. 11; Jer.33:15-17, &c.; as also from the manner in which He is spoken of, and addressed in the New Testament. The angel Gabriel says unto Mary concerning her son: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32,33. Thus also His entry into Jerusalem as the "King of the daughter of Zion," as foretold, Zech.9:9, as the SON OF DAVID, as He "that cometh in the name of the Lord," &c., according to Luke 19:38, as "the King that cometh," &c., and according to John 12:13, as the "King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord," &c. (Denoting the different modes of expression by which Christ as the Son of David is described - each pointing to His kingly office.) Hence these several terms, KING, KING OF ISRAEL, &c., are by the Holy Ghost used to denote Christ as the Son of David. Hence His being the King of Israel and being the Son of David is one and the same thing.

3rdly. We now come to a consideration of the sonship of Christ as the Son of God.

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Here we at once meet with a peculiar distinction of this sonship from the other two. This is a begotten sonship. He is revealed as the only begotten Son of God. The others are not begotten sonships; they relate to His humanity. He became a Son in those respects, in consequence of His union with His people; as in this respect, as it will be shown, His people are sons of God in consequence of their union with Him. Christ is then truly the Son of God. But what does His sonship in this respect consist in? In His Godhead? In His humanity? Or in something else? 1st: That it does not consist IN HIS GODHEAD, or in His personal distinction in the Godhead, which is the doctrine of the Nicene Creed; I should think has already been clearly shown in treating on God's existence as THREE AND ONE, by the proof produced establishing the fact that Christ in the distinct relation which He sustains in the Godhead, is revealed as the one God, the Jehovah, and therefore as being absolutely self-existent and independent, in His being, as in the Father. 2nd: The idea that His sonship, as the Son of God, consists of His being born of Mary, I should think would be given up on reflecting that His other sonships related to His humanity and were therefore not begotten sonships, whereas in this sonship He is begotten of God. But in the further prosecution of this enquiry other considerations will present themselves in opposition to this idea.

In examining the New Testament on this subject, it will, I think, appear very manifest. 1st: That Christ, as the Son of God, sustains a subordinate relation to the Father. Let us look at some of the principle texts relative to Christ's superior glory as the Son of God. In John 3:16-18, whilst Christ is declared to be God's only begotten Son, the testimony is that God gave His only begotten Son, &c., consequently the Son as such was subject to the Father. Turning to John 5:17, 30, we find the Son declaring His superior authority as such, over the SABBATH and to EXECUTE JUDGMENT, &c.; yet throughout the passage He acknowledgeth His subordination to the Father. His language is, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." (John 5:19) "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," &c. See also John 10:16 - 18. Passing to John chap. 17, and we behold the Son praying to the Father to be glorified with that glory which He had with the Father *before the world was*, (verse 5,) thus acknowledging a dependence on the Father before the world was. Hence He must have been a Son before He was made flesh. In I Cor. 15:27, 28, Paul having spoken (vs. 24) of Christ's *delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father*, saith, "For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Here again the subordination of the Son, as such, to the Father, is declared in language as plain as can be expressed. In Col. 1:12-20, the greatness, the glory, and vast superiority of Christ, as God's dear Son, over every created thing in heaven, and in earth, is declared; and yet all this was by the Father's pleasure; not of His own independent will. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell," &c. vs. 19. Again in Heb. chap. 1, the great superiority of the Son over angels is shown; and yet all this glory, is by the Father's pleasure. He *appointed Him heir over all things*; He said unto Him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son." vs. 5. (See Ps. 2:7-11; II Sam. 7:14) - "And when He bringeth His first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." vs. 6. Can anything be more explicit than this chapter to show the subordination of the Son to the Father, as well as to show His great superiority as the Son, over the angels? I have selected these texts in which the highest authority, exaltation, &c., of the Son as such is declared, and have shown that as thus presented to view in His exaltation, His subordination to the Father is manifested; so that it cannot with any show of candor be said, that this subordination belonged only to His humiliation, as the Son. Still I know men have said, and will say that it is only as the Mediator, the Redeemer, that He is spoken of in these and the like passages. I will only say in return,

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that when they can convince me, the Holy Ghost has been mistaken in the terms He authorized to be used, I may admit their right to substitute other terms, conveying other ideas, for those He has employed; but I think not before. Let us however examine one or two of the passages already referred to. Take I Cor.15:28. And we shall find that instead of the Holy Ghost's intimating that the Son, only in His Meditorial office, shall thus be subject to the Father, it is expressly affirmed, that the Son also *Himself*, shall be subject, &c., thus confirming the fact by an empathic expression, that it is of the Son Himself, the affirmation is made. And in Heb.1:5, instead of its reading, *Thou art my appointed Mediator*, and I will be the one God and thou shalt be the one Mediator, the affirmation is: "Thou art my Son," &c. "And I will be to Him a Father," &c. Thus the idea which I contended for in some of the preceding communications, namely: that a *begotten existence*, implied a derivative, and as therefore a dependent existence, is sustained by the whole revelation of Christ as the Son of God, by His subordination to the Father, therein manifested. And such subordination in a son is sanctioned by the voice of nature, of reason, and of God. God says, "Honour thy father and thy mother." &c. Ex.20:12. And Christ says, "I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me." John 8:49. Hence it is evident, that the revelation made of Christ as the only begotten Son of God, is not a revelation of the *modus* of His existence as Jehovah, as the Father's *fellow* or equal. His sonship therefore must relate to something other than to His essential existence as God.

But the Athanasians say that God in begetting a Son, must have begotten one in His own nature, and must therefore have begotten Him God, &c. This reasoning would be correct if God in begetting His Son was subject to the law of generation, by which man is governed. But the subjection of God to such a law, I think they would hardly contend for. The expression as used in reference to God, is evidently designed to denote the putting forth His producing power, in a way distinct from the act of creation, but peculiar to Himself, further than this we cannot say. But still there is in the person of the Son of God, a conformity to the law of generation, by which everything produces its like. For in His person, whilst He is the begotten Son of God, He possesses also the fullness of the Godhead, is the Jehovah equally with the Father, not as the product of the Father's begetting, but essentially so, of Himself as God. He therefore in His person possesses every quality and lineament of the Son of God, is the *brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person*. Hence whilst as the Son, He with propriety saith, "My Father is greater than I," &c., (John 14:28,) with equal truth He saith, "I and my Father are ONE." John 10:30. So also, the Father could with truth, on the one hand, address Him, the Son, thus: "Thy throne O God is forever and ever," &c., and on the other hand, say to Him, "God even thy God hath anointed thee," &c. Heb.1:8,9.

This subject being too lengthy for one communication, I will continue in another.



On the Sonship of Christ.

(Concluded)

Brother Beebe: - Having in the preceding Number shown satisfactorily as I trust, from the testimony of the scriptures concerning Christ, that His sonship as the Son of God does not consist in His essential existence as God; because in that He is self-existent and independent, equally with the Father; nor in His assumption of humanity, for in that, He was *made under the law*, and took the *form of a servant*, (Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7;) and therefore, surely He has a higher sonship than this; it remains to be shown in what other character He is revealed, in which His sonship as the Son of God may consist. He is certainly revealed as the Head of His church and people, and as so existing before the foundation of the world. He *was set up from everlasting, and brought forth when there were no depths*, &c. Pv. 8:23-27. As God, He could not be set up, as man, He was not *brought forth* until the fullness of time. "He who was to be Ruler in Israel, had His goings forth from of old, from everlasting." Mi.5:2. Christ as the Head and His church as His body must ever have existed together; for neither can the head exist without the body, nor the body without the head. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you," I Cor. 12:21; compared with vs.12. His people as His posterity existed in Him their Head "before the foundation of the world;" for they were then *chosen in Him*, and "predestinated by Him to the adoption of children." Eph. 1:4,5. If it was as they were predestinated to the adoption, they were *chosen in Him*, He must as their Head have been, a son also. Thus is it made manifest how Adam was made in the *image of God*, that is, in the image of the Son, who is God, and by "whom all things were made," and how he was the "figure of Him that was to come;" that is in that Adam was made *male and female*, as well as made with his posterity in him. See Gen. 1:27; Rom. 5:14. The Apostle contrasts the two Heads of their respective posterity's in this way, "The first man is of the earth, earthly: the second man is the Lord from heaven." I Cor. 15:47. If the first man in being made of the earth was made a *servant*, then as contrasted with him, He who was the Lord from heaven, was not a servant, but a Son - and so is the contrast between Moses and Him. Heb.3:5,6. Herein, then, as the Head of His church, and of His seed, and as contrasted with Adam as the *earthly head*, who was made a servant, do I understand the sonship of Christ as the Son of God to consist. I am confirmed in this by the testimony of the following texts which I will notice. 1st: In immediate connection with the text just quoted (I Cor. 15:47) we read: "As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly." Now we do know that the posterity of Adam are born, servants under the law, and that when the posterity of Christ are born, that is when any are *born again*, they are no more servants, but sons, sons of God. See Gal. 4:7; John 1:12,13 & Rom. 8:14. If then, in the former class; their being born servants, was in likeness to their head the *earthly*, then, in the other class their being born *sons of God*, must be in likeness of their Head, the *heavenly*. If so, I ask, is not the conclusion irresistible that He as the *heavenly* Head is the Son of God? The testimony of Rom. 8:29 is "for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." It is then in the image of the Son of God, that His people are born sons; but they bear of course the image of their head; it must be as their Head then, that He is the Son of God. But further, if He is the "first-born among many brethren," and He of course was born a Son, then He and they must have been born of the same seed, the same parentage, and be sons together. And how could this be, but as they were begotten and brought forth? And therefore He was the *only begotten* and *first-born* of the Father, with a seed, a posterity in Him. In accordance with this idea of a common parentage, He says to Mary: "But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." John 20:17. Again, wherein His people are spoken of as

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“many sons to be brought to glory,” it is said: “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,” &c. Immediately after it is added: “Behold I and the children which God hath given me,” &c. Heb. 2:10-13. Hence Christ recognizes these *many sons* both as *His brethren* and as *His children*. In this is fully carried out the parallel, between Christ as a Son and Head and His seed, as sons with Him, and Adam and his posterity, with him. The posterity of Adam are all the creatures of God, but God finished the work of creation in six days (Gen. 2:1-3,) hence the human family are all but that one creation which God made when He “formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” &c. Gen. 2:7. As Adam and his posterity were thus all of one lump, of one foundation, so Christ and His people are here all represented as being of one, are of one begetting, one brotherhood, all brought forth in Him, in that life which was in Him, the Word, and which *sanctifies* them, sets them apart, or manifests them as the children of God. As Adam and his posterity are alike the creatures of God, so Christ is not ashamed to *call* His people Brethren. Again as the human family are the children of Adam, being born of that life of which he was the head, that is in their distinct manifestation; so the people of God, in their being manifested as such, are the children of Christ, (not mediately, but directly, He being distinguished from Adam in this, that He is the Everlasting Father,) in that they are born of that life which was in Him, the Word, are made partakers of His spirit. John 1:4, Rom.8:9 & Gal.4:6. And indeed Christ is their life. Col.3:3,4. Is it not then manifest that as Adam in being created a human being, was created the head of the human family; so Christ in being the only begotten of the Father, was begotten as the Head of the sons of God? I might pursue this subject and show that throughout the New Testament, His people, in that life which He is to them, are connected with His sonship as the Son of God. Thus; Does their heirship rest on their being the children of God? They are as such “joint heirs with Him.” Is He spoken of in His superior glory as the Son of God? He has “His fellows,” and is the Head of His body the church, though Himself in “all things having the preeminence.” See Rom.8:17; Heb.1:9 & Col.1:18. But proof sufficient has been brought to establish the point, and here I might close, were it not for the objections against this position arising, from other considerations than want of proof to the point. These it seems proper to notice. 1st: There seems to be among many, very vague and indeterminate ideas as to what constitutes the bond of union between Christ and His people, and consequently wherein His headship consists; some would seem to represent it as merely nominal. From this source therefore objections will arise to the idea I have given of the sonship of Christ. This subject must on this account receive some attention. Whilst regenerating, or quickening is in the scripture ascribed, to each, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and believers are called children and sons of God, I think all consistent Old School Baptists, and I mean by such, those who have searched the scriptures in dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to derive their ideas concerning all parts of religion from thence, instead of taking them second handed from Doctor Gill or any other author; I say such will readily admit that Christ Jesus, the Son distinctively, is revealed as standing in a peculiar relation to His people, such as is not affirmed of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Not only in that they are said to be His as the gift of the Father; redeemed by Him, &c., but they are collectively, that is as His church, declared to be His bride, His body, and even the “fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” Eph.1:23. Here the oneness of Christ and His church as she is distinctively manifested, is far more full than that of the type, Adam and Eve. Eve was a rib taken from Adam’s side, but the church is His Body itself, the *fullness* of Him, is Himself, is the *Abraham’s seed* which He is. See Gal. 3:16-29. He must therefore be the living and abiding Head of His church. Again, His people are spoken of as His posterity, He calls them His children as has been noticed. Heb. 2:13; Isa. 8:18. They are called His seed. Ps. 22:30, Isa. 53:10; Ps. 89:29-36. And they are declared to be *members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones*. Eph. 5:30. And He is their life and therefore the Head or fountain of it. Col.3:4. On the other

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hand the testimony of scripture is full to the point that the believer has an existence distinct from that which he derived from Adam. He is said to be *born again*, in a birth as distinct from his natural one, as spirit is distinct from *flesh*. John 3:3-6. To be quickened in a sense in which he was before dead. John 5:25; Eph. 2:1-5. To be a *new creature*. II Cor. 5:17. And to have been created, not in Adam, in this sense, but *in Christ Jesus*. Eph.2:10. Now that, of which all these affirmations are true, must be a *living principle, real existence. It is declared to be of incorruptible seed, and to be everlasting life*. I Pet. 1:23; John 3:36. The union therefore of Christ and His people must be a real living union, and He a real head of this union. Of the existence of this new principle the believer is sensible not, by external observation, but by its effects, as we know that the wind bloweth. John 3:8.

Now the point of enquiry is, what is this new life, or existence? It is not the essential nature of God, every believer knows. For as he discovers its existence in Him, he finds it far from possessing the essential attributes of the Godhead, such as self-existence, independence, omnipotency. It is spirituality, holiness, and love, in these things the *new man is after the image of Him who created Him*. Col.3:10. But some have inferred from what Peter says, that the believer has, in his new birth implanted in him, the divine nature. But what is Peter's statement? "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." To whom were these promises given? To the believer, - *that by these*, by these promises, he *might be a partaker of the divine nature*, not that he certainly was a partaker of it in regeneration. And truly God has so given Himself to His people in His promises, that when by faith they can take hold of those promises, they apprehend God in all His attributes, as their help, their wisdom, power, defense, &c. But certainly brethren, we are not gods. The believer is, in his experience much farther from it; than before he believed.

Others suppose that Christ's being made flesh was what constituted the union of Him and His people. But this would rather make them the head, for it was in consequence of *their being partakers of flesh and blood, that He took part of the same*. But they were His children before He partook of this nature. Heb.2:13,14. It would make the woman the head, for in His being made flesh, He was manifested as the *Seed of the woman*. Besides the believer knows that his human nature was derived, not from Him who was the Lord from heaven, but from him who *was made of the earth, earthy*. He has all the evidence he wants of this, from the earthiness and depravity of his nature.

Some may suppose the preexistent soul of Christ to be that which constitutes the bond of union of Him and His people. If so, why does it not constitute Him the head of all who have souls? But brethren, had you not souls before you were regenerated? And did they not betray their origin as being of the earthy Adam, by their being depraved? Our western brethren, however if I understand them, do not make the preexistent soul of Christ, the bond of union, but the repository of that which constitutes the union. But the scriptures I think reveal a far safer repository for the believer's life than any created being could be, even God Himself, as I shall notice. It must then be that the *new man* of the believer, that by which he is manifested as the seed of Christ, is distinct both from the Godhead and from humanity. It is not *earthly* like humanity, but spiritual and heavenly. It is not independent in its powers of action like the Godhead. *To will is present with the believer, but how to perform that which is good he finds not*. But some one will hastily say, why, to represent Christ as the Head of such a distinct life, would be to represent Him as possessing a third nature distinct from His Godhead and humanity. And does this alarm you, my brother? Though you may not have thought of it in this form, yet have you not in substance believed it. Do you feel that you are as young gods? Or do you believe with the Arminian that regeneration is nothing but giving a new bias to the old nature? If so, it will be of no use to argue this point with you.

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But if you believe a new principle, a living principle of holiness, righteousness and love is imparted in regeneration, and that this was derived from Christ as the Head, do you not believe that it had a previous existence in Him, and that you therefore existed in Him, in this life, before the foundation of the world? Or what was the existence you then had in Him? But to the law and to the testimony on the point. Let us come to the 1st of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." This Word then who, whilst He is declared as distinct from one who is also God, is declared to be God, and the Maker of all things, must have been essentially life itself. When therefore it is affirmed in vs.4 that, "In Him was life," it must refer to a life in Him, distinct from His essential existence. "And the life was the light of men." Can there be any mistake then in understanding this life as being the life which is communicated in regeneration, and which delivers from the power of darkness? But this was in Him distinct from His essential existence as God. It is also distinct from His humanity; for it is afterwards, vs.14, affirmed of Him that He was made flesh. Need I bring any further proof to the point? We have it in vs.14, compared with vs.16, and with II Tim.1:9, as well as in other texts. That which was His glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was His fullness of grace and truth, of which all believers have received. And truly the life they derive from Christ is grace and truth compared with their life in Adam.

One point more. Does this view of the Sonship of Christ derogate from His divine and essential glory as God? Not in the least. His person is more exalted in this view of the subject, for whilst He is the Son of God, He is absolutely Jehovah, equally with the Father. This life which is the begotten of God exists in the Word or Son, as God, - it never has, nor ever will exist separate from the Godhead, either in the Son or in His people. In Him was life. And of His people He says unto His Father: "I in them and thou in me." John 17:23. As the only begotten Son He is said to be in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18. As Christ He is hid in God, for the life of His people are hid with Him in God. Col.3:3. This life does not exist in His people without God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." I Cor.3:16. See also I John 4:12-15,16; and John 14:15,16. Although believers are conscious of a principle distinct from nature being in them, from the holy and heavenly desires they have, and from the warfare within, which could not exist were there not two opposite principles within; yet this new principle has no independent powers of action. The believer cannot of himself exercise faith on a single promise, nor bring into exercise a single holy affection to the suppression of those which are unholy. And so we are told, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of His good pleasure." Phil.2:13. Christ says, "without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Herein perhaps is where some have confounded the Holy Ghost, which is God, with the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God's Son which the believer has, Rom.8:9; Gal.4:6, because the Holy Ghost dwells with such.

From a review of this whole subject, well may we exclaim with the beloved disciple, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," &c. I John 3:1. Brethren what an exalted religion doth the believer stand in to God, as having from everlasting been one with His only begotten and well beloved Son. Beloved as He was, begotten in Him, hid in Him, and living in His life. The union does not stop in heaven, they were sons of Adam, of condemnation and death, He became the Son of man, sunk below them under the curse, and raised them when He arose, and made them sharers of His dominion as the Son of David. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," are His words. Sharers they are in His justification from the law, in His triumphs over death, over the grave, over the curse, and in His exalted glory. John 17:22, compared with vs.5.

Here then I have given a view of my sentiments on this important subject. Are they supported by scripture and experience, or are they not? Brethren examine candidly before you join in the cry of heretic which has been attempted to be raised against me on account thereof. And may God lead you to a righteous judgment in the case.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia,
July 28, 1840 – Part 1
Sept. 2, 1840 – Part 2
S. Trott.
SIGNS of the TIMES: Vol. 8 (1840)



THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

By the Word that was made flesh, we are to understand one of the Three who bear record in heaven, “The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost” I John 5:7. By comparing this latter text with John 1:1, we see the propriety of the expression, “The Word was with God,” as the Word is *one* of the *three* who distinctly bear record. We are also taught by thus comparing these texts that the Three are not merely three manifestations of God, nor three parts of God, or three distinct persons, or beings comprising the Godhead; for it is positively said that “The Word was God.” Hence it is evident, though we can not comprehend the how, that God exists as Three, and so exists, that the *Three* are *One*, and that each of the Three in this peculiar relation is the One God. Hence also that the Word who *was made flesh*, was God, not in part, but in all the fullness of the Godhead. Thus it is said “God was manifested in the flesh,” I Tim. 3:16; and of Christ it is said, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” Col. 2:9. And; “There is none other God but one” I Cor. 8:4.

We will now notice the declaration, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” 1st. The *Word was made flesh*: Not that there was a transmutation of Spirit into flesh, or of the eternal Godhead into the babe of Bethlehem. We must understand the expression *made flesh* as explained by other texts; as the one from I Tim. 3:16 - “God was manifested in the flesh,” and Phil. 2:6-7, “Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Thus the *being made flesh* was a *being manifested in the flesh*; a *taking upon Him the form of a servant*; a *having a body prepared Him* Heb. 10:5. Again we are taught from Gal. 4:4, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,” &c., that this being *made flesh* was not a mere assuming of a fleshly body, but that the term flesh is here used as in several other places (see Gen. 6:3, John 3:6) for the whole of manhood or Adamic nature, in distinction both from angelic nature, and the

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spirit of the new man. Thus the being *made of a woman*, was a being *made under the law*. But the law has dominion over man as a living soul, not as a mere body formed of the dust of the ground. So Christ speaks repeatedly of His soul in a sense in which He could not have intended merely animal life. It may be asked, Why is the strong expression used “The Word was *made flesh*,” if it intended only the assuming of mankind? I answer, we are not to understand that it was merely assumed as an outward form; but that the Word was *so made flesh*, that the manhood was *personally one* with the Word, with God, and the Man, Christ Jesus, whether viewed as the babe in Bethlehem, as growing in stature, or on the cross, was personally the Word, was God, was the Jehovah. Thus Watts sings:

“Aaron must lay his robes away,
His mitre and his vest;
When God Himself comes down to be,
The offering and the priest.”

The Word was made flesh, that He might accomplish the work of redemption and meet the demands of the law which stood against His church and which His relation to her as her Head and Husband required Him to meet. The law could not have dominion over the Godhead as such, either to demand and receive obedience, nor to inflict its penalty of suffering and death. Hence the word’s being *made flesh* or *made of a woman*, was that, He might be *made under the law*. And being thus made it was no other than the Word, the God of Abraham, the Almighty God, who yielded obedience to the law in His own flesh or manhood which He *was made*, or which was made in personal union with Himself in behalf of His people. In His manhood He bore their sins, was made a curse for them, and thus by His infinitely perfect offering, and obedience, He brought in everlasting righteousness, took the curse out of the way, expiated their sins, and made an end of them, and finished transgression. For though it was only through and in His manhood of which He was born of Mary that He would be in subjection to the law, or endure its penalty. As the Godhead in itself could neither suffer, nor be in subjection as before shown, but the Word in *being made flesh*, was so God and man in one person, that the Godhead in all His fullness of attributes carried all its powers and excellency, &c., into all that the man Christ Jesus did and suffered, and thus perfect redemption from under the law was accomplished for His people and death was conquered.

2nd. *And dwelt among us*: This embraces the whole of Christ’s humiliation. His birth, His growth in stature, His susceptibility to hunger, thirst, weariness and being grieved and angered; in a word, having all the original appetites and passions of man without being disordered with depravity, being in all things made like unto His brethren; that He might be *tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin*, and be a merciful and faithful High Priest. It includes also His ministering in common with His brethren as a servant under the law, and sharing with them in all the evils, sorrows, enmity, &c., consequent upon sin, even to the condemnation of the law, though in Himself without sin. Thus, in all the debasement of His people, He owned them as His brethren, His bride, sharing with them in this debasement, that He might raise them to share with Him in glory. As His oneness with His people was manifested in His sharing with them in the consequences of sin, so their oneness with Him shall be manifested in their sharing with Him, in His being *appointed heir of all things* and in the *glory He had with the Father before the world was*. Surely, this is love and condescension immeasurable! Well might Paul desire to know the *fellowship of His sufferings*, that is, the participation His people have in what He *suffered for sins*; and the *power of His resurrection*, in His being *declared to be the Son of God with power* and their being *quickened together with Him, and raised up and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.

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3rd. "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John may have reference to what he and Peter and James beheld, the transfiguration of Christ; and to which Peter somewhat similarly refers, II Pet. 1:16-18. This, however, was but a view given to these disciples beforehand of the glory that should follow His sufferings. Hence I think this text has a further reference to that full manifestation of Christ in His kingdom. Not even the disciples in this sense beheld *His glory as of the only begotten of the Father* whilst He was a minister of the circumcision and served under the law; for then He was seen in *the form of a servant*, and in the likeness of man, Phil.2:7. The Jews seem never to have beheld this glory in the Messiah, but have supposed that His kingdom would be set up like David's under the dominion of the law of Moses. None of the conditionalists see this glory of our incarnate Lord. They view Him as like the servant Moses, and as proposing salvation as *it* were by the works of the law - not by the works of the law - but as *it* were by them; that is, by creaturely activity, and mortifications, &c., "For they stumble at that stumbling stone" as did the Jews. See Rom.9:32.

But what is this glory, "The glory as of the only begotten of the Father?" 1st. How the *only begotten of the Father*? In Psa. 2:7 it is said of Him when God had set a *King upon His holy hill Zion*, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." By turning to Acts 13:33 and Heb. 1:3-5 we see that this relates, not to His being born of Mary, but to His being the "First begotten of the dead" (Rev. 1:5), or to His being "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). I do not understand by this that Christ did not exist as the Son of God before His resurrection, or before His being made flesh. He existed as such from everlasting; hence it is said of Him who is to be *Ruler in Israel* (and therefore the same, and spoken of in the same relation as in the 2nd Psalm, the King on the holy hill Zion), that His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" Micah 5:2. It is also said in Heb.5:8, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," which shows that He was a Son before *He learned obedience*, &c. Hence also whilst He is said to be "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead," Col. 1:18, He is also said to be "the first born of every creature," and that "He is before all things and by Him all things consist" Col. 1:15-17. Hence I understand the text, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," as referring to Christ being manifested in His resurrection to His church, as the *beloved and only begotten Son of God, in whom God is well pleased*, and to His establishing that new dispensation, the spirit of which is the spirit of sonship and which is distinct from the former dispensation, the spirit of which is that of bondage. As Christ was born of Mary, He was born as *made under the law*, as He had been manifested in types, &c., to the fathers, He had been only manifested through the law; but now in His resurrection He was manifested in His glory as freed from the law, having canceled all its demands against Him as the Husband and Surety of His church, and His church in Him; and therefore no longer does His relation to His people impose on Him the form of a servant, but He is declared the Son of God; and His people as no longer *servants*, but sons and heirs of God in Him. Now the Sonship of Christ, as declared by the resurrection, was in His relation to His church as the Head, for as such He was raised from the dead, and if this was the glory which *He had with the Father before the world was* (and that was the glory with which He prayed the Father to glorify Him), then His glory as Son before the world was must have been in His relation to His church and body as its Head. See John 17:5. Whether, therefore, we consider Him in His being *begotten from the dead*, or in His being the *first born of every creature*, He is the *only begotten of the Father*, as Adam was of the human family, the only direct creation of God, though Eve and all his posterity were created in him, and have, therefore, proceeded from him, and formed in their distinct manifestations according to God's arrangement and are, therefore, creatures of God. So Christ was the only begotten of the Father, though in His being begotten, His seed or posterity were begotten in Him, and are, therefore, spoken of as His seed, being, though born of God, directly begotten of the Son

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as the Everlasting Father Isa. 9:6. Hence it was that they were predestinated to be *conformed to the image of God's Son*, "That He might be the firstborn among many brethren" Rom. 8:29. Hence also it is said: "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" Heb. 2:11. *All of one lump*, of one original production. So also whilst they are the *children which God hath given Him*, He recognizes them as brethren, saying unto Mary, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God" Heb. 2:13; Isa. 8:18; John 20:17. Thus it is also that whilst He as Son is "appointed heir of all things," His people are *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Him* Heb. 1:2 & Rom. 8: 17. This relation of Christ's people to Him alike applies, in their manifestation as sons, to His manifestation as the Son of God by His resurrection; and in their original *predestination to the adoption of children*, to His *goings forth from of old, from everlasting*. It appears to me that I tread on safe ground, being sustained by the declarations of Scripture, in going thus far in reference to the sonship of Christ as being in relation with His people, but I do not feel safe in going into the Athanasian view of the sonship of Christ with nothing but human speculation and theological dogmatism to support it.

2nd. *What is His glory and how beheld*. His glory is that which He had *with the Father before the world was*. *In this He is the brightness of God's glory*; not the essential glory of the Godhead, for that shines as bright in the Father as in the Word, but the manifested glory of God, this centers in the manifested sonship of Christ, and outshines all the glory of the heavens. This glory is only seen by faith. Even the quickened souls see nothing of it whilst under the law; they look to God then only through the law, and therefore see nothing but wrath reflected upon them. But when faith is given them to behold God in Christ, then the glory of God's way of salvation, as contrasted with their formed legal notions, and of the peculiar liberty and privilege of sonship, as contrasted with the bondage of the law, bursts with heavenly splendor upon their vision; and though filled with wonder and admiration at the glorious scene before them, reflected through the gospel, yet they have no disposition, like Peter, James and John, to make tabernacles for Moses and Elias with Christ - but rather are they disposed to hear only Him as God's beloved Son in whom they see God *well pleased*. But, though the children of God may have, from time to time, glimpses of His glory while in this dark vale, yet the fullness of this glory will not be seen by us until that prayer of our Lord has its accomplishment: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me" John 17:24. Thus we see that this glory of the Son is not His essential glory as God, for it is given Him of the Father.

3rd. "*Full of grace and truth*." According to the parenthesis in which the preceding sentence is included, this clause should belong to the former sentence, thus, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." And surely there was nothing but grace in the errand on which He came and dwelt among us. Grace was the moving cause; and redemption from the law, and the establishing of the *reign of grace unto salvation* was the result. Hence His people receive grace - not for their works - but for *grace given them in Him before the foundation of the world*. *And truth*. His sacrifice and blood and righteousness are not shadows like the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law; but real substance, where is no deception in trusting by faith in His blood and righteousness for pardon and acceptance with God, as there is in trusting to human efforts. Or if the meaning is that "we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth," how full of grace did the whole gospel plan of salvation, and the whole Scripture testimony concerning it appear when we beheld Christ by faith, as contrasted with what the Scriptures and what we heard appeared to us before, all denouncing the curse against us. Now all is refulgent with love and favor, and all is beheld in beholding Christ. How

full of truth did this sure foundation now appear as contrasted with all the foundations we had before been trying to find rest upon? The promises of God as viewed in Him are a revelation wholly of grace, and are in Him *yea and Amen*. None of those *ifs* in them which marred the excellency of the promises of the Sinai covenant and changed them in consequence of disobedience to curses. May we be enabled to keep Christ in view as the only begotten of the Father, and beholding His glory be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia,

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S. Trott.

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THREE-ONENESS OF GOD.

The Scriptural doctrine of God's existing as One and Three,
presented for the consideration of brethren:

That God is ONE appears manifest from every page of God's revelation; but I shall here content myself with quoting some of the those texts in which He has more positively taught that He is to be acknowledged and worshipped as one and only as one God. The 1st command in the Decalogue is in point. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" Ex. 20:3. Thus Moses on another occasion: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" Deut.6:4. Hear God also by the prophet saying, "Is there a god besides me? yea there is no god, I know not any" Isa.44:8. Again, Isa.45:22, "For I am God and there is none else." In Isa.46:9, He says: "For I am God and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me." When we pass to the New Testament, we find Jesus teaching the same thing as taught by Moses, with His declaration prefixed that it is the first of all the commandments, "And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord" Mark 12:29. Paul's testimony is, I Cor.8:6 - "But to us there is but one God, &c."

Here, in conclusion of my proofs on the point of God's unity, I would remark that although the doctrine of God's existing as three is, as I shall show, fully revealed in the Scriptures, yet there is nothing like the positive declarations which we find on this point, found on the other. Surely, as the Master says; the first of all the commandments is this; so it is carried out through the law, the prophets and the New Testament. And certainly it cannot be without a special design. What then are we to learn from it but this, that the point of the first importance in the doctrine of God is His unity? Hence the system which implies directly or indirectly God's existing as three beings or gods, or parts of God, is a greater departure from the scriptural doctrine of God than is that which obscures or denies His essential existence as Three in One.

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That God exists in plurality, and that His plurality is limited to three, I will now show from several texts of Scripture.

1st. That He has revealed Himself in plurality. The first name by which God declared Himself (as in Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created, &c.") is in the original plural, *Elohim*, but in this, as in most instances, it is connected with a verb singular, though there are exceptions to this, thus showing that this plurality exists in unity. In ver.26 of this same chapter, God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and in verse 27, it is said, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, &c." Thus we have God again presented to view both in plurality and in unity. In Gen. 3:22, "The Lord God said, Behold man is become as one of us." In Gen. 11:7, God says: "Go to let us go down and there confound their language." Isaiah says: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord God saying whom shall I send and who shall go for us" (Isa. 6:8). Unity and plurality again united. In Dan. 4:17, we read: This matter is by decree of the Watchers and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones. These Watchers cannot be angels, for it is not for them to decree concerning the affairs of kings and men. Christ, in the figure of Wisdom, says, "By me kings reign," &c. Prov. 8:15. Hear Daniel also further in that same verse, "To the intent that the living may know, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

2nd. I will now show this plurality to be declared in the Scriptures to be Three. In Isaiah, chapter 48, we hear Him who in verse 12 and 13 says, "I am He, I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand hath also laid the foundations of the earth," &c., in verse 16, saying, "Come ye near to me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from-the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me." Who can this be that declareth all these things of Himself, but He whom He declares Himself to be, in verse 17, The Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel - the Lord thy God. And yet this glorious One says, "Now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me." Here then are Three clearly brought to view acting distinct parts in accomplishing the work of redemption. The Lord God, as Father, and His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, as uniting in sending the Redeemer; and the Lord thy Redeemer, as being sent, and who in equality with the Father declares, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth, &c. Passing on to the New Testament, at the baptism of Jesus, the Saviour, we have the same Three presented to view as sustaining their respective stations in the great plan of redemption. We see Him, who was made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem, &c.; and who was therefore the LORD THY REDEEMER, being baptized; and the Spirit, whose office it is to testify of Christ (John 15:26) So designating, by a visible appearance, Jesus, as the Messiah, that John could unhesitatingly bear witness of Him as being the Son of God. (See John 1:33,34.) "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him." And also the Father was manifest as approving of the work the Son was engaging in, "And, lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" Mt.3: 16 & 17. Again the Three are declared as equal in authority, and equally objects of the believer's trust, in the instituted form of baptism: Baptizing them in the name - not names - of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost Mt.28: 19. They are also revealed as being equally the object of worship, and the source of blessing; in the form of blessing II Cor. 13:14. ("The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.") Again the Three are declared as sustaining their several stations in the plan of salvation, in Eph.2: 18 ("For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."); in effect, in II Thes. 2: 13 ("But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."); and fully in I Pet. 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

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through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” And in the text which has been so often referred to in this controversy, I John 5:7. Three are declared by distinct names, and as bearing testimony in heaven, not that they bear one testimony; but there are Three that bear record, it is therefore a threefold testimony, though the Three are declared to be ONE. There are many other texts in which each of the Three is declared by one or other of His peculiar names, and as sustaining His peculiar relation and performing His peculiar part in the plan of salvation; and there are other texts also in which the Three are presented to view at once, each at the same time sustaining a distinct relation as in John 14:26 - “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, &c.,” says Christ to His disciples. So that the Three must be something more than merely three names or three manifestations which He has made of Himself. God must be so Three that He can be distinctly manifested as Father, Son and Spirit, in the peculiar relations and stations of each, in the plan of salvation, at the same time. See also John 15:26, where the order is somewhat reversed.

I now pass to show from the Scriptures, that whilst, as has been shown, God has so revealed Himself as three, as that He is manifested as sustaining three distinct relations, &c., at the same time, that on the other hand, He is so revealed to be One, that when spoken of as God, even in reference to the distinct relations He sustains as three, He speaks and is spoken of as absolutely God, as the one Lord God, as He whose name alone is Jehovah. I here declare, and who will make me a liar on this point, that God is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures in a way to justify expressions like this, God in the first person, God in the second person, &c., or God in the person of the Father, God in the person of the Son, &c., or that which such expressions imply, namely: God in the first order or relation, and God in the second order or relation, &c. Expressions calculated to present God to view thus in different grades, are evidently the offsprings of an overheated zeal to support a system. And as God said to Job, so it may be said to such zealots: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel with words without knowledge?” I shall on this head confine myself to proofs to show that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each in His distinct relation, is declared absolutely and equally as God, the one God, &c. Referring to the text before quoted, I Cor. 8:6, Paul says: “But to us there is but one God, the Father.” - The Father then as distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, is absolutely the one God. (See the whole text.) But Thomas addressed Christ as His Lord and his God, and no doubt Thomas had then true faith in exercise. John 20:28. And Paul says of Christ: “Who is over all God blessed forever. Amen” (Rom.9:5). If Christ is overall God blessed, then He must be the Most High God. And therefore the only God.

When we look into the Old Testament, we find many instances in which God is declared by one or another of His names, as, God Almighty, LORD or Jehovah, &c., &c., in which it might be presumption in us to undertake to decide whether it is as the Father, as the Son, or as the Holy Spirit, He is therein declared. It is evidently enough for us, in such cases, to know that it is God, our God, the God of the Scriptures who is revealed as therein speaking or acting. In other instances by a reference to the clearer light of the New Testament, we may clearly discover, whether as Father, or as Son, or as Holy Ghost, it is that God speaks, or is declared. Thus we know from the New Testament that Christ is the Lord that hath shown us light, for He came a light into the world, &c., and this is the true light, &c. We are told, Ps. 118:27, that, “God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light.” God then is Christ. And so John bears testimony, John 1:1-4. We know from the New Testament that Christ Jesus is the only Saviour, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” Acts 4:12. We know also that we have redemption through His blood, (Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14) and therefore that He is the Redeemer of Israel. And the disciples were not deceived when they trusted that Jesus of Nazareth had been He which should have redeemed Israel Luke 24:19-23. But on

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turning to Isa. 47:4, we read: “As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts (Jehovah Sabaoth, in the original) is His name, the Holy One of Israel.” Hence the name Jehovah Sabaoth, or Lord of Host is here clearly given to the Redeemer as such. He “whose name alone is JEHOVAH is the Most High over all the earth” Ps. 83:18. Is not then Christ in His distinct relation as Redeemer, the Most High and He whose name alone is Jehovah, and therefore distinctly the one Lord God? As to the name, Holy One of Israel, it as peculiarly belongs to Christ as the Messiah, as does the name Redeemer, and so I understand it wherever found. All the holiness of national Israel and of their multiplied rites, &c., was centered in Christ, as He was shadowed forth in them. And all the holiness of spiritual Israel is found in Him, as made unto them sanctification, holiness, &c. I Cor. 1:30. That the Father also in His distinct relation, as calling Christ, upholding Him, giving Him for a covenant of the people, &c., is He whose name alone is Jehovah, I will now show from one text. After declaring Himself as He that created the heavens, &c., and then saying to Him whose office it is to be a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners, I the Lord (Jehovah) have called thee, &c. He then goes on to say, “I am the Lord (Jehovah) that is my name and my glory will I not give to another nor my praise to graven images” Isa. 42:5-8. Now looking to Isaiah chapter 43, we shall see that He who addresses Israel and says thou art mine, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, and repeatedly in the same connection declares Himself their Saviour, their Holy One, their King, &c. (see verses 3-14, 15) as confidently and absolutely declares, as did the Father in the preceding chapter, that He is Jehovah. He says verse 3: “I am the Lord thy God,” and in verse 11: “I am the Lord and besides me there is no Saviour.” In both of these instances, instead of Lord it is in the original Jehovah. And in verse 12, he says to His Israel, “Therefore ye are my witnesses saith the Lord that I am God.” And will not His people with Thomas bear witness that He is the Lord their God? And can any doubt from these Scriptures, as thus compared, that the Father and the Son whilst distinct, as manifested in their separate relations in the economy of salvation, are each absolutely the one Jehovah, the one self-existent, independent God in all His divine attributes? It will be discovered by those who examine the Scriptures, that I have selected but few among the many proofs in point.

As to the Holy Ghost’s being in His distinct relation absolutely God, we have also proofs in point. Thus by comparing II Pet. 1:21, with II Tim.3:16; and Acts, chapter 5, verse 3 with verse 4, we shall find that He who in the one instance in each verse is said to be the Holy Ghost is in the parallel text declared absolutely to be God. Christ informs us, John 6:63, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, yet Paul tells the Ephesian brethren, that, “God who is rich in mercy, &c. hath quickened us together with Christ” Eph. 2:4,5. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established, we are told. Hence the above establish the fact that the Holy Ghost is God, the One God. I would suggest for the consideration of brethren, whether, from the declaration of Peter, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. 1:21), we are not authorized to understand, when the prophets speak of God speaking to them, that the Holy Ghost, in His distinct office is intended? Thus when Isaiah says, “the Lord spake to me with a strong hand and instructed me,” are we not to understand that the Holy Ghost was He who thus spake to him with a strong hand, or in him, as he speaks to the saints in these ways and instructs them? For, I presume, God spake not audibly to the prophets. And whether, among many other texts, we are not to understand, in the text Amos 6:8, which is rather a remarkable one, the Lord, the God of Hosts, which saith, The Lord God hath sworn by Himself, is the Holy Ghost in His distinct office?

What, then, is the sum of this Scripture testimony, concerning God as being one and three? It is, as I receive it, this:

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1st. That the Lord our God is ONE Lord. ONE JEHOVAH – that besides Him we are to have no other as the object of our worship and trust.

2nd. That this one Jehovah, exists as THREE, and so exists as THREE, that in all His divine majesty and perfections, He as the Father remains the invisible God, high seated on His throne, rolling on His eternal purpose, maintaining the honors of His throne, demanding and accepting satisfaction for His transgressed law, &c. At the same time the Son, as appointed heir of all things, be made a High Priest, offers Himself in sacrifice, and having purged away the sins of His people, enters into glory as their Intercessor and Forerunner. And, also at the same time, as the Holy Ghost be a distinct Witness, through the Apostles and in the hearts of God's children, of the completion and perfection of the work of Christ and of the acceptance of His offering and intercession for His people by the Father.

And 3rd. That whilst He is thus three, these three are so absolutely ONE, that each is the one Jehovah, acting in His distinct relation, in all the fullness of the Godhead; so that whether it is the Father, predestinating, and loving; the Son, redeeming, interceding and governing, or the Holy Ghost, quickening, comforting and guiding, whatever part or point of the believer's salvation we contemplate, we are constrained to say it is God's act, and God's perfection is in it.

Should I be asked what I mean by God's existing as three; I answer, my meaning is that He as absolutely, eternally, and essentially exists as three, as He exists as God. I feel authorized so to understand it, first: from this consideration, God has manifested Himself in the Scriptures as three and I cannot conceive that in making a revelation of Himself, He would declare Himself as existing as three and one unless He so existed; so I must believe He eternally existed, as essentially three, as one. Secondly: I am confirmed in this, by His declaring Himself to be, I AM THAT I AM, not I Am, what I eternally was not. How He exists as ONE, or how He exists as three, He has not told me. I can no more comprehend how He eternally exists of Himself, that I can how He exists as three or as three and one. It is enough for me to know that He so exists, and therefore that every part of salvation is His work, and bears His mark of perfection. But I will add that I can no more believe that God, in order to exist as three, was under the necessity of begetting and breathing Himself into existence as such, that I can, that He begat or breathed His essence into being.

Again, should I be asked: Are the Three, three persons? I answer, not in a proper sense and I think to use a word in an indefinite and improper sense, tends to confuse and darken counsel. An undefined term can be of no use; it may do hurt.

I am authorized to speak of the Father as a person, not only because He is God, but also because as God, the Scriptures speak of His person, in Heb. 1:3, the Son is said to be the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. But I understand the term person here not to have reference to the Father in His distinct relation as such in the Godhead, as the attachment to a system has led some to represent it; but to Him as the invisible God, it being evidently a parallel passage with Col. 1:15, where Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God. I am also authorized to speak of the Son as a person, because He is God, and also because He stands in personal relation to His church as Her Husband, Head and King. And in speaking of Him as a person, I am led to contemplate Him as having some things peculiar embraced in His person, which do not belong to the Father or Holy Spirit as such. For He is revealed as God and man, and having in Him that life which is the light of men, all in one person. In like manner the Holy Ghost is declared to be God and as exercising the attributes of a person as in I Cor. 12:11 - "But all

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these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” That is, I am authorized to speak of each, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, individually as manifested, and as acting, as God and therefore as a person. But I am thereby no more warranted to say they are three persons than I am to say they are three Gods. That I may not, however, appear to make a greater difference than what really exists, between what I understand to be the scriptural view of the subject, and the system of men. I will add further; that what many mean by the terms three persons, namely: that the relations and distinctions, which the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost sustain each toward the other, are of a personal nature, I believe to be a scriptural idea, revealed by the use of the personal pronouns distinctly applied to each, and in other scriptural declarations. And for this I contend in opposition to the notion that the Three are only three offices or manifestations of God. And when persons, in using these terms, are careful to explain that they do not use them in the full import of the terms I do not feel so much opposition to their using them, though for reasons before assigned, I do not use them. But when, without any reserve or explanation persons say absolutely that there are three persons in the Godhead, or like Elder Osbourn, say there are three proper and distinct persons, my mind revolts at it as absurd in itself, and as calculated to beguile the inexperienced into a notion of three gods or something like it. And when Eld. O. or others assume to prescribe to us that we must conform to them in the use of these terms, or be denounced as heretics, I certainly shall resist it, as being, so far as it goes, the very spirit of popery; the terms not being sanctioned by Scripture authority.

I now appeal to my brethren, Does not the revelation which infinite Wisdom and Love has given us of God in the Scriptures, possess in and of itself a godlike glory, beauty, simplicity, and adaptation to our cases, which the explanations and sophistry of the schools with their undefined, but consecrated forms of expression only tend to mar and confuse? Such as their explaining God’s existence as three, by their first, second, and third persons, one begetting, another begotten, and the third breathed forth, and the Godhead of the Son as begotten, thus, that He is very God of very God, begotten - not created, begotten, unbegotten, &c. Whoever may undertake to study the system of men on this subject, with the idea of comprehending the being of God within a human system, will find such study producing a very different feeling from a suitable reverence of the greatness of God, they will find it to be a leaning to their own understandings, and producing disappointed feelings at the incapacity of their reasoning powers to grasp and arrange the subject without confusion, and a consequent bitterness of feeling toward those who discover the weakness of their system and reject it.

On the other hand, when we go as little children to the Scriptures to receive the revelation which God has been pleased to give of Himself, and to receive it just as He has given it, we are filled with reverence and awe at the greatness, the glorious majesty, and incomprehensibility of Him whom the Son has declared; and are humble before Him under a sense of how little we know or can know of God. Should reason under these circumstances attempt to approach the subject, she is confounded at once, driven back abashed, and gives place to faith whose province alone it is to apprehend the revelation of God. And she, as she takes hold of this subject, is still knowing that it is the being of God she is embracing in her arms, the great I AM THAT I AM. Yet faith apprehends all in the revelation that we need to know to inspire us with fear, reverence and love of God; with unreserved and childlike trust and confidence in Him, and with boldness of approach to Him, and pleading with Him in all our straits. This revelation corresponds with our experience. Our experience taught us nothing of first, second and third persons in God, of eternal generation of a begotten or breathed forth God; nor of the pre-existent soul of Christ, &c. But when our hearts were opened to understand the law, we felt that it was the law of God our Creator which we had transgressed, that against Him and Him only we had sinned. When the plan of salvation

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was revealed to our souls, it appeared all of God; God, in the riches of His love I and in His wisdom and power to save, was manifested to us; and with confidence we trusted in His salvation. In our after experience, when a promise has been peculiarly applied to our case, or a Scripture has been opened by the Holy Ghost to our understanding, we have been ready to say with Isaiah: “The Lord spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me” Isa.8:11.

There remains one point more to be shown, namely: what I understand to be the scriptural doctrine concerning the sonship of Christ, that brethren may know the whole amount of error, which it has been insinuated that myself, and perhaps, Brother Beebe and others hold.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia,

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S. Trott.

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