



CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF

by
W. E. Best

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CHRIST'S TWO SONSHIPS

The Lord Jesus Christ is one Person with two Sonships. He is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. The Son of God in the bosom of the Father was pleased to condescend to become the Son of Man. He willingly assumed human nature in order to reveal the Father, redeem the elect, and communicate the knowledge of God to His people.

God alone can reveal God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The Fatherhood of God is not known apart from Sonship: "...No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). Christ's eternal Sonship is an unoriginated relationship to the Father. Eternal Fatherhood demands eternal Sonship. For example, no human father is older as a father than his son. He became a father at the same time his son became a son. The terms "Father" and "Son," when speaking of the Godhead, imply co-eternality and co-equality. Christ's incarnation did not affect the unoriginated relationship. He continued in the bosom of the Father. The "only begotten God," *monogenes theos*, remains "with God" in the full sense of John 1:1 — "...the Word was with God..." "With God" signifies distinction in the Godhead. The preposition *pros* (with) reveals not merely existence alongside of but Person with Person eternally. Only such a Divine Person can reveal the Father. The popular belief that men by nature know the Father is in direct opposition to Scripture (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 14:10). Christ is a mighty Teacher. He gives discernment where He finds none.

Beginning with the title "Son of God" is the correct approach to this study. Whatever subject one is considering, the approach should always begin with God absolutely considered. In the study of creation, it is "In the beginning God created..." (Gen. 1:1). The study of salvation begins with God, "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). Christian living also begins with God: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Glorying in the Son of Man may be compared with the high priest of Israel passing the outer veil of the tabernacle. He enjoyed the first enclosure reserved for the feet of the covenant people. The holy place was for those anointed of God. However, when the high priest went through the second veil, he gloried not only in the Son of Man but in the Son of God. He penetrated the veil which symbolized the human nature of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19, 20). He beheld the mercyseat which foreshadowed the Son of God whom the Father sent to be his propitiation (Rom. 3:25). As we stand before the Son of Man, it is as though we stood before the second veil of the tabernacle which shrouds the mysteries of the Son of God. Let us not ascend from the Son of Man to the Son of God but descend from the Son of God to the Son of Man. With this approach, we can say with Paul, "...without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the

flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).

The gospel of John is unique in that it carries us back into eternity. It presents the Son of God in His eternal Deity and leaves us with a view of Him who has offered Himself on the cross as the Son of Man (John 1:1, 49; 3:14-16). The Son of God came into the world with those who had been purposed to be His by electing love, but He did not leave the world until He had redeemed them (John 10:11, 15; 17:1-24). The Father had given them to Him by covenant relationship. John looks deeper into the Person of Jesus Christ than the other gospel writers.

In the study of Christian evidences, we study not only the prophecies, birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man, but we go deeper and touch the heart of Christianity—the Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we conclude, “Truly this is the Son of God.” Hence, my hope of eternity is not built upon some little etymological technicality. It is not founded upon the construction of a phrase or the mood, voice, and tense of a verb, as important as these things are in their places. The revelation of God’s glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ by the Spirit of regeneration gives the recipient the ability to say, “...whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). As I look upon the sun shining, I do not need some person to tell me it is 93 million miles from the earth, and according to his logarithmic calculation, its light is sufficient to enlighten a hemisphere at a time. Why? I see its light and feel its heat. Hence, having been regenerated by the Spirit, the call of the gospel does not come by the understanding of all the parts of English and Greek grammar. If it did none would be converted. Those things are for the students who have been converted.

The Son of God is the eternal Son. Micah’s prophecy concerning Him states, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). The son of God, therefore, is no creature limited by time. He is from eternity. Solomon’s description of the Wisdom of God has great similarity to John’s description of the Divine *Logos* (Prov. 8:22-36; John 1:1-5). The book of Proverbs represents the Son of God as the Wisdom of God, but not yet manifested. The gospel of John reveals Him as the Word of God, but He is now manifested. Wisdom may be unrevealed, but the Word spoken is revealed. One may be unusually wise without anyone knowing it, but when he speaks his wisdom is revealed. The Son of God was Wisdom incarnate. As soon as the Word made flesh began to speak, men said, “...Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). The two metaphors “Word” and “Son” supplement and protect each other. “Word” might suggest an impersonal quality in God, while “Son” might limit one’s conception of a personal yet created being without properly understanding it. Combining the two metaphors gives us the full truth and guards against error. Jesus Christ is the Son, but the Son also being the Word cannot be a created being.

Solomon gives several proofs of the Son’s eternity: (1) He was one with the Father — “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (Prov. 8:22). (2) He was in the beginning — “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Prov. 8:23). (3) He was before creation — “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor

the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth” (Prov. 8:24-27). (4) He was God’s fellow and delight — “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (Prov. 8:30). (5) He delights in men — “...my delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. 8:31). (6) He calls men to hear — “...hearken unto me, O ye children...” (Prov. 8:32). (7) There is danger in rejecting Christ — “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death” (Prov. 8:36).

The eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ is an absolute necessity in the Christian faith: (1) Eternal Sonship and eternal election stand or fall together (Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9). If the Son of God is not eternal, our election is not eternal. (2) Eternal Sonship and God’s purpose of redemption stand or fall together (I Pet. 1:18-20; Acts 2:23; John 3:16). (3) Eternal Sonship and regeneration stand or fall together (John 5:26). The Son quickens whom He will. (4) Eternal Sonship and preservation stand or fall together (Rom. 8:32-39).

Mary did not call Jesus Christ “Son of Man.” The angel said to Mary, “...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). This verse has been tortured by depraved men trying to prove that Jesus Christ is not the eternal Son of God. The verb “shall be called” is from the Greek future tense of *kaleo*—to call. There is a wide difference between “began to be” and “will be called.” The statement “began to be” means that he was not before, but the statement “will be called” means that He who formerly existed is manifested among men as the Person who had been promised as the “seed of the woman.” “That holy thing” comes from the Greek *to gennomenon hagion*, the holy child or offspring, the subject of the verb “will be called.” The neuter gender has confused some, but the Holy Agency producing the Holy Embryo seems appropriate, since the Son of God was assuming a holy nature. The “Highest Son” — *huios hupsistou*, the genitive form of *hupsistos*, highest, loftiest, most elevated, the most high (“What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?” — Mark 5:7) —of Luke 1:32 would be called “the Son of God” when He was born of the virgin Mary in Luke 1:35. The virgin could not be told by the angel that the Son of God would be begotten by her, because He was eternally begotten by the Father (John 1:1, 14). Neither could the angel tell Mary her child would be called the Son of Man, because He was never addressed as Son of Man. “Son of Man” was not man’s title for Jesus Christ but His own title for Himself.

There is one important thing to observe about the title “Son of Man.” It was never found upon the lips of any but Jesus Christ during His public ministry, with the exception of John 12:34. Christ’s enemies did not understand how the Son of Man could be equated with the Messiah. They could not reconcile how the Son of Man was to be crucified and the Messiah was to be with them forever. The title “Son of Man” is applied to Christ only three times in all the rest of Scripture. Stephen used the title when he saw the Lord Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55, 56). The two passages in Revelation are quotations from the Old Testament (Rev. 1:13; 14:14; Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 7:13). The Old Testament sheds more light than the New Testament on the manner in which the title “Son of Man” was established. On the other hand, the New Testament is clearer than the Old Testament in its description of the manner in which Christ achieved the title “Son of God.” Such prophecies as II Samuel 7:12-14 and I Chronicles 17:12-14

predict the time when God would be the Father of Jesus Christ and Christ would be His Son. Both passages are spoken futuristically. A Sonship would be established, and that Sonship was as the “Son of Man.” The New Testament speaks of the “only begotten Son” (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18). Hence, there are two titles for the same Person. “Son of God” is by reason of Christ’s eternal generation, which is never futuristic. “Son of Man” is established by Christ’s incarnation, which is in time.

The Greek word for “Son,” in the title “Son of Man,” is not always used to designate the thought of being born of man. The word “son” is often used to carry the thought of “being identified with.” The word *huioi* is used in Matthew 13:38 — “...children of the kingdom...” (*huioi tes basileias*); Mark 2:19 — “children of the bridechamber...” (*huioi tou numphonos*); Mark 3:17 — “...sons of thunder” (*huioi brontes*); Luke 16:8 — “...children of this world...” (*huioi tou aionos*); “...the children of light” (*tous huious tou photos*); Eph. 2:2 — “...the children of disobedience” (*tois huiois tes apeitheias*); I Thess. 5:5 — “...children of light...” (*huioi photos*), and “...children of the day...” (*huioi hemeras*). In these verses, “sons” does not mean they were born of the kingdom, of the bridechamber, of thunder, etc.; but it does mean they were identified with the kingdom, the bridechamber, thunder, etc. Therefore, the expression “Son of Man” does not mean that Jesus Christ was born of Joseph.

The identification of the Son of God with the sons of men validated the title “Son of Man.” This was due to the hypostatic union of the two natures in one Person. Christologists cannot deny the reality and perfection of the Divine and human natures in the unique Person, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they cannot confound the two natures or deny the unity of the Person. The Son of Man is the bond between heaven and earth. He is the God-Man, Son to both. He is the Mediator through whom God reaches man and man reaches God. The Lord Jesus affirmed that He possessed human nature, and He also affirmed His preexistence. Other persons are sons of individual men, but Jesus Christ was no man’s son. He is the unique Son of Man. He belongs to no particular people but to His people among all nations and kindreds. The title “Son of Man” is associated with Divine undertakings. Therefore, what is proper to either nature is ascribed unto the Person under whatsoever name He chose to call Himself.

The New Testament never states that the eternal Son became a man. It does affirm that the Word became flesh, the Son was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, Christ was made in the likeness of men, and He was found in fashion as a man (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7, 8). Some claim that to deny personality to Christ’s human nature is to deny redemption for mankind. They reason that what Christ did not take He did not redeem. The fact is, however, if Christ’s human nature is also personal, not only does He have two natures but He is two distinct persons. The Son of Man was a Person, but where did His personality lie? The Lord Jesus Christ possessed personality with the other Persons of the Godhead, but no one can say Jesus Christ is the Father or the Holy Spirit. Christ’s human nature does not possess a distinct personality over against His Divine nature. It has subsistence only in the second Person of the Godhead. If the human nature of Christ has a distinct subsistence apart from the Divine nature, the Deity of Christ is denied. Our blessed Lord is one Person with two perfect natures—Divine and human. Hence, the Son of Man was in heaven while on earth: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). The words “which is in heaven” are omitted in some manuscripts, but they have strong support in the ancient versions.

The text refutes the denial of the preexistence and Deity of Christ. It also disproves that the “Son of Man” surrendered His attributes during the days of His flesh on earth.

The title “Son of Man” became a reality when the “Son of God” became flesh. Until the incarnation, “Son of Man” was predictive. The eternally begotten “Son of God” was begotten in time. The first begetting was not like a human begetting. It is referred to by many theologians as “eternal generation.” The term does not express the inexpressible, but for want of a better term it is acceptable. The statement “only begotten” comes from the Greek word *monogenes*. It means only, unique, or single of its kind. The word comes from *monos* which means single, alone, or only. Hence, Christ’s eternal Sonship is unique, one of its kind.

The unique Son of God was sent into the world at God’s appointed time as the sole representative of the being and character of the One who sent Him. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman...” (Gal. 4:4). The word translated “sent” — the aorist tense of *exapostello* — means to send out or forth, to send away, or to dispatch on a service. This interesting word has two prepositions as prefixes. The stem *stello* means “to dispatch,” *apo* means “from,” and *ex* (from *ek*) means “out of.” This compound word means the eternal Son was sent out from heaven to execute a commission on earth. It refers to the act of one who sends another with a commission to perform a particular work. The word “apostle” comes from *apostello*. The prefixed preposition *apo* means the Person sent is to represent the Sender. The second prefixed preposition *ex* signifies the only begotten Son of God was sent out of the Father’s presence in heaven. Nowhere is it indicated in the Scriptures that God sent forth His Son into the world and anxiously awaited His reaction to the work of the cross. The word for “made” is *genomenon*, an aorist participle of *ginomai* — to be subject to or to be born.

When the Son of God came into the world, He did not assume a nature which could be laid aside after He had completed His mission. The assumption of Human nature made it possible for the Son of God to experience both suffering and glory as the God-Man. Christ experienced suffering throughout the days of His flesh on earth — “...the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). As God absolutely considered, the Son of God could not experience these things; but as the God-Man, the Lord Jesus did suffer these things. God, who demanded the Lamb, not only provided the Lamb but became the Lamb that He demanded.

The Son of Man not only experienced suffering, but as the coming Messiah, He shall experience the glory of the kingdom. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory....Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:31, 34). The truth that God absolutely considered could never experience the glory of the kingdom in the manner in which the Son of Man shall experience its glory must be repeated. When the Son of Man assumes the kingdom at the time appointed, it will be in view of His being the predicted seed of David (Luke 1:31-33). The Divine nature must not be exalted to the exclusion of the human nature. Christ’s suffering and reigning are both viewed in relation to the God-Man. God absolutely considered is represented in Scripture as reigning, but that reign is not the reign of promise. The kingdom is promised to the Son of David.

Jesus Christ is both David's Son and David's Lord: "...I am the root and the offspring of David..." (Rev. 22:16). This duality is understandable in terms of the mystery of Christ's Person. Blind Bartimaeus appealed to the Son of God as the Son of David (Mark 10:46-52). If the Son of Man is not Divine, there is no hope for mankind.

CHRIST'S TWO BEGETTINGS

The incarnation of Jesus Christ was a change of state but not a change of nature. He was veiled in human flesh. Personal and official glories of the Son of God were both hidden, except where the faith of the elect discovered them. John said, "...we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father..." (John 1:14). The glory of the tabernacle was God tabernacling in its midst. The glory of the church is the only begotten Son of God dwelling in her midst (Matt. 18:20). Only God's gift of faith sees that glory. The faith of the disciples penetrated Christ's human nature and beheld the glory of the eternal Son who is full of grace and truth. The Lord Jesus walked through the land unrecognized as the Divine Son except where the light of the Spirit of regeneration enabled one to behold the Light of the world concealed by human nature. Christ's moral glory, however, could not be hidden. He could not conceal a perfect life which was manifested by His words and works. God is absolute purity, uncontaminated even by the shadow of sin: "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5).

Christ's twofold begetting is the foundation of the elect of God being begotten again unto a living hope (I Pet. 1:3). The eternal God comes to the elect in time that the elect in time can go to God eternally. This has been made possible by the eternally begotten Son being born in time thus providing the means whereby the elect born in time can be born again for eternity. The twice begotten Son—once in eternity and once in time—obtained eternal redemption for the elect who must be begotten twice in time to spend eternity with God (Heb. 9:12; John 3:1-8). Unlike the begetting of the elect in time, Christ's twofold begetting is divided between eternity and time. His eternal begetting is without beginning. The Lord Jesus is the only accepted once-begotten Person in time. God's elect, however, are twice born in time. They are born physically, and then, born from above.

The eternally begotten Son of the eternal Father must be begotten in time to be the Mediator between the holy Father and the elect given to Him in the covenant of redemption. The mystery of the first begetting is a vital part of the mystery of the Son's second begetting, and both are the foundation of the mystery of the begetting again of the elect. Paul said, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from the ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27).

The Father vindicated the Son's declaration that He and the Father are equal: "...He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:23). The title "Son of God" permeates the first epistle of John. The blood of the Son cleanses (I John 1:7). The Son is the Advocate with the Father (I John 2:1, 2). The unction causes believers to abide in the Son (I John 2:20). Faith in the Son gives victory over the world (I John 5:4, 5). God's record testifies of the Son (I John 5:9-13). We have life in the Son (I John 5:12). The Son came to give understanding (I John 5:20). The Son is the true God and eternal life (I John 5:20).

The title “only begotten Son” has been the source of controversy since the third century after Christ’s death. Origen of Alexandria taught that Christ is from God and not God in Himself; He was generated not in time but in eternity. In the fourth century, Arius taught that God has not always been Father. He believed there was a time He was alone; but the eternal God made the Son a creature before all creatures; and He adopted Him for His Son. This teaching brought about great controversy. The church fathers concluded that the word “begotten” meant an inexplicable relationship and not an event.

There is a new theory about Sonship taught today. Some say to apply “begotten” to Jesus Christ in His eternal Deity in the past is a traditional error. Those who embrace this view say “begotten” refers to Christ as born of the virgin in time. They believe the Reformers, in trying to escape Arianism, invented the phrase “eternal generation.” While this view is incorrect, one must understand this revolutionary idea does not deny the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ.

Some boldly proclaim that the Bible says nothing about “begetting” as an eternal relationship between the Father and the Son. They advocate dropping the statement “eternal generation” from the vocabulary of theology. The following are some arguments against the term “eternal generation.” (1) Theologians, trying to escape the difficulty of Arianism, invented the phrase “eternal generation.” (2) “Begotten” refers to Christ’s birth of the virgin in time. (3) God was not known to any man as Father until the Man was here who is called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). (4) The Person spoken of in Hebrews 1:5 is represented as Son. He is called Son because Sonship is related to His Manhood. (5) The assumption that prophetic statements of what Christ would be could be taken as setting forth facts subsisting as actualities at the time they were written would make the Scriptures nonsensical. Hebrews 1:5 is a quotation of Psalm 2:7. The Sonship of Christ does not go back into eternity. (6) Scripture does not speak of “eternal Father” or “eternal Son.” Father and Son are names which could be known only through the incarnation. (7) The one who is eternally God has come into the place and relationship of Son. This involved obedience to the Father.

“Eternal generation” is a human term designed to explain, as well as one can, the inexplicable. Explaining the inexplicable can be likened to knowing the unknowable (Eph. 3:18, 19). “Trinity” is a human term used to explain the mystery of the Godhead. Objectors to the use of “eternal generation” use the human term “Trinity.” Hence, they are not consistent. If one human term should be dropped, consistency would demand dropping all human terms. If this is done, interpretation is impossible. Human interpretation falls short of perfection, but all Christians are responsible to interpret. The task of the interpreter is to use materials provided and make them as understandable as possible. Christ existed as Son from all eternity. What is this but eternal generation? God does not generate as man because there is a difference in nature. In human generation, the father exists before the son. However, in the Godhead, the Father and Son coexist. As there is a distinction of the Persons in the Godhead in time, there must be a distinction of Persons by name in eternity. God’s knowledge is infinite (Ps. 147:5). There is no new thought with Him. God knows all things simultaneously. Eternal generation is an anomalous (inconsistent with the accepted or expected) expression to declare the inexpressible. It is acceptable for the want of a better term. It is not objectionable when one considers such Biblical truths as eternal election and eternal justification.

The Lord Jesus is eternally the only One of His kind. The Greek word for “only begotten” is *monogenes*. It comes from two words: (1) *monos*, which means sole, single, alone, only; and (2) *genos*, which means kind, class, family, offspring. “Only begotten,” therefore, means the only one of its kind, unique. Everything in the Divine nature is eternal; therefore, the “only begotten” is eternal. The incarnation, baptism, and resurrection were manifestations of Sonship: “Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:3, 4).

Some hold firmly to the eternal Sonship of Christ, but they refuse the term “only begotten” and substitute “well-beloved.” We have two sources of information for our understanding of “only begotten.” The Hebrew *yahid* occurs twelve times in the Old Testament. It is translated “my darling” (Ps. 22:20; 35:17), “desolate” (Ps. 25:16), “solitary” (Ps. 68:6), “only beloved” (Prov. 4:3), “only son” (Gen. 22:2, 12, 16; Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech. 12:10), and “only child” (Judges 11:34). In the New Testament the word *monogenes* occurs nine times. Three times the word is used of an “only child” (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38), once of Isaac (Heb. 11:17), and five times of the Son of God (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9). Some have been confused about the passage in Hebrews 11:17. They say Isaac was not the only son. Ishmael was also Abraham’s son. However, the principle of Romans 9:7 clears up the confusion: “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” The word *monogenes* is not the ordinary word for “beloved” when applied to Jesus Christ. It is the word *agapetos* which is used in such passages as Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5. If *monogenes* referred to Christ’s incarnation, such passages as Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5 would have been appropriate places to have used them. The fact is that *monogenes* speaks of the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ.

All Persons of the Godhead are equal, but they must be distinguished. How are they distinguished? How does one conclude who is number one? Who is number two? Who is number three?

There are many references in the New Testament which state the Father sent the Son: “...He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:23). “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (John 6:57). “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). There are three different Greek words used for “sending” in these passages. They are *pempo* (John 5:23), *apostello* (John 6:57), and *exapostello* (Gal. 4:4). These words are not used for the sake of variety. *Pempo* means to send, commission, or appoint. *Apostello* means to send out or away. *Exapostello* means to send away from oneself. The Father who sends is greater than the Son who is sent. Christ said, “...I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). John 10:30 proves the Lord Jesus spoke of priority of position, not inferiority of nature: “I and my Father are one.” Paul also confirmed the priority of the Father’s position: “...the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3).

The Father sent the Son, and both Father and Son are said to have sent the Holy Spirit: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). Christ said, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you

from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26). Since the Father and the Son both sent the Spirit, they are greater in priority but not superior in nature.

Each Person of the Godhead has a distinguishing quality of His own, yet the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. The Son is of the Father, but the Father is never of the Son. The Spirit is of the Father and the Son. The Father operates through the Son, and the Father and the Son operate through the Holy Spirit. Some things are attributed to all three Persons; but, on the other hand, certain acts are predicated of one Person which are never predicated of the other two Persons. Neither Person is God without the others, but each with the others is God. The Father elects. The Son redeems. The Holy Spirit regenerates.

The title “Son” cannot be restricted to the incarnation of Jesus Christ. “Son” is a term that would not apply to the second Person of the Godhead if He were the Son only in an official or ethical sense. Jesus Christ sustains a relation to God which can be compared only with that which a son among men sustains to his father. The title refers to equality in nature. Therefore, the One who was eternally Son was manifested as Son in time.

Three references in the New Testament where the word “begotten” is used to speak of Christ do not mean “only begotten.” The word for “begotten” of Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, and Hebrews 5:5 is *gegenneka*, the perfect tense of *gennaō*, which means to be the father of, to cause to be born, or to cause to arise, engender, excite. In Acts 13:33, Paul quoted Psalm 2:7 in defense of Christ’s resurrection. Hence, Christ was manifested with power when He rose from the dead. “Begotten” (*gegenneka*), therefore, means “Thou art my Son, this day have I brought thee forth or delivered thee up from the dead.” In Hebrews 1:5, Jesus Christ is revealed to be greater than the angels. Angels are called sons (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), but they are not manifested as the Son of God is. The writer to the Hebrews quoted not only a portion of Psalm 2:7 but a part of II Samuel 7:14 — “I will be his father, and he shall be my son.” This statement could never be used to speak of the eternal relationship of Father and Son. II Samuel 7:14 referred to Solomon in the immediate sense but to the Son of God in the ultimate sense. Solomon was king, but Jesus Christ would be the theocratic King. Finally, in Hebrews 5:5, the validity of Christ’s priesthood is proved. The same Person who said “Thou art my son...,” also said “...Thou art a priest for ever...” (Heb. 5:6). Christ’s qualification for the office is revealed in the first statement, and the proof of His appointment is manifested by God’s oath in the latter. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is greater than the Aaronic priesthood.

Being the Son of God eternally and being manifested the Son of God in time are two different things. The “only begotten” (*monogenes*) is never used in connection with Christ’s human nature, but the words *gennaō* (to be born, to cause to arise) and *prototokos* (firstborn) are associated with the incarnation. Having considered the references where “begotten,” *gegenneka*, is used, let us now investigate the word *prototokos*. It is used seven times in connection with the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5). The word *prototokos* comes from *protos* which means foremost, whether in time, place, order, or importance. The birth of Jesus Christ is superior and therefore has priority over all births, creatures, and events. Christ is said to be the firstborn Son of Mary, firstborn among many brethren, firstborn of every creature, firstborn from the dead, firstborn who shall be brought into

the world, and firstborn of the dead. The adjective “superior” and the noun “priority” fit each verse where *prototokos* is used in connection with Jesus Christ.

The human nature of Christ was not eternally in the bosom of the Father. However, the “only begotten” was and is in the bosom of the Father. This destroys the theory that Sonship is related only to Christ’s Manhood. Since the Father gave His only begotten Son, He was the only begotten Son before He was given (John 1:18; 3:16). Christ said the person who has not believed in the “name” of the only begotten Son is already condemned (John 3:18). The word “name” speaks of Christ’s very being and nature—His Person and Work as revealed to men. Does the word “name” include Christ’s Sonship? We must not forget that God sees future, present, and past all at once. God is one mind. He has a fixed and settled purpose. All history is but one. There is no succession in God’s knowledge, but there is in the revelation of that knowledge to men. Since God’s knowledge is infinite, Sonship was not a revelation to Him who knows everything as present. If one says that Christ is God’s Son by virtue of the everlasting covenant, how can he say a covenant begat Him? Begetting implies a Person, not a compact. A covenant implies the existence of covenant parties. If one says that Christ is the Son of God by virtue of the union of the Divine and human natures, how does he answer the fact that the “only begotten” is never associated with Christ’s human nature? “That holy thing” was not called the Son of God, but the Person clothed in that was (Luke 1:35). If Jesus Christ is the Son of God merely by virtue of the hypostatic union, where is the blessedness of the declaration, “...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17)? Finally, if Jesus Christ is Son of God merely by the incarnation, the Holy Spirit would be His Father, “declared the Son of God” would be meaningless, and there would be no uniqueness about His Sonship. That uniqueness is the Son of God becoming the Son of Man while remaining the Son of God.

There seems to be some confusion about the title “Son of Man.” Some teach that the human birth of Christ did not make Him the Son of Man. They cite John 3:13 and John 6:62 in defense of their view that the Son of Man descended out of heaven and He ascended up where He was before. The answer to this is not difficult when one realizes that all things have, with respect to God, a known and a real existence. Both are eternally known to God. However, the God-Man did not coexist with the Father, but the Father coexisted with the God-Man. There is no time with God. He is the first and last simultaneously (Is. 41:4). Christ’s human nature was neither from heaven nor omnipresent, but the Son of God who assumed the human nature in time was omnipresent. Therefore, the Son of God who became the Son of Man in time did not cease to be the omnipresent Son of God. That is the answer to both John 3:13 and John 6:62.

Jesus Christ is not said to be begotten of the Father in any sense except as the Father bore testimony to Him as being His unique Son. Psalm 2:7 has been a verse of much controversy among Bible students. Some feel the controversy is unprofitable. It has been said that the dispute reveals presumptuous curiosity rather than reverent faith. Personally, I believe this is an excuse for lack of study to learn as much as possible about the infinite God. The Psalmist boldly described God’s victory over His enemies. Functions of government are centered in the Son of God. Therefore, God said, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6). The kingdom predicted is not soteriological but eschatological. The appointed King expressed who He is and what He is able to do by virtue of the Divine decree: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:7). Five things

must be observed in the text: (1) Jesus Christ is Son. (2) He is My Son, i.e., the Son of God. (3) He is the Son of God begotten. “Begotten” comes from the Hebrew word *yalad*, which means to bear and bring forth as a mother (Gen. 4:1); to beget as a father (Gen. 4:18). With the second Person of the Godhead, a relation would exist which could be compared with that of a father and a son. The word “generation” is not inconsistent with equality. The Reformers used the word in the sense of individuals having equal status at the same time, not in the sense of procreation. (4) The Son of God is begotten this day. “This day” refers to the time the decree was revealed. Since this was a Divine act, it was eternal. This proves the eternal Sonship which the decree (law or statute) declares. There is no succession, yesterday, or tomorrow but one continuous day in eternity (Is. 43:13). The Psalmist is the seer, and the Psalm is a picture of what he saw and heard. (5) The begotten was by saying. Hence, the eternal Son was begotten by the eternal Father in the sense of the Father’s testimony: “...the LORD said...Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

The argument that “eternal Father” and “eternal Son” are not Scriptural expressions is illogical. It is a fact that both are eternal. Furthermore, it is a fact that God’s knowledge is infinite (Ps. 147:5). Since God understands our thoughts afar off, to say the terms “Father” and “Son” were not understood by God until they were revealed in the incarnation would be against all logic. The Psalmist said, “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off” (Ps. 139:2). This means before a thought becomes my own it is eternally comprehended by God. The incarnation would give a complete account of both Sonship and Fatherhood (John 1:18; Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22). God alone can declare God. The Greek word for “declare” of John 1:18 is *exegesato*. It comes from two words — *ek*, out of, and *hegeomai*, to take the lead; to think, consider, esteem, regard; to be chief, to preside, govern. Hence, the full account of Fatherhood and Sonship is necessary for the elect’s salvation. Therefore, Fatherhood had to be there in order to be brought out. Fatherhood cannot exist apart from Sonship. Hence, the “Son” was given (Is. 9:6). The Son is equal with the Father (John 5:17-47; 10:30). He is the image of God (Heb. 1:3). The word “image” involves two things—representation and manifestation. The Son of God, therefore, is not simply the revealer of God, but He Himself is God revealed. In order to reveal the Father, the Son condescended to take the place of subjection to the Father. The place of subjection as the God-Man was to reveal the Father and redeem the elect.

Two Persons are revealed in Psalm 2:7 —the Father and the Son. The Son’s begetting by the Father’s testimony is a declaration of an eternal fact in the Divine nature. Lancelot Andrewes shows there is a resemblance between begetting and speaking. Both result in bringing forth. When one speaks, he does it either within himself or without to others. What one speaks comes from what he thought. The thought is a form of generation known only to oneself until the thought is declared. When the thought is expressed, it takes on a form of expression called the second begetting. Let it be fully understood that the day of Christ’s begetting is for the elect. He was eternally begotten in the purpose of the Father to be begotten of the virgin Mary in time. Both result in bringing forth. The purpose (decree) was brought forth: “...when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman...” (Gal. 4:4). Therefore, the Word which was eternally with God and known only to God was revealed by the Spirit to the seer in prophecy. This is what is taught in Psalm 2:7. But there is more to come. The prophecy of the eternally begotten Son became a reality when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:1, 14). Hence, the eternally begotten was begotten in time.

CHRIST'S TWO ADVENTS

The prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7 came at a time when King Ahaz and the people of Judah had forsaken God. Ahaz had refused the sign of deliverance and was seeking alliance with Assyria to fight off his enemies. The people were turning to mediums and spiritists instead of God for guidance. Isaiah shows in the last verse of chapter eight that many prefer any source of assumed intelligence, even though it is diabolical. In this setting, the prophet said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20). The fact that man possesses a spirit causes him to seek support for that spirit in the day of mental strain and distress. Therefore, the unsaved person is an open target for "familiar spirits" (Is. 8:19). Satan does not allow the vacuum to go without filling it in his own way and for his own purpose. Familiar spirits will tell their clients just what they want to hear. They have no regard for the law of God, because it is their enemy. However, there is one thing for sure, the word which they despise will judge them in the last day. Christ said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

In the midst of the darkness, Isaiah saw the sunrise behind the clouds. There was a brighter day, a day without clouds. It is interesting to observe that the clearest promises of the Messiah have been given in the darkest hours of history. In the dark hour of Adam's fallen state, God gave the promise of sin's remedy in the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). In the dark hour of Israel's bondage in Egypt, Israel saw the promised Messiah in the paschal lamb (Ex. 12:3-10). When the foundation of society in Israel was crumbling with iniquity, God gave the promise of a sure foundation for believers (Is. 28:16). When false teachers were overthrowing the faith of some in Paul's day, the Holy Spirit gave a message through the apostle to Timothy: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19). As we see the dark clouds gathering in these days of great wickedness and apostasy, our Lord is saying to us through Luke: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). This redemption is not that of the soul but of the body (Rom. 8:23; 13:11).

Prophecy is to the Christian what a light is in a dark room. Peter said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Pet. 1:19). Both the dawning of the day and the rising of the morning star refer to the *parousia*. The dawning of the day speaks of the anticipation in believers' hearts caused by the signs of the approaching day of our Lord. Such anticipation produces a great transformation in the hearts of God's people (I John 3:2, 3). Hence, the unfulfilled prophecy of Scripture is a light that God has provided for the church in her hour of suffering and darkness. Prophecy not only proves the faithfulness of God in the past by prophecies that have been fulfilled, but the unfulfilled prophecies give direction and comfort to His people in the present. Hope is strengthened and sustained by what God has promised for the

future. David was living in dark times when God's message came to him: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow" (II Sam. 23:2-5). Although David's house (his family) was not right with God, he knew that God's covenant was unconditional and everlasting. "A morning without clouds" is a prophecy of the coming kingdom. The darkness before dawn appropriately describes the period preceding the kingdom: "...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). "The night is far spent, the day is at hand..." (Rom. 13:12).

Isaiah's prophecy is in the present tense. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given..." Future things are often expressed in the Hebrew as past, present, or both. To God there is neither past nor future. He is the "I Am." God "...calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). The prophecy in Isaiah 9:6-7 should be viewed as though the Messiah was just born to national Israel, and that nation was also born again to welcome Him (Is. 66:7). "Unto us" refers to the only nation ever elected as a nation.

The kingdom is the subject of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 9:6-7 has had only a partial fulfillment. A Child has been born, a Son has been given, but the government is not upon Christ's shoulders. The government is not soteriological but eschatological. During Christ's personal ministry on earth, He paid tribute to Caesar (Matt. 17:24-27). Caesar was not forced by the righteous rule of Christ over men to pay homage. The Lord Jesus did not rule in "peace" at His first advent (Matt. 10:34). He did not sit on His throne — the throne of David (Luke 1:32; Rev. 3:21). A world-wide, righteous government and universal peace are inseparable. The prophecy of Jeremiah 23:5-8 prophesies a reigning King. The terms of this prophecy were not fulfilled at Christ's first advent. The Jews rejected Him at His first advent. They said, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). This prophecy, therefore, has been partially fulfilled. Like other Old Testament prophecies, the coming of the Son of God into the world is announced without distinguishing the first from the second advent.

Included in the entire message of Isaiah to King Ahaz are both the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. Isaiah declared that Jehovah had spoken to him. The prophecy is better understood if the word for "confederacy" of Isaiah 8:12 is translated "conspiracy." Isaiah and his associates were accused of a conspiracy against Ahaz and Judah, because the prophet had condemned the alliance of Ahaz with Assyria. This kind of slander is always expected when God's true servants oppose professed followers of God who appeal to the heathen for help. When Amos prophesied that Jeroboam would die by the sword and the people would be led into captivity, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam, saying, "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel..." (Amos 7:10-11). When Paul's message of truth cut the hearts of the religionists, more than forty conspired that they would eat nothing until they had killed the apostle (Acts 23:12-14). However, Paul was protected from the conspiracy. Condemnation of fleshly activities in professing Christendom will result in conspiracies against God's men today. Religious flesh is the same in every age. Furthermore, when God's ministers warn people of the

impending judgment of God on an ungodly society before the second advent, religious scoffers say, "...Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:4).

Both the first and second advents of Jesus Christ are predicted in Isaiah 9:6-7, without any distinction between the two. This is not unusual from the perspective of Old Testament prophets. Both advents are absolutely necessary for completed redemption with respect to redemption's application. The Old Testament prophets saw salvation of men in its completion—soul and body. Redemption's application to the soul takes place when one is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:8), but its application to the body will not take place until Christ's second advent (Rom. 8:23). Christ's first advent was in humiliation to purchase redemption for the elect; His second advent will be in power to finalize its application to the elect and to establish the kingdom for them. Each has its appropriate place in God's eternal purpose. The glory of the second is the reward subsequent to the suffering and application of the first.

The first advent of Christ is given in the first part of Isaiah 9:6 — "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...." The incarnation was an absolute necessity. Man can suffer, but he cannot satisfy God by his suffering. God absolutely considered can satisfy, but He cannot suffer. Jesus Christ is both a child born and a Son given. As the "child born," we have the human nature in which the Son of God could suffer; and as the "Son given," we have the Divine nature of the Person who alone could satisfy God. Hence, the God-Man is able to suffer the penalty of sin for man and make satisfaction unto God at the same time. As the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ—the God-Man—reconciles God to the elect and the elect sinners to God. Jesus Christ restores God's favor manward in propitiation. He removes our enmity Godward in reconciliation. Reconciliation is objective before it is subjective: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Christ's death on the cross removed the alienation objectively before it is removed subjectively by regeneration.

The "child born" and the "Son given" are two statements that predict the hypostatic union—two natures in one Person. Three great areas of study are opened to us in this prophecy of Christ's first advent: (1) "Child" and "Son" speak of Christ's two natures. "Child" is a term used among men. No one would ever speak of God absolutely considered as a "child." There are references to Jesus Christ as a "babe" (*brephos* — Luke 2:12), a "child" (*paidion* — Luke 2:27), a "boy" (*pais* — Luke 2:43), and a "man" (*anthropos* — John 19:5; *andra* — Acts 2:22); but these apply to Him as the One in whom both the Divine and human natures are united. Hence, the "child" is from the earth, but the "Son" is from heaven. (2) "Child" and "Son" tell us what had a beginning and Who is without beginning. That which was born of the virgin had a beginning, but the Son who assumed that which was born has no beginning. The virgin brought forth the child that was born, but the Father gave the Son who was without human birth. (3) At the birth of Jesus Christ, there was a "manger" for the child, but there was a "star" for the Son (Matt. 2:2). The shepherds came to view the child, but a choir of angels celebrated the Son (Luke 2:7-14). When Jesus Christ said, "I thirst," He was emphasizing His human nature (John 19:28). God does not thirst. When He said, "I and my Father are one," Christ was stressing His Divine nature (John 10:30). Moreover, when He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," the Lord Jesus was manifesting Himself as the God-Man (Matt. 11:28). The Lord

Jesus Christ is equal with the Father but different because He possesses a human nature. He is the incarnate Son. Christ is equal with His brethren but different because He possesses a Divine nature (Heb. 2:11-18). “Child” and “Son” do not constitute two persons. There is one Person with two natures. Both “child” and “Son” have but one name — “...His name shall be called...,” and upon the shoulders of this Person shall rest the righteous government.

Unto whom is the unique Person of Jesus Christ given? The text says “unto us.” The promise, therefore, was made to Israel through the prophet; but the promise includes the unconditional Abrahamic covenant. By the death of the “seed” (Gal. 3:16), provision was made for the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant to come on both Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 3:13, 14; Heb. 2:16). “Unto us” includes all the elect given to Jesus Christ (John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). The Son is given to the elect because the elect were given to the Son before the foundation of the world. His name is half Hebrew—Jesus—and half Greek—Christ. Of all the gifts that have come down from the Father of lights, the gift of His Son is the greatest (James 1:17). “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15). Precious gifts always come wrapped in something less precious, and the gift of God’s Son is not different. The Son of God was wrapped in human nature. His human nature, however, was not something unclean or peccable. The human nature, although infinitely below the dignity of the Divine nature, was holy (Luke 1:35).

The second advent of Jesus Christ receives greater emphasis in Isaiah 9:6-7 than the first advent. The first advent is stressed in Isaiah 7:14. Connecting the government of this prophecy with the church will not withstand the test of Scripture. The church cannot be equated with the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy. At the center of Jewish tradition was the belief in a Divine kingdom. The prophet pointed to a King of whose government and peace there shall be no end. To equate the missionary work of the church with the increase of Christ’s government and peace of which there will be no end is exegetical fraud. All missionary work will come to an end when the church has completed her mission on the earth. Some have gone so far as to say the increase of Christ’s government is by the distribution of Bibles and tracts, by building hospitals and schools, and by preaching the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, the kingdom will be established by the coming King after the church has been completed and her mission fulfilled.

Christ’s kingdom will be different from His control of the church as her Head and His providential rule over the universe. If Christ were reigning in the kingdom now, all the peoples of the world would recognize His reign. His reign in the kingdom will be visible. Neither His Headship in the church nor His sovereign rule in providence is visible. People in the world at large know nothing about Christ’s present rule. There is a great difference between the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom and his rule in the church. He will rule immediately in the kingdom; whereas, He rules mediately in the church.

Isaiah’s prophecy states: “...the government shall be upon his [Son’s] shoulder [shoulders NASB].” Many expositors write and talk about the supreme, executive power given to Jesus Christ (John 5:22, 23), such as forgiveness of sin and punishment of the ungodly. They make a threefold division of the kingdom: (1) the kingdom of grace, (2) the kingdom of providence, and (3) the kingdom of glory. By kingdom of grace, they mean the government of the church is laid upon the shoulders of Christ with a threefold solemnity: (1) an unalterable decree (Ps. 2:6-8), (2) a covenant transaction between the Father and the Son (John 17), and (3) an oath, ratifying the

determination of a council of peace (Ps. 89:3, 4, 35). Those who hold this view compare the kingdom and the church. They state that as the kingdom has laws to govern, officers under the king, armies to train, enemies to fight, and fortification to protect, so has the church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, to them the church or kingdom during the Old Testament dispensation was confined to the posterity of Abraham, with the exception of a few proselytes; but now, since the first advent of Christ, the church or kingdom has been extended also to the Gentile nations. But is this the meaning of the government upon Christ's shoulders in this text?

The prophet enlarged upon the meaning of the government of Christ in Isaiah 9:7 — “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” A correct exegesis of this verse should dispel all confusion on the entire passage under consideration. That which will be given is not the last word on this passage; but it shall be an honest effort, in the light of all Scripture, to arrive at the truth apart from any denominational bias.

The exalted and reigning King shall have a name above every name. Following the condescension and humiliation of the eternal Son, Paul said: “...God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). “To bend or bow” and “to profess openly” are aspects of the acknowledgement of God's greatness based on Isaiah 45:23 — “...That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” There will be a universal acclamation in which angels (“of things in heaven”), men (“and things in earth”), and devils (“and things under the earth”) shall confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

By the subjects of the righteous government of the King, His name shall be called: (1) Wonderful: He is wonderful in His eternal generation, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and coming kingdom. He is no ninety day wonder, but an eternal Wonder—the Wonder of all wonders. Our Savior and King is beyond our comprehension. Therefore, the first syllable of His name reveals that whatever we may know of the Son's excellencies, there is still more that is unknown. He is not a miracle-worker, but He Himself is a miracle. As God-Man in one Person, He is a miraculous Personage. (2) Counsellor: This syllable of His name refers to Christ's singular capacity for management. Every man, regardless of his position, needs counsellors; but the God-Man is the Wisdom of the Father (Prov. 8). In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). The Lord Jesus never went to college, belonged to any of the sects of His day, or counselled any by human methods. Christ is called Counsellor because He is the Counsellor with God. Before the world was, there was a solemn conclave between Father, Son, and Spirit of their working out the eternal purpose. Christ has preeminence as Counsellor. (3) Mighty God: In the hypostatic union, the Divine nature is not humanized and the human nature is not deified. The two natures are so united in the one Person that what is peculiar to one nature is often ascribed to the other (John 3:13; Acts 20:28). As the God-Man, Jesus Christ is the Mighty God who has power over all flesh (John 17:2), is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25), holds all things together (Col. 1:17), and shall destroy the wicked one with the brightness of His coming (II Thess. 2:8). (4) Everlasting Father (Father of eternity):

Christ is not called Father in respect to the eternal three. He is the Son in that point of view. How complex is the Person of Jesus Christ! The prophet called Him “child,” “Son,” “Counsellor,” and now “Eternal Father” (Father of eternity). A look at Jesus Christ will save the soul (Is. 45:22), but diligent study and patient meditation alone by the child of God can fill the mind with the knowledge of Him who passes knowledge. In what sense is Jesus Christ Father? Is the Son His own Father? The Hebrews had a tradition of calling a person the father of something for which he was responsible for its existence. For example, Jubal is called the father of such as handled the harp and organ; and Jabel was the father of such as dwelt in tents and raised cattle (Gen. 4:20, 21). These two men were the inventors of their occupations. Furthermore, according to Jewish custom, the elder brother was the father of the family in the absence of his father. The firstborn took precedence over all and took upon him his father’s position. In this light, since the Lord Jesus will be the only visible Person of the Godhead in the kingdom, He will exercise the Father’s office to His own. (5) Prince of peace: The Lord Jesus gives individual peace to the elect as they are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). This peace was made by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20). When peace has been disturbed, Christ restores it (Is. 57:18, 19). This peace which we have in a world of disturbance will be perfected in the kingdom.

There will be no end to the increase of Christ’s government and peace. The government shall never have an interregnum. There will never be another king to reign when the Lord Jesus sits on David’s throne. There will never be an end to the government and peace of His kingdom: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32, 33). The subject of the kingdom clearly illuminates the past and present. It dispels the darkness of the immediate future for Christians. An explanation of neither the past nor the present can be given unless we consider the ultimate result displayed in the coming kingdom. Salvation is perfected in the kingdom, not in the church. Reigning is in the kingdom, but suffering is in the church.

The prophet closed his prophecy by saying, “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Is. 9:7). No person can handle the Scripture properly without the correct concept of the kingdom. The establishment of the kingdom will not take place until the Son of Man openly exercises His power and visibly brings all things into subjection to His righteous reign on the earth. He alone will perform this when He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHRIST'S TWO FORMS (Part I)

The nature of the Son of God was not changed, and He did not surrender His attributes in the incarnation. Jesus Christ did not cease to be God, but He veiled His Deity in human flesh. The Son of God did not take upon Himself all that we are, but He did share flesh and blood that through death He might save His people. He who created all things and upholds all things condescended to become the “seed of Abraham,” “the seed of David,” and “the seed of the woman.” The eternal Son of God shared our nature but not our sin. He could not have atoned for our sins if He had shared our guilt. He could not have cleansed our hearts if He had Himself been unclean. Priests of the Levitical system first offered sacrifices for their own sins and then for the sins of the people whom they represented, but the Son of God was the spotless Lamb who offered Himself. He who is all purity came to an impure people to make them pure. He who is absolute holiness came in a holy body that we might be partakers of His holiness. He made of one blood all nations of men so that in the sin of one all sinned. He then came in flesh and blood that we might be washed from our sins in His blood. He who was in the form of God took upon Himself the form of a servant to cleanse us by His blood.

Christ took on Him the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:16). The Greek verb is the present middle form of *epilambano*, which means to lay hold of, seize, to assume a portion of, to assume the nature of, or to attach oneself to. This is not the language that describes the ordinary birth of a person. No human being could say, with respect to his birth, that he was pleased to take on him such a body. Most people I know would have taken on them different bodies than they have. It seems that everyone is dissatisfied to some extent with his body. Our text describes voluntary action. It was an act contemplated beforehand. The middle of the verb *epilambano* means that He Himself assumed the seed, *sperma* (seed, offspring, children, posterity, nature), of Abraham. Preexistence, power, and condescension are implied in Hebrews 2:16 — “...He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” The Lord Jesus is greater than either angels or men. He who voluntarily took on Him the seed of Abraham was not less God because He said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

The Lord Jesus was determined to save those the Father gave Him. Our Savior's birth in the flesh was the assurance of our birth in the Spirit. His birth in time is the pledge of our new birth. He is the Son of God by nature, and we are sons of God by grace. The prospect of death causes fear which results in mental bondage. Christ delivers His people from bondage: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14, 15). Because of Christ's death in the place of our death, Satan no longer has power over the elect to keep them in bondage to fear. As soon as the sovereign Spirit regenerates sinners, they are delivered experientially from the fear of death which has subjected them to slavery. The fear of death is twofold: (1) There is an instinctive fear that is shared by all, even the strongest Christians. The psychological nature of man is such that the first conscious reality of impending

death causes fear. This fear is normal. The stark reality of dying hides from even the believer the blessedness of dying with the Lord, until he collects his thoughts (Rev. 14:13). After he gains his composure, the grace of God made available through his knowledge of Scripture will give calmness in the hour of dissolution. Hence, he can say, "...though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). The believer not only passes through death, but to him it is only a shadow. The shadow is a shade cast by an object, and the object is the death of Christ. Therefore, the sting of death has been removed by the death of Christ, leaving death but a shadow because it is stingless. The sting of death is sin, but the sin question has been settled for the Christian. The glorious light of the resurrection is behind the shadow (I Cor. 15:51-57). It is wonderful to know that death belongs to the Christian rather than the believer belonging to death. This is what Paul meant when he said, "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:21-23). (2) The sting of death has not been removed for the unbeliever. He will not walk through death's shadow, but he will walk into the second death which is eternal. He dreads death's mystery. Hebrews 2:14-16 cannot give comfort to the nonchristian, because he is not included among the "sons" (Heb. 2:10), "brethren" (Heb. 2:11), "children" (Heb. 2:14), and "his brethren" (Heb. 2:17). There is a threefold division of Hebrews 2:14 that suggests a great truth — "the children," "he also," and "the devil." There should be no fear to the Christian because the Lord Jesus comes between him and the devil. This is the secret of the believer's safety, but the unbeliever does not have Christ to stand between him and the devil. Hence, there is no hope to the person who dies in his sin.

The condescension of the Son of God is seen in His high priestly prayer: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them..." (John 17:22). Christ's essential glory is something that can be neither received nor given. As the second Person of the Godhead, Christ possesses the glory which is essentially His from eternity. He never relinquished this glory of the Son of God. As the incarnate Son, there was a personal glory given which was ever peculiar to the God-Man and therefore incommunicable (John 1:14). However, there was a glory given to our Savior for the special object and purpose that He should give it to His believing people, until out of His fulness we receive grace upon grace. Christ's reception of anything from the Father presupposes condescension. He who received this glory was none the richer, but it was for our enrichment. In fact, Christ receiving glory refers to His poverty; but His poverty was in order that we might be made rich: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). Our enrichment is not separate from Jesus Christ. The glory Christ received, which was for the benefit of His people, was the glory of His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. As the Prophet, He is our Divine Messenger. He is the Teacher who has come from God to reveal the Father and to unfold the truth for the everlasting good of His people. He is our Divine Priest who has satisfied God by His atonement and has reconciled us to Himself. He is our King for whom we look to complete our salvation and establish His kingdom. This threefold office is the glory which has been communicated to us. It is not some perishable wealth or worldly honor. As the recipients of this glory, we are the messengers of God reflecting the light of Him who is the Light of the world. We are the sons of God by the redemptive work of Christ. Finally, we are motivated by the hope of Christ's second coming and the new heavens and the new earth. Men seek glory for themselves in material wealth, worldly honor, and political power; but all such

glory has no lasting portion for the soul. The glory which Christ gives will not only be remembered, but it will shine forth as the manifestation of the sons of God.

Christ was rich, but He became poor: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9). Persons who have been born and nurtured in the lap of poverty feel less woes of their condition. However, there are others whose poverty we pity. They were once rich but now they know the meaning of poverty. We pity them because they have known something better. Since Christ neither was born rich nor acquired earthly wealth, His riches must be attributed to His preincarnate state. He was rich in the possession of the inexpressible glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17:5, 24; Heb. 2:14-16). Christ was rich not only in glory but in virtue. His inherent righteousness could not be laid aside, yet His relative position to the law was altered. He was regarded by the law as a debtor, and His life was forfeited for your moral poverty. Although Christ could not become poor in the sense of being a sinner, He did become poor in the sense of being treated as one: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21). There is no degree of wealth to compare with the riches of Christ Jesus before His incarnation. Furthermore, there is no degree of poverty to compare with the poverty of Christ in His incarnation. Since He was so steeped in poverty, what must He be in riches? Since He made us rich in His poverty, what will He do for us now that He is glorified? Since the dying Savior wrought salvation from sin for us, should not the living and interceding Savior abundantly secure it? “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10).

Christ’s poverty was for our sake. The true test of any action lies in its nature. Many deeds seem to be noble when in reality they are ignoble. They have been performed with an inglorious motive. Conversely, other actions appear to be inglorious, but they are full of the glory of a noble purpose. The less of self in any deed, the more noble it is. This brings us to Paul’s purpose in the message of Philippians 2:1-11. Both doctrine and duty are closely united. The “therefore” of verse 1 connects the passage with the manner of life worthy of the gospel in Philippians 1:27-30. Positively, there are qualities to be cultivated (2:1, 2); and negatively, there are things to be avoided (2:3, 4). Verse 5 has been considered transitional, linking the duty of verses 1-4 with the great doctrinal section of verses 6-11. The mind which was in Christ Jesus should be in the Philippian saints. They were followers of Christ. The inculcation of personal virtue based on moral example is not implied in the words “in you” (2:5). Contrarily, they signify that the same mind as Christ’s should be exercised in church fellowship at Philippi. Humility is the only attitude for those in Christ, because He is the one supreme example to His people (I Pet. 2:21). Christ’s humiliation consists in three stages: (1) The nature of Christ’s humiliation was self-renunciation (vv. 6-7a). The apostle had just appealed to the saints to “Look not every man on his own things...” (v. 4). (2) The manner of Christ’s humiliation was the incarnation (v. 7b). Paul would remind the saints of his statement, “Look...every man also on the things of others” (v. 4). (3) The extent of Christ’s humiliation was His death (v. 8). The apostle would call the believer’s attention to his statement in verse 3, “...let each esteem other better than themselves (let each of you regard one another as more important than himself—NASB).”

As Jesus Christ who was rich became poor and suffered for “our sake,” let us not forget that Paul said, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Phil. 1:29). “For His sake” includes “...for righteousness’ sake...” (Matt. 5:10), “...for the gospel’s sake...” (I Cor. 9:23), “...for his body’s sake, which is the church...” (Col. 1:24), “For the elect’s sakes...” (II Tim. 2:10), and “...for the kingdom of God’s sake” (Luke 18:29).

The norm for Christology is given by the Holy Spirit through Paul in Philippians 2:5-11. Paul named the Person who was in the form of God and took upon Himself the form of a servant. His name is Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5). This passage proves not only Christ’s condescension but His preexistence. Hence, the same statements that prove His human nature also prove His Divine nature. The Divine Person did not become a mere man. He did not lay aside His Deity but assumed a human nature. This is called the hypostatic union—two natures united in one Person. The Divine nature never has a human attribute, and the human nature never has a Divine attribute. However, the God-Man may be spoken of as having both Divine and human attributes.

Christ’s preexistent nature is strikingly described in Philippians 2:6 — “Who, being in the form of God...” The Greek text reads *hos en morphe theou huparchon*. The word *huparchon* is a present active participle of *huparcho* which means to exist, to subsist. The present tense, active voice makes it read: “Who is existing in the form of God.” Furthermore, the word *morphe* speaks of who Christ is essentially. This word is used three times in the New Testament (Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7). The word in its original meaning carried the idea of reality that does not change regardless of how it might be manifested. Now, we see the importance of the word. He who was in the form of God does not cease to be God, even though He chose to manifest Himself in the form of a servant. The mystery of God was manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16). The mode of manifestation is not identical with the essence itself. He who was with God was God (John 1:1). Paul used an expression which indicates the relation of the second Person to the first Person of the Godhead. There is an eternal subordination without inferiority of nature. There cannot be a Father without a Son. The eternal Being must have an image. Christ Jesus is both the form of God and the express image of God (Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). We must not think of Christ Jesus apart from both His Divine and human natures. Since the incarnation, He is the God-Man forever.

The reality of Christ’s human nature is set forth by three expressions in Philippians 2:7-8 — (1) “Form of a servant” is used to describe Christ’s human nature. The same word is used to describe both His human and Divine natures. Therefore, *morphe* proves the reality of the human nature, as it does the Divine. Christ took the human nature that He might serve and die in it. (2) “Likeness of men” indicates that Christ Jesus is different from all other men. He who was eternally begotten was begotten in time by the Holy Spirit. Paul’s definition leaves room for all that range of difference between Christ and us. (3) “Found in fashion as a man” completes the description of the incarnation. It has been suggested that “form” describes who He was, and “fashion” describes what He looked like. The word “fashion” comes from *schema* — fashion, form; fashion, external show (I Cor. 7:31); guise, appearance (Phil. 2:8). Some give *morphe* as a synonym for *schema*. In certain cases, they may be used interchangeably; but here, Paul gave a contrast between what Jesus Christ was in Himself and what He appeared to be before men.

Christ Jesus existing in “the form of God” and taking “the form of a servant” in time are two different things. Thinking of God absolutely devours one’s thoughts, but thinking of God manifested in the flesh is a comforting reflection. The form of God denotes the dignity of His being, and the form of a servant indicates His humiliation. The dignity of the preincarnate Christ refers to what He is essentially. He is essentially one with the Father (John 10:30). Therefore, *morphe* is properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract but as actually subsisting in the individual and retained as long as the individual Himself exists. Since Jesus Christ is eternal, the word includes His whole nature and essence. Christ did not change one form of being for another in the incarnation. He changed His appearance by assuming another nature—the form of a servant. He did not cease being God, because He is immutable (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; James 1:17). But the Lord Jesus did assume the form of a servant, thus becoming what He was not before, the God-Man. He veiled Himself in flesh for the elect’s sake. Moreover, He condescended to notice our misery and agree to be our Savior; but much more did He condescend to associate with that misery by becoming our Kinsman-Redeemer by taking the form of a servant. In the form of God, He commanded. In the form of a servant, He subjected Himself to His own commands. In the form of God, Christ was the lawmaker. In the form of a servant, He subjected Himself to the law He had made (Gal. 4:4). He was born, lived, and died under His own holy law. Furthermore, He satisfied every requirement of that Divine law. The real difference between the “form of God” and the “form of a servant” is revealed in the tenses of the participles (verbal adjectives) used. The participle *huparchon* is the present active of the verb *huparcho* and means “who is existing in the form of God.” In the three expressions to describe Christ’s human nature, there are the participles: (1) *labon*, the second aorist active of *lambano* which means “taking the form of a servant”; (2) *genomenos*, the second aorist middle of *ginomai* which means “being made in the likeness of men”; and (3) *heuretheis*, first aorist passive of *heurisko* which means “recognized in fashion as a man.” Hence, He who ever exists in the form of God did not cease being God when He assumed the form of a servant.

The union of the “form of God” with the “form of a servant” has made Jesus Christ the complex Person. John tells us that the Word who was with God and was God became flesh (John 1:14). The same verb is used in John 1:3 — “All things were made [became] by him....” The Word became that which first became by Him. The Word did not cease to be what He eternally was by becoming flesh. He only entered into a new mode of being, but He did not become a new being. (See Luke 1:35; Rom. 1:3, 4; 9:5; I Tim. 2:5). The Godhead did not become flesh, but the second Person of the Godhead did. The names of the Persons of the Godhead remained unchanged in the incarnation. Hence, it was fitting that the Father commissioned the Son to become flesh instead of the Son commissioning the Father. It has been suggested that it was proper for the middle Person of the Divine Trinity to become the Mediator between God and man, since man occupies the middle position between angels and beasts in the scale of creatures.

The eternal Word made flesh must be distinguished from transubstantiation. In the incarnation, the phrase “And the word was made [became] flesh” does not mean that the Word that was God ceased to be God. That would be transubstantiation. Transubstantiation is the change of an entire substance in which one substance is entirely destroyed and an entirely new one takes its place, without any change of appearance. This is one of the chief doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Their catechism states: “The priests of the Church continue to exercise this power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ by repeating the words of Christ: ‘This

is my body...this is my blood,' at the moment of consecration (the time when the sacred change takes place) in the mass.... The change of the entire substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is Transubstantiation" (The New Baltimore Catechism #2). Roman Catholics make a god out of the mass and then become cannibals and devour him.

There are some who believe that Christ who existed in the form of God emptied Himself and became something less than He was originally. Liberal theologians press the sense of "emptied" until nothing of the form of God remains. They insist that the Son of God emptied out of Himself the attributes of Deity. This would be transmutation, the change from one nature to another. This is the opposite of the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Transmutation is heresy regardless of which way it goes—from God to man or from bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

The eternal Word made flesh must be distinguished from consubstantiation. Some believe there was a mixture of the Divine and human natures in the incarnation. In the fifth century A. D., Eutyches taught there was a mixture of the two natures in the incarnation, thus making a third person which is different from both. Eutychianism is mentioned to show that the Lutheran church has partially revived the heresy of Eutyches. The Christology of Luther was clear on some points but indefinite on others. His favorite illustration on the union of the two natures was derived from heated iron. Two substances are united. The one interpenetrates the other. The iron receives the attributes of the heat, making it glow. Where the iron is, there the heat is; but the iron remains iron and the heat remains heat. This ingenious illustration, however, does not explain how Divine attributes are transferred to the human nature, and human attributes are transferred to the Divine nature. Divine attributes are not attributed to the human nature, and human attributes are not attributed to the Divine nature. They are ever distinct but performed by the God-Man. Therefore, the properties of the Divine essence never became the properties of the human. The Divine never becomes human, and the finite never becomes infinite. Lutheran Christology is reflected in their doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In their doctrine of consubstantiation, they believe the substance of the body and blood of Christ coexist in and with the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Luther affirmed that not only the accidents (the outward appearance of the elements) but the reality of bread and wine remained in the sacrament of the altar. He further stated that the bread and wine are really bread and wine and the true flesh and blood of Christ are in them in the same fashion and the same degree as the Roman Catholics hold them to be beneath their accidents.

Failure to see the difference between Person and nature has led to mixing the natures in Christ. Nature denotes the sum total of all the essential qualities of a thing—that which makes it what it is. Person denotes a complete substance endowed with reason. It is nature with something added, namely, independent subsistence. Christ assumed a nature that was not personalized, one that did not exist by itself. However, it is incorrect to speak of Christ's human nature as impersonal. It is in-personal, because it has personal existence in the Person of Christ.

The Word made flesh means Christ Jesus came to possess characteristics in addition to His Divine attributes. Assuming a human nature gave the Son of God a human form of consciousness as well as the Divine cognizance. Christ had only one form of consciousness in His preexistent state; but now, in His human awareness, He was "a man of sorrows," "acquainted with grief,"

“smitten of God, and afflicted,” “wounded,” “bruised,” “cut off out of the land of the living” (Is. 53), and “wearied with his journey” (John 4:6). He “wept” (John 11:35), “hungered” (Matt. 4:2), and “slept” (Matt. 8:24). The Son of God could not have any of these human experiences before the incarnation. But He was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15), and as our High Priest He sympathizes with us in His incarnate state. He became subject to all the trials of human nature, except one. He had no experimental knowledge with sin. When the eternal Son assumed “the form of a servant,” He did not cease being the “form of God.” The Lord Jesus was capable of a twofold mode of existence, consciousness, and agency as the incarnate Word.

CHRIST'S TWO FORMS (Part II)

The “form of God” refers to who Jesus Christ is essentially, and the “form of a servant” points to His assumption of the human nature in the incarnation. Assumption of the human nature may be illustrated by man’s contact with the sun. Should the sun descend to earth absolutely, none could bear its light and heat. Men’s eyes would not be enlightened but blinded by its glory.

Furthermore, they would be consumed by the greatness of its heat. God is not only the Light of the world, but He is a consuming fire (I John 1:5; John 8:12; Heb. 12:29). If Jesus Christ had not veiled Himself with human nature, man would have been both blinded and consumed by God’s essential glory. However, since He veiled Himself with human nature, man can withstand and benefit from the rays proceeding from the Son of Man’s official and moral glory. What condescension to associate with the misery of the elect by becoming their Kinsman-Redeemer in the form of a servant!

We are not living in a time of orthodoxy but heterodoxy. There are more persons propagating unorthodox than orthodox views about the Person of Christ. The church has never been without conflict concerning the most important principle of the Christian faith, namely, the Person of Jesus Christ. It seems that, in the last of the last days, believers are bombarded not only with a revival of old heresies but also some new ones.

Some of the heresies concerning the Person of Jesus Christ in the first five centuries have been exposed. (1) The Ebionites (A.D. 107?) denied the reality of Christ’s Divine nature. They believed Jesus Christ was nothing more than a man, and their history can be traced back before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The Ebionites could not be classified as Judaic Christians but simply Judaizers within the Christian church. (2) Docetism (A. D. 70-170) denied the reality of Christ’s human body. This was a pagan philosophy introduced into the church. Docetism comes from the Greek word *dokeo* which means “to appear, to seem.” (3) Monarchianism (second and third centuries A. D.) denied the Trinity. It was a form of Unitarianism which emphasized the unity of God by maintaining that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three manifestations or aspects of God. There were two schools of Monarchianism. First, the Dynamic school was represented by Theodetus who denied the incarnation of the *Logos* and said that Jesus Christ was a mere man. Divine power and wisdom were bestowed upon Christ at His baptism and operated in Him as in no other man. Second, the Modalistic school was represented by Sabellius who accepted the divinity of Christ but denied His independent and preexistent personality. The life of Christ was only a theophany to this school. To this school God was one, and the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit signified no more than different manifestations of the Divine essence. Both schools were condemned by the Synod of Antioch in A. D. 268. (4) Arianism was a reaction from Sabellianism in the fourth century. Arius denied the Deity of Christ. He taught that Jesus Christ was not consubstantial with the Father. This heresy was condemned in 325 A. D. at Nicea. (5) In the same century, at Constantinople in 381 A. D., the heresy of Appollinaris was condemned. Appollinarianism denied the completeness of Christ’s human nature. He taught that Christ had no human spirit; He had only a

human body and soul. Hence, he taught the Divine *Logos* assumed not a complete human nature, but was only an irrational human animal. (6) In the fifth century, Nestorius denied the real union between the Divine and human natures in Christ. He separated the two natures into two persons. He was removed from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 431 A. D. (7) Eutychianism was condemned at Chalcedon in 451 A. D. Eutyches denied the distinction and coexistence of Christ's two natures. He mingled both into one which constituted a third nature different from the original natures.

The fourth and fifth centuries revealed the Christological conflict that has not subsided. To summarize the heresies of that period, it may be said Arianism denied the true Godhead of Christ, Apollinarianism denied the true humanity of Christ, Nestorianism denied the unity of the two natures of Christ, and Eutychianism denied the distinction of the two natures of Christ. The heresies of our time are just as blatant, but it must be acknowledged that they are more subtly stated.

During the first five centuries of the Christian church, Christology was a subject of great conflict; but out of that period of controversy came the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A. D. The four Chalcedonian adverbs point out how essential it is to the Person of Christ that one must believe that He possesses both Divine and human natures "without mixture," "without change," "without division," and "without separation." This formula has dominated the orthodox exegetes to the present day. Hence, Chalcedon has been called the terminal point of Christology. For Christians, however, there is but one terminal point in the study of Christology, and it is given in the words of Christ Himself: "...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). God manifest in the flesh is both a mystery and a manifestation (I Tim. 3:16). We must not become so occupied with its mystery that we overlook its manifestation. On the other hand, we must not become so enamored with the manifestation that we fail to understand that it remains a mystery. The Person of Christ is a mystery to the elect. Although they know Him to some degree, they do not know Christ as the Father knows Him. Christ said, "...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father...."

Reaction to the Chalcedonian Christology has been varied. At the end of the eighth century, some Spanish theologians contended there were two modes of sonship in Christ, one natural and the other adoptive. As the Son of Mary, Christ was the adopted son of God; as the second Person in the Trinity, He was the only begotten of the Father. Hence, they believed that Christ as the adopted Son was subordinate, and as the only begotten He was equal with the Father. Adoptionism was a reaction to various monophysite tendencies. A monophysite was one who maintained that Christ has one nature, partly divine and partly human. Scripture does not represent Jesus Christ being adopted as the Son of God as a reward for His faithfully performing a task. The Divine quality of Christ's work is seen in the fact that He who is David's Son is also David's Lord (Matt. 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44). Adoptionism was condemned at Regensburg in 792 A. D., Frankfort in 794 A. D., and Aachen in 799 A. D.

History was quiet in her Christological conflict until the sixteenth century. There were two interesting developments in this century. First, there was Martin Luther and his new development of Christology. In his teaching on the two natures, he believed they interpenetrated one another

in such a way that the attributes of the Divine nature were communicated to the human. During His earthly ministry, Christ veiled the Divine perfections of His human nature, but they are now manifested in His exaltation. This was a natural corollary that the physical body was considered omnipresent, and the real presence of Christ's body and blood are in the elements of the Lord's Supper. Secondly, during this same period, Socinus, an Italian Protestant Reformer (1539-1604), denied the Trinity. He taught that Christ was only a man with no existence before His birth. He taught that Christ was miraculously conceived by the virgin Mary, and He was peccable but sinless. He was baptized by the Spirit and caught up into heaven to be taught of God before He began His public ministry. At His exaltation, Christ was given power and is now worshipped as God. Socinians flourished in Poland until 1658. Socinianism led to the modern Unitarianism.

During the Reformation, great emphasis was placed on the Person and Work of Christ. Some have criticized the reformers for lack of emphasis concerning Christ's humanity, but such criticism is without foundation. Many strong confessions on the Divine and human natures united in the Person of Christ were made during this period. The spirit of Chalcedon is reflected in the Christological confessions. The Westminster Confession is a good example. It states: "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, and all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man."

The eighteenth century was marked by Rationalism. Emmanuel Kant was a rationalistic philosopher. He believed God was inscrutable, and the historical Christ was an ideal set before the mind as the perfect man. Therefore, when the mind had formed the ideal He represented, then He ceased to be the object of veneration. To Kant, Christ was the inward idea of a perfect man. Hence, Christ's mission was to awaken the dormant God-consciousness in men; and redemption meant the awakening of the God-consciousness, thus elevating them to the level of Christ, the ideal man.

In the nineteenth century, there was the emergence of what is called the Kenosis-Christology. Thomasius said, "Kenosis is the exchange of one form of existence for another." He appealed to Philippians 2:7 for his Biblical support, and the Kenosis became the point of departure for a new Christological formula. Those who were dissatisfied with dualism went for the view of Thomasius. For the Word to become flesh meant to them that the Godhead was transmuted into humanity. They believed the Kenosis refuted the dualism of the Chalcedon formula. A transition from the form of God to the form of a servant by self-emptying replaced the union of the two natures. The Kenosis theory continues to be taught in the present century, but there are some modified versions.

The twentieth century is marked by the rise of Neo-orthodoxy. It is religious liberalism whose defenders accept nothing as truth but what is acceptable to human reason. This is the age of existentialism. Existentialism is a humanistic philosophy that makes human experience the norm for judging reality. This philosophy denies that Scripture provides the norm for belief or action.

To the existentialist, theology must rely on existentialism rather than on Biblical supernaturalism. Man, therefore, is severed from any objective, supernatural support. Theology is turned into anthropology. To the existentialist, God is known in the Word, but he has only a subjective standard for the Word. He talks about demythologization. All mythological attributes must be removed in order to accurately appraise the Word. Thus, he looks through naturalistic eyes as though they would give him Biblical truths. This, however, is in direct contradiction to Scripture: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). There is no inner light or revelation given above that which is written. Subjective revelation is without a standard: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is. 8:20).

In closing this lesson, a limited list of heresies concerning the Person of Christ are given to show what the Christian has to battle in these last of the last days:

FIRST—Roman Catholics advocate the Deity of Christ, but they deny His humanity by their doctrine of Mariolatry and the saints. If Christ assumed a human nature, why do they appeal to Mary and to the saints for understanding our infirmities? (See Heb. 4:15). Furthermore, the Mass completely undermines the work of Calvary (Heb. 10:10-14).

SECOND—Unitarians deny the Deity of Christ. They believe in the divinity of mankind. They say their differences with the Orthodox Church is not that it made Jesus God but that it stopped there.

THIRD—Christian Scientists teach that “Jesus is the human, and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus Christ....Jesus was the offspring of Mary’s conscious communion with God” (Mary Baker Eddy).

FOURTH—Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that Christ existed as a spirit being before He was made flesh, and was properly known as “a god” —a mighty one. As chief of the angels and next to the Father, He was known as the Archangel—the highest messenger. They teach that Jesus was not a combination of two natures, human and spiritual; that the blending of the two natures produces neither the one nor the other but an imperfect, hybrid thing, which is obnoxious to the divine arrangement.

FIFTH—Mormons believe the Persons of the Trinity are not three Persons in one Being but three separate beings. They believe in a plurality of gods. Furthermore, they believe God was a man and He became god; so men may become gods. They also believe Christ was a polygamist whose wives were Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalene, and the sisters of Lazarus; and the feast in Canaan was the occasion of one of His marriages.

SIXTH—The World Wide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong) teaches that Jesus was, in the human flesh, a descendant of David; but in His resurrection He was born again. Armstrong says that Jesus alone of all humans has, so far, been saved. He does not say He was saved from sin, but he does say Jesus was the first to achieve it—to be perfected, finished as a perfect character. Armstrong asserts that no Scripture says that Jesus Christ could not sin.

SEVENTH—The Kenosis-Christology (Christ emptying Himself) has four different views: (1) The absolute dualistic concept teaches a twofold division of attributes. Christ's eminent attributes are related to Deity, and His relative attributes are related to humanity. The former are essential to the Godhead and the latter to the physical. (2) The absolute metamorphic theory believes Christ emptied Himself of all Divine attributes. His eternal consciousness ceased and was gradually regained until He attained again the completeness of Divine life. (3) The semimetamorphic concept contends the eternal Son in becoming a man underwent not a loss but a disguise of His Deity. He exchanged the eternal manner of being for the temporal manner of being. (4) The real and relative view teaches the Divine *Logos* retained His Deity, but He did so within the restricted confines of His human consciousness. The properties of the Divine nature were not present in their infinitude but were changed into properties of human nature.

EIGHTH—The doctrine of peccability has been embraced by many in a large number of religious denominations. This man-made doctrine states that the historical Christ had the capacity to sin.

CHRIST IN THE FORM OF GOD

As we begin an in-depth study of the great Christological passage of Philippians 2:5-11, let us not forget that Jesus Christ is known absolutely only by the Father. Christ said: "...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father..." (Matt. 11:27). There is an eternal Father and Son relationship, and it is revealed as never before in the incarnation. Unlike ordinary father and son relationships, this unique Father and Son relationship was absolutely perfect. This perfect relationship is the foundation of Christology. He who ever exists in the bosom of the Father did not change one form of being for another in the incarnation. Even in the incarnate state of the Son, the fulness of God dwelt bodily in Him (Col. 2:9). The word "fulness" cannot be reduced to something less than being filled. Paul used the word *pleroma* which means fulness, completeness. The eternal Son who assumed human nature is filled with the essence of God, even though at the time of Paul's writing He was in His glorified humanity. Who can know the infinite Son but the infinite Father? Not even glorified saints shall know the Son as He is. As a vessel cast into the ocean can receive only according to its capacity, the effort of the finite saint to understand Christ is like a thimble trying to hold all the waters of the oceans.

Paul's statement "Who being in the form of God" is foundational for a true perspective of Christology. The apostle used a verb which does not convey the idea of who Jesus Christ was before the incarnation, but who He is essentially. We have the present active participle of the verb *huparcho*, and it means "Who is existing in the form of God." This destroys any idea of Christ being anything less than God in the incarnation. It was the Father's good pleasure that all the fulness of Deity, *theotes*, should dwell bodily in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:9). The Son of God is declared to be God "manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16). God "...is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10). "...We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20). When Paul penned the words of Philippians 2:6, the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension were historical facts. However, the one about whom he wrote was the ever living God.

B. B. Warfield has suggested the phrase "Who being in the form of God" is not describing a past mode of existence of our Lord, but what in His intrinsic nature He is. This is correct according to the tense of the verb used. Others say the phrase "Who being in the form of God" presents two aspects of Christ's preexistence: (1) its fact, and (2) its form. Although His preexistence is true, that is not the subject of this passage. When the intrinsic nature of God is apprehended, there is no problem with either preexistence or condescension. It is not a contrast between what God was and what He now is, but Who He is. Jesus Christ is the "I AM."

God's proper name is "I AM." The tense of this description manifests that God's essence knows no past or future. God, therefore, is distinguished from all creatures. No created being can say in truth, "I am." God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14 NASB). This name signifies

unchanging essence and eternity. It denotes personality — “I”; self-existence — “I AM”; and mystery — “I AM WHO I AM.” This name includes all past, present, and future existence and constancy. Therefore, God could not speak of Himself as “I was.” That would indicate that He is not now what He once was. Furthermore, God could not speak of Himself as “I will be.” That would intimate that He is not now what He shall be. Hence, the eternity of God is sometimes fragmentarily expressed for the benefit of man’s finite capacity: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8). It cannot be said of any created being that he always was and shall always be what he is. The eternal “I AM,” however, is who He was and shall ever be who He is. The distinction between the Creator and created beings is that God is and created beings become. Created creatures are continually becoming something different, but God never changes (II Cor. 4:16, 18) or becomes anything different from what He eternally is (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; Ps. 102:27).

“I AM WHO I AM” proves the unity of God to the exclusion of many gods, the unchangeableness of God who lives in the eternal present, and the self-sufficiency of God who is His own equivalent. This is the eternal name that is equivalent with Jehovah. Jesus Christ is the great “I AM.” In the gospel of John, Christ said of Himself: “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); “I am the light of the world” (8:12); “Before Abraham was, I am” (8:58); “I am the door” (10:7, 9); “I am the good shepherd” (10:11); “I am the resurrection, and the life” (11:25); “I am the way” (14:6); and “I am the true vine” (15:1). The interesting thing about all of these is the use of the two Greek words *ego* and *eimi*. In each instance, the text reads *ego eimi* which means “I myself am.” *Ego* is the personal pronoun “I,” and *eimi* is the verb “I am.” When *ego* precedes *eimi*, it is used for emphasis — “I myself am.”

The distinction between Christ and His creatures is remarkably illustrated in John 8:58 — “Before Abraham was, I am.” The verb applied to Abraham should be contrasted with the one Christ applied to Himself. The verb applied to Abraham is *genesthai*. Here we have a second aorist middle infinitive of *ginomai* which means to come into existence or to be born. But when Christ spoke of Himself, He used the verb *eimi* which speaks of an existence without origin. There is no implied beginning in the verb *eimi*. Our Lord spoke of His eternal existence when He said, “I AM.” It has been said that age is a relative term. It implies beginning, but God is eternal. It implies change, but God is unchangeable. It implies the measure of created existence, but God is eternal. This proves that all thoughts of God which apply time and succession to His existence are erroneous.

The word “form” (*morphe*) is used three times in the New Testament (Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7). In Mark 16:12, we are told that Christ appeared “in another form” — *en hetera morphe*. The different form does not mean the intrinsic nature of Christ is different in His glorified body from what it was while He was in the “form of a servant” in His unglorified body. There were changes, however, in the presentment of Christ to His people between His resurrection and ascension. For example, when Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, she supposed Him to be the gardener (John 20:15). Again, when He appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus, He appeared as a scribe who expounded the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Another example is that Christ stood in the midst of the disciples after the two men had returned to Jerusalem

saying, “The Lord is risen indeed”; yet, when He said, “Peace be unto you,” they were terrified and supposed they had seen a spirit (Luke 24:34, 36, 37).

Whether it be the “pre” or “post” resurrection period, the intrinsic nature of Christ was unchanged, because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). However, there were changes in presenting Himself to His own. This is not only true of Christ during His public ministry on earth, but it is also true of the revelation and works of God in the Old Testament: “GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...” (Heb. 1:1, 2). Biblical references to God repenting do not mean that God changes His will which is immutable and eternal, but they refer to a change in His work. It seems probable that the appearance of Christ changed from time to time during the forty days after His resurrection to meet the several cases of the disciples, but there was no change in God Himself.

The word “form” in Philippians 2:6 has had varied interpretations by theologians and writers. The general consensus of these interpretations of the phrase “form of God” conveys the idea that Jesus Christ is God. The following is a summary of some of those views of “form”:

1. It denotes majesty.
2. It is identified with the essence of a person, not shape.
3. It refers to those qualities which constitute God.
4. It refers to the essential attributes in the form.
5. “Form,” *morphe*, and the term *doxa* have a connection, attesting to Paul’s seeing in the preexisting and glorified Christ the form and glory of God.
6. It does not mean mere outward appearance.
7. It refers to the inner, essential, and abiding nature of a person or thing.

There are three words in Scripture to denote the interrelation of the Father and the Son: (1) image (*eikon*), “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15); (2) express image (*charakter*), “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3); and (3) form (*morphe*), “Who, being in the form of God” (Phil. 2:6).

1. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). The Greek word *eikon* means image, figure, likeness; the image of one; one in whom the likeness of one is seen. Since this word is used to speak of Christ, man, and things, the question is often asked, how can image be used when speaking of Christ who is equal with the father? Is not an image inferior to that of which it is a figure? Image is not the thing of which it is the figure. Adam was created in God’s image and after His likeness, but he was not God of whom he was the image and likeness (Gen. 1:26, 27; I Cor. 11:7). Men make images of God, but such images deface the glory of the incorruptible God (Rom. 1:23). The phrase “the image of God” does not always carry out the idea of

perfection. The context must determine its use. Christ, however, is the only perfect representation of God. He is God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16).

Adam being the image of God and Christ being the image of God are not the same. Adam was a type of Christ as the incarnate Son (Rom. 5:14). Christ is the express image of His Father (Heb. 1:3). The things in Adam which constituted the image and likeness of God were of a created substance. Conversely, the things in Jesus Christ were of the same Divine and eternal substance with the Father. The God-like nature is not perfectly represented in man because man is finite. On the other hand, God's nature is perfectly represented in Jesus Christ because the Son of God is infinite.

An image is something looked upon, thus something else is seen. The word *eikon* means one in whom the likeness of one is seen. The Person and Work of Christ manifested the perfection and glory of the Father. Christ said, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:9). Christ meant that in His Person, as well as His doctrine and works, God is manifested as far as He can be to man. Wisdom, power, holiness, compassion, love, meekness, patience, longsuffering, justice, etc., are all revealed in Jesus Christ. Christ, therefore, is the image of the invisible God. No man has seen God at any time, yet to see God is a vital necessity for man's salvation (John 1:18). Christ is seen only by faith: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3, 4). Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Godhead, is as invisible as the Father; but Christ clothed with human nature is the perfect representation of the excellency of the Father. Therefore, the invisible God has been manifested through the God-Man to the elect. It is by the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration that faith removes the veil and floods the soul with the "...light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

2. Jesus Christ is the "express image" (*charakter*) of God (Heb. 1:3). The Greek word *charakter* means an exact likeness or full expression of God. It comes from *charagma*, an engraving tool, and then something engraved—a character, as a letter, mark, or sign. Our word "character" comes from *charakter*. This word is used only in this text, but *charagma* is used eight times and is translated "graven" (Acts 17:29) and "mark" (Rev. 13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). The essential being of God has come into full expression in the incarnate Son who bears the exact likeness of the Divine essence. The Father and the Son are coexistent and coeternal. Jesus Christ not only delivered God's message, but He is God's message. He is not only the exact likeness of God's essence *hupostasis* (which means a substructure; subsistence, essence), but He is of the same essence. He came not only to provide a remedy for sinners, but He is the remedy. Therefore, if the sinner is to know God, it must be through Christ who knows the Father. Christ said, "...neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).

Christ as the "express image" (exact representation) of God does not stand alone in Hebrews 1:1-3. He is the "Son" who has revealed the Father, and He is also the "brightness" of God's glory.

The Son is contrasted with the prophets of the Old Testament. The prophetic revelations of the prophets were fragmentary and progressive, but the Son is the complete and final revelation of the Father. The prophets were “holy men,” but they were men (II Pet. 1:21); whereas, the Son of God is the God-Man. The incomplete revelations from the prophets caused the people to desire more revelations; but when the completed revelation of the Son comes into the hearts of the elect, there is no desire for new revelations. Believers know that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). Their desire is to know more about the completed revelation. The Bible is more than a book written by men. It is the mind of God.

Christ is the “brightness” (*apaugasma*)—an effulgence of God’s glory. The Greek work *apaugasmas* is a compound word—*apo*, from; and *auge*, brightness. The verb *augazo* means to be bright, to shine forth (II Cor. 4:4). The word for “brightness” is used only here. It is used in the sense of radiance rather than reflection. The brightness issuing from the sun is of the same nature as the sun. It comes naturally and voluntarily. This brightness comes from the sun and not the sun from the brightness. Each is distinct from the other, but each is inseparable from the other. Finally, the light which the sun gives to the world is by this brightness. Hence, the metaphor of the sun and its brightness sets forth the co-eternality, distinction of Persons, and the incomprehensible glory of the Father shining forth in the Son who is equal with the Father.

The following is a summary of some truths by Lancelot Andrewes on Hebrews 1:1-3 in 1612: This passage of Scripture includes Christ’s consubstantiality as the Son, coeternality as the effulgence, and coequality as the character (the true stamp of His substance). As the Son, Christ is contrasted with the prophets. As the effulgence, He is contrasted with the many parts (sparks) of Old Testament prophecy. As the character (essence), He is contrasted with the vanishing shadows of the law (old economy).

3. Jesus Christ exists in the form of God (Phil. 2:6). Paul began his subject of Christology by showing who Jesus Christ is in His incarnate state. He is the one who ever exists in the form of God. The great concern of the apostle was to show who Jesus Christ essentially is. When this is understood, one will not be thinking about what He was before the incarnation and what He became during the incarnation. With many religionists, Christ became something less in the incarnation than He was before. The eternal Son of God has the Divine nature in which there can never be a change. Therefore, one is never correct to speak of the eternal God as to who He was and who He now is. That kind of terminology implies a change. Past and future, with respect to God, are terms that the defects of our finite capacity force us to use. The essence of God is eternally the same. God not only remains but is constant. “But thou art the same...” (Ps. 102:27). Both the nature and perfections of God are immutable as well as eternal. That which remains the same is not changed, and what is changed cannot remain the same. Jesus Christ is eternally existing “in the form of God” which cannot change but ever remains the same.

EQUAL WITH GOD

The phrase “Who...thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Phil. 2:6) has been interpreted many different ways. Before getting into what we believe the passage teaches in the light of the context, it will stimulate our thinking to mention some interpretations of this statement: (1) Christ had no need to grasp at Divine equality because He had already possessed it as the eternal Son of God. (2) Christ did not consider equality with God a thing to be tenaciously retained. (3) Christ did not consider the honor of being equal with God as something to be retained at the expense of robbing the universe of the glory of redemption. (4) Although Jesus Christ was God, He cared less for His equality with God and His own things than He did for His own people. (5) Christ did not hold fast and bring down to earth the visible demonstrations of His Deity. (6) Christ did not falsely seize upon a title not rightly His. He did not regard His claims to equality with the Father as something stolen. (7) Christ did not count His existence in a manner equal to God something to cling to. (8) Christ did not hold fast and bring down to earth the visible demonstration of His Deity. (9) Had Christ come into the world emphasizing His equality with God, the world would have been amazed but not saved. He did not grasp at this. (10) Christ did not consider His God-equal existence a warrant for grasping (active) to Himself the glory afterward required.

Christ’s equality with God is a subject of great importance. Like Christ existing in the form of God, equality with God is foundational. Some say “equality with God” declares Christ’s Being and “form of God” expresses the manifestation of that Being. Others say “form of God” has reference to nature and “equal with God” denotes relation. There is one thing for sure, the two words “form” and “equal” complement each other. You cannot have one without the other.

One of the great passages on Christ’s equality with the Father is John 5:19-47. The Lord Jesus was so perfectly one with the Father that He could do nothing contrary to Him. As they are one in nature, they are also undivided in their working. As all is of the Father, all is by the Son. Christ had performed an act of mercy on the Sabbath. The man who had been healed was told to take up his bed and walk. Because of this act of mercy on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted Jesus Christ and sought to slay Him. God’s providence does not stop on the Sabbath. Furthermore, He is above all law which He ascribed for His creatures. He is His own law. Christ’s equality with the Father was declared when Christ said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). The clear declaration of truth does not satisfy wicked men; therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Christ. They said, “...he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18). The Jews thought this was sufficient evidence for capital punishment.

Christ gave examples of His equality with the Father (John 5:19-29). He is equal with the Father in works, quickening, judgment, honor, giving eternal life, authority, and resurrection of the dead. He is so perfectly one with the Father that He can do nothing contrary to Him. As it is impossible for the Son to do anything of Himself, it is impossible for the Father to do anything

without the Son. Christ receives the same honor as the Father. There is an honor due to God only, and not to be given to any other. If the incarnate Christ is nothing more than man, how could He receive the same honor? Christ's condescension took nothing from the "form of God." No one can honor the Father who dishonors the Son.

The equality of Christ with the Father is supported by witnesses (John 5:30-47). The first witness was Christ Himself. It is commonly stated that a man makes a poor witness in his own case. But it must be understood that Jesus Christ is no ordinary man; He is the God-Man. The reason a man is a poor witness in his own case is very simple. He is prejudiced, filled with self-love, and is subject to error. Christ is, however, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14). Christ's statement "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" of John 5:31 does not contradict "...Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true..." of John 8:14. In John 5, the Savior meant His witness was in itself insufficient as a matter of legal evidence. A testimony must be validated by two or three witnesses (Matt. 18:16). Therefore, Christ gave a fivefold witness. In John 8, the Jews were judging after the flesh. Their judgment was according to their corrupt hearts which could not understand the things of God (I Cor. 2:14). The other witnesses Christ mentioned were John the Baptist (vv. 32-35), His own works (v. 36), the Father (vv. 37, 38), and the Scriptures (vv. 39-47). According to Jewish law, the additional witnesses validated Christ's testimony.

There are two major views of Philippians 2:6b — "Who...thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (*hos...ouch harpagmon hegesato to einai isa theo*). They are (1) equality was not something to retain in possession, and (2) equality was not something to be seized in the future. With regard to the first view, the essential equality with God is not something that could be surrendered. The incarnation did not rob the Godhead of any virtue or honor. Christ remains equal with the Father in His position as Mediator, the God-Man. Concerning the second view, Christ considered not His future honor to be given Him by the Father something to be seized. The future equality would be connected with Christ's exaltation as He appears to men on an equality with God.

Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The Greek word for "thought" is the aorist tense of the verb *hegeomai*, which means to think, count, consider, esteem, or regard. Paul used the word in Philippians 2:3 — "...let each esteem other better than themselves"; Philippians 3:7 — "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"; and Philippians 3:8 — "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..." The context of this passage indicates a choice was made by the preincarnate Son and that choice was carried out by the immutable Christ in His state of humiliation.

The word "robbery" comes from the Greek word *harpagmon*, accusative singular of *harpagmos*, which means something to grasp after; something to hold to; a thing seized or to be seized. This word is used only in Philippians 2:6, but the verb *harpazo* is used several times in the New Testament (Matt. 11:12; 13:19; John 6:15; 10:12, 28, 29; Acts 8:39; 23:10; II Cor. 12:2, 4; I Thess. 4:17; Jude 23; Rev. 12:5). The verb *harpazo* means to take by force, to claim for oneself, or to snatch out or away. In every case where the verb is used, there is no indication of something being "retained in possession," but rather something seized or claimed for oneself.

The context of Philippians 2 does not justify the idea of Jesus Christ possessing a position of equality which He had and gave up in the incarnation. It does, however, justify the idea of a choice made by the eternal Son in His preincarnate state that He would not grasp after equality with God, because the future equality was to be God's gift following the incarnation, death, and exaltation (Phil. 2:9-11). The future equality would include the names "Jesus" and "Lord." In these two names, both Saviorhood and Lordship are revealed. "Jesus" was His God-given name: "...thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). To this "name" every knee must bow either in grace or in judgment. Every tongue must confess His "Lordship" either in grace or in judgment (Phil. 2:11). The equality of Saviorhood and Lordship is recognized by men in grace now, but it will not be recognized by Christ's enemies until the judgment. The future equality promised Christ by the Father has to do with His offices, not with His essential personality. In Christ's essential personality, He is existing in the form of God which includes equality with God. Consummation of Lordship will be the kingdom. Sovereignty is vested in Christ as the eternal Son of God, but the coming kingdom belongs to Him as the Son of David (Luke 1:31-33).

A comparison of Adam and Christ has been suggested by some to clarify the idea which appears to be the correct interpretation in the light of the context. Adam asserted himself to be equal with God by an act of seizure (robbery). He was a son of God by creation (Luke 3:38). Satan told Eve if she would eat the forbidden fruit, she would "be as gods" (Gen. 3:5). Adam, as the head of the woman, deliberately ate of the forbidden fruit in an attempt "to be as god." He sought to be lord independently of God his Creator, but he failed in his pursuit. Conversely, the Son of God by eternal generation, chose not to seize equality with God independently of His Father. The future honor of equality was not something to be grasped, but it was a gift to follow His humiliation.

CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF (Part I)

The entrance of the eternal Son of God into the world in the form of a servant cannot be compared with man's entrance. Man's entrance is not as difficult to describe. Man has a beginning and an entrance. In the case of Adam, man came into existence by an act of creation; but in the case of each man since Adam, he has come into existence by procreation and creation. His body came by procreation and his soul by creation. Christ's entrance into the stream of mankind is more difficult to explain. With the Son of God, there was no coming into existence. He is eternal. Therefore, His entrance took the choicest of words to reveal the incarnation of Him who is without beginning: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7).

Paul's words "But made himself of no reputation" shall occupy our attention in this lesson. This phrase comes from three Greek words, *alla heauton ekenosen*, which mean "But emptied himself." *Alla* means "but" and is a stronger word than *de*. *Heauton* is the accusative singular masculine of *heautou*, a reflexive pronoun meaning "himself." *Ekenosen*, is the aorist form of *kenoo*, which means to empty, to deprive of power, or make of no effect. The Kenotic theory of the incarnation is based on the Greek word *ekenosen*, emptied. This word has been the occasion for various interpretations, many of which are heretical.

The following list is a summary of some of the interpretations of the phrase "But made himself of no reputation":

1. It means to give up one's rights or privileges.
2. Christ laid aside equality with the form of God.
3. This is the emptying of Deity in order to take up humanity.
4. The Divine form was shed to avoid having mankind give Him His rightful honor. Instead He took on the form of a servant.
5. Christ gave up His proper and peculiar position. However, His Divine nature was not given up. He exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant. The change He experienced did not rob Him of the consciousness of Deity. Although He retained equality with God, He did not assert this equality.
6. Christ did not give up His Divine nature. The thing most probably relinquished was the surroundings of glory.
7. He removed His supreme authority.

8. Christ concealed His Divinity for a time. Only in His humanity was there emptying. Christ's humbling Himself was a covering for his Divine majesty.
9. Christ took a servant's form and limited His glory. He laid His glory aside in order to be born in the likeness of men.
10. This emptying can never be understood fully outside eternity. He emptied Himself not of Deity but the glory of Deity in order to accomplish redemption for mankind.
11. His form of being was traded for another form.
12. He voluntarily relinquished His rights.
13. Outward manifestations of His Deity were given up.
14. The emptying was related to His being God, and the humbling was related to His being man.
15. He laid aside His glory and became a sinner by imputation and by reputation.

This listing will give one some idea of the controversy that has originated over one Greek word, *ekenosen*. In thinking of the Kenosis, one must never permit himself to think of Jesus Christ as anyone other than God who changes not. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Christ is God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16). The immutability of God disproves any idea of Jesus Christ becoming something different from what He eternally is with the Father. It would not only be subversive to the immutability of Jesus Christ, but it would destroy the Divine Trinity, humanize the eternal Son, and make Jesus Christ neither God nor man.

The only way to arrive at the truth of the statement "But emptied Himself" is to study the Greek verb *kenoo* and see how it is used in the New Testament. It was by this method that we were able to have a better understanding of *harpagmon* in verse 6. The Greek verb *kenoo* is used five times: (1) "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void [perfect passive form of *kenoo*], and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:14). If legalists are heirs of God's promise, faith is emptied of all meaning or rendered useless. (2) "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect [the aorist passive subjunctive form of *kenoo*]" (I Cor. 1:17). Paul did not fall into the trap of magnifying a church ordinance at the expense of the message of the cross. Had he done this, the cross would have been emptied of its meaning or rendered powerless and inoperative. (3) "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void" [aorist active subjunctive form of *keno*] (I Cor. 9:15). Paul did not want to be deprived of his ground for boasting. His self-denial gave him confidence in the presence of his enemies. (4) "Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain [aorist passive subjunctive form of *kenoo*] in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready" (II Cor. 9:3). The apostle did not want anything to hinder the collection of the money they had promised to give. He did not want his boasting of them to be empty. (5) This brings us to the final place

where *kenoo* is used, and that is Philippians 2:7. The adjective *kenos* is used eighteen times and is translated by two words — “vain” and “empty.”

Christ “emptied Himself” must be understood in one of two ways: (1) If it is connected with Christ’s Divine nature (essential equality or form of God), of what did He empty Himself? (2) If it is connected with Christ’s human nature, of what did He empty Himself?

The verb for “emptied” has been explained in the sense of removing something from a container until it is empty. Was the eternal Son of God emptied of Deity until He was empty? Did Jesus Christ exchange the Divine form of existence for a human form of existence? There is no Biblical evidence of Jesus Christ renouncing His Divine nature. It is blasphemy to even suggest such a thing. There are those who think they have toned down such strong language by suggesting the Son of God divested Himself of all Divine functions, attributes, and consciousness, and restricted Himself to the limitations of man. They mean by this that the Son passed from one mode of being to another. The fact is, if Jesus Christ did not act in both natures during His condescension, how could He have been the Mediator? Furthermore, if the Son of God either emptied Himself of Deity or divested Himself of His attributes, what happened to providence during this time? The further we go with this view the worse it gets. However, I must not stop until I mention that the heretical doctrine of peccability (the teaching that Christ could sin) is one of the fruits of this heresy.

There is a modified form of the Kenotic theory that does not deny Christ’s Deity, but it falls short of giving any sensible interpretation of the passage in the light of its context. Those who hold this modified view say there is no reference to abandoning Deity or attributes, but Christ merely took something, namely, “the form of a servant.” During His humiliation, the Son of God laid aside certain rights as the eternal One; but Deity or attributes, He could never lay aside. He did not insist upon being served but became a servant. Christ emptied Himself of all the outward glory of the form of God and revealed Himself to the world in the form of a slave. He surrendered the independent exercise of His Divine attributes. This theory may be summarized by the use of four statements: (1) “Form of God” refers to Christ’s preexistence. (2) “Equal with God” denotes Christ’s Person. (3) “Thought it not robbery to be equal with God” refers to the posture of His mind. (4) “Emptied Himself” points to the fact of His assuming “the form of a servant.” Since, equality with God” was not something to retain, this modified view will not fit the context.

Christ “emptied Himself” is used in association with His human nature. It is something connected with Christ’s humiliation. Paul does not specifically state of what the self-emptying consists, but a study of the immediate context in the light of the overall context of Scripture will give us the answer.

CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF (Part II)

I categorically deny that Jesus Christ divested Himself of Deity either absolutely or relatively in the incarnation. Such language as “Christ emptied Himself of His Deity to take upon Himself His humanity” is blasphemous. It is reprehensible for anyone to suggest that He surrendered His attributes. Jesus Christ did not cease to be God in the incarnation, but He veiled His Deity in the form of a servant. The Son of God did not take upon Himself all that we are, but He did take upon Himself the nature of man minus its depravity. Here is a combination heretofore supposed to be contradictory and impossible. God is infinite; space cannot contain Him. Man is finite, fenced in by definite bounds. How can the unlimited and limited unite? This is the mystery of the incarnation.

There is a difference between mystery and mist. One stands in awe before the impenetrable mystery of the incarnation, but he may by grace penetrate the mist. False conceptions, or half-truths, make a mystery needlessly greater. Furthermore, whether one sees the human or Divine-human will depend on the direction from which the subject is approached and the point of view he occupies. For example, if a person with only one nature approaches the subject of the incarnation, he looks at it strictly from the human point of view. Spiritual things are foolish to him: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). The person with one nature has only natural understanding of spiritual things. Therefore, he does not have grace to penetrate the mist, and stand in holy awe before the God-Man. Conversely, the person with two natures has a spiritual mind. Hence, he knows spiritual things are (1) revealed by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:10), (2) known by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:12), (3) communicated by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:13), and (4) discerned by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:14b). Having grace, the believer views the incarnation from God’s point of view and not man’s. He penetrates the mist, and stands in awe before his Mediator, the God-Man.

The condescension of the Godhead is one of the amazing truths of the Bible. Condescension means to stoop or descend from a higher, or superior, position. God is described in Scripture as “sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Is. 6:1). (See Ps. 113:4-8). This is a revelation of majesty, power, and wisdom. They are all unequaled. Everything is under the control of the Sovereign. The Father greatly condescended to purpose to save some from among depraved mankind (Eph. 1:4-6). The eternal Son condescended to take upon Himself the form of a servant in the incarnation that He might purchase those the Father condescended to elect to salvation in the Son. This is the message of Philippians 2:6-8. As the Father was no less the sovereign God when He condescended to purpose to save sinners, the Son was no less God when He condescended to be born of the virgin, live, and die for those the Father elected. Paul associated the blood of Christ’s human nature with a Divine title when he charged the Ephesian elders: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). This proves that Jesus Christ was God even when He was nailed to the cross.

Finally, the Holy Spirit condescends to regenerate each person the Father elected and the Son redeemed. Condescension's greatest wonder is that the Holy Spirit dwells in the regenerate sinner. The Holy Spirit who resides in the believer is no less God than the Father who elected and the Son who redeemed. How humbling it is to the believer when he realizes that the Father condescended to choose him, the Son condescended to redeem him, and the Holy Spirit condescended to regenerate and reside in him. The Christian alone recognizes and calls the Son of God "Emmanuel" — God with us (Matt. 1:23).

The Person of Jesus Christ is not understood as the sciences of the world. To understand the sciences of the world, men must give themselves to laborious research and much learning. Human sciences are attained by study, but the knowledge of the Person of Christ comes to the elect by revelation. Many had observed Christ as He walked among them, but they did not know Him. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Christ replied, "...flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:16, 17). By this revelation, Peter penetrated through mere observation and apprehended the Lord Jesus whom he could not comprehend. God's gift of faith enables the elect to penetrate the mist of the Divine mystery of the incarnation and stand in awe before the impenetrable mystery of the infinite Savior. He who contents himself with the human nature of Christ and does not grasp the meaning of Emmanuel—God with us—does not have saving faith. The death of Jesus Christ is more than the death of a mere man. It was God's satisfaction for sin. In regard to Christ's resurrection, one must see more than the resurrection of Lazarus or some other man. His resurrection was for the justification of the elect.

"Knowing the unknowable" is the language of the Christian: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge..." (Eph. 3:19). The apostle used a word between the verb and its object which on the surface seems to contradict the verb. The verbal noun *gnonai*, second aorist active infinitive of *ginosko*, which means to know, is used. *Agape*, the strongest word for love in the Greek, is the object of the knowledge. Between the verbal noun and its object, the word *huperballousan* is used. It is the present participle (verbal adjective) of *huperballo*, which means to surpass, excel, or transcend. This compound verb is used five times and is translated "excelleth" (II Cor. 3:10), "exceeding" (II Cor. 9:14; Eph. 1:19; 2:7), and "which passeth" (Eph. 3:19). The choice of words by the Holy Spirit proves that the love of Christ transcends the knowledge of the Christian. It is superior not only to human understanding, but it surpasses spiritual understanding. However, it does mean the Christian knows by grace what he could not know by natural understanding; he knows by faith what he could not know by reason. Hence, the knowledge of the saint is experiential and not merely academic.

Experiential knowledge is not static. Paul began his explanation of this knowledge by using an active infinitive to show that one's knowledge is not static. Too many church members have an erroneous view of Divine wisdom. They think that when they "make a decision" or have a "change in mental attitude" they have arrived. After years of "church membership," there is no change in their knowledge of Christ. However, the knowledge of the Lord of Glory given by the Holy Spirit is not static. It is a knowledge that increases (Matt. 11:25-27; I John 2:20, 27; I Cor. 1:21, 30; Eph. 1:15-23; 2:6, 7; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 3:18). Between knowledge and the object of that knowledge, Paul used a present participle to describe the object of knowledge that transcends knowledge. Although Divine knowledge is not static but progressive, it can never comprehend

the infinite. This does not discourage the believer. As natural life is one of growth and development, the same is true in the spiritual life, with one important exception. In natural life, years of aging and deteriorating come after years of growth and development. Conversely, no deterioration is experienced in the spiritual life. There is a continual renewing day by day while in a deteriorating body, and there will be an increasing growth in the knowledge of God (II Cor. 4:16-18; Eph. 2:6, 7).

It is noticeable that when Jesus Christ affirms that "...neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son...", He at once adds, "...and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). Why did He not continue His affirmation with "and he to whomsoever the Father will reveal him" instead of "he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him"? The statement is absent because there are mysteries in the union of the two perfect natures, Divine and human, in the one Person of Christ which the Father nowhere in Scripture promises to fully reveal. The infinite is too deep for the finite mind of man. It is impossible to fully comprehend the complex Person of the God-Man.

The complex Person of Jesus Christ can be known by grace, but He cannot be fully known. God the Father hides things from the wise and prudent (Matt. 11:25). The wise and prudent are not those who are truly wise and truly prudent, but those who are wise and prudent in their own eyes (Is. 5:21). Such persons are blind, proud, covetous, and prejudiced. Their problem is something that no preacher can cure. If the sovereign God does not give sight and change their proud hearts, they will never know Jesus Christ. Wise men of the world by their wisdom know not God (I Cor. 1:21).

Knowledge that springs solely from the mind of man is not adequate. A mere speculative knowledge of God does not embrace the complex Person of Jesus Christ. The man possessed with a religious demon cried, "...I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God" (Mark 1:24). That knowledge was unattended by any sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. He knew who Jesus Christ was, but he wanted to be left alone. He knew Christ was holy but hated His holiness. There are two distinct types of knowledge: (1) natural knowledge apart from grace (Rom. 1:21-24) and (2) spiritual knowledge which is the fruit of grace (Col. 1:6).

Most religionists talk about their blessings rather than their Blessor. A regard for those things which benefit oneself personally to the neglect of the Person of Christ is concern for the benefits rather than the Lord of glory. A manifestation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the greatest evidence of salvation. This knowledge consists in the glory of His Divine nature and the immeasurable fulness of His human nature.

Scripture enables one to know if his knowledge of Jesus Christ is the revelation of God or the revelation of a false spirit. A person without the correct concept of the Person of Christ has never had the Holy Spirit to shine in his heart, giving him the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6). The Holy Spirit within the regenerated person leads him outside of himself to the Person of Christ as the object of faith. No mistake can be made because it is the revelation of God, not the mere influence of man as the instrument of Satan. Where the Spirit of regeneration has been made to shine, the recipient knows that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16).

For centuries, the self-emptying of the Son of God has been explained in terms of many patterns. Such questions as (1) How can God empty Himself and remain unchanged? and (2) How can a life be really human if that life is in some sense Divine? have never been satisfactorily answered for all professing believers. The fact is, these questions will never be answered to the satisfaction of all religionists. An answer that will satisfy all is as impossible as trying to get a translation of the Bible that all can understand. People do not need a change in translations of the Bible but a change of heart. Without a change of heart by the grace of the sovereign God, no one can handle such a mystery as the incarnation. Any fool can ask questions, but it takes grace to apprehend what one cannot comprehend.

In our study of the Kenosis theory, let us consider, (1) what it is not, and (2) what it is in the light of its text and context.

The Kenosis does not mean the eternal Son of God emptied Himself of Deity to take upon Himself humanity. How could He who is existing in the essence of God empty Himself of His existence and remain a Person who could take upon Himself humanity? The preincarnate Son of God possessed only one nature; therefore, if He emptied Himself of Deity, the second Person of the Godhead became extinct. Such an idea is unthinkable to the Christian. Scripture points out that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior; and in the same context, He is called “God our Savior” (Titus 1:3, 4; 2:13, 14). In becoming the God-Man, God did not cease to be God. Had the Son of God ceased to be God in the incarnation, He could not have been the Mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5). Without a Mediator, man is without hope.

In John 1:1, the Son of God is called the “Word.” John used this term four times when speaking of the Son of God (John 1:1, 14; I John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). Three great facts about Jesus Christ are given in John 1:1 — (1) Christ’s existence is eternal — “In the beginning was the Word.” The word “was” proves that the Word did not begin at the beginning of creation. The Divine Word *Logos* not only was in the beginning but He was the center of all things in the beginning (John 1:3). (2) Christ’s Person is distinct — “...the Word was with God.” “With God” signifies distinction in the Godhead. For example, He that is with me is not me. The preposition “with” (*pros*) implies not merely existence alongside of, but personal intercourse. The root meaning is near or facing. (3) Christ’s nature is Divine — “the Word was God.” The presence of the article *ho* before *Logos* points to no particular Person. Christ is not merely a concept of Deity — one among many. He is the unique concept of Deity. He is Deity manifested: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:5). Christ is called the “Word of life” (I John 1:1). As the Word, Christ is the revealer of what we need; as the Life, He is the communication of what we need (Luke 19:10). As the Word, Christ is God uttering Himself; as the Life, He is God giving Himself (John 10:11). As the Word, Christ is God without us; as the Life, He is God within us (Col. 1:27).

The eternal Word was made flesh (*sarx egeneto* — became flesh). The three clauses of John 1:1 are the foundational causes for the three great truths connected with the incarnation of John 1:14 — (1) He who was in the beginning with God was made flesh in time. (2) He who was with God tabernacled among men. (3) He who was God became veiled in human nature. Our attention shall be occupied in this study by the words “made flesh” — *sarx egeneto*. The verb *egeneto*, second aorist indicative of *ginomai*, means “became.” Observe the contrast between “was” in

verse 1 and *egeneto*, “became,” in verse 14. In the first, we have the continuous existence of Christ in “was” and in the second the incarnation of Christ in time in *egeneto*. Jesus Christ is not God made imperfect by the incarnation, but God manifested in the flesh.

The word *sarx* (flesh) does not denote person but nature. The great truths of the incarnation are (1) God manifest in the flesh of men (I Tim. 3:16), (2) God manifest in the flesh to dwell with men (John 1:14), (3) God manifest in the flesh that He might be full of grace and truth for men (John 1:14), (4) God manifest in the flesh that He might die in the flesh (I Pet. 3:18), (5) God manifest in the flesh that through His flesh He might enter into the holy of holies (Heb. 10:19, 20), (6) God manifest in the flesh in order for the flesh of men to rest in hope (Ps. 16:9), and (7) God manifest in the flesh that all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3:6).

There is a Hebrew word for flesh, *basar*, which means “show forth” or “to bring tidings.” It is used in Isaiah 61:1 — “THE Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” The Greek word *euaggelion* is used to represent the Hebrew word *basar*. The first reference to *basar* portrays Christ on the cross. “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh [*basar*] instead thereof” (Gen. 2:21). The flesh of Adam was closed after his side was opened, but the wound inflicted in Christ’s side of John 19:34 was not closed in the resurrected Lord: “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27). God made woman and presented her to Adam. She was Adam’s completion. Since the bride of Christ is incomplete, the side of Jesus Christ is not closed. The word *basar* also means to show forth. Therefore, the person who has been given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ of II Corinthians 4:6 speaks the gospel and shines it forth in his life.

The “Word became flesh” may be illustrated in the following manner. Suppose you picked up a Greek New Testament but you did not even know the Greek characters. You would see words in the Greek text but could not understand what they mean. You must have a person who knows Greek and English to teach you. The same is true with the “Word made flesh.” Jesus Christ is God’s thought made flesh. Those who saw Him and all who read about Him cannot know Him unless someone who knows Christ and knows us teaches us. The Holy Spirit is our teacher (I John 2:20, 27). Without Him we can never know God’s thoughts about us, but with Him we confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh for us. (See I John 4:2.) Through the written word we embrace the Incarnate Word in a conversion experience.

After seeing by faith that, Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, the believer goes from the historical reality of Christ’s human nature to His eternal existence. Hence, in the light of John 1:1 and 14, he concludes John is presenting three basic things: (1) The Son of God who appeared in time existed before time. (2) He who dwelt among men was with God. (3) He who became flesh was the self-existing God by nature.

CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF (Part III)

Jesus Christ did not surrender His attributes in the incarnation. To make the incarnation in its actual historical form possible, some advocate the eternal Son reduced Himself to the rank and measures of humanity. To accomplish this, they say the personal Subject in the *Logos* remained the same when He passed from the Divine to the human state but completely surrendered all the Divine attributes. But the Son could not surrender His attributes without surrendering His Deity.

The Bible warns us about persons who distort the Scripture: "...they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16). The word for "wrest" is *streblōo*, which means to distort or pervert. Peter described perverters of truth as "unlearned and unstable." Such persons draw statements from Scripture and distort them to justify their sins. They say David committed adultery, Jacob was deceitful, and Peter lied. Thus they attempt to suppress the truth by their unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

Those who advocate Jesus Christ surrendered His attributes in the incarnation quote the following Scriptures: (1) "I can of mine own self do nothing..." (John 5:30). (2) "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there..." (John 11:15). (3) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son..." (Mark 13:32). They conclude these verses refute the view of Christ maintaining the attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience during the days of His flesh. I might add, since Jesus Christ is "a man approved of God" of Acts 2:22, why do they not go further and say Christ is not God and deny the great mystery of godliness (I Tim. 3:16)?

When Christ said, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30), He was speaking as the incarnate Son who had come to earth to do the will of His Father. He is inseparable from the Father's essence, will, power, and operation; therefore, He could act only subordinate to the will of God. This was not a denial of omnipotence, but it was a declaration that He would never exercise His power independently of the Father.

Christ did not deny His omnipresence when He said to Mary and Martha after Lazarus' death, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe..." (John 11:15). Christ was there in His Divine nature but not in His human nature. The principle of John 3:13 applies in this case. Untried faith is weak. Faith never prospers so much as when all things are against it. Tried faith makes experience real, exposes weakness, keeps us from making idols of our mercies, and drives us to God. Our Lord often takes away our earthly props that we might lean more firmly on Him.

The Son of God bears witness to His natures in Mark 13:32 — "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Ignorance is attributed to His human nature. He was so unlimited in His Divine nature that He knew the Father perfectly (Matt. 11:27); therefore, ignorance does not belong to His Divine

nature. God absolutely considered has no blood; yet Jesus Christ who is God had blood as the incarnate Son, because He had assumed a human nature. The Divine *Logos*, though present in the infant Christ, could not properly manifest knowledge in the infant as He could through the child or the man. This is the only recorded statement by the Lord Jesus before His public ministry: “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). But the Divine *Logos* did not grow. “...Jesus increased in wisdom and stature [age]...” (Luke 2:52), but the Divine Son did not increase. The eternal Son was always filled with wisdom, but it developed in His experience as He grew in age. The manifestations of human and Divine consciousness stand side by side in the records of our Lord’s self-expression. He spoke alternately out of a Divine and a human consciousness. In Christ’s condescension, He resolved not to use—as man—the knowledge which His omniscience—as God—would afford. The wisdom He used was the illumination of the Spirit given without measure. Divine attributes could not be surrendered, but we must not confound nonexistence with nonexertion. We declared the human nature was not the residential subject of omniscience.

The Son of God did not surrender His omnipotence in the incarnation. Jesus Christ is “...a man approved of God among you by miracles...” (Acts 2:22). The word for “miracles” is *dunamis*, which means power, miraculous power, or omnipotence. When one thinks about miracles, it is not the “how” but the “Who” that should capture his attention. Paul’s defense before King Agrippa included the question, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). One cannot use the words “incredible” and “God” in the same sentence and remain logical. But, who can expect a depraved mind to be logical? The Greek word for “incredible” is *apiston*, the accusative singular of *apistos*, which means unbelieving or without confidence. Consider the miracles the incarnate Christ performed. He changed water into wine, healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, stilled the storm, and raised the dead. He had power to lay down His own life, and He had power to take it again (John 10:17, 18). The word for “power” is *exousia*, which means authority, right, or liberty; supernatural power, government. Therefore, the incarnate Son was not only omnipotent, but He had the authority, or right, to be omnipotent. He is God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16).

Jesus Christ did not surrender His omnipresence when He took upon Himself the form of a servant. When one understands who Jesus Christ is, he will have no problem with His attributes. The omnipresence of Christ is taught in John 3:13 — “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which [who] is in heaven.” The Lord from heaven came to earth to do the will of the Father. He obeyed the law, wrought miracles, and suffered death for His people. Christ did not bring with Him His human nature. He, being the omnipresent God, assumed a human nature into union with His Divine Person. Thus the Son of Man was in heaven by virtue of His Divine Person, while at the same time He was on earth in His human nature. His human nature was not in heaven, because it was not in its glorified state. The Son of God took upon Himself the form of a servant into a personal union never to be laid aside. Hence, it became proper for the human nature to carry a Divine title. There are three good examples of Divine attributes in evidence with human titles and human attributes in evidence with Divine titles: (1) In John 3:13, a human title is in evidence with a Divine attribute. Christ, in speaking to Nicodemus, spoke of Himself as the Son of Man who is in heaven. (2) In Acts 20:28,

a Divine title is given to a human attribute. Paul called the blood of Christ's human nature the "blood of God." (3) In I Corinthians 2:8, a Divine title is given to a human attribute — "...they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The eternal Son did not cease to be God by His incarnation. He continued to be the omnipresent God filling heaven and earth.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not surrender His omniscience in the incarnation. Strike out the thought of omniscience and you extinguish Deity by a single stroke. Paul desired that the Colossian saints have full assurance of understanding which would result in a true knowledge of the mystery of God, namely Christ: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). There is no greater passage to illustrate the omniscience of the incarnate Christ than John 1:43-51. Why did Nathanael worship Christ the moment they first met? Were not the Jews taught to worship none but God and to bow to Him only? When Jesus Christ said to Nathanael, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee" (John 1:48), Nathanael recognized the omniscience of the One who spoke. There was nothing unusual about Nathanael being under a fig tree. The remarkable thing was they were separated by a space of several miles. Therefore, when this Jew, who knew the attributes of God, met a Person whose presence was not only separated by distance but who knew where he was, he concluded that this is the omnipresent and omniscient God. Hence, he confessed, "...thou art the Son of God..." (John 1:49). According to John 1:51, he must have been reading about Jacob at Bethel. Jacob dreamed of a ladder that was set up on the earth, the top of which reached heaven. The angels of God were seen ascending and descending on it (Gen. 28:12). The "Word became flesh" is the meeting place of heaven and earth, and every person spiritually enlightened says, "God is with me." "Thou God seest me" of Genesis 16:13 should constantly ring in our ears. The infinite mind of God is able to grasp billions of objects at once, and yet focus His attention as much upon one object as if there were no others.

One must clearly understand this truth in the hypostatic union—the Divine nature never has a human attribute and the human nature never has a Divine attribute. Christ's Deity was never mixed with His human nature. Hence, we are not to assume that Christ's human nature is omnipotent because His Divine nature is all powerful, that His human nature is omnipresent because by His Divine nature He is everywhere present, or that His human nature is omniscient because His Divine nature has infinite understanding. As man possesses soul and body, Jesus Christ possesses the Divine and human natures. As man's soul is invisible and his body is visible, the Divine nature of Christ is invisible and the human nature is visible. As the two substances of man retain their individual qualities, the two natures of Christ retain their distinctive attributes. The Divine continues omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; and the human nature is limited in strength, presence, and knowledge. Furthermore, when we speak of man as immortal and mortal, we assign each of these attributes to that part of man to which it corresponds. Hence, the soul of man is not subject to death, but the body is subject to physical death. Likewise, the Divine nature cannot die, but the assumed human nature of Christ did die and was raised again the third day.

We must understand that Christ's Divine Nature is the base of Christ's Person. Before the incarnation there was no God-Man, but there was the second Person of the Godhead—the eternal Son of God. The personality of the Son, therefore, was not dependent on the incarnation. Moreover, the death of Christ on the cross did not separate the union between the two natures,

although they were temporarily dissolved for three days and three nights. The undissolved union kept the body of Christ from seeing corruption. The God-Man existed between His death and resurrection, notwithstanding the separation between His human soul and body.

There are those who believe the verb “emptied” refers to Christ’s being on an equality with God rather than His existing in the form of God. Those who hold this view do not deny Christ’s Deity. They believe when the Son of God assumed the form of a servant He did not lay aside His form of God. The passage is interpreted to mean that Christ who preexisted in the form of God did not regard equality with God as a prize to be retained, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. The emptying involved a state of subjection in which Christ rendered obedience during His humiliation. This view is widely acclaimed among Christians. Not that I desire to be different, but it seems to me that the Greek construction and internal evidence is against this view. I shall list my objections and give the reasons for so doing. (1) There is nothing in the word *harpazo* or its derivatives to justify the idea of retaining something. Hence, the idea of retaining equality at the expense of robbing mankind of redemption is not the idea expressed in Philippians 2:6b. (2) Equality with God is not something that could be relinquished by the Son. During the days of Christ’s flesh, equality with the Father was maintained by the Son (John 5:17-47). Equality with God and the form of God are inseparable.

There is another theory of the Kenosis that is popular. Some advocate the verb “empty” is a dramatic way of expressing the change in the outward appearance of Christ which took place in the incarnation. They do not believe Christ emptied Himself of Deity, but only its outward manifestation and use for His own benefit. The illustration used is a king who temporarily wears the garments of a peasant while remaining king. Hence, they say the Son of God did not hold the outer manifestation of His Deity as a treasure to be grasped and retained. This view does not properly interpret *ekenosen* — emptied. To say Christ’s essential glory was concealed during the incarnation is not the same as “He emptied Himself.” The words “concealed” and “emptied” cannot be equated.

Another interpretation of “He emptied Himself” is that Jesus Christ surrendered independent exercise of His attributes in the incarnation. Here are some arguments for this theory: (1) Christ did not empty out of Himself the form of God. (2) The verb *ekenosen* denotes a crisis act by Christ. (3) The verb “emptied” is guarded by two clauses — “taking the form of a servant” and “made in the likeness of men.” (4) Christ alone could give up the independent exercise of His attributes. (5) The testimony of the whole passage precludes that in emptying Himself Christ only acted as though He did not possess the Divine attributes. The main point of this theory is Christ’s surrender of independent exercise of His attributes in the incarnation; but this view, like all the aforementioned theories, falls short of interpreting the verb *ekenosen*.

One of the more recent theories of the Kenosis is called self-limitation. This view begins with creation. Those who embrace it say creation means the existence of something that is not God, and God’s relation to creation implies limitation. Hence, limitation upon God, brought about by creation, is a free limitation and is therefore a Kenosis. God has fully accepted this limitation in the fulfillment of His will for fellowship with another. They believe the freedom of God means God is free to transform His mode of existence from the infinite to the finite. This freedom means God and man do not stand in radical opposition to each other; therefore, the Creator is

free to share fully the life of His creature. They contend such a life is not foreign to God because there is a humanity about God. His being has its manward side. They believe the New Testament shows that Christ was already a man sharing the realm of God in His preexistent state. He was a man dwelling “in the form of God” who came to share the “form of a servant.” The Kenosis is God expressing His Lordship over creation by entering it. Christ as a man is different from other men (1) by virtue of being God’s unique agent for redemption of mankind and (2) by His divinity lying in His power to save.

Several things in the self-limitation view need to be exposed: (1) “There is a humanity about God.” This is like saying there is a finiteness about the infinite. (2) “Christ was a man in His preexistent state.” No distinction is made between Christ’s manhood in purpose and in actuality. Manhood could not be an actuality before the incarnation. It was only in purpose. (3) “The Kenosis is God expressing His Lordship over creation and entering it.” The Kenosis is not what the eternal Son left. He did not empty Himself of Deity or equality with God. Kenosis refers to the life of the incarnate Son of Man that was spent and expended. (4) “Christ is different from other men by virtue of being God’s unique agent in His power to save.” Jesus Christ is different from men because He is the God-Man, Son of both. The union of the Divine and human natures makes Christ unique. When we speak of the God-Man, we are talking about one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith. In the God-Man, there is the union of the greatest possible opposites—Godhead and manhood. The fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Son of Man. When we know who Jesus Christ is, there is no problem with His power to save.

CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF (Part IV)

A summary of the negative approach to the Kenosis is in order before we consider what it is in the light of the text and context. It cannot be (1) an emptying of Deity, (2) an emptying of equality with God, (3) an emptying of Divine attributes, (4) equated with Christ surrendering independent exercise of attributes, (5) equated with concealing essential glory, or (6) equated with self-limiting.

After considering what the Kenosis is not, let us seek to learn what it is in the light of Scripture. We have considered the testimony of many witnesses; and by the process of elimination for lack of Biblical support, the truth should not be too difficult to see. This does not mean the Kenosis will be clearly seen; but like knowing Christ's love, there can be some degree of sight. There are degrees of sight just as there are degrees of knowledge. In John 20:5, the disciple who outran Peter to the sepulchre "saw the linen clothes lying." The Greek word for "saw" is the present tense of *blepo*, which means to have faculty of sight, or to exercise sight. This means the disciple got a glance of the linen clothes as he stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. In John 20:6, Peter, following the more speedy disciple, went into the sepulchre and "seeth the linen clothes lie." The word for "seeth" is the present tense of *theoreo*, which means to be a spectator, to gaze on, contemplate; to behold, review with interest and attention (Matt. 27:55; 28:1). Peter saw more than John, because he entered the sepulchre and viewed the clothes with great interest. He was not satisfied with a mere glance from the outside. May our interest in the great Christological passage of Philippians 2 be viewed with as much interest and attention as Peter had in the proof of Christ's resurrection out from among the dead. Finally, in John 20:8, John — "that other disciple" — who reached the sepulchre before Peter, went in also, "and he saw, and believed." The Greek word for "saw" is the aorist tense of *horaō*, which means to see, behold; to attain a true knowledge. John saw exactly what Peter had seen. Having gained true knowledge from the factual evidence before him, John believed the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead. I trust our investigation of the Biblical evidence of the incarnation will result in a true knowledge of the complex Person of Jesus Christ. Let us not be satisfied with a mere glance at the evidence, but enter into an intense investigation of all the Biblical evidence and say, "I believe Jesus Christ is God with us."

Suggestion has been made that "but emptied himself" derives its meaning from what precedes and follows. Therefore, we are told two things about the self-emptying of the eternal Son: (1) He took upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. (2) He became obedient. He, before whom all powers obeyed, learned in a new experience the grace of obedience (Heb. 5:8). Therefore, the general belief is that the self-emptying of the Son of God includes everything that took place during the humiliation of Jesus Christ. The human nature He assumed was real but minus depravity. It had all the characteristics of fallen nature, except sin.

"Christ emptied Himself" cannot be connected with His Divine essence or equality with God. This should be understood at this point in our studies. It is associated, however, with Christ's

human nature, and it refers to something our Lord did during His humiliation. The aorist tense of *kenoo* means to empty, to deprive of power, or to make of no effect. It is used five times (Rom. 4:14; I Cor. 1:17; 9:15; II Cor. 9:3; Phil. 2:7).

Paul's use of *spendomai* in Philippians 2:17 and II Timothy 4:6 throws light on the subject of the Kenosis. Paul said, "...if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (Phil. 2:17). Again he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim. 4:6). These are the only two places where the verb *spendomai* is used. It means to pour out a libation or drink offering; to make libation of oneself by expending energy and life in the service of the gospel (Phil. 2:17); to be in the act of being sacrificed in the cause of the gospel (II Tim. 4:6). In Philippians 2:17, the possibility of Paul's execution for the sake of the gospel was weighing on his mind. This act of sacrifice is the main feature of Paul's statement. He not only lived a life that was expended—used up or emptied—for the cause of Christ, but he contemplated the time of condemnation to death. That time had come when he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim. 4:6). Here, we have the present passive indicative of *spendo*, which means "I am already being poured out." Paul was in the condition of the victim on whose head the wine had been poured. The only thing that remained was the stroke of death.

Paul's life had been a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1); but in death, his martyrdom would be a drink offering which would be the final seal upon his expended life. Paul told the Corinthians, "...I will very gladly spend and be spent for you..." (II Cor. 12:15). The Greek word for "spend" is future active indicative of *dapanao*, which means to expend or to be at expense (Mark 5:26; Acts 21:24; II Cor. 12:15); to spend, waste, consume by extravagance (Luke 15:14; James 4:3). The word for "spent" is future passive indicative of *ekdapanao*—to exhaust, consume, to spend out or to spend utterly. The prepositional prefix gives the compound verb the meaning "to spend wholly." To the Corinthians, Paul, who possessed the Spirit of Christ, was saying, "I will most gladly spend and be expended (to spend wholly) for your souls." The apostle manifested the spirit of Him about whom it is said "...for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Heb. 12:2) until he too was completely expended for the cause of Him whose life was spent and expended for him (II Tim. 4:6).

The previous statements should make it easy for us to see the meaning of "But emptied himself." Christ, during the days of His humiliation, did not consider His future honor of equality with God before men something to be seized. He was willing to spend and to be expended in the ultimate sense for the elect. In His holy life, Christ said, "...the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). This verse relates the character, life, and death of Jesus Christ. (1) He is called the Son of Man who came. Since man was the offender, the Son must assume the nature of man to suffer the penalty for man. In this union, dignity is united with humility. This made Jesus Christ the unique Person. "The Son of Man came." His "coming" is as unique as the Person who came. He came voluntarily on a unique mission, a mission of mercy. He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28). (2) The life of Jesus Christ on earth was as unique as His Person. He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." This should fill us with amazement when we consider who came and the place from which He descended. The Son of God did not exchange Deity for

humanity, but He did exchange one state of living for another. His earthly mission necessitated a life of service rather than a life of being served. Hence, His life was one spent ministering to others. (3) The death of the Son of Man was as unique as His Person and life. He came “to give his life a ransom for many.” The word “for” has a vicarious meaning. It means He gave His life instead of many. Our Lord Jesus Christ expended Himself in His death on the cross. There was nothing else to give. He gave all. Not only did His body die upon the cross, but He poured out His soul unto death (John 19:30-34; Is. 53:12). The Son of Man is the ultimate as to His Person, life, and death. Hence, we have the meaning of “But emptied Himself” in a life spent in humiliation that was expended (emptied) in death. Death does not mean cessation but separation of being.

THE FORM OF A SERVANT (Part I)

The Son of God took the form of a servant in the incarnation. Three expressions are used to set forth the reality of Christ's human nature: (1) "the form of a servant," (2) "the likeness of men," and (3) "found in fashion as a man." There is not a trace of Docetism in this or any other New Testament passage. The Docetist refers to Christ's body as a phantom. He places emphasis on the human appearance of the Son of Man. Over against the human appearance, one may speak about the human nature in such a way as to make it hard to believe in a true human nature. Docetism alienates mankind from the Mediator between God and men. This is heresy that must be condemned.

Christ did not take upon Himself the nature of angels but the "seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). Marvelous grace is displayed in the comparison the writer of Hebrews makes between angels and men. The comparison shows how inferior our nature is to that of angels. Men at their highest are compared to angels. Stephen's highest moment of spirituality is described by the analogy of an angel in Acts 6:15 — "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." David's wisdom is said to be as "an angel of God" (II Sam. 14:20). Paul's eloquence could not surpass angels. He said, "THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1). Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:14), but men are dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27). Angels are immortal spirits (Luke 20:36), but men are as grass (I Pet. 1:24). Angels are heavenly spirits (Matt. 24:36), but men have their abode on earth (I Cor. 15:47). Oh, what grace for the Son of God to pass by the angels and assume the nature of man! This is beyond the reach of human reason. Thus, "...It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good" (I Sam. 3:18).

There were some angels which kept not their first estate, but left their habitation (Jude 6). When some of the angels fell, the Son of God sat still. He did not assume the nature of angels but left them in their fallen condition. There is no promise or hope for fallen angels. On the other hand, when Adam fell and fled from the presence of the Lord, God sought fallen Adam. God not only followed after man in his flight, but He followed with such earnestness as to be worthy of our consideration. When the angels sinned, God did not spare them. Peter said, "...God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Pet. 2:4). But when man fell, God spared the elect by not sparing His Son: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). The Greek words *ouch epheisato* are used in both II Peter 2:4 and Romans 8:32. The word *epheisato* is the aorist tense of *pheidomai*, which means to spare, be tender (Romans 8:32); or to spare in respect of hard dealings (Acts 20:29; Rom. 11:21; I Cor. 7:28; II Cor. 1:23; 13:2, II Pet. 2:4, 5). The word *ouch* means "not." Thus, God spared not the nonelect angels, but He spared elect men by not sparing His Son.

The incarnation was for the purpose of Christ apprehending the elect. Paul's use of the word "apprehended" of Philippians 3:12 supposes a flight by the elect and a pursuit of the elect by

Christ. The apostle said, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The word “apprehended” comes from the aorist passive form of the Greek word *katalambano*, which means to lay hold of so as to make one’s own, to obtain, to attain, to overtake, or find. When Christ has overtaken us in grace, He lays hold on us with both hands as something He is glad to have; and having us in His hands, He will never let us go (John 10:27-29).

Christ took the form of a servant in the incarnation (Phil. 2:7). The word for “form” is the same as the one used to describe Christ’s Divine essence (Phil. 2:6). Therefore, the human nature of Christ is as real as His Divine. The assumption of human nature, however, does not indicate a change in the personality of the second Person in the Godhead. Christ is called God’s servant (Is. 42:1). The eternal Son entered into the contract of service with the Father, and He was employed in the Father’s business (John 9:4).

The reality of Christ’s humanity is carefully explained within the context of this Christological passage. First of all, distinction between the “form of God” and the “form of a servant” is shown by *huparchon* and *genomenos*. The first proves the eternal existence of the form of God, and the second reveals the definite historical event of the form of a servant prepared for the Son of God in time. The Son of God became something He was not in the incarnation, but He did not cease to be what He is essentially. Secondly, Scripture makes it clear that Christ’s body was similar but not identical to ours. That is why Paul said, “...and was made in the likeness of men.” The crucial word for the proper understanding of Christ’s human nature is the word *homoiomati*, the dative singular of *homoioma*, which means likeness, resemblance, or similitude. This same word is used in Romans 8:3 — “For what, the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The word *homoiomati* means “similar to” but not “identical with.” Thus, Jesus Christ did not come in sinful flesh, but only in the likeness of sinful flesh. He became the God-Man without entering the stream of human sin. Another example of this is associated with Christ’s testing. Christ was “...in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). The word *homoioteta*, accusative singular of *homoiotetes*, which means likeness or similitude is used in Hebrews 4:15 and Hebrews 7:15. This means Christ was tested in a similar but not identical manner as we are. If He had been tested in the identical manner that we are, He would not have been the impeccable Savior.

The body Jesus Christ assumed was one that was especially prepared for Him. “Wherefore when he [the Lord Jesus] cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5). The word “prepared” comes from the aorist middle form of the Greek word *katartizo*, which means to prepare or provide. It speaks of a special kind of preparation, to render fit or complete. It is translated “to make perfect” (Heb. 13:21), “to perfect” (I Thess. 3:10), “to be perfectly joined together” (I Cor. 1:10), and “to frame” (Heb. 11:3). Christ’s body, therefore, was so perfected by the Spirit in the womb of the virgin that no depravity touched that “holy thing” (Luke 1:35). The bodies of animals offered as sacrifices under the Levitical system were nothing more than “stays of execution” until the once-offered body of Christ put away sins forever (Heb. 10:10-14).

Christ’s “form of a servant” was not only in “the likeness of men,” but it was “found in fashion as a man” (Phil. 2:8). The word for “fashion” is *schemati*, dative singular of *schema*, which

means fashion, form; external show (I Cor. 7:31); or guise or appearance (Phil. 2:8). These are the only places where *schema* is used. The words “being found” are the translation of the Greek word *heuripheis*, first aorist passive participle of *heurisko*, which means to find, discover, examine, or observe. The aorist points back to the earthly ministry of Christ. Christ’s appearance, speech, and works proved He was God manifest in the flesh. Putting the three statements “form of a servant,” “likeness of men,” and “found in fashion as a man” together, we have the following facts: (1) “Form” refers to the reality of human nature. (2) “Likeness” gives the similarity of Christ’s human nature to the nature of all men. (3) “Fashion” denotes the outward appearance of Christ. Unlike the fashion of the world that is passing away, the assumption of human nature which bears the fashion of a man will never pass away. He is the God-Man forever.

The word “servant” (*doulos*) means a slave, man of servile condition, or one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will. Under the Roman law, a Jewish slave was subjected to great humiliation. The following are some of the laws respecting a slave: (1) He had no right as a citizen. When injured, Christ had no redress. Hence, when He was subjected to unjust treatment, there was no arm of justice for His defense. He who shall judge the nations was judged by wicked men. He who is life expects the sentence of death. Christ’s silence was wonderful. He who could have made the world to tremble opened not His mouth before His evil interrogators. Why? He came not to be His own advocate but ours. His silence was full of suffering that was vicarious and expiatory. Verbal defense does not convince a prejudiced mind. Convincing a prejudicial mind requires an inner work of grace. (2) He could have no property. The Servant of servants had no place to lay His head and no money to pay His taxes. (3) A slave, in the eyes of the law, was a mere chattel who could be bought or sold. Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver. (4) At death, a slave was tortured as no other. Consider the treatment Christ received from His enemies! Such treatment, however, is only from man’s side. What about Christ’s forsakenness by the Father? Sin drove angels out of heaven, drove Adam out of the garden, and caused the Father to hide His face from His Son when Christ paid the debt of sin for the elect. The Son was God’s “servant” carrying out the will of the Father to make satisfaction for sin.

THE FORM OF A SERVANT (Part II)

Jesus Christ is absolutely unique within the circumference of human nature. The expressions in Philippians which assert Christ's incarnation also assert His Deity. One could not say that Jesus Christ as man regarded equality with God as something to be seized. A mere man has not been exalted and given a name above all others. Every knee shall not bow or every tongue confess that a mere man is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

When Christianity expresses what she knows of Jesus Christ, she calls Him the God-Man. Christ's inner nature and His external, historical reality in His appearance before men were not contradictory. What He appeared to be was not the corresponding reality of what He essentially is as the eternal Son of God. The contrast between what Christ appeared to be and what He essentially is became sharper and sharper until its climax in His death. Jesus Christ who is eternal life sank in death to become life for the elect of God. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). "...I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15).

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5). The distance between God and man was brought about by man's sin. As far as man was concerned, there was none in heaven or earth, in their original nature, to undertake the office of Mediator. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him..." (I Sam. 2:25). Job said, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:33). The required mediator could not be God absolutely considered: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Gal. 3:20). Hence, a Christ truly human, yet not absolutely Divine, would be a bridge from man's side who could not reach God's side. However, in the God-Man, God and man meet with blessing to man and glory to God through the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the course of human history, God has established three ways of communication with man. (1) In the garden of Eden, Adam was in a state of friendship with God. Before the fall, no mediator was needed, because mediation implies a difficulty which is not easy to reconcile. (2) Under the law, Moses stood between God and the people of Israel to communicate to them the word of God: "I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount..." (Deut. 5:5). God gave a promise in the unconditional covenant of Abraham (Gen. 17). The promise spoke of nothing but blessing. The law was "added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). Israel was unable to bear the things that were spoken. God came to Israel not as He did to Abraham. The promise to Abraham was made directly by God. He spoke to Abraham as friend to friend; but God spoke through Moses in awful majesty as an offended sovereign. (3) Jesus Christ is the true Mediator of reconciliation in a way of satisfaction for the offence committed. This proves that the holy God can deal with men only through His Son. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of

reconciliation and then of intercession. The elect are first reconciled through the sufferings and death of Christ and then through His interceding life. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). There is no mediator of intercession before reconciliation. Hence, as Christ prayed not for the world (John 17:9), He died not for the world. Since He died for those God had given Him out of the world, He makes intercession for those and no others.

The hypostatic union—the union of two natures in one Person—is a doctrine difficult to understand, dangerous to undertake, and more dangerous to mistake. It is beyond the reason of man to comprehend. To be mistaken about the Person of Christ is indeed tragic. The characteristic feature about the incarnation is the hypostatic union—two natures in one Person.

Distinction must be made between a trinitarian, a human, and a theanthropic person. There are three Persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but there is only one essence. All three Persons have one Divine nature. Before the incarnation, Jesus Christ possessed only one nature. A human person possesses two natures—material and immaterial. The material nature is visible, but the immaterial is invisible. Man’s material body came into existence when God made man from the dust of the earth, and the immaterial soul came into existence when God breathed into that body the breath of life. A theanthropic Person has three natures. Jesus Christ alone is the theanthropic Person. He has the Divine essence, a human body, and a human soul.

Expressions used to describe the theanthropic Person should be guarded. One is incorrect to speak of the incarnate Christ as either “God in man” or “God and man.” This is the correct description: Jesus Christ is the “God-Man.”

The expression “God in man” belongs to persons who have been born of the Spirit. Christ indwells believers: “...Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). God indwells the elect by the Spirit of regeneration. The indwelling is a fact. As the temple was the place where God dwelt with Israel, the body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit: “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19, 20). Indwelling signifies not only presence but activity and restraint. The Holy Spirit is the source of life who brings form and order from what at first was shapeless and void. This presence is not to be regarded as a mere influence. He is a Person who regenerates, works in the believer to will and do God’s good pleasure, and subdues sin. The Holy Spirit is the seal and earnest of an unseen Savior. Scripture speaks of the omnipresence of the spirit. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Ps. 139:7). Omnipresence is an attribute, but the indwelling of which we speak is a Person.

Paul’s statement, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...” (II Cor. 5:19), does not contradict the statement, “God in man should be restricted to Christians.” The relationship between the Father and the Son is not the same as the relationship between Christ and His own. Relationship of the Father and the Son is one of essence, and the relationship of Christ and the believer is one of grace. John 14:20 makes distinctions in these relationships: “At

that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” When Christ spoke these words, the disciples did not know these things as they would. Their views would be enlarged and their faith confirmed. The teaching of the word enables Christ’s own to know. The following are points of knowledge emphasized in John 14:20 — (1) “I am in my Father” refers to the mystery of the Trinity. Scriptures are required to know that Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ (John 14:20; II Cor. 5:19). It has been said that the text states “Ye shall know,” not “ye shall know how.” The “why” and “how” of God’s grace are wrapped up in His secret counsel. (2) “Ye in me” is the fruit of the incarnation. (3) “I in you” is the relationship of grace.

The statement “God and man” indicates two persons rather than two natures. Jesus Christ is one Person, the second Person in the Godhead. He did not obtain personality by uniting with the human nature. The personality of Christ existed before the incarnation. On the other hand, the human nature Christ assumed was impersonal in itself; but it was personalized in the Divine Person. The nature Christ assumed had no subsistence apart from His Divine Person.

Paul makes a distinction between person and nature in Romans 9:21 — “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?” The potter’s power over the clay denotes the absolute sovereignty of God. A lump of clay consists in one nature, but the sovereign God fashions from one piece of the lump a vessel unto honor and from another piece a vessel unto dishonor. Both vessels come from the same lump. However, when the Creator fashions the lump into vessels, they become personalized in particular vessels. The nature of all men is the same, but their characteristics differ. Nature is invisible. It is visible only as it is reflected in one’s person. Human nature is not actually personal, that is, a distinct person. Thus, “that holy thing” (Luke 1:35) was not called a person. Christ assumed not a person in the incarnation but a nature.

The expressions “Son of man,” “man approved of God,” and “Behold the man” denote more than man. They indicate the God-Man who appeared in the form of a servant. Christ did not exist eternally as the God-Man. The God-Man’s complex consciousness was revealed as He walked among the sons of men. He possessed a twofold consciousness with only one self-consciousness. If Christ had only one nature, He could not have mediated between God and man. Christ’s weariness, weeping, praying, thirsting, and crying of forsakenness were from His human form of consciousness. On the other hand, His announcement that He and the Father are one, He had the power to lay down His life, He had power to resurrect Himself, and He had authority to forgive sin must be ascribed to the Divine form of His consciousness.

While the acts and qualities of either nature of the God-Man may be regarded as proceeding from one Person, the acts and qualities of one nature cannot be attributed to the other. That which characterizes Christ’s Divine nature can never be assigned to His human nature. To say Christ’s Divine nature suffered, died, and was raised would be erroneous. Each nature has certain qualities, and the qualities of one cannot be transferred to the other. A material nature can have only material qualities, and a spiritual nature can have only spiritual qualities.

The truth of Christ’s complex consciousness may be illustrated, to some extent in an imperfect manner, with a fluctuation of consciousness in a human person. Man’s thirst, hunger, pain, and

sorrow are attributed to his human nature. On the other hand, man's love for the Lord Jesus and joy in the Lord are ascribed to his spiritual nature. Man with his material nature is perishing daily, but his inward man which is his spiritual nature is renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16-18).