

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 230

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

*“In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.”*

John 1:1

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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THE DEITY OF CHRIST

#230

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THE MOST EXCELLENT SUBJECT

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664)

Looking unto Jesus—Hebrews 12:2

THE most excellent subject to discourse or write of is JESUS CHRIST. Augustine,¹ having read Cicero's² works, commended them for their eloquence; but he passed this sentence upon them: "They are not sweet because the name of Jesus is not in them." And Bernard's³ saying is near the same: "If thou writest, it doth not relish with me,⁴ unless I read Jesus there; if thou disputest or conferrest, it doth not relish well with me, unless Jesus sound⁵ there." Indeed all we say is but unsavory, if it is not seasoned with this salt: "I determined not to know any thing among you," saith Paul, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1Co 2:2). He resolved with himself before he preached among the Corinthians that this should be the only point of knowledge that he would profess himself to have skill in, and that, in the course of his ministry, he would labor to bring them to. This he made "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of his knowledge (Eph 3:18). "Yea, doubtless," saith he, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phi 3:8).

In this knowledge of Christ, there is an excellence above all other knowledge in the world. There is nothing more pleasing and comfortable, more animating and enlivening, more ravishing and soul contenting. Only Christ is the sun and center of all divinely revealed truths. We can preach nothing else as the object of our faith, as the necessary element of your soul's salvation, which doth not some way or other either meet in Christ or refer to Christ. Only Christ is the whole of man's happiness: the Sun to enlighten him, the Physician to heal him, the Wall of fire to defend him, the Friend to comfort him, the Pearl to enrich him, the Ark to support him, the Rock to sustain him under the heaviest pressures, as "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa 32:2). Only Christ is that between earth and heaven, the Mediator⁶ between God and man (1Ti 2:5), a mys-

¹ **Aurelius Augustine** (354-430) – Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa and theologian.

² **Cicero (Marcus Tullius)** (106-43 B.C.) – Roman philosopher, writer, and orator.

³ **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090-1153) – French monastic reformer known for his devotion.

⁴ **relish with me** – give me pleasure or delight.

⁵ **sound** – speaks (by His Word and Spirit).

⁶ **Mediator** – a go-between; "It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest, and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto Whom He did from all Eternity give a people to be His

tery, which the angels of heaven desire to pry, peep, and look into (1Pe 1:12). Here is a blessed subject indeed: who would not be glad to pry into it to be acquainted with it? “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Joh 17:3). Come then, let us look on this Sun of righteousness (Mal 4:2); we cannot receive harm but good by such a look. Indeed, by looking long on the natural sun, we may have our eyes dazzled and our faces blackened; but by looking unto Jesus Christ, we shall have our eyes clearer and our faces fairer. If “the light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart” (Pro 15:30), how much more when we have such a blessed object to look upon? As Christ is more excellent than all the world, so this sight transcends all other sights. Looking unto JESUS is the epitome⁷ of a Christian’s happiness, the quintessence⁸ of evangelical duties.

In the text, we have the act and object. The act in the original is very emphatic—*aphorontes eis*⁹—the English doth not fully express it. It signifies an averting or drawing off the eye from one object to another. There are two expressions, *apo* and *eis*: the one signifies a turning off the eye from all other objects, the other a fast fixing of the eye upon such an object and only upon such. So it is both a looking off and a looking on.¹⁰ On what? That is the object: looking unto *Jesus*, a title that denotes His mercy and bounty, as *Christ* denotes His office and function.

I shall not be so curious as to inquire why Jesus and not Christ is nominated;¹¹ I suppose the person is aimed at, which implies them both. Only this may be observed: Jesus is the purest gospel-name of all other names. Jesus was not the dialect¹² of the Old Testament; the first place that ever we read of this title as given to Christ is in Matthew 1:21: “Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins.” Some observe that this name *Jesus* was given Him twice: once until death (Mat 1:21) and afterwards forever (Phi 2:10).

The first was a note of His entering into covenant with God to fulfil the Law for us and to die for our sins; the second was a note of so meritorious a person, Who for His humility was more exalted than any person ever hath been or shall be.

seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (1689 London Baptist Confession 8.1); further, see FGB 183, *Christ the Mediator*, both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁷ **epitome** – summary or condensed account of anything.

⁸ **quintessence** – purest or most perfect form of something.

⁹ *aphorontes eis* – Greek = ἄφορῶντες εἰς: to direct one’s attention without distraction; fix one’s eyes trustingly on someone. (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, hereafter BDAG)

¹⁰ The verb ἄφορῶντες has the sense of directing one’s attention without distraction, while the prefix “from” adds the sense of “looking away from all others toward one.” (Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 453)

¹¹ **nominated** – mentioned by name.

¹² **dialect** – manner of speaking.

First, Jesus was the humble name of His deserving grace; now Jesus is the exalted name of His transcendent glory. At first, the Jews did crucify Jesus and His name; and the apostle did then distrust whether *Jesus was the true Jesus*: but now God hath raised Him from the dead and “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” (Phi 2:9-10).

My meaning is not to insist on this name, in contradiction to other names of Christ: He is often called Christ, Lord, Mediator, Son of God, and Emmanuel. Why? Jesus is all these, Jesus is Christ, as He is the anointed of God; and Jesus is the Lord, as He hath dominion over all the world; and Jesus is Mediator, as He is the reconciler of God and man; and Jesus is the Son of God, as He was eternally begotten before all worlds; and Jesus is Emmanuel, as He was incarnate, and [is therefore,] God with us. Only because Jesus signifies *Savior*—this name was given Him upon that very account: “for he shall save his people from their sins”—I shall make this my design: to look at Jesus more especially as carrying on the great work¹³ of our salvation from first to last. This, indeed, is the glad tidings, the gospel, the gospel privilege, and our gospel duty—*looking unto Jesus*.

From *Looking unto Jesus*, Sprinkle Publications, www.sprinklepublications.net.

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664): Anglican, then Presbyterian minister and author; born in Ormskirk, Lancashire, England.



¹³ See FGBs 219, *The Person of Christ*, and 225, *The Work of Christ*.

CHRIST'S DEITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Charles Hodge (1797-1878)

THE doctrine of redemption is the distinguishing doctrine of the Bible. The person and work of the Redeemer is therefore the great theme of the sacred writers. From the nature of the work that He was to accomplish, it was necessary that He should be at once God and man. He must participate in the nature of those whom He came to redeem and have power to subdue all evil, and dignity to give value to His obedience and sufferings. Therefore, from the beginning to the end of the sacred volume—from Genesis to Revelation—a God-man Redeemer is held up as the object of supreme reverence, love, and confidence to the perishing children of men. It is absolutely impossible to present a tithe¹ of the evidence that the Scriptures contain of the truth of this doctrine. It is to the Bible what the soul is to the body—its living and all-pervading principle, without which the Scriptures are a cold, lifeless system of history and moral precepts. It seems, therefore, to be a work of supererogation² to prove to Christians the divinity³ of their Redeemer. It is like proving the sun to be the source of light and heat to the system of which it is the center. Still, as there are men professing to be Christians who deny this doctrine, as there have been and still are men who make the sun a mere satellite of the earth, it is necessary that a part, at least, of the evidence by which this great truth is proved should be presented and should be at command to resist the gainsayers.⁴

The Protevangelium:⁵ Immediately after the apostasy of our first parents (Gen 3:1-6), it was announced that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Gen 3:15). The meaning of this promise and prediction is to be determined by subsequent revelations. When interpreted in the light of the Scriptures themselves, it is manifest that the seed of the woman means the Redeemer and that

¹ **tithe** – tenth.

² **supererogation** – beyond what is required or expected.

³ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Theological writers often use *deity* and *divinity* synonymously. However, many anti-trinitarian writers use *divinity* to say that Christ is *like* God, but is *not* God in essence. *Deity* seems to be the stronger term, though both are legitimate. "By 'deity' more is meant than 'divinity,' as this latter term is employed by different classes of antitrinitarians. The Arians [followers of Arius of Alexandria (AD 250/56-336), who taught that Jesus was not God]...taught the divinity of the Son in the sense of a *similarity of nature* between Him and the Father. This resemblance is greater and closer than that of any other being, man or angel, but is not *identity of essence*...It is *like* it, but it is *not* it. The Son has divinity but not deity." (Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed., 258)

⁴ **gainsayers** – those who speak against or contradict.

⁵ **Protevangelium** – first gospel; God's warning to the serpent (Gen 3:15) that there would be enmity between its offspring and Eve's, and that her offspring would crush the serpent's head, is seen as the earliest announcement of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

bruising the serpent's head means His final triumph over the powers of darkness. In this protevangelium, as it has ever been called, we have the dawning revelation of the humanity and divinity of the great deliverer. As seed of the woman, His humanity is distinctly asserted; and the nature of the triumph that He was to effect in the subjugation⁶ of Satan proves that He was to be a divine person. In the great conflict between good and evil, between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, between Christ and Belial,⁷ between God and Satan, He that triumphs over Satan is and can be nothing less than divine...

Jehovah⁸ and the Angel Jehovah: On this primary and fundamental revelation of this great truth, all the subsequent revelations of Scripture are founded. As there is more than one person in the Godhead, we find at once the distinction that runs through the Bible with ever-increasing clearness—Jehovah as He Who sends and Jehovah as the messenger, a mediator—between the Father and the Son as coequal, coeternal persons. This is not an arbitrary⁹ or unauthorized interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. In Luke 24:27, it is said of our Lord, “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luk 24:27). Moses therefore did testify of Christ (Joh 5:45-46); and we have a sure ground on which to rest in interpreting the passages of the Old Testament, which set forth the person and work of the great deliverer as referring to Christ.

He Who was promised to Adam as the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) was next declared [to] be the seed of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-6). That this does not refer to his descendants collectively but to Christ individually, we know from the direct assertion of the apostle (Gal 3:16) and from the fulfillment of the promise...Abraham therefore saw the day of Christ and was glad (Joh 8:56); and as our

⁶ **subjugation** – conquering; bringing under domination.

⁷ **Belial** – the spirit of evil personified; the devil.

⁸ **Jehovah** – The English name *Jehovah* appears four times independently in the Old Testament of the KJV (Exo 6:3; Psa 83:18; Isa 12:2; 26:4) and three other times as a compound: Jehovahjireh (Gen 22:14; the LORD will provide); Jehovahnissi (Exod 17:15; the LORD is my banner); and Jehovahshalom (Judges 6:24; the LORD is peace). God's name in the Hebrew Scriptures consists of four consonants, YHWH or JHVH (Hebrew = יהוה), commonly referred to as the Tetragrammaton (“four letters”). The KJV translates it LORD, which informs the reader that God's name is being used in the Hebrew. Modern scholars prefer to use Yahweh instead of Jehovah, although the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* says, “The pronunciation of *yhwh* as Yahweh is a scholarly guess.” Daniel I. Block likewise says, “Although the original pronunciation of the name is uncertain, today non-Jewish scholars...prefer to render the name as “Yahweh,” which is also a hypothetical form.” Block goes on to say, “Because of the uncertainty of the name's original vocalization...I render the divine name simply with...YHWH” (Block, *For the Glory of God*, xv). For clarity, Hodge's use of Jehovah will sometimes be replaced with LORD.

⁹ **arbitrary** – based solely on personal wishes or feelings rather than on reasons or principle.

Lord said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Joh 8:58).¹⁰ This proves that the person predicted as the seed of the woman and as the seed of Abraham, through whom redemption was to be effected, was to be both God and man. He could not be the seed of Abraham unless [he was] a man, and he could not be the Savior of men unless [he was] God.

We accordingly find throughout the Old Testament constant mention made of a person distinct from the LORD, as a person to whom nevertheless the *titles, attributes, and works* of the LORD are ascribed.¹¹ This person is called "the angel of the LORD."¹² He claims divine authority, exercises divine [exclusive rights,] and receives divine homage. If this were a casual matter, if in one or two instances the messenger spoke in the name of Him Who sent him, we might assume that the person thus designated was an ordinary angel or minister of God. But when this is a pervading representation of the Bible; when we find that these terms are applied, not first to one and then to another angel indiscriminately, but to one *particular* angel; that the person so designated is also called the Son of God (Dan 3:25), the Mighty God (Isa 9:6); that the work attributed to Him is elsewhere attributed to God Himself; and that in the New Testament, this manifested Jeho-

¹⁰ Jehovah, the...well-established rendering of the Hebrew consonants YHWH, was regarded by the Jews as too sacred to be pronounced and was replaced by a variety of substitutes, such as "Lord" (*Adonai*) or "The Name." We can no longer say with certainty how it was pronounced, but from Exodus 3:14, we know that it was derived from the verb "to be": "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Now on more than one occasion our Lord [Jesus] refers to Himself by using "I am" in a way that points unmistakably to this Old Testament title of Jehovah. In a controversy with the Jews, He declared, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Joh 8:58). Had He been merely a preexistent Being, then He would have had to say, "Before Abraham was, I was." That the amazing implication of His claim did not escape the Jews is clearly shown by the extreme violence of their reaction in attempting to stone Him to death for alleged blasphemy. Another occasion on which He used it was at the time of His arrest. To His question to His approaching captors "Whom seek ye?" they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," to which He replied, "I am." The effect that this brief utterance had on them was dramatic: "They went backward and fell to the ground" (Joh 18:5-6). The mere literal sense of these words could hardly have produced this extraordinary effect. Then again at the crucial stage of His trial, Jesus, being interrogated by the high priest as to His messianic claims, replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mar 14:62). The savage vehemence that this called forth in the high priest and the company can be explained only if it was understood by them to be a claim to personal deity, a blasphemy in their eyes of such magnitude as to be expiated only by death. (F. F. Bruce, W. J. Martin, *The Deity of Christ*, 7-8)

¹¹ **ascribed** – considered as belonging to.

¹² **the angel of the LORD** – "The angel of the LORD" (מלאך יהוה) is mentioned fifty-eight times in the OT, "the angel of God" eleven times. Angels of the LORD appear either singly as here or in groups. When first seen, they are usually taken to be men, but by the end of the encounter one of them is realized to be God (Gen 18:2, 22; Jdg 6:11-22; 13:3-22). When, as here, the text simply speaks of a single angel of the LORD, this must be understood as God Himself appearing in human form, nearly always to bring good news or salvation. (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, Vol. 2, 9)

vah, Who led His people under the Old Testament economy, is declared to be the Son of God, the *logos*,¹³ Who was manifested in the flesh, it becomes certain that by the “angel of the LORD” in the early books of Scripture, we are to understand a divine person, distinct from the Father.

The Book of Genesis: Thus, as early as Genesis 16:7, the angel of the LORD appears to Hagar and says, “I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude” (Gen 16:10). And Hagar, it is said, “called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me” (Gen 16:13). This angel therefore is declared to be Jehovah and promises what God only could perform. Again, in Genesis 18:1, it is said, “The LORD appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre,” Who promised to him the birth of Isaac. In verse 13, He is again called LORD [*Jehovah*]. [He] said, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee...and Sarah shall have a son” (Gen 18:14). As the angels turned toward Sodom, one of them, called the LORD, said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” (Gen 18:18). And the LORD said, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;²¹ I will go down now, and see” (Gen 18:20-21). Abraham, it is added, stood before the LORD (Gen 18:22). Through the whole of Abraham’s intercession in behalf of the cities of the plain, the angel is addressed as *Adonai*, a title given only to the true God, and speaks as Jehovah and assumes the authority of God to pardon or punish as to Him seems fit. When the execution of the sentence pronounced on Sodom is mentioned, it is said, “Then the LORD rained...brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven” (Gen 19:24).

With regard to this and similar remarkable expressions, the question is not, “What *may* they mean?”, but, “What *do* they mean?” Taken by themselves, they may be explained away; but taken in the light of the connected revelations of God on the subject, it becomes apparent that the LORD is distinguished as a person from the LORD; and, therefore, that in the Godhead there is more than one person to whom the name “the LORD” [*Jehovah*] belongs. In this case, the words *brimstone and fire* may be connected with the words *from the LORD* in the sense of “fire of God” as a figurative expression for the lightning. The passage would then mean simply, “The LORD rained lightning on Sodom and Gomorrah.” But this is not only against the authorized punctuation of the passage as indicated by the accents, but also against the analogy of Scripture.¹⁴ That is, it is an unnatural interpretation and brings this passage into conflict with those in which the distinction between the angel of Jehovah and Jehovah, *i.e.*, between the persons of the Godhead, is clearly indicated.

¹³ *logos* – Greek = λογος; word.

¹⁴ **analogy of Scripture** – interpretation of unclear, difficult, or ambiguous passages of Scripture by comparison with clear and unambiguous passages that refer to the same teaching or event.

In Genesis 22:2, God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. The angel of the LORD arrests his hand at the moment of immolation,¹⁵ and says, “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Gen 22:12). And in Genesis 22:16, the angel of the LORD said, “By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD...That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed.” And Abraham called the name of that place “Jehovahjireh”¹⁶ (Gen 22:14). Here God, the angel of the LORD, and the LORD are names given to the same person, Who swears by Himself and promises the blessing of numerous posterity to Abraham. The angel of Jehovah must therefore be a divine person.

In Jacob's vision, recorded in Genesis 28:11–22, he saw a ladder reaching to heaven, “And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth.” Here the person elsewhere called the angel of the LORD, and Who had given the same promise to Abraham, is called the LORD God of Abraham and the God of [Isaac]. In Genesis 32:24–32, Jacob is said to have wrestled with an angel who blessed him, and in seeing whom Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face.” In referring to this event, the prophet Hosea, says, “He had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial” (12:4-5). The angel with whom Jacob wrestled was the LORD God of Hosts.

Other Historical Books of the Old Testament: In Exodus 3, we have the account of the revelation of God to Moses on Mount Horeb. “The angel of the LORD,” it is said, “appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush” (Exo 3:2). Moses turned to see this great sight, “And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush...and said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.”

Here the angel of the LORD is identical with the LORD and is declared to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The personal distinction between Jehovah and the angel of Jehovah—between the Father and the Son, as these persons are elsewhere, and usually in the later Scriptures, designated—is clearly presented in Exodus 23:20, where it is said, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions:

¹⁵ **immolation** – killing or offering as a sacrifice.

¹⁶ **Jehovahjireh** – “the LORD will provide.”

for my name is in him” (Exo 23:20). The last phrase is equivalent to “I am in him.” By “the name of God” is often meant God Himself as manifested. Thus it is said of the temple, “My name shall be there,” *i.e.*, “There will I dwell” (1Ki 8:29). As in the New Testament the Father is said to send the Son and to be in Him, so here the LORD is said to send the angel of the LORD and to be in Him. And as the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sin, so the angel of Jehovah had authority to forgive or punish at His pleasure...

That the angel of Jehovah is a divine person is further manifest from the account given in Exodus 32-33 of what God said to Moses after the people had sinned in worshipping the golden calf. In punishment of that offense, God threatened no longer personally to attend the people. In consequence of this manifestation of the divine displeasure, the whole congregation was assembled before the door of the Tabernacle and humbled themselves before God. And the LORD descended and “spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exo 33:11). And Moses interceded for the people and said, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (33:15). And the LORD said, “My presence (*i.e.*, I myself) shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exo 33:14). This shows that a divine person—the LORD—had previously guided the people and that, on their repentance, He promised to continue with them. This person, called the angel of the LORD, *Jehovah Himself*, is in Isaiah 63:9 called “the angel of the face¹⁷ of Jehovah,” *i.e.*, the angel or the messenger, who is the image of God. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that this angel was the Son of God, sent by Him, and therefore called “His angel.” In Isaiah 63, [He] is designated as the Savior of Israel (63:8) and the Redeemer of Jacob (63:16), Who came to reveal God. He was “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3) in Whom was His name. It is expressed in the New Testament [as] “the fulness of the Godhead” (Col 2:9), Who in the fullness of time, for us men and for our salvation, became flesh and revealed His glory as the only begotten Son full of grace and truth (Joh 1:14).

In subsequent periods of the history of God’s people, this same divine person appears as the leader and God of Israel. He manifested Himself to Joshua (5:14) as “captain of the host of the LORD”; to Gideon (Jdg 6:11) as “angel of the LORD” and spake to him...*i.e.*, Jehovah said to him, “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites” (6:14). In verse 16, it is again said, “the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” When Gideon became aware Who it was that spoke to

¹⁷ **angel of the face** – this is a literal translation of the Hebrew; KJV = “the angel of his presence [*pānīm*]”; “The [word *pānīm*], therefore, is not to be taken objectively in the sense of ‘the angel who sees His face,’ but as explanatory, ‘the angel who is His face, or in whom His face is manifested.’ The *His* which follows does not point back to the angel, but to Jehovah, Who reveals Himself thus.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7, 600)

him, he exclaimed, "And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die" (6:22-23). The same angel appeared to Manoah, promised him a son, and revealed Himself as He had done to Gideon by causing fire to issue from a rock and consume the sacrifice that had been placed upon it. When Manoah knew that it was the angel of the LORD, he said unto his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Jdg 13:22)...

The Prophetical Books... Isaiah 6:1-5 contains an account of the prophet's vision of Jehovah in His holy temple, surrounded by the hosts of adoring angels, who worship Him day and night. The person thus declared to be Jehovah, the object of angelic worship, the apostle John tells us [in John 12:41]¹⁸ was none other than Christ,¹⁹ Whom all Christians and all angels now worship.

In chapters 7-9, the birth of a child whose mother was a virgin is predicted. That this child was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, is proved (1) from His name Immanuel, which means "God with us," *i.e.*, God in our nature. (2) The land of Israel is said to be His land. (3) He is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, Father of Eternity, and Prince of Peace. (4) His kingdom is everlasting and universal. (5) The consequences of His advent and dominion are such as flow only from the dominion of God. In the eleventh chapter, we have another description of the perfection of His person and of His kingdom, which is applicable only to the person and kingdom of God. It is only where God reigns that the peace, holiness, and blessedness that attend the coming of the predicted deliverer are ever found. The same argument may be drawn from the prophetic account of the Messiah and of His kingdom contained in the latter part of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter to the sixty-sixth. This Messiah was to effect the redemption of His people, not merely from the Babylonish captivity, but from *all* evil: to secure for them the pardon of sin and reconciliation with God; the prevalence of true religion to the ends of the earth; and, finally, the complete triumph of the kingdom

¹⁸ These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him (Joh 12:41). "His' refers to Christ—it is 'his glory'—as the concluding words of vs. 41 confirm: 'spake of him.' The Evangelist does not mean that Isaiah already foresaw Jesus' (later) glory, but that the glory of God as the prophet foresaw it in his vision was no other than that which the Son of God had with the Father before the world was and that was to be manifested before the eyes of all in the incarnation of the Word (17:4; 1:14, 18)." (Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, 445)

¹⁹ One of the recurrent themes in [the Gospel of John] is divine "glory"; it is attributed both to God and to Jesus. One of the most extraordinary references is in 12:37-43. After describing the unbelief of Jesus' contemporaries in 12:37-38 as fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 53:1, the author (in 12:39-40) cites Isaiah 6:10 as further explanation of this unbelief. Then we are told in 12:41 that Isaiah "saw his glory, and spake of him." In the immediate context, the antecedent of "his" and "him" has to be Jesus. (Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 374)

of light over the kingdom of darkness. This is a work that none other than a divine person could effect...

The first six chapters of the prophecies of Zechariah are a series of visions, foreshadowing the return of the Jews from Babylon, the restoration of the city, and the rebuilding of the temple; the subsequent apostasy of the people; the advent of the Messiah; the establishment of His kingdom, and the dispersion of the Jews. From the ninth chapter to the end of the book, the same events are predicted in ordinary prophetic language. Jerusalem is called upon to rejoice at the advent of her king. He was to be meek and lowly, [humble] and peaceful (9:9), and his dominion universal. In chapter 11, He is represented as a shepherd who makes a last attempt to gather his flock. He is to be rejected by those whom he came to save and sold for thirty pieces of silver. For this enormity, the people are to be given up to long desolation; but at last God will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication, and “they shall look upon me,” saith Jehovah, “whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn” (Zec 12:10). This shepherd is declared to be God’s fellow, associate, or equal. His kingdom shall triumph, shall become universal, and holiness shall everywhere prevail...

It is plain, even from this [hasty] review, that the Old Testament clearly predicts the advent of a divine person clothed in our nature, Who was to be the Savior of the world. He was to be the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David; born of a virgin; a man of sorrows; and to make “his soul an offering for sin” (Isa 53:10). He is, however, no less clearly declared to be the Angel of Jehovah, Jehovah, Elohim, Adonai, the Mighty God, exercising all divine prerogatives,²⁰ and entitled to divine worship from men and angels. Such is the doctrine of the Old Testament as to what the Messiah was to be; and this is the doctrine of the New Testament, as to what Jesus of Nazareth in fact is.

From *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, Theology, 483–521.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878): American Presbyterian theologian; born in Philadelphia, PA.



On the matter of our Lord’s Godhead, we cannot for an instant hesitate: we do not merely believe Jesus Christ to be God, but we risk our eternal future upon that truth. I am a lost man, I know, and for me there can be nothing but eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, if the Savior, Christ, be not divine. *But He is divine.* This we will maintain in the teeth of all men as our confession of faith—Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest, very God of very God, is my Lord and my God.—*C. H. Spurgeon*

²⁰ **prerogatives** – exclusive rights; privileges.

JESUS AND THE HONORS DUE TO GOD

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

CHRIST'S eternal deity may be demonstrated from that divine honor and worship that is due to Him and by angels and saints given unto Him. The apostle showeth that religious worship ought to be performed to none but to Him that is God by nature (Gal 4:8), and that they are ignorant of the true God who religiously worship them that are no gods by nature. Therefore, if Christ were not God by nature and consubstantial¹ with the Father, we ought not to perform religious worship to Him.

Divine worship is due to the Second Person of this coessential² Trinity, to Jesus Christ our Lord and God. There is but one immediate, formal, proper, adequate, and fundamental reason of divine worship...and that is the sovereign, supreme, singular majesty, independent, and infinite excellence of the eternal Godhead. For by divine worship, we do acknowledge and declare the infinite majesty, truth, wisdom, goodness, and glory of our blessed God. We do not esteem anything worthy of divine honor and worship that hath but a finite and created glory because divine honor is proper and peculiar to the only true God. [He] will not give His glory to any other who is not God (Isa 42:8). God alone is the adequate object of divine faith, hope, love, and worship because these graces are all exercised and this worship performed in acknowledgment of His infinite perfection and independent excellence. Therefore, no such worship can be due to *any* creature or thing below God...

The Father and the Son are one (Joh 10:30)—one in power, excellence, nature—one God, and therefore to be honored with the same worship: “All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (Joh 5:23). Every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ, Who is man, is God also and therefore equal to His Father (Phi 2:6, 11-12); and it can be no robbery, no derogation to³ the Father's honor, for us to give equal honor to Him and His coequal Son, Who subsists⁴ in the form of God, in the nature of God. Thus, you see the divine nature, the infinite excellence of Jesus Christ, is an undeniable ground of this coequal honor. Therefore, the worship due to Christ as God, the same God with His Father, is the very same worship both for kind and for degree that is due to the Father. But, for the further and clearer opening of this, consider,

¹ **consubstantial** – of the same essence.

² **coessential** – having the same essence.

³ **derogation to** – taking away from.

⁴ **subsists** – existing as a real entity.

(1) **First, that all *inward worship* is due to Christ.** As, [1] *Believing on Him*. Faith is a worship that belongs only to God, enjoined in the First Commandment (Exo 20:3); and against trusting in man, there is a curse denounced (Jer 17:5-6). But Christ commands us to believe in Him: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me” (Joh 14:1); “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (Joh 6:47). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16). “He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (3:36). The same respect that Christians give unto God the Father, they must also give unto the Son, believing on Him; [this] is an honor due only to God. Other creatures—men and angels—may be believed, but not believed on, rested on. This [would] make them gods; this [would be] no less than idolatry.

[2] *Loving Jesus Christ with all the heart*. [This is] commanded above the love, nay, even to the hatred, of father, mother, wife, children, yea, and our own lives (Luk 14:26). He who is not disposed, where these loves are incompatible, to hate father and all other relations for the love of Christ, can be none of His. I ought dearly and tenderly to love father and mother—the Law of God and nature requiring it of me—but to prefer dear Jesus, Who is God blessed for ever (Rom 9:5), before all and above all, as Paul, the primitive⁵ Christians, and martyrs have done before me. “Your house, home, and goods, your life, and all that ever you have,” saith that martyr,⁶ “God hath given you as love tokens, to admonish you of His love, to win your love to Him again. Now will He try your love, whether you set more by Him or by His tokens.” When relations or life stand in competition with Christ and His gospel, they are to be abandoned, hated, etc. But,

(2) **Secondly, all *outward worship* is due to Christ.** As, [1] *Dedication in baptism is in His name*. “Baptizing them in the name⁷ of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mat 28:19), *into* the name by that rite initiating them and receiving of them into the profession of the service of one God in three persons, and of depending on Christ alone for salvation. Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is the consecrating of them unto the sincere service of the sacred Trinity.

[2] *Divine invocation*⁸ *is given to Jesus Christ*. “Stephen calls upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit” (Act 7:59). “All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Co 1:2). “God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus

⁵ **primitive** – earliest; ancient.

⁶ John Bradford (c.1510-1555), in *Acts and Monuments of John Fox*, Vol. 7, 238; Roman Catholic Queen Mary had Bradford burned at the stake for refusing to deny his faith.

⁷ Greek = εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, “into the name.”

⁸ **invocation** – calling on God for help.

Christ, direct our way unto you” (1Th 3:11). “Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:2). It is the saints’ character that they are such as call on the Lord Jesus (Act 2:21; 9:14; 2Co 12:8-9; 1:2; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1-2). But,

[3] *Praises are offered to our Lord Jesus Christ*: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed⁹ us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev 5:9). “I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (5:11-13). Here [is] a catholic¹⁰ confession of Christ’s divine nature and power. All the creatures, both reasonable and unreasonable, do in some sort set forth the praises of Christ because in some sort they serve to illustrate and set forth His glory. Here you see that Christ is adored with religious worship by all creatures, which doth evidently prove that He is God.

Since all the creatures worship Him with religious worship, we may safely and boldly conclude upon His deity. Here are three parties that bear a part in this new song: (1) the redeemed of the Lord; and they sing in the last part of the 8th verse, and in the 9th and 10th verses. Then, (2) the angels follow, verses 11 and 12. (3) All creatures are brought in, joining in this new song, verse 13. That noble company of the Church triumphant¹¹ and Church militant,¹² sounding out the praises of the Lamb, may sufficiently satisfy us concerning the divinity of the Lamb. But,

[4] *Divine adoration is also given to Him*. “A leper worshipped him.” (Mat 8:2). Mark saith he kneeled down, and Luke saith he fell upon his face (Mar 1:40; Luk

⁹ The act of redemption is peculiar to God in the Old Testament. Two Hebrew words are in use, and both occur in Hosea 13:14: “I will *ransom* them from the power of the grave; I will *redeem* them from death.” Again, in Psalm 130:7-8: “For with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” A direct parallel to this is found in Titus 2:13-14 with the difference that now Christ is identified with God (see verse 10): “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” A different Greek verb for redemption is found in Galatians 3:13: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.” Again, in Revelation 5:9: “For thou [*the Lamb*] wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Bruce & Martin, *The Deity of Christ*, 11-12)

¹⁰ **catholic** – universal; not in the sense of *Roman Catholic*, but meaning “common to all.”

¹¹ **Church triumphant** – portion of the Church that has overcome this world and entered into glory.

¹² **Church militant** – Church on earth in its struggle against the powers of evil.

5:12). He showed reverence in his gesture. “Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.” He acknowledged a divine power in Christ in that he saith [Jesus] could make him clean if He would. This poor leper lay at Christ’s feet, imploring and beseeching Him, as a dog at his master’s feet, as Zanchy¹³ renders the word, which shows that this leper looked upon Christ as more than a prophet or a holy man and that believing He was God, and so able to heal him if He would, he gave Him religious worship. He doth not say to Christ, “Lord, if thou wilt pray to God or to thy Father for me, I shall be whole”; but “Lord, if thou wilt I shall be whole.” He acknowledges the leprosy curable by Christ, which he and all men knew was incurable by others, which was a plain argument of his faith. As Avicenna¹⁴ observes [on Matthew 2:11], “Though the wise men of the east, who saw Herod in all his royalty and glory, worshipped him not, yet they fell down before Christ”...Is it probable that they would worship a young babe that by reason of his infancy understands nothing, except they did believe some divine thing to be in Him?...

[5] *When Jesus Christ was declared to the world, God did command even the most glorious angels to worship Him as His natural and co-essential Son, Who was begotten from the days of eternity in the unity of the Godhead.* For, when He brought His first-begotten and only-begotten Son into the world, He said, “And let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb 1:6).¹⁵ The glorious angels refuse divine honor to be given to themselves: “See thou do it not,” saith the angel to John, when John fell at his feet to worship him; “I am thy fellow-servant” (Rev 19:10; 22:9). Yet they give, and must give, divine honor unto Christ (Phi 2:9). The *manhood* of itself could not be thus adored because it is a [creation], [except] as it is received into unity of person with the deity and hath a partner agency therewith, according to its measure in the work of redemption and mediation. All the honor due to Christ, according to His divine nature, was due from all eternity. There is no divine honor due to Him from and because of His *human* nature or any perfection that truly and properly doth belong to Christ as man. He Who was born of Mary is to be adored with divine worship: not for that reason—because He was born of Mary—but because He is God, the coessential and eternal Son of God. From what has been said, we may thus argue: he to whom religious worship is truly exhibited *is* the most high God. Religious worship is truly exhibited unto Christ, [therefore,] Christ is the most

¹³ **Girolamo Zanchy (Zanchi)** or **Jerome Zanchius** (1516-1590) – Italian Reformer and author.

¹⁴ **Avicenna** or **Ibn Sina** (973-1037) – Persian philosopher and scientist.

¹⁵ That [the author of Hebrews] believes in the full deity of Jesus is clear: Jesus is described as the perfect representation of God’s glory and nature (1:3); He not only existed before He appeared on earth (10:5), before Melchizedek (7:3), before human history began (1:2), or before the universe was created (1:10), but He also existed and exists eternally (7:16; 9:14; 13:8); like His Father, He may be called Lord; He is creator (1:10), sustainer (1:3), and heir of the universe (1:2), that is, everything in time and space...He is worshiped by angels (1:6) and is the object of human faith (12:2); He is sovereign over the world to come (2:5); and passages referring to YHWH in the OT are applied to Him. (Harris, *Jesus as God*, 225)

high God.¹⁶

From “The Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures”
in *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, Vol. 5, in the public domain.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680): English nonconformist Puritan preacher and advocate of Congregationalism; buried in Bunhill Fields, London, England.



¹⁶ The evidence for the deity of Christ is quite compelling. The Son is to be honored just as we honor the Father (Joh 5:23). He is given glory in doxologies modeled on OT doxologies to God (1Pe 4:11; 2Pe 3:18). He is the object of worship that is expressed in the words of OT references to the worship of YHWH (Heb 1:6) or in scenes in which all creation worships Christ alongside God in heaven itself (Rev 5:8-14). He hears and answers prayers for salvation, for the safekeeping of one’s spirit at the moment of death, and for other needs (Joh 14:14; Act 7:59-60; Rom 10:12-13; 2Co 12:8-9). Religious songs are sung in His honor (Eph 5:19; Rev 5:9-10). He is as much the object of religious faith as God is (Joh 14:1; Rom 10:11). We are to fear or revere Him (Eph 5:21; 1Pe 3:14-16), serve Him (Dan 7:14), and love Him (Joh 14:15, 21) as we do God. (Bowman & Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 270-271)

JESUS AND GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

WE now proceed to show that the Lord Jesus, our adorable Immanuel, is represented in God's Word as invested with all the *attributes* that belong to Jehovah.

Let us commence with His *eternal existence*. If it can be proved from the sacred Scriptures that this belongs to Christ, it must follow that He is God; for of no other being can it be said that he is eternal, but Jehovah. Examine, then, Colossians 1:17-18: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

In this striking and beautiful passage, Jesus is declared to be *before* all created things. Could this be true if He Himself were a created being? Either Christ is created or He is uncreated. He is a creature or the Creator. There is no intermediate scale of being. We repeat it: He must be one of two—the creature or the Creator. If a mere creature, and the Socinian¹ allows Him to be no more, then it is absurdity to suppose Him creating all things: for He must have been created before He could create; then He could not have been *before* all created things.

If, too, He were a mere creature—let it be remembered the Socinian and Arian² deny that He is more—how could He uphold all things? For He would need an upholding power for Himself. No mere creature ever has or ever can sustain itself. The angels could not, for they fell. Adam could not, for he fell. And Christ could not have sustained Himself in the solemn hour of atonement³ when standing beneath the mighty load of His people's sins, had He not been more than creature—the uncreated Jehovah. His humanity⁴ did indeed tremble, shudder, and shrink

¹ **Socinian** – follower of the 16th and 17th century movement of Faustus and Lelio Socinus, who rejected the deity of Christ, the Trinity, and original sin.

² **Arian** – follower of Arius, a bishop of Alexandria (AD 250/56-336), who taught that the Logos was the Son, Servant, and supreme creation of God, but not coequal with God the Father: he was *divine*, but not *deity*. The Post-Reformation Socinians held essentially the Arian view of the Son; Jehovah's Witnesses are modern day Arians.

³ See FGB 227, *Atonement*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁴ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** For a brief explanation of Christ's Incarnation, we supply the following excerpt from John Owen (1616-1683): "1. The divine and human nature in Christ have but one personal subsistence; and so are but one Christ, one distinct personal principle of all operations, of all that He did or doth as mediator...For the Word could not be made flesh, nor could He take on Him the seed of Abraham, nor could the mighty God be a child born and given unto us, nor could God shed His blood for His Church, but that the two natures so directly expressed must be united in one person; for otherwise, as they are two natures still, they would be two persons also. 2. Each nature thus

back; but upborne by His Godhead—secretly, invisibly, yet effectually sustained by His deity—He achieved a complete triumph, made an end of sin, and brought in a new and everlasting righteousness.⁵

If, too, He were a creature only, how could He give spiritual life to the dead, and how could He sustain that life when given? All spiritual life is from Christ, and all spiritual life is sustained by Christ—“Christ, who is our life” (Col 3:4)—the life of the soul, the life of pardon, the life of justification, the life of sanctification,⁶ the life of all the Christian graces; the life of all that now is, and the life of all that is to come. Glorious truth [is] this to the saint of God!

Compare Revelation 1:8—“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”—[with] Isaiah 44:6: “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last;⁷ and beside me there is no God.” We refrain from commenting on these passages, so self-evident is the truth.

Turn to our blessed Lord’s conference with the Jews in which He asserts His eternal existence: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (Joh 8:58). Does not Jehovah apply these very terms to Himself? “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exo 3:14). How then

united in Christ is entire and preserves unto itself its own natural properties. For He is no less perfect God for being made man; nor no less a true, perfect man, consisting of soul and body with all their essential parts, by that nature’s being taken into subsistence with the Son of God. His divine nature still continues immense, omniscient, omnipotent, infinite in holiness, etc.; His human nature, finite, limited, and, before its glorification, subject to all infirmities of life and death that the same nature in others, absolutely considered, is obnoxious unto. 3. In each of these natures, He acts suitably unto the essential properties and principles of that nature. As God, He made all things, upholds all things by the word of His power, fills heaven and earth, etc.; as man, He lived, hungered, suffered, died, rose, ascended into heaven: yet, by reason of the union of both these natures in the same person, not only His own person is said to do all these things, but the person expressed by the name which He hath on the account of one nature, is said to do that which He did only in the other. So God is said to “redeem his church with his own blood” (Act 20:28) and to “lay down his life for us” (Joh 10:17), and the Son of man to be in heaven when He was on the earth (Joh 3:13); all because of the unity of His person.” (Owen, *Works*, Vol. 2, 418-419)

⁵ See FGBs 187, *Justification*, and 191, *Imputed Righteousness*.

⁶ See FGB 215, *Sanctification*.

⁷ A significant title assumed by the Lord Jesus in the book of Revelation is “first and last” (1:11; 2:8; 22:13). In 22:16 the speaker says of Himself, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things,” having already said in verse 13, “I am Alpha and Omega...the first and the last.” Also in chapter 2:8, there is no doubt about the person to whom the words refer: “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.” Now, this designation “first and last” occurs three times in Isaiah (41:4; 44:6; 48:12), where on each occasion Jehovah [*the LORD*] is the speaker. (Bruce & Martin, *The Deity of Christ*, 6)

are we to understand these words? Not by the Socinian's gloss,⁸ but by the conduct of the Jews: "Then took they up stones to cast at him" (Joh 8:59). They considered Christ guilty of blasphemy in applying to Himself the incommunicable name and attributes of Jehovah. They perfectly understood Him to mean that He was God. Had He not been truly divine, would He have left them under so fearful a delusion? And would He have jeopardized His life, when by a single retraction He could have allayed their rage and averted the danger that threatened Him?

What a consoling view do we derive of Christ from this revealed attribute of His nature! Is He eternal? Then His love to His people is eternal, His love to them being coexistent with His very being. It is not the love of yesterday or of today—it is the love of *eternity*. Its springhead⁹ is His own eternal existence. Is He eternal? Then must He be unchangeable too: His precious love, set upon them from all eternity, can never be removed; having given them Himself, Himself He will never take away. Blessed thought! He may blight earthly hopes; He may break up earthly cisterns; He may wither earthly gourds; He may send billow upon billow, breach upon breach, but never, never will He take Himself from the people of His love. Dear reader, you may be conscious of many and great departures; this single view of your Father's unchangeableness may recall to your recollection backslidings, many and aggravated: forgetfulness, ingratitude, unkindnesses without number; murmurings, rebellion, and unbelief. Still does God, your God, say to you, "Though you have dealt so with Me, though you have forgotten Me, though your name is rebellious, yet do I love you still. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you." What a soul-humbling, heart-melting thought is this! Does your Father love your sins? No! Does He look complacently on your wanderings? No! He hates your sins, and He will follow your wanderings with His chastising rod; but He loves your person, beholding you in the Beloved, fully and freely accepted in the glorious righteousness of Jesus, Who is the same "yesterday, to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). If this truth, dear reader, be broken up to your soul by the blessed and Eternal Spirit, the effect will be most holy and abasing.

***Omnipresence* is an attribute of deity ascribed to Christ.** We would refer the reader to two portions of Scripture for proof. They both run in parallel lines with each other. In Matthew 18:20, we have this encouraging declaration from Christ: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Compare this with Exodus 20:24: "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto you and will bless you." Thus the reader will perceive that the identical promise that God gave to His ancient Church, when He established her in the wilderness, when He gave to her the Law, built for her the tabernacle,

⁸ **gloss** – comment, explanation, or interpretation, often used in a sinister sense for a plausible but misleading or dishonest interpretation.

⁹ **springhead** – source or fountain of a stream or river.

and instituted for her a sacrifice, the Lord Jesus makes of Himself. Consoling thought! Jesus is with His saints at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. He is “God with us” (Mat 1:23). He is with them to comfort them in the hour of sorrow, to enlighten them in the hour of darkness, to guide them in the hour of doubt and perplexity, to deliver them in the time of conflict, to support them in the hour of death. O for faith to realize this! He was with His three faithful servants in the fiery furnace. He was with Daniel in the lions’ den. He was with Jacob in his wrestlings at Bethel. He was with John in his exile at Patmos. Jesus is, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances with His dear people...

Regard the attribute of *omniscience*¹⁰ as belonging essentially to Christ: “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man” (Joh 2:24-25). We beseech the reader to regard attentively 1 Kings 8:39, where the same attribute, in almost the same expressions, is ascribed to Jehovah: “For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.” Whose prerogative¹¹ is it to search the heart? Who can fathom this fathomless sea of iniquity? Who can follow it in all its serpentine¹² windings? Who can detect its deep subtlety? Who? “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins¹³” (Jer 17:10). A mere creature—such as the denier of Christ’s proper deity would make Him—cannot know the heart.

It is a perfection peculiar to God and must in its own nature be incommunicable; for were it communicable to a creature, it could not be peculiar to God Himself. Were it possible, we say, that God should delegate the power and prerogative of searching the heart and trying the reins of the children of men to a mere created being, then with no propriety could it be said of Him that He only searches the heart. Yet to Jesus does this attribute belong. In the prophecy of Jeremiah 18:10, the Lord says, “I, Jehovah, search the heart and try the reins, to give every man

¹⁰ **EDITOR’S NOTE:** Critics present Mark 13:32 as evidence that Christ was not omniscient. John Owen gives a helpful reply to this question: “I do not hereby ascribe the infusion of omniscience, of infinite understanding, wisdom, and knowledge, into the human nature of Christ. It was and is a [creation], finite and limited, nor is [it] a capable subject of properties absolutely infinite and immense. Filled it was with light and wisdom to the utmost capacity of a creature; but it was so, not by being changed into a divine nature or essence, but by the communication of the Spirit unto it without measure. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and made Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord (Isa 11:2-3)...The Spirit of God dwelling in Him, in all the fullness of His graces and gifts, gave Him an understanding peculiar unto Himself; as above that of all creatures, so beneath the essential omniscience of the divine nature. Hence, some things, as He was a man, He knew not (Mar 13:32) but as they were given Him by revelation (Rev 1:1).” (Owen, *Works*, Vol. 1, 93)

¹¹ **prerogative** – exclusive privilege or right.

¹² **serpentine** – winding and twisting like a snake.

¹³ **reins** – center of human feelings or affections; heart.

according to his ways.” In Revelation 2:23, Christ says, and He would have it proclaimed through the churches as the true doctrine of the gospel, “And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

Is not then the evidence of His deity most conclusive? Who can resist it? What blessedness flows to the believing soul from this attribute of Christ! It is at all times a consolation to him to remember that Jesus knows and searches the heart. His iniquity He sees and subdues; for the promise is, “He will subdue our iniquities” (Mic 7:19). He detects some lurking evil, some latent corruption, and before it develops itself in the outward departure—the overt act—He checks and conquers it. “Cheering thought,” may the believer say, “that all my inbred evil, the hidden corruption of my heart, is known to my Savior God. Lord, I would not hide it from you; I would not veil from your eye a single corruption. I would not conceal a thought, but would cry, ‘Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting’” (Psa 139:23-24). He sees, too, His own gracious work in the soul. The little spiritual life that He has breathed there, the little grace that He has implanted there, the little spark of love that He has kindled there, the faint and feeble longings after Him, the inward strugglings with sin, the hungering and thirsting for holiness, the panting for divine conformity—all is known to Jesus. The Lord Jesus knows and recognizes His own work; the counterfeit He soon detects. The outward garb and the unhumiliated spirit, the external profession and the unbroken heart escape not His piercing glance. Man may be deceived—the Lord Jesus never. We may not be able to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between nature and grace, between the outward profession and the inward reality; but Jesus knows what is genuine and what is base, what is the work of His own blessed Spirit, and what is the mere effect of an enlightened judgment and an alarmed conscience.

Dear reader, this is His own solemn declaration of Himself: “I, the Lord, search the heart” (Jer 17:10)...Are you willing that He should search [your heart] and prove it? O be honest with God!...Let David’s example encourage you: “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psa 32:5). And while the heart is thus pouring itself out in a full and minute confession, let the eye of faith be fixed on Christ...Disclosures¹⁴ you dare not make to your tenderest friend, you may make to Him. Sins you would not confess, corruption you would not acknowledge as existing within you, you are privileged, thus “looking unto Jesus” (Heb 12:2), to pour into the ear of your Father and God...Come at once—come now! Rush to your Father’s feet and, bringing in your

¹⁴ **disclosures** – acts of making new or secret information known.

hands the precious blood of Christ, make a full and free disclosure. Thus, from the attribute of Christ's *omniscience* may a humble believer extract much consolation. At all times [you are] permitted to appeal to it and say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (Joh 21:17).

*Omnipotence*¹⁵ is declared to belong to Jesus. Compare Psalm 45:3— "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, *O most mighty*"—[with] Revelation 1:8: "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*." Compare verses 6-7 of the same Psalm—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows"—[with] Hebrews 1:8-9: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." [Here] the same words are quoted and applied to Christ.

And let us glance at the authoritative manner with which He executes His mighty acts of grace. Mark His deportment...Did not the God shine through the man with majestic awe, when to the leper He said, "I will; be thou clean" (Mat 8:3); to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand" (Mat 12:13; Mar 3:5; Luk 6:10); to the blind, "Receive thy sight" (Luk 18:42); to the dead, "I say unto thee, arise" (Mar 5:41; Luk 7:14); and to the tumultuous waves, "Peace, be still" (Mar 4:39)? Dear reader, are you an experimental¹⁶ believer in Jesus? Then this omnipotent Christ is wedded to your best interests. He is omnipotent to save; omnipotent to protect; omnipotent to deliver; omnipotent to subdue all your iniquities, to make you humble, holy, and obedient. All power resides in Him. "It pleased the Father that in him"—in Him as the Mediator of His Church—"all fulness should dwell" (Col 1:19). [There is] not a corruption, but He is omnipotent to subdue it; not a temptation, but He is omnipotent to overcome it; not a foe, but He is omnipotent to conquer it; not a fear, but He is omnipotent to quell it. "All power" is His own consoling language, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mat 28:18). Could any mere creature assert this of himself? Never,

¹⁵ Omnipotence is a perfection that belongs to Christ and is peculiar to God, Who only can do all things. Christ is almighty, and His works declare it: the creation of all things, the [sustaining] of the universe, the redemption and preservation of His people, and the resurrection of them at the last day, all which are "according to his mighty power, which is able to subdue all things to himself" (Phi 3:21). To observe no more, immutability belongs solely to God, Who is without any "variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam 1:17), and such is Christ, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8; see Psa 102:26 compared with Heb 1:12); and since therefore such perfections of the Godhead are in Christ, He must be truly and properly God. (Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 117)

¹⁶ **experimental** – having actual or personal experience of anything.

without the deepest blasphemy. “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isa 12:6).

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www.tentmakerpublications.com.

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878): Nonconformist pastor; born in London, England, raised in New York, buried in Abbey Cemetery, Bath, UK.



JESUS AND GOD'S NAMES

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

LET us then proceed to show how Christ stands forth invested with...the names that are given to God. The idea conveyed to the mind by the names *Jehovah, Lord, [and] God* are self-existence, omnipotence, infinite, and absolute perfection. Indeed, they include all the awesome attributes that belong to the Divine nature. Now, then, our argument is this: *Jehovah* is the...name of the eternal, self-existent God. If it can be shown in the Scriptures of truth that Christ is called *Jehovah, Lord, [and] God*, then Christ is God.

We commence with Numbers 21:5-6: "And the people spake against God...And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Now compare this passage with 1 Corinthians 10:9: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."¹ To what conclusion do these passages conduct us, but to the blessed one that the person whom the rebellious Israelites tempted, who inflicted the punishment, and who swore they should not enter into his rest, was the Eternal Son of God, *Jehovah Jesus*?

Again, Isaiah 6:1-6: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." And in the eighth verse, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert,

¹ Here, Paul states that some of the Israelites in the wilderness put Christ to the test, and he warns the Corinthians not to make the same mistake...Therefore, we should understand Paul to have been affirming that Christ existed during the time of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness. Moreover, what Paul says here about Christ is what the Old Testament said about the LORD God: that the Israelites had put Him to the test (Num 14:22; 21:5-6; Psa 78:18-20; 95:9). Once again, the New Testament affirms not only Christ's preexistence but also His divine preexistence. (Bowman & Kosmowski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 95).

and be healed.” Compare these passages with John 12:39-41: “Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.” Whose glory was it that [Esaias] saw, and of whom did he speak? It was the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, and of Him he spoke. It was the glory of Christ as the King Jehovah of hosts—the Ancient of days—He that was to come. Here, dear reader, might we pause and adore the great Jehovah for this glorious revelation of Himself. Blessed Immanuel! Give us, by the teaching of Your Spirit, clear, close, humbling views of Your exalted person. Keep our souls fast anchored on this truth: that You are God in our nature.

But let us proceed. Regard the declaration of the Evangelist [in] John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” What can more clearly and conclusively prove the real deity of our dear Lord than these words of the Holy Spirit? Not merely is it declared that the Word was God—even this would have been overwhelmingly conclusive—but the Word, as distinguished from the Father, and as so distinguished, declared to be God as absolutely as the Father Himself was declared to be God.

Another instance in which the term *God* is applied to Christ is found in Romans 9:5: “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Here is a distinct declaration of the complex person of our Lord. Touching His humanity, He came from the Jews; touching His deity, He is God over all. Can language be more explicit?

1 Timothy 3:16:² “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the

² Many modern translations and textual critics prefer the reading, “He was manifested in the flesh.” Charles Hodge wrote, “The most important passage, however, in these pastoral epistles, is 1 Timothy 3:16...Whatever reading be adopted, whether θεός [God], ὅς [who], or ὃ [which], all of which appear in different manuscripts, the passage must refer to Christ. He it was Who was manifest in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, and received up into glory. (3) Whatever reading be adopted, the passage assumes or asserts the divinity of our Lord. With the apostolic writers, the doctrine of the incarnation is expressed by saying that the *logos* “became flesh” (Joh 1:14); or, “Christ is come in the flesh” (1Jo 4:2); or, He Who is the brightness of God’s glory took part of flesh and blood (Heb 2:14); or, He that was “equal with God” was “found in fashion as a man” (Phi 2:8). The same truth, therefore, is expressed, whether we say, “God was manifest in the flesh,” or, “He who was manifest in the flesh,” or, that “the mystery of godliness was manifest in the flesh.” (4) The external authorities are so divided that the most competent editors and critics differ as to what is the original text...(5) The internal evidence, so far as the perspicuity [clarity] of the passage and the analogy of Scripture are concerned, are decidedly in favor of the common text [*God* was manifest...]. There is something remarkable in the passage; it is brought in apparently as a quotation from a hymn, as some think, or from a confession of faith, as others suppose, at least, as a familiar formula in which the leading truths concerning the manifestation of Christ are concisely stated: (1) He is God. (2) He

Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Here Christ is declared to be the visible Jehovah—God embodied in Christ—clear, tangible to our apprehensions. Will not this single passage suffice to remove every doubt?

We have yet other and equally conclusive evidence. Is Jehovah *the great God*? So is Christ: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Ti 2:13).³

Is Jehovah *the true God*? So is Christ: “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” (1Jo 5:20).

Is Jehovah *the mighty God*? So is Christ: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6).

What was the declaration of Thomas, after his doubts had vanished and his mind received the full conviction of the truth? “My Lord and my God!” (Joh 20:28).

Again, 2 Peter 1:1, “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ”...

was manifest in the flesh, or became man. (3) He was justified, *i.e.*, His claims to be regarded as God manifest in the flesh were proved to be just by the Spirit (*i.e.*, either by the Holy Ghost, or by the *pneuma* [spirit] or divine nature revealing itself in Him; *cf.* Joh 1:14). (4) He was seen of angels. They recognized and served Him. (5) He was preached unto the Gentiles, as He came to be the Savior of all men and not of the Jews only. (6) He was believed upon as God and Savior; and (7) He was received up into glory, where He now lives, reigns, and intercedes. (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 518-519). Hodge adds, “Dr. [Ebenezer] Henderson has ably vindicated the reading θεός [God] in his “The Great Mystery of Godliness Incontrovertible; Critical Examination of the Various Readings in 1 Tim. 3:16,” *The Biblical Repository* 2 (1832), 1-56. Interested readers may also reference John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 424-520; *God Was Manifest in the Flesh: Examination of a Disputed Passage*, Trinitarian Bible Society.

³ The terms “God and Savior” both refer to the same person, Jesus Christ. This is one of the clearest statements in the NT concerning the deity of Christ. The construction in Greek is known as the Granville Sharp rule, named after the English philanthropist-linguist who first clearly articulated the rule in 1798. Sharp pointed out that in the construction article-noun-*kai*-noun (where *kai* = “and”), when two nouns are singular, personal, and common (*i.e.*, not proper names), they *always* had the same referent. Illustrations such as “the friend and brother,” “the God and Father,” etc., abound in the NT to prove Sharp’s point. The only issue is whether terms such as “God” and “Savior” could be considered common nouns as opposed to proper names. Sharp and others who followed...demonstrated that a proper name in Greek was one that could not be pluralized. Since both “God” (*theos*) and “savior” (*soter*) were occasionally found in the plural, they did not constitute proper names, and hence, do fit Sharp’s rule. Although there have been 200 years of attempts to dislodge Sharp’s rule, all attempts have been futile. (NET Bible Notes)

Again, let us compare the Word of God with itself. Isaiah 8:13-14: “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel.” The stone of stumbling and the rock of offence, mark, is the LORD of Hosts Himself. But this stone of stumbling and rock of offence, as appears from the language of Peter, is no other than Christ. 1 Peter 2:6: “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.” Who, with a mind not steeled against the truth but open to conviction, can doubt that the same being who is called LORD [*Jehovah*] of Hosts in the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ in the New? To the proud and unbelieving Jews, He was a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; but to us who believe, He is precious.

Further, Isaiah 44:6, “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.” Compare with Revelation 22:13, “I (Jesus) am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” These titles are confined to Him alone, besides Whom *there is no God*. Jesus has assumed these titles to Himself. [The] inference, strictly logical, is Jesus is God.

We would also direct the reader to that remarkable prophecy that was fully accomplished in Christ, recorded by Zechariah 11:12: “If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized⁴ at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” Who is the speaker in this passage? Jehovah. Who was sold? Jehovah Jesus. At what price? For thirty pieces of silver. Let the reader turn for the exact fulfilment of this prophecy to Matthew 27:3-10: “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they

⁴ **prised** – valued.

of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.”

The last proof we quote is Isaiah 45:23: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Compare this prophecy with Romans 14:11. The apostle argues that all creation should do honor to Christ: “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” What is the solemn inference? That the God Who predicates that all men shall give account to Him and stand before Him is the same referred to in the tenth verse: “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Thus have we shown from the simple testimony of Scripture that Christ is, without qualification or diminution,⁵ Jehovah, Lord, God.

From *Atonement and the Cross*, Tentmaker Publications,
www.tentmakerpublications.com.



⁵ **diminution** – representation of something as less than it is.

JESUS AND THE DEEDS OF GOD

W. G. T. Shedd (1820-1894)

DIVINE works are attributed to the Son of God: 1. *Creation:...* “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Joh 1:3). “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col 1:16–17); God “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb 1:2); “But unto the Son he saith...Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands” (1:10).¹

2. *Preservation:* “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3); “By him all things consist” (Col 1:17); “My Father works hitherto, and I work” (Joh 5:17).

3. *Miracles* performed by Christ in person or through His apostles, especially the resurrection of the dead: “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them;² even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (Joh 5:21). “I will raise him up at the last day” (6:40). Christ appeals to these miracles in proof of His divinity: “But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (5:36).

Socinus³ asserted that the creation ascribed to Christ is the secondary *spiritual* creation. This is not so because (a) John 1:3 speaks absolutely, without any quali-

¹ If a figure performs deeds that are the *exclusive* prerogative of God, or if he performs *all* the deeds, or *at least a wide range of them*, that are normally associated with God *throughout* time—from creation through history and right up to and including the consummation—then such deeds demonstrate that he is in fact God. On this basis, we are on firm ground in identifying Jesus as God. The heavens and the earth—which is to say, the universe—are His work (Heb 1:10-12). Nothing came into being apart from Him (Joh 1:3). All created things exist in, through, and for Him (Col 1:16). He sustains the universe (Col 1:16; Heb 1:3). In His earthly ministry, He demonstrated divine sovereign control over the forces of nature (Mat 8:23-27; 14:13-33). His word is the divine “word of the Lord” (Act 8:25; 13:44, 48-49). He forgives sins (Mar 2:1-12; Col 3:13). He sends the Holy Spirit and imparts spiritual gifts (Joh 20:22; Act 2:33; 1Co 12:4-5; Eph 4:8-11). He gives life to whomever He chooses (Joh 5:21, 26). He judges all people, so that all may honor Him as they honor the Father (Joh 5:22-23; 2Co 5:10). (Bowman & Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 273)

² **quickeneth them** – makes them alive.

³ **Faustus Socinus (1539-1604)** – Italian theologian who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ (making Him a mere man), and the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. Socinus also denied that Christ offered any atonement (or satisfaction) to God for sinners, as well as predestination,

fiction, which would have been necessary if a particular kind of creation were intended. (b) The universal creation without exception (“not any thing”⁴) is expressly mentioned. (c) It is not exclusively the spiritual creation, namely, the Church, because that part of the world who “knew him not” (1:10) was created by Him. And (d) Paul extends the creation by Christ to all creatures, visible and invisible (Col 1:16)—to angels as well as men—and speaks of the second spiritual creation afterward (1:18).

Socinus also asserted that Christ’s agency in creation is instrumental⁵ (Joh 1:3 “through him”⁶). The reply is (a) that there cannot be instrumental agency in such a work as creation *ex nihilo*;⁷ an instrument must have materials to work upon, but there are none in creation. (b) The same preposition⁸ is applied to God: “For of him, *and through him*, and to him, are all things” (Rom 11:36). “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by [*dia*, through] Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)” (Gal 1:1). (c) The creation is not only “by him”⁹ (Col 1:16) but “for him”¹⁰ (1:16). Christ is the final end as well as first cause; and (d) the creation is not only “by him,” but also “in him”¹¹ (1:17). The universe has its supporting ground in Christ (“by him all things consist”¹²), as man is said to live in God [“For in him we live, and move, and have our being”] (Act 17:28). When creation is peculiarly ascribed to the Father, the Son is not excluded, any more than when redemption is peculiarly ascribed to the Son, the Father is excluded.

It is asserted that Christ’s power to work miracles was official,¹³ like that of the apostles and prophets. This is an error because (a) miraculous power emanated¹⁴ from Him as from the original source: “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” (Mat

original sin, radical depravity, and eternal hell. Socinianism helped give rise to Unitarianism in England and later in the American colonies.

⁴ *Greek* = οὐδὲ ἓν = “not one thing.”

⁵ **Christ’s agency...instrumental** – Socinus taught that Christ was not deity and therefore did not have power in Himself to create; rather He was merely an instrument through which God created all things.

⁶ *Greek* = δι’ αὐτοῦ = “through him”; KJV = “by him.”

⁷ **ex nihilo** – out of nothing.

⁸ *Greek* = δι’ αὐτοῦ = “through him.”

⁹ *Greek* = δι’ αὐτοῦ = “through him”; KJV = “by him.”

¹⁰ *Greek* = εἰς αὐτὸν.

¹¹ *Greek* = ἐν αὐτῷ = “in him”; KJV = “by him.”

¹² *Greek* = ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε = “in him all things hold together”; KJV = “by him all things consist.”

¹³ **official** – authorized to exercise some specific function; therefore, the argument is that Christ did not have power in Himself, but only received the ability to work miracles in the same way as the apostles and prophets did.

¹⁴ **emanated** – originated; flowed from.

9:28).¹⁵ (b) The apostles affirm that they do not work miracles in their own name, but in the name of Christ: “Jesus Christ maketh thee whole” (Act 9:34). “And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong” (Act 3:16); “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole” (4:10). Compare Matthew 14:33 (“Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him”) with Acts 14:15 (“Sirs, why do ye these things?”). When Christ thanks the Father for hearing His prayer (Joh 11:41), it is to be noticed that it is a prayer in His office of mediator and that He offers it in order that the people may have a proof of His divine mission (11:42). It was not that He felt Himself unable to work the miracle and needed to be empowered for the act; but He wished that the spectators—“the people which stand by”—should know that He and the Father were one and the same being in all acts and words. If the spectators had seen Lazarus raised from the dead with no allusion to the eternal Father and no uplifting of the filial¹⁶ eye, they would have been apt to separate Christ from the Father, as a kind of separate and independent God. Respecting this prayer, Christ says, “I knew that thou hearest me always” (Joh 11:42), implying that His prayer is not like that of a mere man, which may or may not be heard according as God shall see best. (c) The work of salvation in its several parts is ascribed to Christ: redemption (Act 20:28);¹⁷ elec-

¹⁵ A fourth general feature of the New Testament teaching concerning Christ relates to the control attributed to Him over the external world. The laws of nature are ordained by God. They can be changed or suspended by Him alone. A miracle, therefore, or any event that involves such change or suspension, is an evidence of the immediate operation of divine power. The efficient agent, therefore, in working a miracle must possess divine power. When Moses, the prophets, or the apostles wrought miracles, they expressly disclaimed the idea that it was by their own efficiency. “Why look ye so earnestly on us,” says the apostle Peter, “as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” (Act 3:12). When Moses divided the Red Sea, the efficiency by which that effect was produced was no more in him than in the rod with which he smote the waters. Christ, however, wrought miracles by His own inherent power; and it was to His efficiency the apostles attributed the miracles wrought through them. It was His name, or faith in Him, as Peter taught the people, which effected the instantaneous healing of the lame man (Act 3:16). Christ never referred this miraculous power to any source out of Himself; He claimed it as His own prerogative; and He conferred the power upon others. He said of Himself that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it again (Joh 10:18); that He had “life in himself” and could give life to as many as He pleased (Joh 5:25-26; 17:2); “Behold, I give unto you,” He said to His disciples, “power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” (Luk 10:19). Every miracle of Christ, therefore, was a visible manifestation of His divinity. When He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, restored the lame, raised the dead, fed thousands with a few loaves of bread, and calmed the raging of the sea, it was by a word, by the effortless exercise of His will. He thus manifested forth His glory, giving ocular [*visible*] demonstration to those who had eyes to see that He was God in fashion as a man. (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 503-504)

¹⁶ **filial** – devoted; having the relationship of a child to a parent.

¹⁷ If He was not the mighty God, He could never have been able to have wrought and obtained the redemption and salvation of His people, by His own arm. What gave virtue and efficacy to His blood,

tion (Joh 13:18);¹⁸ effectual calling (Joh 10:16; Mat 9:13); sanctification (Eph 5:26); mission of the Spirit (Joh 16:7, 14; 15:26); defense against enemies (Joh 10:10); gift of eternal life (Joh 10:28);¹⁹ resurrection of the body (Joh 5:21); final judgment (Joh 5:22; Act 17:31); Christ is called the Lord of the Church (Eph 4:5) and the husband of the Church (5:25), which latter is the title given to Jehovah in reference to Israel (Isa 54:5).

Religious worship in its various acts is rendered to the Son of God, namely, faith: “believe also in me” (Joh 14:1);²⁰ hope: “blessed are all they that put their trust in him (the Son)” (Psa 2:12); but “cursed is the man that trusts in man” (Jer 17:5); adoration: “Let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb 1:6); “kiss (a mark of homage and adoration, 1Sa 10:1) the Son” (Psa 2:12); “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (Joh 5:22-23); “at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow” (Phi 2:9-10); invocation of blessing: (a) Grace, mercy, and peace are implored from Christ, not less than from the Father; believers are described as those who “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Co 1:2; Act 9:14); Stephen calls upon Christ to receive his spirit at death (7:59). (b) Glory and honor are invoked for Christ in connection with the Father “who sits upon the throne” (Rev 5:13). (c) Doxology²¹ to Christ (1Pe 4:11; 2Ti 4:18; Rev 1:6;

to purchase His Church and people, and cleanse them from their sins, is His deity; and so to His righteousness, to make it a justifying one before God; and to His sacrifice, to make it expiatory [*servicing to make satisfaction*] of sin, and acceptable to God. (Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 117)

¹⁸ The elect are called His elect (Mat 24:31; Joh 13:18). “I know whom I have chosen” (Joh 15:16). “I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (15:19). “But I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (Brooks, *The Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures*, 159)

¹⁹ The bestowing of *eternal life*. John 10:28: “My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life.” Christ is the prince and principle of life, and therefore all out of Him are dead whilst they live (Col 3:3-4). Eternal life is too great a gift for any to give but...God. (Brooks, *The Golden Key*, 159)

²⁰ He also promises to all who believe on Him, eternal life. He has power to quicken or to give life to as many as He will. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life” (Joh 10:26-27). “Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Joh 6:40). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life” (Rev 2:7). “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev 2:10). “A crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (2Ti 4:8). “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (Joh 14:27). “Ye believe in God, believe also in me” (Joh 14:1). “I go to prepare a place for you” (Joh 14:2). “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Joh 14:3). “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat 11:28). It is obvious that the infinite God Himself can neither promise nor give anything greater or higher than Christ gives His people. To Him they are taught to look as the source of all blessings, the giver of every good and every perfect gift. (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 503)

²¹ **doxology** – utterance of praise to God.

2Pe 3:18). Says Athanasius,²² “‘May God and His angel Gabriel, or Michael, grant you’ would be a new and extraordinary sort of prayer. But ‘God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ grant you’ is perfectly agreeable to Scripture” (Orations 3.12).²³

From *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 1, in the public domain.

William Greenough Thayer Shedd (1820-1894): Presbyterian theologian and educator; born in Acton, Massachusetts.



Now the Christian meaning of the term “deity of Christ” is fairly clear. The Christian believes that there is a personal God, Creator, and Ruler of the universe, a God Who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. So when the Christian says that Jesus Christ is God, or when he says that he believes in the deity of Christ, he means that that same person who is known to history as Jesus of Nazareth existed, before He became man, from all eternity as infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God, the second Person of the holy Trinity.—*J. Gresham Machen*

This is the glory of the gospel and of every truth and doctrine contained in it—that Christ is God, true and very God, One in the same incomprehensible Godhead with the Father and the Spirit, the Creator of all worlds, beings, and things, the upholder of all things visible and invisible, the only Savior...He is the true God and eternal life. May we continually live in the belief of this.—*Samuel E. Pierce*

²² **Athanasius** (c. 295-373) – Greek theologian and Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt; defender of the deity of Christ against the Arian heresy.

²³ *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 1 (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1888), 323.

CHRIST THE ETERNAL WORD

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.—John 1:1*

THE theme of John's Gospel is *the deity of the Savior*. Here, as nowhere else in Scripture so fully, the Godhood of Christ is presented to our view. That which is outstanding in this fourth Gospel is the divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus. In this book, we are shown that the One Who was heralded by the angels to the Bethlehem shepherds, Who walked this earth for thirty-three years, Who was crucified at Calvary, Who rose in triumph from the grave, and Who forty days later departed from these scenes, was none other than the Lord of glory. The evidence for this is overwhelming, the proofs almost without number, and the effect of contemplating them must be to bow our hearts in worship before "the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Ti 2:13).

That John's Gospel *does* present the deity of the Savior is at once apparent from the opening words of the first chapter. The Holy Spirit has, as it were, placed the key right over the entrance; for the introductory verses of this fourth Gospel present the Lord Jesus Christ in divine relationships and unveil His essential glories.

"In the beginning was the Word,¹ and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (Joh 1:1-3). How entirely different is this from the opening verses of the other Gospels! John opens by immediately presenting Christ not as the Son of David, nor as the Son of man, but as the Son of God. John takes us back to the beginning and shows that the Lord Jesus had no beginning. John goes behind creation and shows that the Savior was Himself the Creator. Every clause in these verses calls for our most careful and prayerful attention.

¹ **Word** – *Greek* = **λόγος** (*logos*); *logos* has several meanings in Greek, the most obvious being "a communication whereby the mind finds expression" (BDAG). It also means "speech, saying, discourse, instruction, reason" among other things. Louw and Nida define *logos* in this context as "a title for Jesus in the Gospel of John as a reference to the content of God's revelation and as a verbal echo of the use of the verbs meaning 'to speak' in Genesis 1 and in many utterances of the prophets—'Word, Message.'" (Louw & Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 399)

² This wonderful verse contains three things. It tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ, here called the Word, is eternal—that He is a distinct Person from God the Father, and yet most intimately united to Him—and that He is God. (Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, Vol. 1, 6)

“In the beginning was the Word,³ and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Here we enter a realm that transcends the finite mind, and where speculation is profane. “In the *beginning*”⁴ is something we are unable to comprehend: it is one of those matchless sweeps of inspiration that rises above the level of human thought. “In the beginning *was*⁵ *the Word*,” and we are equally unable to grasp the final meaning of this. A “word” is an expression: by words, we articulate our speech. The *Word* of God, then, is deity expressing itself in audible terms. And yet, when we have said this, how much there is that we leave unsaid! “And the word was *with* God,” and this intimates His separate personality and shows His relation to the other Persons of the blessed Trinity. But how sadly incapacitated are we for meditating upon the relations that exist between the different Persons of the Godhead. [“And the Word was God,” literally,] “And *God was the Word*.” Not only was Christ the Revealer of God, but He always was and ever remains none other than God Himself. Not only was our Savior the One through Whom and by Whom the deity expressed itself in audible terms, but He was Himself co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. Let us now approach the throne of grace (Heb 4:16) and there seek the mercy and grace we so sorely need to help us as we turn now to take a closer look at these verses: “Our God and Father, in the name of Thy dear Son, we pray Thee that Thy Holy Spirit may now take of the things of Christ and show them unto us: to the praise of the glory of Thy grace. Amen.”

“*In the beginning*,” or, more literally, “in beginning,” for there is no article in the Greek. In what “beginning”? There are various “beginnings” referred to in the New Testament. There is the “beginning” of “the world” (Mat 24:21); of “the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mar 1:1); of “sorrows” (Mar 13:8); of “miracles” (or “signs”) (Joh 2:11), etc. But the “beginning” mentioned in John 1:1 clearly antedates all

³ Christ is called “the Word” both here and verse 14, and 1 John 1:1; 5:7, Revelation 19:13, and elsewhere; not only because He is the chief subject of the written Word or Scripture—being the great promise made and often repeated in the Old Testament, He in Whom all the promises are yea and amen, the substance and truth of all the law-types and shadows, the end of the Law and kernel of the gospel—but further, because as a word is a meaning of revealing a man’s mind to others, so Christ hath revealed the Father in His own person, being “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3); so that God is to be taken up, and is savingly known only as He hath revealed Himself in Christ; and in His office, as He...knoweth all the Father’s secrets, so He is “the Word” of the Father, as declaring Him, His mind and will, to the Church in all ages (Mat 11:27; Joh 1:18). (Hutcheson, *Gospel of John*, 10)

⁴ In the beginning immediately reminds any reader of the Old Testament of the opening verse of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”...Both in Genesis and here, the context shows that the beginning is absolute: the beginning of all things, the beginning of the universe. (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 113–114)

⁵ The expression “was” means “existed, was existing.” The whole sentence signifies that when the world was first called into being, however long ago that may be...at that period, the Lord Jesus Christ was existing. He had no beginning. He was before all things. There never was the time when He was not. In short, the Lord Jesus Christ is an eternal Being. (Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, Vol. 1, 6)

these “beginnings.” The “beginning” of John 1:1 *precedes* the making of the “all things” of John 1:3. It is, then, *the beginning of creation, the beginning of time*. This earth of ours is old; how old we do not know...But “the Word” was before all things. He was not only *from* the beginning, but He was “*in* the beginning.”

“*In beginning.*” The absence of the definite article⁶ is designed to carry us back to the most remote point that can be imagined. If then, He was before all creation, and He was, for “all things were made by *him*”; if He was “in the beginning,” then He was Himself *without beginning*, which is only the negative way of saying He was *eternal*. In perfect accord with this, we find that in His prayer recorded in John 17, He said, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.*” As, then, the Word was “in the beginning,” and if in the beginning, eternal, and as none but God Himself is eternal, the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus is conclusively established.

“*Was the Word.*” There are two separate words in the Greek that, in this passage, are both rendered “was”: one means “to exist,” the other “to *come into being.*” The latter word (*egeneto*) is used in John 1:3 which, literally rendered, reads, “all things through him *came into being*, and without him came into being not even one (thing) which has *come into being*”; and again we have this word *egeneto* in John 1:6 where we read, “There was (became to be) a man sent from God, whose name was John”; and again in John 1:14, “And the word *was made* (became) flesh.” But here in John 1:1 and John 1:2, it is “the word (*ito*) with God.” As the Word, He did not come into being or begin to be; but He was “with God” from all eternity. It is noteworthy that the Holy Spirit uses this word *ito*, which signifies that the Son *personally subsisted*, no less than four times in the first two verses of John 1. Unlike John the Baptist who “*became (egeneto)* a man,” the “word” *was (ito)*, *that is, existed* with God before time began.

“*Was the Word.*” The reference here is to the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, the Son of God. But why is the Lord Jesus Christ designated “the Word”? What is the exact force and significance of this title? The first passage that occurs to our minds as throwing light on this question is the opening statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “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). Here we learn that Christ is the final spokesman of God. Closely connected with this is the Savior’s title found in Revelation 1:8: “I am Alpha and Omega,” which intimates that He is *God’s alphabet*, the One Who spells out deity,

⁶ **definite article** – The definite article (in English, the word *the*) identifies or particularizes a noun or noun substitute...For example, in English the phrase “the man” has the definite article and is specific, as opposed to the indefinite article in the phrase “a man.” Unlike English, Greek has only the definite article. The absence of the article denotes indefiniteness. (Heiser & Setterhom, *Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology*)

the One Who utters all God has to say. Even clearer, perhaps, is the testimony of John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared him*.” The word *declared*⁷ means *tell out* (cf. Acts 15:14 and 21:19); it is translated “told” in Luke 24:35. Putting together these three passages, we learn that Christ is the One Who is the spokesman of God, and One Who spelled out the deity, the One Who has declared or told forth the Father.

Christ, then, is the One Who has made the incomprehensible God intelligible. The force of this title of His found in John 1:1, may be discovered by comparing it with that name that is given to the Holy Scriptures—“the Word of God.” What are the Scriptures? They are the Word of God. And what does that mean? This: the Scriptures reveal God’s mind, express His will, make known His perfections, and lay bare His heart. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus has done for the Father. But let us enter a little more into detail:

(a) A “word” is a *medium of manifestation*. I have in my mind a thought, but others know not its nature. But the moment I clothe that thought in words, it becomes cognizable.⁸ Words, then, make objective unseen thoughts. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus has done. As the Word, Christ has made manifest the invisible God.

(b) A “word” is a *means of communication*. By means of words, I transmit information to others. By words, I express myself, make known my will, and impart knowledge. So Christ, as the Word, is the Divine Transmitter, communicating to us the life and love of God.

(c) A “word” is a *method of revelation*. By his words, a speaker exhibits both his intellectual caliber and his moral character. By our words, we shall be justified, and by our words, we shall be condemned. And Christ, as the Word, reveals the attributes and perfections of God. How *fully* has Christ revealed God! He displayed His power, He manifested His wisdom, He exhibited His holiness, He made known His grace, He unveiled His heart. In Christ, and nowhere else, is God fully and finally told out.

“And the word was *with God*.”⁹ This preposition *with* seems to suggest two thoughts. First, the Word was in the presence of God. As we read, “Enoch walked

⁷ **declared** – *Greek* = ἐξηγήσασθαι; to set forth in great detail; expound (BDAG). “The Greek term in this context is related to the English derivative term *exegesis*, and the focus of meaning here is upon ‘clear revelation’ or ‘clear explanation.’ It is possible to translate it in some languages ‘He has clearly made God known’ or ‘He has clearly shown to people who God is.’” (Newman & Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 27)

⁸ **cognizable** – able to be known; clearly identifiable.

⁹ **with God** – This phrase denotes the existence of the Word with the Father, His relation and nearness to Him, His equality with Him, and particularly the distinction of His person from Him, as well as His eternal being with Him; for He was always with Him, and is and ever will be. He was with Him

with God,” that is, he lived in fellowship with God...We may add that the Greek preposition *pros* here translated “with” is sometimes rendered “toward,” but most frequently “unto.” The Word was toward or unto God. One has significantly said, “The word rendered *with* denotes a perpetual tendency, as it were, of the Son to the Father, in unity of essence.”¹⁰

That it is here said, “The word was with God,” tells of His *separate personality*: He was not “in” God, but “with” God. Now, mark here the marvelous accuracy of Scripture. It is not said, “The word was with the Father” as we might have expected, but “the word was with God.” The name “God” is common to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, whereas “the Father” is the special title of the first Person only. Had it said, “The Word was with the Father,” the Holy Spirit had been excluded; but “with God” takes in the Word dwelling in eternal fellowship with both the Father and the Spirit. Observe, too, it does not say, “And God was with God,” for while there is plurality of Persons in the Godhead, there is but “one God,” therefore the minute accuracy of “the WORD was with God.”

“And the word *was God*,”¹¹ or, more literally, “and God was the word.” Lest the figurative expression “the word” should convey to us an inadequate conception of the divine glories of Christ, the Holy Spirit goes on to say, “and the word was with God,” which denoted His separate personality and intimated His essential relation to the Godhead. And, as though that were not strong enough, the Holy Spirit expressly adds, “and God was the word.” Who could express God save Him Who

in the council and covenant of grace, and in the creation of the universe, and is with Him in the providential government of the world. He was with Him as the Word and Son of God in heaven, whilst He as a man was here on earth; and He is now with Him, and ever will be. (Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Vol. 7, 738)

¹⁰ John Wesley (1703-1791), “Notes on the Gospel according to St. John” in *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 218.

¹¹ Jehovah’s Witnesses (in their *New World Translation*) attempt to translate the Greek “and the word was a god.” This is because the last clause of John 1:1, the word *theos* (God) appears without the definite article *the* [Greek = *ho, ô*]. However, D. A. Carson writes, “...the Word was God. That is the translation demanded by the Greek structure, *theos ên ho logos*. A long string of writers has argued that because *theos*, ‘God’, here has no article, John is not referring to God as a specific being, but to mere qualities of ‘God-ness.’ The Word, they say, was not God, but divine. This will not do. There is a perfectly serviceable word in Greek for ‘divine’ (namely *theios*). More importantly, there are many places in the New Testament where the predicate noun has no article, and yet is specific. Even in this chapter, ‘you are the King of Israel’ (1:49) has no article before ‘King’ in the original (cf. also Joh 8:39; 17:17; Rom 14:17; Gal 4:25; Rev 1:20). It has been shown that it is common for a definite predicate noun in this construction, placed before the verb, to be anarthrous (that is, *to have no article*). Indeed, the effect of ordering the words this way is to emphasize ‘God,’ as if John were saying, ‘and the word was God!’ In fact, if John had included the article, he would have been saying something quite untrue. He would have been so identifying the Word with God that no divine being could exist apart from the Word. In that case, it would be nonsense to say (in the words of the second clause of this verse) that the Word was with God.” (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 117)

is God! The Word was not an emanation of God, but God Himself made manifest—not only the revealer of God, but God Himself revealed. A more emphatic and unequivocal¹² affirmation of the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ it is impossible to conceive.

From *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1923), 17–30, in the public domain.

A.W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, author; born in Nottingham, England.



The GODHEAD of CHRIST is the chief corner stone in the edifice of Christianity.
Remove this from the building, and the whole fabric immediately totters.

—*Robert Hawker*

¹² **unequivocal** – unmistakable; leaving no doubt.

GOD BLESSED FOREVER

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.—Romans 9:4-5

WE have been considering the argument put forward for the new translations that turn the last part of verse 5 into a doxology addressed to God instead of being a description of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ We have seen that we must face this because so many of God's people today are being misled and misguided by various false religions and cults that we really cannot afford to be uncertain with regard to this matter. How, then, do we deal with this argument?

My first answer is that it is very interesting to observe that these people who would refuse to ascribe those words to the Lord Jesus Christ and who ascribe them only to God as a doxology, do not attempt to base their position on grounds of grammar. Now, much of the change in modern translations from the Authorized Version is done on such grounds—they say that because of the grammar alone, we are compelled to do this and that, and so to change the great teaching of the New Testament. But here they do not say that, for the very good reason that they cannot possibly do so. They have to fall back, therefore, on this more general statement, that this is something that the apostle Paul does not do in his writings. So that is a *general* argument instead of a particular one in terms of grammar. Indeed, we shall find that the grammar is most certainly against them and on the side of the Authorized Version translation.

Secondly, this variation in the translation is not based...on a question of the various manuscripts of the New Testament. Commentaries often refer to those manuscripts and compare them, so it is important that we should know something about them. This is textual criticism...Textual criticism means that these various ancient manuscripts should be examined and compared. It is important for the purposes of translation that we should get as accurate a manuscript as is available and, beyond any question, much excellent work has been done in that direction during the past one hundred and fifty years or so...I refer to all this just to indicate that here, in verse 5, the proposed variations in the translations are not based

¹ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** In a previous sermon, Dr. Lloyd-Jones had begun the argument that he now completes in detail.

upon a matter of manuscripts. We must always pay serious attention to manuscript evidence; but here, there *is* no such evidence because what decides the translation here is ultimately a question of punctuation—whether you put a full stop after “flesh” or whether you put a comma. So it has nothing to do with the manuscripts because the punctuation of the Scriptures did not come in until the third century...

It is important, then, that we should see that the argument for these modern translations is not at all a question of “scholarship.” How over-awed we are by “scholarship”! But grammatical literary criticism does not come in here, nor, especially, does textual criticism because there is no evidence from that line at all. So it cannot be justified in those terms.

Now lest somebody should think that I am merely giving my own opinion here, let me quote from some great authorities. Here is what the commentary written by Sanday and Headlam says—and neither of these men was an evangelical Christian—“It may be convenient to point out at once that the question is one of interpretation and not of criticism.”² Now that is a statement by two great authorities on the whole matter of criticism, so that we are in the happy position that we cannot be over-awed and frightened by the words *scholarship* or *criticism*. They do not apply here. So those who would dispute the Authorized Version translation have to fall back upon this general statement, that it is not the custom of the apostle to describe our Lord as God.

So we can now come to the particular arguments. Why should we contend for this Authorized Version translation? Well, looking at it superficially and generally, one reason is that it would be quite unnatural to introduce a sudden doxology to God at this point because there is nothing that leads up to it and nothing that calls for it. The apostle is expressing his sense of sorrow and so on, and he is referring here to the Lord Jesus Christ. So that there is nothing that indicates any reason for suddenly uttering a doxology to God.

“But,” somebody may say, “does he not do that very thing in the first chapter in verse 25, where we read, ‘Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen?’” But that is not a parallel because in Romans 1 verse 25 the apostle is referring to God the Father—the Creator. And having referred to the Creator, he says, “Who is blessed for ever.” He is not changing from one person to another, so that that does not make any difference whatsoever to our argument. That, therefore, is the first reason, especially coupled with the fact that the apostle here, because of the very subject with which he is dealing, is obviously not in a state or

² A. C. Headlam & W. W. Sandlay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 233.

mood that would suddenly cause him to burst forth into a doxology to God the Father.

Then secondly—and here we *are* dealing with grammar—look at this word *who*: “...of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, *who* is over all.” Or, if you take the other way of translating it, “of whom Christ came according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Now “who” means “the one who.” And, surely, by all rules of grammar that indicate that a relative pronoun should always refer to the nearest antecedent,³ then this “who” clearly refers to the Lord Jesus Christ: He is the nearest antecedent. The apostle is writing and talking about Him, and when he says “who” you naturally take it to mean the same person; the One Who as concerning the flesh came from these people. That is the One to Whom he is referring and about Whom he is now going to say certain further things...

Then we add to that a third argument, and this is a very important one. The apostle in the first part of the statement tells us something about the Lord Jesus Christ: “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.” So you would expect that if he has put emphasis upon “according to the flesh” or “concerning the flesh,” then he has a contrast in his mind—what is the other side of Christ? Christ has two natures in one person; so then, Paul goes on to complete it concerning the flesh.” He has come of the children of Israel, but on the other hand, He is God over all, God blessed forever. Now this is not only a natural parallel here to complete a balanced statement; it is, of course, an exact repetition of what we find the apostle saying about Him at the very beginning of the Epistle in chapter 1. Here are the first four verses: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:1-3a). Then he speaks of Christ like this—“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” (1:3b-4). You see, he starts all like that. He is anxious that we should know that in this blessed Person there are these two natures. He is truly man, but He is also truly God. There is something that is true of Him “according to the flesh”; there is something that is true of Him “according to the spirit.” And here in Romans 9, you have a repetition of exactly the same parallel, the two sides of the same statement, the antithesis—“flesh,” “spirit”; natural, human, divine, eternal, spiritual...

Then the fourth argument, again, is a very interesting one. Notice the relative position of the words *God* and *blessed*. “Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” What is the significance of the relative position of these two words? Well, in doxologies, the order of the words is the exact opposite of what it is here! This is a typical doxology: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

³ **antecedent** – noun or its equivalent to which a relative pronoun refers.

Jesus Christ.” The “blessed” comes first, “God” follows it. Charles Hodge went into this matter very thoroughly, and others have done the same. Charles Hodge says that there is no exception to that order in the Greek or the Hebrew Scriptures...⁴

So far, we have been dealing with this point purely in terms of grammar and syntax, but what about the other argument—that the apostle never refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as God, and that that teaching only comes later? It is said, also, that it is not customary to describe our Lord as “over all” because He was subservient to the Father and submitted Himself to the Father’s will; and that the whole tenor of the teaching in the New Testament is that the Son is subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit subordinate to the Son and to the Father. What of this argument?...

Well, there is a great deal to be said in reply to this contention also. The first is that the apostle Paul very frequently does describe the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of all creation. Take, for instance, 1 Corinthians 11:3: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” There Paul reminds us that simply for the purposes of our salvation the blessed Holy Trinity has divided the work between them. We often describe this as the “economic Trinity.” But in 1 Corinthians 11, the Lord Jesus Christ is described as “the head of every man.” That is the important point there.

Then we find exactly the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15:28: “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Again, the two ideas come in; but the point is that Paul is teaching there that everything is put under Him. You also have the same in Philippians 2:5-11, especially in verses 10 and 11: “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 [Jehovah], to the glory of God the Father.”

The same truth exactly is found in Colossians 1:15-17: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” There is a perfectly clear, plain, and explicit statement of the fact that He is “over all,” and it is characteristic of New Testament teaching...

Then take again that tremendous statement from Philippians 2:6: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” This means that

⁴ Charles Hodge (1797-1878), *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The Banner of Truth Trust.

in this equality with God that was true of Him, He did not consider it to be a prize to be clutched at and held on to at all costs. No, instead, He made Himself of no reputation. But the statement is that He was equal with God. It means nothing else, and it is a very powerful argument. Notice the terms: *form of God* and *equal with God*.

Notice, too, the statement in Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” You cannot get anything beyond that. Hebrews 1:3 says the same thing: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” Again you get the notion associated with it, that the Son is the “heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,” and who upholds “all things by the word of his power.” There, then, are terms that should satisfy us that here there are expressions used with respect to Him that clearly indicate that He is God, that He is equal with God; the same form, the same appearance as God. There is only one meaning to these statements...

Those, then, are the important answers to the arguments brought against this translation that we have in the Authorized Version. So let me close this study by quoting in full the comments made on this verse by Sanday and Headlam, who we have seen had no axe to grind—Sanday in particular. Neither of these men was by any stretch of the imagination an evangelical believer; but they were great scholars, and this is their conclusion. Here you have two professors belonging to the University of Oxford, a university that is famous for its carefulness, for its balance, for its fearfulness to commit itself, rejoicing in “the balanced mind.” So notice how careful they are! “Throughout there has been no argument which we have felt to be quite conclusive, but the result of our investigations into the grammar of the sentence and the drift of the argument is to incline us to the belief that the words would naturally refer to Christ unless God is so definitely a proper name that it would employ a contrast in itself: we have seen that that is not so. Even St. Paul did not elsewhere use the word of the Christ, yet it certainly was so used at a not much later period. St. Paul’s phraseology is never fixed; he had no dogmatic reason against using it. In these circumstances, with some slight—but only slight—‘hesitation’”—notice the qualification of the qualification of the qualification!—“we adopt the first alternative and translate: ‘Of whom is the Christ as concerning the flesh, Who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen!’”⁵...

Now is it not interesting that on such a flimsy basis these modern translators do not hesitate to go against what has been believed throughout the running centuries? What makes them do it? *It is a theological interest alone.* There is something in them that makes them jump at any opportunity of detracting from the certainty of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the eternal Son of God. There is no other reason...we should have no hesitation in adopting this Authorized Version transla-

⁵ Sanday & Headlam, 238.

tion and realizing that the apostle is saying here that the supreme privilege that was given to the nation of Israel was that out of them according to the flesh came the One Who is God over all, blessed for ever, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

From “Sermon 7,” pp. 79-90, in *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 9*
God’s Sovereign Purpose, The Banner of Truth Trust,
www.banneroftruth.org.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981): Well-known expository preacher and minister of Westminster Chapel, London, England, 1938-68; born in Wales, UK.



GOD WITH US

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*They shall call his name Emmanuel,
which being interpreted is, God with us.—Matthew 1:23*

IF Jesus Christ be “God with us,” let us come to God without any question or hesitancy. Whoever you may be, you need no priest or intercessor to introduce you to God, for God has introduced Himself to you.

Are you children? Then come to God in the child Jesus, Who slept in Bethlehem’s manger. Oh, ye grey heads, ye need not keep back, but like Simeon come and take Him in your arms, and say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (Luk 2:29-30)...O man, God comes to you as one like yourself. Do not be afraid to come to the gentle Jesus. Do not imagine that you need to be prepared for an audience with Him, or that you [lack] the intercession of a saint or the intervention of priest or minister. Anyone could have come to the babe in Bethlehem. The horned oxen, I think, ate of the hay on which He slept and feared not. Jesus is the friend of each one of us, sinful and unworthy though we be. You, poor ones, you need not fear to come, for, see, in a stable He is born, and in a manger He is cradled. You have not worse accommodation than His; you are not poorer than He is. Come and welcome to the poor man’s Prince, to the peasants’ Savior. Stay not back through fear of your unfitness; the shepherds came to Him in all their dishabille.¹ I read not that they tarried to put on their best garments; but in the clothes in which they wrapped themselves that cold midnight, they hastened just as they were to the young child’s presence. God looks not at garments, but at hearts, and accepts men when they come to Him with willing spirits, whether they are rich or poor. Come, then! Come, and welcome, for God indeed is “God with us.”

But, oh, let there be no delay about it. It did seem to me, as I turned this subject over yesterday, that for any man to say, “I will not come to God,” after God has come to man in such a form as this, is an unpardonable act of treason. Peradventure, you knew not God’s love when you sinned, as you did; [perhaps], though you persecuted His saints, you did it ignorantly in unbelief; but, behold—your God extends the olive branch of peace to you, extends it in a wondrous way, for He Himself comes here to be born of a woman that He may meet with you who were born of women too and save you from your sin. Will you not hearken now that He speaks by His Son?...

¹ **dishabille** – dressed in a negligent or careless style.

And as for you who have given up all hope, you that think yourselves so degraded and fallen that there can be no future for you—there is hope for you yet; for you are a man, and the being [seated] next to God is a man (Heb 1:3). He that is God is also man, and there is something about that fact that ought to make you say, “Yes, I may yet discover, mayhap,² brotherhood to the Son of man Who is the Son of God. I, even I, may yet be lifted up to be set among princes, even the princes of His people, by virtue of my regenerated manhood, which brings me into relation with the manhood of Christ, and so into relation with the Godhead.” Fling not yourself away, oh man... Turn you to your God with full purpose of heart, and you shall find a grand destiny in store for you.

Now, my brethren, to you is the last word: let us be with God since God is with us. I give you for a watchword through the year to come: “Emmanuel, God with us.” You, the saints redeemed by blood, have a right to all this in its fullest sense, drink into it and be filled with courage. Do not say, “We can do nothing.” Who are ye that can do nothing? *God is with you.* Do not say, “The church is feeble and fallen upon evil times”—nay, “*God is with us!*” Whatever is possible or whatever is impossible, Christians can do at God’s command, for God is with us. Do you not see that the word, “God with us,” puts impossibility out of all existence? Hearts that never could else be broken will be broken if God be with us. Errors that never else could be [proven false] can be overthrown by “God with us.” Things impossible with men are possible with God... Let us live with it upon our hearts: “The best of all is God with us.” Blessed Son of God, we thank Thee that Thou hast brought us that word. Amen.

From a sermon delivered on Lord’s Day morning, December 26, 1875,
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential English Baptist preacher; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.



² **mayhap** – perhaps; possibly.