1 John - Commentaries by Alexander Craven Ord

An Explanation, Blessedness of the Person of Christ, The (2:24)

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father (1 John 2:24).

A further demonstration of the nature of the false doctrine brought out by Mr. Raven has come to light. Judging by his correspondence with a friend, in reply to Mr. R. Hunt, he can no longer claim to share the common "precious faith," held by all true Christians since the introduction of Christianity. He now plainly denies the unity of the glorious Person of Christ, the foundation upon which all the superstructure of divine truth and the Church itself is built, as the Lord Himself said to His disciples (referring to Peter's confession of His Person, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God"), "Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We should have thought that the charge of undermining the unity of the Person of Christ, already brought against Mr. Raven, founded on his previous letters and statements, would have called forth from him, as it has from his friends, some assurance of his having been mistaken or misunderstood; and that he held that unity to be of deepest importance, even if his language seemed irreconcilable with it; or, at least, that for the sake of his friends, as well as his own sake, he would have endeavored to preserve some appearance of retaining it. Far from this, be gives, without any hesitation, his reasons for refusing it, even treating it with a contempt which we must call profane.

It is no longer therefore merely a question as to the nature of eternal life, or when it may be received by those who are made partakers of it, serious as such questions may be, and dangerous as they have proved when carried back to the spring or source of Eternal Life in Christ, and involving thereby both His Nature and His Person. Encouraged however, in these speculations, by the continued support of His adherent, and still more by the countenance of his friends in the reply to the second letter (addressed to foreign brethren)written by Mr. Anstey, and countersigned by C. H. M. and J. B. S., Mr. Raven has now ventured not only to dissect and to divide the life which ever existed in the Person of Christ and to affirm that some of His titles do not include Divine attributes (by which he had greatly disquieted and distressed all who were not previously rendered insensible or indifferent to his earlier irreverent expressions as to the Lord of Glory) but carrying these reasonings still further, he virtually destroys that which is the keystone of the arch of Christianity and with it the whole Divine fabric reared upon it falls to the ground. Nor is this an inference merely drawn by others, for he himself, as will appear, carries this division of the Person of Christ into the past, the present, and the future—what He was on earth, what He accomplished on the cross, and the present relations or offices He now sustains towards us in heaven, or that He will occupy in the future as Son of Man the Second Adam, or Head of His body, the Church.

In doing this Mr. Raven has disregarded the double warning given by Mr. Turpin, not only in extracts from Mr. Darby's writings {quoted in W. T. Turpin's magazine} in Helps in Things Concerning Himself {edited by W. T. Turpin}, but also his own solemn and earnest entreaty which accompanies it. This disregard however is scarcely surprising seeing that Mr. R passes by, with total indifference, the check which Scripture puts upon the intrusion of the human mind into the sacred inviolability of the blessed Person of Christ and in this he is the more responsible, inasmuch as he quotes (page 9) the passage "No man knoweth the Son but the Father"; yet he is not deterred by this from pursuing the inquiry which it forbids. He also ignores (with what has an appearance of an assumed air of ignorance) all that has been universally held and maintained as to the unity of the Person of Christ by pious and esteemed teachers and men of God in the Church of Christ since the days of the apostles replying to Mr. Hunt's reverent pleading for the unity of the Person of Christ, with the question,—where did he get it from? as though it were something novel and unheard of! It is easy of course to say this, and thus to give to those of his followers who are ignorant of the facts, the false impression that the mistake lies in Mr. Hunt's unacquaintedness with the subject, instead of with his own presumptuous rashness exhibited in thus despising the long-established faith of the church of God. But even if he did not think it worth his while to follow the cautious conduct of the apostle Paul, in communicating and comparing his teaching with that of others of weight in the Church of God, lest, as he tells us, "By any means he should run, or had run, in vain" (Gal. 2:2), yet the Athanasian creed (with which any ordinary instructed Christian, not to say teacher, may be supposed to be acquainted) might have stayed so arrogant an expression of impious ridicule as "Where the idea of unity of a person is got from, I know not. It seems to me perfect nonsense."

What Mr. Turpin says is this

The holy mystery of His blessed Person is attempted to be unraveled and explained after a fashion that one's whole soul shrinks from; and the end must be that adoration and worship will be superseded by reason and speculation.

May God in His great grace and goodness avert such a consummation as this, is one's constant, earnest cry . . .

How well it is said (by Mr. Darby), that we must take care not to pretend to know all that concerns the union of humanity and divinity in the Person of the Lord. This union is inscrutable. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Jesus grew in wisdom. What has made some Christians fall into such errors is, that they have wished to distinguish and explain the condition of Christ as man. We know that He was and is God; we know that He became man and the witness to His true divinity is maintained in that state of humiliation by the inscrutability of the union. One may show that certain views detract from His glory, and from the truth of His Person; but I earnestly desire that brethren should not set to work to dogmatize as to His Person. They would assuredly fall into some error. I never saw any one do it without falling into some unintentional heresy. To show that an explanation is false, in order to preserve souls from the evil consequences of the error and to pretend to explain the Person of the Lord, are two different things.

Again, (Mr. Turpin continues) the same writer says

I dread dissecting, if I may venture so to speak, Christ; it is not the way to honor Him. Very few will speak so as not to commit themselves; “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” We may know many precious things of Him which enable us to condemn error, but nice definitions of what He was, and how He was it, human language and human thoughts are not competent to, I judge .

(Helps in Things concerning Himself. No. 34; pp. 254- 256.)

But perhaps it may be doubted by some whether Mr. R. really holds such sentiments, or means what his words appear to convey. Alas! there can be no question on this head; for the system of doctrine elaborated by Mr. Raven is painfully complete in its character, and is carried out in all points in which it could be applied to the Person, the Work, the Titles of Christ, as well as the relations in which He stands to us, or before God on our behalf.

Moreover, this is not only stated and developed, but passages are quoted from his opponents, in which the common faith of Christians is expressed, in order to condemn and repudiate them. Quoting Mr. Hunt, he says

The phraseology in which Mr. Hunt couches his own belief, such as God and Man one Christ, and God becoming the woman’s seed, is not the language of Scripture, nor, in my judgment, conveys at all accurately the truth of Scripture. . . . The fact is that those who have left us have no sense of the reality of the incarnation of the Son, and are fast traveling in the direction of the profane thought of M. Favez, their leader in France, that the Son of Man is man united to the divinity.

(A Correspondence, page 10).

Yet Mr. Darby says, in Collected Writings

“Christ’s humanity was united to Godhead, which no one else’s humanity ever was” (vol. 15, p. 229).

It may be thought that because Mr. Raven does not deny either the divinity or the humanity of Christ, his views are less serious on that account. But such is not the case inasmuch as the separation of the natures involves the dissolution and ultimate loss of His Person, and all the blessed results for faith which flow from it, in all that He has undertaken for us. This will be shown in the sequel. We give some further extracts from Mr. Darby’s writings, showing the importance of the subject, as well as his views upon it, not that we own any standard but Scripture, but because of their intrinsic value, and because they are accepted and appealed to by Mr. R’s followers, in support of their own views.

If we regard the Second Man, the Lord from heaven Immanuel, God with us, the One testified unto by Jehovah of hosts as “the Man My Fellow” (Zech.13:7), Him who fills the highest heavens, and yet was down here a babe in a manger, who could command the waves, and still the storm, but was buffeted by His creatures—how fearfully and wonderfully made! . . .“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,” has thrown the efficacy of what He Himself is into all that He has done. He offered one sacrifice for sins, of abiding efficacy. He has “obtained eternal redemption” and brought in “everlasting righteousness,” He has “perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” He is “consecrated” a priest “for evermore” (Heb. 7; 9; 10). All the value of the work and offices of Christ flows from the glory of His Person (Psa. 139, Practical Holiness, by J. N. D.)

Thus we have a revelation of heavenly things brought directly from heaven by Christ, and in His Person. He revealed them in all their freshness which was found in Him, and which He, who was ever in heaven, enjoyed He revealed them in the perfection of the Person of Him who made the glory of heaven; whose nature is the atmosphere which all those who are found there breathe, and by which they live; He, the object of the affections which animate this holy place, from the Father Himself, down to the last of the angels who fill heaven’s courts with their praises, He is the center of all glory. Such is the Son of Man, He who came down to reveal the Father—truth and grace—but who divinely remained in heaven in the essence of His divine nature, in His Person inseparable from the humanity with which He was clothed! The Deity which filled this humanity was inseparable in His Person from all the Divine perfection, but He never ceased to be a man, really and truly man before God (J. N. D. Notes on the Gospel of John, p. 37).

It is a great mistake to suppose that because people have not intelligently received an evil doctrine they have not suffered by it. The plain simple notion of Christ is undermined, and power against evil and for good destroyed, though the soul is unaware of it. The sense of the evil is utterly enfeebled, and Christ practically lost (Collected Writings vol. 15, p. 210 note).

There are four great fundamental points on which we join issue with Mr. Raven in reference to the Person of our blessed Lord. And we affirm that on each of these points the Scripture teaches that which completely overthrows Mr. Raven’s system of doctrine.

First, as to the union of the divine and human natures in His glorious Person, we affirm that this unity is everywhere implied or expressed in Scripture.

Secondly, as to the names, titles, or designations that He bears, we assert that they all, without exception, include or carry with them Divine attributes.

Thirdly, as to the relations, positions, and offices between God and man, which He fills, we declare that they all, and in every aspect, imply and involve the whole glory of His Person.

Fourthly, as to the work of expiation which He has accomplished, we appeal to every Christian that the thought as well as the reality of what He was, as God, in accomplishing it, must always and of necessity be brought into it.

Far be it from us to pretend to comprehend or explain the mode or manner of the precious and all-important union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ. The very thought of thus subjecting that ever blessed Person to such intrusion of the human mind is abhorrent to us. Love and loyalty alike forbid the thought of thus dishonoring, by irreverent curiosity, Him whom faith, whilst allowed to gaze on His perfections, contemplates with holy adoration and worship. But whilst owning that in the depth of His Person this Holy One of God is

altogether unfathomable, yet we may bring forward the universal testimony of Scripture as to the fact, the necessity, and the display of this unity; for all this is distinctly revealed to us.

First, then, as to the union of the divine and human natures in His glorious Person; we affirm that this unity is everywhere implied or expressed in Scripture.

In Matt. 1:23 it is written, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Here it is evident that under the same designation of “His Name Emmanuel,” the Spirit includes both the child conceived and brought forth, and the infinite Emmanuel, thus expressing not only Godhead, but God in the new condition of manhood in our midst, that is, God with us. So in Isa. 9:6 “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God.” That the same Person should be both a child born, and the mighty God, is neither conceivable, nor possible, nor can be in any sense true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in that Person. John the Baptist puts this in the most striking light when he says, “After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for He was before me” (John 1:30).

As to His human nature, the Lord came after John, as to His divine, He was before Him, and He founds His exaltation as Man on the fact that He was before him, the Baptist speaking of Him unequivocally as one Person, both before him, and after him. This could only be on the ground of the unity of the Person. We see the same in the Lord’s own testimony of Himself, when He says, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). It is impossible, unless we hold the heretical notion of the existence of the humanity of Christ before His incarnation (and so misinterpret, in a wholly novel way, passages of this kind) to give them any real signification, unless we take them as expressive of the unity of the Person of Christ; this unity being so real, that what was proper to one nature could be thus applied to the other.

“What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” (John 6:62).

In Isa. 50 the Lord gives this challenge to Israel, as regards His divine Person when manifested in the flesh “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called was there none to answer. Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness .. . I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.” And He continues, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (vv. 2-4).

The same Person speaks throughout as “I” and “Me.” He who clothes the heavens with blackness, as the mighty Creator, is the obedient One, who, as Man, has received the tongue of the learned, and submits to His Father’s will exposing His face even to shame and spitting (vv. 5,6). The same Person in John 8, who, little more than thirty years of age, was about to be “lifted up” as man from the earth declares “before Abraham was, I am,” thus applying to Himself the eternal self-existent name of Jehovah. In John 18:4, “Knowing all things that should come upon Him,” He presents Himself to those who came to take Him in Gethsemane (responding to the title “Jesus of Nazareth,” which distinctly involved His humanity) with the words “I am (He)”; yet these words sufficed to render them powerless and they go backward, and fall to the ground. He moreover protects His own, whilst delivering Himself up, that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, “Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none” (vv. 5-9). When He invites the recognition of His Person as “the Son of God,” by the blind man (whose eyes He had opened, and who had owned Him as “a prophet,” a “man” who was “of God,” and who now answers Christ’s invitation to believe on “the Son of God,” by saying, “who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”), He says, “Thou hast both seen Him and He it is that talketh with thee” (John 9:17, 33-38). The statement in John 1:14, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth,” is alone sufficient to establish this unity; for in saying that He who is God, the Word, and the Creator, became flesh, the apostle does not imply that He assumed another personality, but that the Person of the Son, who had existed from all eternity, assumed manhood, and displayed the divine glory in that manhood, and as Man. Thus also, in Phil. 2, He who subsisted in the form and glory of God, “took upon Him the form of a servant, . .. and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

All was Himself, and the same person, whether in the form of God, or humbled as a servant here.

In Zech. 9 Christ takes His place as the Shepherd of Israel, who feeds His flock, but is rejected by the nation, and specially by their leaders, and then He is sold for thirty pieces of silver; all this distinctly brings Him before us as man.

“And I said to them . . . Give me my price, and if not forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.” But the prophet adds, “And the Lord”—that is Jehovah—“said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.” For the man so treated the Messiah and Shepherd of Israel, is Jehovah also (vv. 12-13).

In Isa. 40, when the coming of Christ in glory is announced, Zion is exhorted to lift up her voice with strength and “say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand . . . Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.” This is evidently Christ; but the Holy Ghost proceeds to say, “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom,” etc. (vv. 9, 10 11); continuing, in the same Person, the shepherd character and tenderness manifested in Him as man, whilst He is God and acts and judges as such. In Zech. 14:3-5 the same event is in view, and Christ is referred to as appearing, for the deliverance of His people, in divine glory as Jehovah, “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations; . . .and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.” But His Person, as man, is distinguished in the words, “His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives,” which cleaves asunder, in testimony to the glory of Him who frequented this spot, in the days of His humiliation upon earth.

In Rom. 1:3, 4 the gospel of God is declared to be “concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here we have His full title. Then His humanity is especially marked as characterizing His person, in the words, “Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,” as well as His power displayed in resurrection as the Son of God, “and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Similarly, in Rom. 9:5, His humanity is first brought forward as marking what He is personally, and quite as distinctly as His divine nature, “Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Indeed the passages which indicate unmistakably the unity of the Person of Christ are innumerable. Many of them will be noticed as we proceed. (Compare among others John 20:27 28; Micah 5:2; Psa. 45:7; Col. 2:9; etc.)

Secondly, as to the names, titles, or designations borne by the Lord, we assert that they all, without exception include, or carry with them, divine attributes.

If we examine the Word of God, we shall find there is not a single name or title that is there applied by the Holy Ghost to Christ as man, even that which seems to be lowest in its relative significance, which does not involve and embrace the essential glory and power of His divine attributes. For if the unity of His Person is a fact divinely taught us, this is seen to be a necessary consequence, as the preceding section will have shown.

His titles, as the King of Israel, the Son of David, or the Branch (which involve dignities which have specially an earthly character), as well as others, which (though belonging to Him as man) have a wider range and signification, such as the Lamb, the Christ, the Second Adam, yet—whether more limited in their application or otherwise—all include, or are invested with, attributes, which no mere creature could exhibit, and with powers which no mere human being could wield, and present aspects of His Person, in which He receives divine worship, or honor, which belongs to God alone.

When offering Himself as King to the daughter of Zion He claims the ass and its colt from its owners, with the words “The Lord hath need of them,” whilst the multitudes which accompany Him shout, “Hosanna to the Son of David! . . .Hosanna in the highest!” This is just what excites the jealousy of the chief priests and scribes, who, when they hear the ascription of praise from the children in the Temple saying “Hosanna to the son of David!” recognize it to be that given in Psa. 118:25, “Save now” (Hosanna), “I beseech Thee, O Lord” (that is Jehovah); “O Lord” (Jehovah), “I beseech Thee, send now prosperity.” They ask Him “Hearest Thou what these say?” and the Lord, accepting this adoration, replies, “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” (Matt. 21:3, 9, 15, 16). Their simple faith, which delighted the Lord, may well rebuke these lowering thoughts concerning Him.

In Jer. 23:5 and 6 we are told, “Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” It is the King and Branch of David, through whose rule Judah is saved, and who executes judgment and justice in the earth who is thus called “Jehovah our Righteousness.” The Lord indeed intimates this glory of His Person, in the question which He addressed to the Pharisees, which silenced and confounded them. Citing Psa. 110:1 (“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool”), He adds, “If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?” (Matt. 22:44, 45). Moreover, as King in Psa. 45, He is declared to have not only His righteous reward of royalty, belonging to Him as man, but the eternal throne, which is His by right as “God” (vv. 6,7). As Son of man, and King in its widest aspect, He judges the nations, and passes the final sentence on them (Matt. 25:34-41). Also in Isa. 11 we see the accompanying display of Divine power in the “Rod” that comes “out of the stem of Jesse”; for “He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (vv. 1-2). In Rev. 5:6, we learn, that as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and as the Lamb that had been slain, He has prevailed to open the Book, which no man can look upon, and He is seen “in the midst of the throne . . . having seven horns and seven eyes,” the fullness of power and intelligence, “which are the seven Spirits of God.” As the stone laid in Zion He has also the same, “the eyes of the LORD” (Jehovah), “which run to and fro through the whole earth” (Zech. 3:9; 4:10).

The title of the Christ, the Anointed (in Hebrew, the Messiah), is of great moment. Attaching to Him distinctly as man upon whom the Holy Ghost descended and abode, it indicates in reality the glory of His Person. We shall find that this anointing is expressly intended to mark out who He is and His personal worthiness and fitness to bear the honor or dignity it implies. In the Old Testament, the anointing with oil, prefiguring the presence and power of the Holy Ghost was conferred on those who were thereby constituted prophets, priests, or kings, being thus distinctly appointed by God as such (1 Kings 19: 16; Lev. 8:12 and 30; 21:12; Psa. 139:20). John the Baptist tells us that in this way it was intimated to him who the person, thus distinguished, was though unknown to him before by any previous acquaintance.

Thus was he to discern who it was that bore the personal title of the Son of God, and the Baptizer of the Holy Ghost. “And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:33, 34). So in John 3 contrasting Him with all others, as men who are of the earth and speak accordingly, he says of Christ, “He . . .” is divine “cometh from above” and “is above all”; “and what He,” alone, “hath seen and heard” (compare vv. 12 and 13), “that He testifieth”; so that receiving His testimony, is to “set to” our “seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (28-34). That is, He unites, in this testimony, His divine and heavenly origin, to the fact of the fullness of the Spirit present in Him; combining thus, in a double way, what is essentially heavenly and divine. For whilst prophets and others delivered the message given to them, but at other times spoke what came merely from their own minds—what characterized Him was, that He, being God manifest, never spoke at any time and upon any subject save the mind of God, and in the words of God.

In the account of the anointing given us in the Gospel of Luke 3:21, 22, Jesus is specially seen as man, “being baptized and praying”; but, in His Person, He is the object of heaven which opens over Him. The Holy Ghost visibly descends upon Him, and the Father expresses what He is to Him “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.” For though seen in humiliation, He is the center of all the Father’s counsels, and on Him rests all divine interest and affection.

Thus it is, that the Holy Ghost testifies by His presence to His title to be thus honored as man, and to His glorious Person upon which the thoughts and delight of heaven are concentrated. In Scripture, therefore, Christ, or the Christ (i.e. anointed), becomes the title by which His Person is specified or distinguished in its entirety, implying all that He is in Himself, on account of which He is the chosen and anointed of God (cp. Isa. 11:2; 61:1). Hence the Apostle John says, that “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (John 5:1); and the Lord Himself connects eternal life with the knowledge of Himself, as bearing this title of “Christ” (John 17:3), which is made the test of the disciples’ belief in Him (Luke 9:20); and this title is conjoined with that of the Son of God, as the means of receiving life, in

John 20:31—“These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name” (cp. Matt. 1:18 and 11:4).

For when we think of the Holy Ghost as God, to whom all creation owes its existence, His finding One upon whom He can rest in His fullness, is the indication of the supreme excellence and worthiness that mark the Person, who is at one and the same time the lowly humbled man, and the true and only Son of God. And this is what gave its character and savor to all that He said and did, as did the frankincense to the Meat Offering. For the Holy Ghost’s presence in Him is not as if it were needful to make up some deficiency, but that all the divine persons might have their share in the economy of redemption, as we are told, in Col. 1:19, that all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him. And, in accordance with this, we find that the display of His marvelous grace and greatness flow out from this “fullness” in manhood; whilst He is the image of the invisible God, and the glory of God shines in His face as the Christ (Col. 1:15 2 Cor. 4:6). And as such He sits on the throne, and exercises judgment, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). Again, “As I live, saith the Lord (Jehovah), every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10-12). Thus, where He is presented as the anointed man, the “Christ,” or the One who has died for us, He acts in judgment as Jehovah, and as God to whom all as His responsible creatures must give account. Hence, when He is born in Bethlehem, the Angel announces Him to the Shepherds, as “a Savior, which is Christ the Lord”; and when re-introduced into the world to come as “the Son,” “the First Begotten,” the Apostle, in bringing forward His personal glory, cites from the Psalms “Let all the angels of God worship Him”; showing us, that when He receives this glory, even as the Son born in time and recognized as the King and Anointed, He receives divine honor, publicly rendered by these most exalted of God’s creatures (Heb. 1:6, 8).

Indeed, creative power, divine virtues, and infinite fullness of grace, are constantly connected with His title as “the Christ,” or as “Christ Jesus,” and sometimes (because of His intrinsic Deity in the unity of His Person) with His preexistence. “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11). And, again “Which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9). This was evidently before the assumption of manhood. “They drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). So also, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, &c” (Phil. 2:5 6). The Apostle Paul glories in his infirmities, “that the power of Christ may rest (tabernacle) upon” him (2 Cor.12:9). “Grace and truth,” which are declared to be “the glory . . . of the Only Begotten of the Father,” “came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:14-17); for God had come and was manifested in Him. From Him, as the Head, and as the Christ, “all the body . . . increaseth with the increase of God” (Col. 2:19, and Eph. 4:15-16). He dwells in the heart by faith, and, through Him, the soul is filled with (“into”) “all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

The Lord Jesus is seen, in His title as the Son of Man, in Rev. 1 with the divine attributes of the Ancient of Days (v. 14), and with the voice that marks the power of the Almighty God (Ezek. 43:2), “His voice as the sound of many waters” and as having reestablished the rights, and displayed the glory of God on the cross, as regards sin and its reflection upon that glory, He has His place now, as Son of Man, in the glory of God. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him” (John 13:31, 32). Then again, as “Son of Man,” He comes “with power and great glory,” and “in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 24:30),—always indicative of the supreme power of the Creator; and not only so, but “in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26). And sitting on a cloud, as “Son of Man,” He executes the judgment, and reaps the harvest of the earth (Rev. 14:14).

Lastly, we have His designation as “The last Adam,” or “the second man,” for these titles are identified in 1 Cor. 15:45, 47, and it has been assumed by Mr. R., in his reasoning, that they do not include those divine attributes which, as we have seen, everywhere else, and under all titles characterize Him. We are told in 1 Cor. 15:21, that “since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” We grant that here He is spoken of as raised by God as the result of God’s acceptance of and delight in that perfect and divine work in which He put away sin, rather than in the exercise of His power as the Son of God in His victory over death (John 2:19; Rom. 1:4); and that His kingdom is also viewed as conferred on Him by God. But there is more than enough to show in this chapter that the notion of any limitation of His power in this, as in other aspects of His Person, is only due to human imagination and unbelief; for He who is seen, in v. 28, to be “the Son,” is, in vv. 21-26, as “man,” the subjugator of all things in God’s creation, and the destroyer of death, which takes place, at the close of all, by His calling the dead out of the graves (John 5:21-23, 28, 29).

Mr. Raven’s argument, that because we are like Christ, and to bear His image (the image of the Second Man, as we have of the first man), therefore divine attributes cannot be included in this title, or “it would be true also of us,”—is wholly without foundation. For, as “the last Adam,” He is “a quickening spirit” (v. 45). Are we therefore “quickening spirits”? And does not a “quickening spirit” include divine power? And are we “out of heaven”? (v. 47). For, as Mr. Hunt justly remarks, John’s testimony, twice repeated disposes in a moment of this idea, stating that “He that cometh from heaven is above all” (John 3:31). So in John 1:14, the glory of Christ is seen as the only begotten of the Father, “full of grace and truth.” And the apostle adds, “Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” (v. 16). Does it therefore follow that we have this fullness as He has? or that we display the glory of the Son as the only begotten, because we are recipients of that which He possesses in divine power and infinitude? Or are we to deny this to be a part of His divine glory, because we are made partakers of His fullness? or, as the apostle Peter says, “of the divine nature”? (2 Peter 1:4). As to this point and the second man not being “characterized” by the “attributes of a divine Person,” we may draw attention to the following

Surely we shall reign with Him; but we shall receive neither the special glory, nor the attributes proper to the Son of man, for they belong to Jesus only.

(Collected Writings 28:476).

We see the same combination of glories, when, as man, or the seed of the woman, He bruises the serpent’s head, and through death destroys him who had the power of death delivering them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14, 15). Having, as He Himself tells us, come upon the strong man, and by His strength (“a stronger than he”) having “overcome him, He taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luke 11:22). Though necessarily Man in accomplishing this, yet His divine power shines out at the same moment, as He tells us in the same passage, it is “with the finger of God” (v. 20) He casts out the devils; an expression always characteristic of Omnipotence. “This is the finger of God,” said the magicians, when baffled in their attempt to

imitate creative power in one of its lowest forms (Ex. 8:19). And again, “Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers” (Psa. 8:3).

Thirdly, as to the relations, positions, and offices between God and man, which He fills, we declare that they all, and in every aspect, imply and involve the whole glory of His Person.

As to this cardinal point Mr. Raven is most distinct.

Referring to Psalm 16, he speaks of “my statement—that ‘Christ is viewed as man distinct and apart from what He is as God’—in that, and other passages” (A Correspondence p. 3).

And in another letter, in this correspondence, he says

By a most improper use of the statement, “no man knoweth the Son but the Father,” Christians are virtually stopped from seeking to enter into the import of any particular relation or position which Christ sustains—for to do this they must of necessity look at such relation abstractly, i.e. in what it is in itself apart from other thoughts as to the Person who sustains it because it is so revealed—and is the only way in which man (being finite) could take it in. In many cases it would not be possible to bring the thought of God as such into the particular relation—for how could it be said of God over all blessed for ever, that He had “a head,” or was “perfected for ever,” or “entered in,” or is the “mediator between God and men,” or “the first born among many brethren?” If any one dares to speak of these things abstractly, he is charged with dividing the unity of the Person of the Son. By such a notion all is shrouded in mystery utterly and hopelessly obscured. Where the idea of unity of a person is got from I know not. It seems to me perfect nonsense. The idea of “person” does not bring in the thought of either parts or unity (ibid., page 9).

It is most blessedly true that Scripture sometimes brings specially forward, and emphasizes, the reality of the humanity of Christ; for this is its beauty. But where do we find that “Christ is viewed as Man distinct, and apart from what He is as God?” Nor is it true, as Mr. Raven affirms, that Scripture in speaking of Him as ‘firstborn among many brethren,’ ‘second man,’ ‘Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,’ ‘Head of the Body,’ ‘High Priest,’ &c., &c. and in presenting Him to us in these positions, speaks abstractly, i.e. limits itself to what is appropriate to the particular position in hand, and does not, in so speaking cover all that is true of the Person who has entered on those positions (p. 4).

On the contrary, Scripture always presents Him to us as a whole Christ, in the blessed unity of His Person, and never so limits itself, or speaks of Him as “man distinct and apart from what He is as God,” or without involving the divine in His Person. And it is profane to imply, as this sentence does that this is not appropriated, and necessary, to every position in which He represents us as Man before God. The Scripture does indeed delight, in every way, to bring out the perfect suitability and adaptation of Christ for the positions or offices which He sustains, whether in reference to God or to ourselves. Sometimes, therefore, when His Mediation or Priesthood is in view, we are encouraged by the reality of His Manhood being brought into special prominence,—His partaking of flesh and blood, and His experimental acquaintance with our circumstances, our sorrows, and our temptation. But this is never, as Mr. Raven affirms, “apart from other thoughts as to the Person who sustains it.” It is on the contrary, accompanied and interwoven with thoughts and statements concerning His nearness to the Father as Son of God, and the acceptability of His Person, as such, in the exercise of this office. Besides this we have the sovereign grace and dignity with which He upholds the people of God in their weakness, and the glory of God involved in their maintenance to the end, both in their connection with God and in their conflicts. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through” (Greek) “the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:14, 15).

If we are invited to consider Him as the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession, offices to which He is called by God and in which He represents us, standing as Man for men in the presence of God, we are reminded that, in this position He is “counted worthy of more glory than Moses” distinguished and honored as Moses was in an exceptional way (Num. 12:7). For He who, as God and Creator, “hath builded the house hath more honor than the house” He has built (Matt. 16:18); as well as having, beyond the place of a servant, the personal interest and rights of a “Son over His own house,” in what belongs to Himself (Heb. 3:1-6). So far is the word of God from looking at Him “distinct and apart from what He is as God,” in these relations.

Again, the apostle insists on the greatness of the Lord in Heb. 7, arguing this from the way in which Melchizedek is presented to us in Scripture, “without father, without mother without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a Priest continually.” Melchizedek’s fitness to represent the Son of God in the dignity of His Person, thus sets before us figuratively His power to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him, in all the exigencies of their spiritual conflict with powers of evil, both within and around them (vv. 3, 16, 25). It is this suitability which has led to His being called or saluted as High Priest, by God Himself, who finds delight or satisfaction in His personal qualifications for this office, as the word “salutes” (Heb. 5:10, Greek) indicates as does the oath itself by which He is constituted High Priest as well as the terms in which it is expressed, “The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. . . . For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:21, 28).

Christ is also the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the means of access or introduction to the Father (John 14:6). He is likewise the Shepherd, whose love and interest extend to every one of the sheep. But though these relations towards ourselves specially involve and express His nearness and tender approach to us, in His perfect humanity, as well as in His giving His life for the sheep, yet, as the Son, no man takes His life from Him. He knows His sheep divinely, as the Father knows Him and He knows the Father. He has other sheep, the Gentiles, whom He must bring. He calls them by name, He gives them infinite and eternal blessings, and no one can pluck them out of His hand, who alone could say, “I and My Father are one” (John 10). If He is the true Vine (John 15) in whom we are to abide, He is the source of nourishment to every branch; and it is only in dependence on His infinite fullness that we are blessed, for without Him we can do absolutely nothing. And when sending forth His disciples after His resurrection, whilst He speaks of Himself as Man, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth He adds, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). In like manner he tells us, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). This blessed and constant ministration of strength, grace, or blessing, by the perpetuity of His divine presence, promised in these varied ways teaches us that in every relation, position, or character fulfilled by Him

towards us, we must bring the thought of what He is, as God, into the particular relation,—which is exactly what Mr. Raven says we must not do. To “look at” “any particular relation or position which Christ sustains” “abstractly,” “is the only way,” he tells us, “in which man (being finite) can take it in.” But such reasoning is utterly destructive of all our blessing, and virtually reduces Christ to the measure of our finite minds. What finite man can comprehend how Christ can be thus present with each of His servants, or in the varied assemblies of His saints, or sustain in grace, in every moment, each soul that looks to Him? The fact is, our confidence is invited, and based upon His capability and qualifications for maintaining the relation and positions assumed by Him towards us, precisely on the ground which Mr. Raven denies. Our profit and comfort would be all destroyed by the admission of such a sentiment into the mind as Mr. Raven suggests. For how could Christ act as Mediator, or High Priest, or Shepherd, without the divine knowledge of each case? This is the very point on which our blessed Lord expressly insists with His disciples when announcing His approaching departure and absence from them on high. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God believe also in Me” (John 14:1). For His care and presence and power, being divine, would be ever used towards them in the same way, and like the unseen power of God, could be apprehended by faith alone. Moreover we need to be assured that, as our Mediator, He can sustain the dignity of the character of God and His holiness, and assure us of our relations with God being maintained; whilst, at the same time, He comes so near to us, and wins the confidence of our hearts, in having become Man; expressing all His tender compassion for us in our far-off condition. But to do this effectually he must know all the secrets of our hearts, and all our peculiar trials and temptations, as God alone can, so that all His divine attributes are necessarily involved in the exercise of each of these offices. There is “one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” i.e. “Jehovah the Savior” (1 Tim. 2:5). All this is as unfathomable as His divine Person, though it is the delight of faith to count upon it, and realize it as infallibly true. Mr. R.’s reasoning insists upon attempting to measure what is infinite, and in order to do so, he must reduce the whole to the level of our finite minds.

The assumption of human nature in its weakest and lowest stage by our blessed Lord, His subordination in all things to the Father, and perfect absolute dependence in that condition, has always been used by human reason and unbelief as the occasion for the depreciation of His Person and His glory. And so it has been in this controversy. But the word of God, on the contrary, makes this very humiliation of Himself, so unsparing on His part, the occasion for bringing out more fully His glory, insisting on His investiture, as Man with special positions and dignities, which should bring us closer to Him and render us more dependent on Him, and beholden to Him, endearing Him the more to our hearts, and making Him thus the object of more honor from man, and even from all intelligent beings in the universe. For it is the Father’s counsel that He should be honored, in that nature in which He has been slighted and despised. Hence Scripture delights to dwell upon what He does as man, and to show the victories or triumphs He has gained in that nature. For now He has, as has been justly stated, acquired, as well as inherited honors. Satan has been overcome by Him, the power of death and the grave destroyed, sin put away, the judgment of God endured, and all this could only suitably be done by Him as man, because it was for man, and as representing man, that all the powers of evil, under which man had fallen, were to be overthrown; whilst the glory of God was to be thus reestablished before the universe (Hebrews 2:9,10,14-16). Hence these same glorious works are sometimes ascribed to Him in His manhood, and at other times ascribed to the exercise of His power as the Son of God.

From all this we may learn, when His manhood is specially brought into relief, not to conclude (from false assumptions of the human mind untaught by the Spirit of God), that when He is spoken of as the “Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” as “Head of the Body,” as the “Second Man,” that divine attributes are not included as the power by which He acts in or sustains these relations but that in all the properties or powers which distinguish Him as God and Man, in the unity of His blessed Person, there is a gracious adaptation and special competency, in a double way, for the exercise of these functions, such as is expressed in the words, “I have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people” (Psa. 89:19). As chosen out of the people, He has the sympathy that links Him with the people of God, in the knowledge of their trials and exercises, and to what the weakness of flesh and blood (unlike the nature of angels) exposes them to, whilst the might that exists in His Person shows His fitness, in another way, to render all the help that we need to be ministered to us, and which He has undertaken to supply. For He does not indeed take hold of angels (i.e. by the hand to assist), but of the seed of Abraham He takes hold. In all this we trace not only the perfect grace of God which has considered so perfectly all our need, but we have also God’s own satisfaction in, and appreciation of, the One who is the divinely chosen instrument of our blessing. For Christ’s investment with the highest functions and offices connected with redemption, far from implying weakness or inferiority, is naturally founded by God’s purpose, on the original ground of suitableness, in His capacity and qualifications for what He has undertaken.

A striking illustration of this statement, and one of great importance in the present controversy, is given us in John 5 where Christ is brought before us, both as Son of God and Son of Man. There we learn that all the works expressive of divine prerogative and power are done by the Son in Manhood, equally with the Father. He quickens souls to Eternal Life, giving life, as the Son, to whom He will. He raises all mankind, as to their bodies, out of the dust of death by His life-giving voice. And, lastly, He alone judges, and thus disposes, sovereignly, of the eternal destiny of the creature—“That all . . . should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father” (v. 23). At the same time He does this specially as Man. He “hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (v. 27. cp. Acts 10:42, 17:31). There is indeed exquisite adaptation even in His manhood, for this office, not only because He has been degraded and set at nought, as Man, by man whom He came to save, but also, because there is suitability, in the estimation of the divine wisdom, that the Judge of Mankind should be Himself One who has been manifested and proved in the midst of human circumstances and temptations—where the creature has failed; and who, as pure and perfect man, has made experimental acquaintance with all that exercises the human heart. At the same time delegation and commission of these varied powers of quickening, saving, or judging, could alone be entrusted to, or be undertaken or executed by, One who was equal with the Father, who could act with Him in all He does, who is perfectly acquainted with His mind and will (v. 30), and who knows all the secrets of men’s hearts, and reads their whole life and history at a glance. (Cp. Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5). Everywhere, when exercising judgment even on the living—as we see Him either walking as the Son of man amidst the seven golden candlesticks, or coming with many crowns upon His head (Rev. 1:19), He is represented as having eyes as a flame of fire, which penetrate into everything, and with a two-edged sword going out of His mouth, and He declares that “All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts” (Rev. 2:23). Power which is expressly stated to belong to God alone (Jer. 17:10; 1 Chron. 28:9), for, as has been said by another, “The exercise of judicial authority in determining the final condition of mankind is a work which could no more be delegated to an inferior intelligence than could the government of the universe. It requires the highest attributes of Deity for its performance.” Hence also, when spoken of in Eph. 4, as man, who “gave gifts unto men” (v. 8), He is also the One “that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things” (v. 10). And again “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. For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him” (Col. 1:17-19, Greek.) Thus, Scripture instead of looking at these relations as “distinct and apart from other thoughts as to the Person who

sustains them," in every such relation introduces the thought of the Glory of the Person, for our eternal consolation, as well as in view of His proper and peculiar exaltation. Indeed, this is just the difference between Christ and all other beings, however honored, whether angelic or human.

Fourthly, as to the work of expiation which He has accomplished—we affirm that the thought as well as the reality of what He was as God, in accomplishing it, must always and of necessity be brought into it.

The idea of what Christ was divinely, as God, or as the Son of God, is essential to this blessed work, both as to fact and as to our apprehension of it. Whether He is viewed as sustaining the judgment of God, or as giving infinite value to the sacrifice which He offered, or as displaying the love which was the source of, and in which He accomplished,—the whole, the full glory of His Person, is the foundation of all.

No instructed Christian thinks of saying that God died but we can say, because of the unity of His Person, that He who was God died, and all the love manifested in this blessed work, as well as the value of it, is taken out of it or lost, if this is denied. Mr. Raven, however, attempts to separate between the human and divine in contemplating the death of our Lord, but solely on the ground of his own reason, as we have seen in other places, nor hesitating to tread on such holy ground. He says

But further, besides presenting God to man in His pathway here, Christ presented man in perfectness before God, and this is the view in Psalm 16; and further, as Son of Man, the woman's seed, He bore the judgment of death that rested on man—by man came the resurrection of the dead. How can you import the thought of God, as such, into all this, in any subjective sense? though all was effected, and could only be effected, in one who is in Person divine. It is really irreverent and profane. The truth is, that the moment those who have left us commit themselves to anything they betray only painful inability to grasp divine thoughts. . . . Mr. Hunt fails to carry on his thoughts as to Christ to death and resurrection, and it is intelligible, for how are you to bring in the thought of God in any subjective sense there, though nothing could alter the truth of the Son's Person?

(A Correspondence, pages 4 and 11).

We will here again quote what Mr. Turpin has brought forward (in extracts from Mr. Darby's writings) in order to guard from the danger of such pernicious reasonings.

Who could say but, there, "God is known in death"? Is it not there God's love is known, never known really till known there? Yet it is weakness, and as to His place as man, the very end of man. But in Himself God is known in love by His being down here with sinful men—by that love reaching even to us. . . . But what an emptying that was, when He who was God could come into death—though suffering, though obeying, bring all that God was in His moral perfection into death.

(See Helps, &c., N o. 35, pp. 299-301).

Having quoted these extracts, we will bring forward, in support of what we affirm, first of all the perception of faith and the testimony, of the Roman centurion, who, as recorded by the inspired writers, being on guard, witnessed the sufferings of the Divine and Precious Savior on the Cross.

Converted on the spot, by the powerful effect of beholding Him throughout this solemn scene, we learn from his own lips, that he saw in the marvelous death of our Lord, not only the suffering of one who was perfection itself in manhood because He was divine, but also the exhibition of a divine power, and of characteristics which elicited from the centurion, in a double way, the same declaration that He was "the Son of God." "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God" (Mark 15: 37-39). In Matthew we are told that the accompanying divine witness to the glory of His Person in the earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and the opening of the graves, as well as the whole scene, produced the same effect upon him, and also upon his companions. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God'" (Matt. 27 54). Whilst the evangelist Luke, who loves to bring before us the true and perfect humanity of our Lord, tells us, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit': and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:46, 47). A striking testimony, when taken together with the accounts of the other evangelists, of that perfect union of the human and divine, which leads to the blessing of the centurion, the divine being brought into it, in the full subjective sense which Mr. R. denies.

In 1 Corinthians 1 the apostle says that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. . . . But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (vv. 18, 23, 24). Here we have the cross as the expression of weakness, but Christ, even in that solemn moment, was to faith the display of the power and wisdom of God. "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (v. 25); for the preaching of the cross "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), though His apparent powerlessness to save Himself was the occasion of the scorn and mockery of His foes, for the strength of God was there, even in that lowly humble, and despised form, or we had never known sin put away in the cross, and God glorified in all His holy being and divine nature—this being done by man, and in the nature of man, or we could have had no interest in it. Who but one who was divine could restore or sustain the infinite glory of God, harmonizing all His attributes, and causing that glory compromised by man, to shine out before the universe displayed as it never was before, and never can be again?

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13:31 32). "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). And here He is speaking as the Son. Take away the thought of the divine Person, the Son of God, who did it—not only could He not have stood in such a place, but it becomes a mere human act, and all that glory which has accrued to God, and which will soon be recognized, as the means of the reconciliation, and the foundation of the new heavens and the new earth (Col. 1:15, 16, 20), vanishes in a

moment.

But the Lord Himself unites these thoughts, which this teaching would separate, and tells us the reality of what takes place on the cross in John 3. He first speaks of the divine necessity of His death, in the aspect of His Person as the Son of Man and our representative on the cross, to satisfy the claims of infinite justice; “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” and then He adds the blessed thought of the gift of God’s love in the same act, and of the divine value or worth of His own blessed Person, “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” (vv. 14-16).

In the 1st Epistle of John also we constantly find the Person of the Lord introduced in this connection. After speaking of God in sending “His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him,” the Apostle adds “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10). Here it is expressly the Son of God bearing the judgment due to sin, as a propitiatory sacrifice for it, the Spirit of God insisting on this as a display of love, because of the infinite worth and dignity of the Person who so bore it.

This corresponds with the statement in chap. 1, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

So the Apostle Paul, contrasting the weakness of the law and the hopeless ruin of man through sin, magnifies the powerful effect of the death of the Son of God, by which God intervened in love on our behalf; and sin, even in its very principle or root, was condemned to the very uttermost. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

Here it is in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet as the Son of God and in His death for sin (that is, by a sacrifice for sin, B,DÂ .:"DJ\"H) that this is done (cp. Rom. 1:3 and 5:10), and this also is the bearing of sin in judgment. The sense of what sin is, with the love that dealt with it, is only thus brought out, in all these passages, in connection with the value of the Person of the Son of God, who took the sin upon Himself. Again in the same chapter we have, “He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

In John 6 Christ is spoken of again and again as the living bread which came down from heaven, involving at once His divine nature as Son come down from heaven, though manifested in manhood, and given by the Father for our sustenance, whilst, as such, He gives life unto the world, and satisfies all the boundless necessities of souls, so that those who eat thereof live for ever (vv. 32, 33, 35, 40, 50). But whilst saying, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven,” He adds “The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world” (v. 51). For by the value of His Person, as the source of life from heaven, He overcomes death, and gives what is of infinite effect, not only to give life “unto the world,” but “for the life of the world” (vv. 33, 51). So the Apostle Paul says, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). In Heb. 10 we find all the sacrifices offered in past ages under the law (superseded because of their inefficacy) giving place to the one perfect and efficacious sacrifice of Christ, which puts away sin for ever. But how is this accomplished? He who undertakes to do the will of God according to the eternal counsels, says, as God, in the holy and solemn act of offering up Himself, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, . . . a body hast Thou prepared me” (vv. 5, 9).

According to this voluntary purpose, He assumes human nature, in order to offer up this body on the cross,—in all the value which the Person so coming, the counsels He fulfilled and the motives actuating Him in so accomplishing the will and the glory of God, could lend to this act. “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). In a similar way His divine person, as the Son is brought in, in chap. 1, in connection with His work, “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). For alone and by His own power, He who upholds all things accomplished this still more wondrous work of purging sins in the presence of the majesty of God; all of whose nature and being were expressed to the uttermost against sin, at that solemn moment when He bore it, who was made sin for us.

Thus constantly is the thought of what He is as God brought by divine teaching, into this blessed work.

This power displayed even in His death, which so struck upon the mind of the centurion, is still more to be observed in the gospel of John, where, in ch. 10, it is coupled with the power to reassume, even when in death and the grave, the life He voluntarily laid down for the glory of God. In John 2:19 He said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” speaking of the temple of His body, but in this passage (John 10), He goes further, alluding to the cross for in that solemn moment of weakness and apparent helplessness of manhood He was free to dispose of His own life. He says, speaking as the Son of God, “No one [@Û*,\H] taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again”; for His power was as infinite on the cross, as in the sepulchre. His exemption from our subordination to death (since He had title over His own life), with His unfailing obedience to His Father’s will, even in death, to establish the rights and glory of His Father, was what constituted its value in His Father’s eyes, and was the occasion of special love on the part of the Father towards Him. “Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (vv. 18, 17). This act could not have had the same worth were it not as really His own, as when He said, when coming into the world, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,” “a body hast Thou prepared Me” (Heb. 10: 9, and 5). For though fulfilling the counsels He had undertaken to accomplish, death was not the unavoidable necessity that it is in our case. Hence we read in chapter 19, “Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, . . . said, It is finished, and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost” (vv. 28, 30); putting His seal to the value and perfection of the work, with these blessed words, “It is finished.” For in His cross, with His heel upon the head of the serpent, He spoiled principalities and powers.

Death was conquered and Satan’s prey delivered. Thus when His death is alluded to in this gospel, it is spoken of rather as departing out of this world to the Father, or as finishing the work the Father had given Him to do, or as His being lifted up—as offering His life according to all the devoted purpose of His heart, so glorifying God and bringing a sweet savor to Him out of death.

Even in the other gospels, where He is more seen as Man, yet as God manifest in flesh, rather than as the Son of the Father, we find the perfection of love and obedience in divine power which characterized Him on to the end, and sustained Him through all, even though the

sufferings were infinite, and though He felt them all as none but a divine Person could. Yet He never yields or gives way as we do He takes the cup in unswerving obedience to His Father's will, and from His hand alone,—and even justifies Him, and cleaves to Him, when forsaken in the darkness of judgment in the words. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from Me, and from the words of My roaring?", adding, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psa. 22:1, 3). We know from Isa. 50 that He set His face like a flint to accomplish His Father's will. And whilst "they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, . . . Jesus went before" His disciples,—who "were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid" (Mark 10:32). In Luke 9 we have "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (v. 51), whilst the dignity of His Person is expressed in the way in which, in the Greek, His death is spoken of, on the mount of Transfiguration, as His exodus from this scene (see v. 31). This is further marked in the statement of the evangelist, "when the time was come that He should be received up" (v. 51). For He was, in His person the true ark of God before whom the waters of death and judgment were dried up for us; as of old, when the priests' feet, bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, touched the Jordan when overflowing its banks, a way was made for the people of God to pass over on dry ground He Himself alone could encounter the judgment of God and the power of the enemy, and exhaust for us the cup of wrath as He says to Peter, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards" (John 13:36).

It is evident from the passages we have referred to, that the Holy Ghost sometimes brings into distinct relief the divine power and glory exhibited in the Person of Christ, and sometimes the weakness and dependence of suffering humanity, and this even in the same acts and scenes; and it is not for us to attempt to reconcile these various aspects because the mystery of His Person and work alike forbid it.

Nevertheless, in the latter case, this is always accompanied with expressions of confidence, or fidelity, or obedience which, in their full perfection, are only possible in one in whom the divine nature was the source of thought and feeling as well as of power, as Mr. Darby says

The spring of divine life in the midst of evil, so that His every thought as man was perfection before God and perfect in that position. This was what marked His state, as being down here, this new thing (Collected Writings, vol. 15, p. 231, note).

We have observed this perfection in His language in Psa. 22 where He says, "I am a worm and no man," and "I am poured out like water"; yet He never fails in His confidence and recognition of what was due to God in the place where He was, as the sinless one made sin for us, or the sin-offering burnt without the camp. It is on this account that, in one of the sacrifices for sin, the fat of the sin-offering, burnt like that of the peace-offerings, went up "for a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Lev. 4:31). For even when made sin for us and for the glory of God, there was in Him and in the motives and devotedness expressed in thus offering Himself, what was infinitely acceptable to God and precious in His sight. A perfect picture of human weakness, expressly contrasted with divine strength, and yet in the same blessed Person, is given us in Psa. 102. There the sufferings of the Lord on the cross are brought before us. From the lips of the Lord Himself we hear the words, "My days are as a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass . . . I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop . . . He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days" (vv. 11, 7, 23). But this complaint of utter weakness and desertion is answered by God addressing the Son, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (vv. 25-27). Thus the Holy Ghost tells us in Heb. 1:10-12, these words are to be applied, contrasting His eternal existence and creative power, with His human weakness and shortened days; but both are true at one and the same moment, and of the same Person.

From this we learn the folly and sin of attempting to submit to our finite minds what is infinite; and that it is our wisdom to receive truth on so solemn a subject with reverence, as Scripture presents it, without seeking to dive into the unfathomable depths of strength or weakness in the cross, which are only recorded for faith to apprehend, and as subjects of adoration and praise.

There are some passages where the specially human sufferings of Christ are most tenderly and touchingly depicted, as in Isa. 53, where He is presented as the Man of Sorrows; yet invariably do we find that the Spirit of God who indited them, introduces at the same time His Person, as that which gives its character to these sufferings, and makes Him the object of the affections of His people. He is the Arm or strength of Jehovah, and as such the subject of revelation "To whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?" (v. 1). And He alone, as such, can bear the griefs, and carry the sorrows of His people, (vv. 1-4). So in Heb. 12, where, as Man, He is looked at as the Author and Finisher of Faith, He also is the One exalted on the throne of God, who alone, amidst a multitude of others, is the Object of Faith, and who endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself; language which could only be used of One who is divine (vv. 2, 3).

But the passage we have quoted, and also Psa. 16, have been brought forward to prove that Christ is viewed as Man apart from what He is as God. We therefore give the following extract

The state described in this Psalm is that of man considered apart from God (I do not mean of course morally separated, nor touch upon the union of the divine and human nature in Christ); but it is man partaker of the divine nature, for so only it could be, but having God for his object, his confidence, as alone having authority over him, entirely dependent on God, and perfect in faith in Him. This could only be in one personally partaker of the divine nature, God Himself in man, as Christ was or derivatively as in one born of God; but, as we have seen, Christ is not here viewed in this aspect, nor the believer as united to Him. The divine presence in Him is viewed, not in the manifestation of God in Him, but in its effect in His absolute perfection as man. He is walking as man morally in view of God.

(J. N. Darby, Practical Reflections on the Psalms, "Psalm 16," p. 26).

Thus, from first to last, as the Babe in the manger, born of the virgin, as the Victim on the cross, in His life here below, and in His relations or positions above, the Holy Ghost keeps Him before us, in the unity of His Person, and never for one moment presents Him to us "abstractly," or "distinct and apart from what He is as God."

This quotation may well serve as a warning of the way in which Mr. Darby is wrongly made to appear as a supporter of these doctrines. Not only is the passage misquoted by Mr. Raven, but Mr. Darby carefully guards what he says from the interpretation put upon it by Mr. R. and other writers of the same school. Similarly, the statement of the author, speaking of the use of eternal life as "a general term," and distinguishing its application to Christ, personally, by the use of the article, as " the Life," or "that Eternal Life," or in other similar ways," is

quoted by a writer of this school as being a surrender of the truth which has been contended for, and the words which immediately precede and follow, applying the term “to Christ personally,” are left out by him, as if in order to give an appearance of truth to the said writer’s statement. Godly souls are still pained and distressed by similar utterances amongst Mr. Raven’s followers, which appear in various places, showing that the leaven is gradually, though surely, working in their midst, verifying the emphatic testimony of Scripture, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Who can remain in contact with such teaching, and not suffer from it, even though it works imperceptibly in the soul? “The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil”: and in all the errors, whether doctrinal or ecclesiastical, of far less magnitude, that have come in amongst Brethren, this has invariably been insisted upon, and the course pursued in obedience to the word of God, “Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity” {2 Tim. 2}. To dishonor the person of the Lord Himself, and then to plead the claim of unity, would keep one in Romanism, or in association with any other evil system. And all who have taken this course, though at first refusing and repudiating Mr. R.’s doctrine, have become more or less contaminated by it, and many have become defenders of it; for the tone of the soul becomes insensibly lowered, or indifferent to the evil with which it is linked, and there is a direct power of the enemy which blinds the eyes of those who tamper with it, so that the only safeguard is to break with it entirely, and to refuse to listen to the insinuations and arguments of its defenders.

Think of what all this comes to, when “to import the thought of God, as such, in any subjective sense” into Christ’s bearing the “judgment of death that rested on man” (which Scripture teaches, and which is believed by all Christians), is denounced by Mr. R., as “really irreverent and profane” (A Correspondence, &c., p. 4). We have seen his denial of the unity of the Person of Christ, brought out in various ways and applied so as to undermine the leading truths of Christianity; but the length to which it is here carried is indeed frightful. That which is so precious to the soul, and on which really hangs its safety for eternity, is to Mr. R. “irreverent and profane.” Do Christians comprehend what this means? It is this; that so completely does he divide the natures in the Holy Person of Christ, that to look upon them as absolutely united and inseparable in that Person, and hence in His death, and in the work of expiation, is profanity.

Of course to speak of Godhead as being united to humanity in any other person and work, would be profane and irreverent, because it would degrade the Godhead; but such language applied to the Holy One of God, of whom the angel in virtue of His miraculous conception, says to the virgin “Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called ‘The Son of God’” (Luke 1:35), ought to make Christians shudder. We may be thankful for Mr. R’s testimony that there are some who “betray only painful inability to grasp” what he calls “divine thoughts.”

We add a further warning from Mr. Darby

And though God of course could not die—no more even could a human soul—yet there was no separation of the natures . . . Of course, if I think of the Son as a divine Person, He could not die—no more, I repeat could a human soul in fact. . . . If Christ was only as a man there, it was no more than another man there only sinless—that is, it was nothing. The Son as a divine Person of course could not die looked at apart but He who was Son died and gave Himself, not as apart, but in all the infinite value of His Person and in His divine love to us. I do not say Mary was the mother of God, if I may compare them, but she was the mother of Him personally who was God, and if He was not, His birth was nothing. A person may object to saying the Son died, because he is looking at Him apart as a divine Person; but if it be denied that He being Son died, I have lost the value of His death, which is infinite, both in love and value.

(Letters of J. N. Darby 2:224).

The following remarks of a well-known brother, now with the Lord, whose writings have been much blessed, are added as appropriate on the subject

The ark and the camp were, in some sense, necessary to each other during the journey through the wilderness. The ark, seated in the tabernacle on which the cloud rested, had to guide the camp, and the camp in its order, had to accompany and guard the ark and all connected with it. . . . Their (mere) journeying through that desert would not have constituted divine pilgrimage. Many a one had traveled that road without being a stranger and pilgrim with God. In order to be such, the ark must be in their company.

The mind of the camp, of which I have spoken might betray its weakness, or forget itself, and this might lead, as we know it did, to chastening again and again. But if its business, of which I have also spoken were given up, there would be loss of everything. . . .

And thus it is with ourselves. We are to maintain those truths or mysteries which the tabernacle and its furniture represented; and the apostle commits our entrance into Canaan to that. “If ye continue in the faith”; and again, “if ye keep in memory what I have written unto you.” Our safety, our rest in the heavenly Canaan, depends on our keeping the truth. This however, is to be added, that not merely for our own safety’s sake, but for Christ’s honor, is the truth to be kept.

This is to be much considered. Supposing for a moment that our own safety were not concerned in it Christ’s honor is, and that is enough. Such a thing is contemplated in 2 John 10; the elect lady was inside the house, she was in personal safety, but she has a duty to perform to “the doctrine of Christ”; so that if one come to her door, and bring not that doctrine, she must keep him outside, and refuse to have him where she is. . . .Mere journeying from Egypt to Canaan will not do. Let the journey be attended with all the trial of such an arid, unsheltered, and trackless road, still it is not divine pilgrimage. A mere toilsome, self-denying life, even though endured with that moral courage which becomes pilgrims will not do. There must be the carriage of the ark of God, confession to the truth, and maintenance of the name, of Jesus. . . .In the thoughts of this epistle, Jesus Christ is always this divine One, so to speak, the eternal Life manifested. With St. John “Jesus Christ” is “the true God,” Jesus is the “He” and “Him” in the argument of his first Epistle; and this “He” and “Him” ever keeps before us One who is God, though in assumed relations and covenant dealings. . . .This, I judge, is the mind and import of the required confession that “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” I here speak of God under the name of Jesus Christ, and it is, therefore, the demand of a confession to the great mystery of “God . . . manifested in the flesh.

The very adjunct (as another has written to me) “come in the flesh,” throws strongly forward the deity of Christ; because if He were a man, or anything short of what He is, it would be no such wonder that He should “come in the flesh.” And 1 John 1:2, 3 guide us to John’s thoughts in the use of the name “Jesus Christ.”

“That which was from the beginning,” the “eternal Life which was with the Father,” was the Person he declared to them. The words “with the Father” are important, making it evident that the Son was the eternal One, the name of this eternal Son being Jesus Christ. And it is interesting to compare the close with the commencement of this epistle. “This is the true God and the” [with the article] “eternal life.”

(From “Brief Expositions by J. G. Bellett.,” printed by Mr. Reid, of Edinburgh, in Bible Witness and Review 2:275-279).

Leprosy is spoken of in Lev. 14 as that which God Himself might put in a house as a test, bearing, as in the case of the individual, a figurative character: “When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possessions” (Lev. 14:34). The house, like the assembly now, is identified with the position of Israel in the land, and with the responsibility to maintain holiness to the Lord in the heavenly place in which He has set it. The suspicion of leprosy called for priestly judgment, and the stones, apparently affected, were to be carefully taken out and replaced by others, and the whole house to be carefully scraped and plastered throughout. Has there been anything corresponding to this?

If the plague broke out again, what was the required prescription? Not only all who entered the house, whilst it was shut up under priestly examination, were defiled, but there was no other remedy to prevent the disease spreading but the entire leveling the house to the ground, and casting the debris out of the city, into an unclean place.

We may add that we are not charging Mr. Raven with what he disavows; but it is clear that his whole teaching does divide the natures in the Person of Christ. Probably he is not aware of what he is doing, and still less of the injurious consequences of his speculations, as he appears to follow his own reasonings in ignorance of much that has been written and has passed on this subject in the Church of God at large.

In conclusion, we subjoin the following reflections as meeting some of the deceptive arguments of the present day

One of the most alarming symptoms in the religious world at the present day is the idea, that there is power in the truth to preserve. There is no power in the truth to preserve; but the question is, whether the soul holds fast the truth. Unless my thoughts, my heart, are in the truth, there will be no power in the truth to me. It is very certain that God will keep His truth; but is my heart kept? If not, it is the mere confidence of man’s mind; for “greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world”; the only ground of victory is the power of the Spirit of God, in the affections and consciences of the saints, and then the heart will be set on Christ, and the things of Christ, to love Him, enjoy Him, and serve Him better. The conflict and difficulty are rather when the truth is brought in question, than when it first goes forth in power.

It is false religion that suits the world better than truth, because it suits itself to man, and the mass will ever follow error, so Paul had to say, “All in Asia are turned away from me.” The Apostle did not expect that truth would have power over the world, but plainly declared that error would. So we see when the Lord allows the sifting o f a large body of people on a point of truth, the greater number will adopt the error. . . . What we have all to seek is, to be occupied with the truth every day, knowing more of delighting and feeding on Christ as the true God, and as the perfect Man subject in all things to His Father; and all this not so as to be able to write an essay on it, but as the Christ in whom I know God and man, the One who lived by the Father, depending on the Father. Then everything that is not of Him strikes upon my soul. It is THAT Christ who is touched, and it affects the whole harmony of the soul. Be sure of this, if it is not the living power of a living Christ known and enjoyed in the soul, you cannot withstand error. It must be truth held in connection with the Person of Christ, or it will not guard you against error; the mere truth is no match for Satan. I wou ld not venture to meet Satan on the truth if I were not called to d o it to warn the saints, and for the glory of God, because I should be afraid; but I know God will keep me when in His service. But I do not therefore cast myself down from off the pinnacle of the temple, because it is written in the Word. “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

(From J. N. Darby, Nine Lectures on the First Epistle of John).

It is our earnest prayer that these weighty words as to the power of the truth, and the importance of its being held in the soul in connection with the Person of Christ, may have their due effect upon the hearts of m any. It is time surely to awake out of that lethargic sleep in which Satan seeks to lull so many now, recalling the state of the Jews, shortly before the Chaldaean invasion, whose false prophets cried “Peace, peace,” when there was no peace, and the people loved to have it so.

The Glory of the Person of the Son of God: His Title as the Eternal Life, Chapter 1: Eternal Life: Its Nature ? the Diversity of Thought Existing (5:11-12)

Its Nature – the Diversity of Thought Existing on This Subject

It seems as if God had specially retained in His own hand certain secrets of nature, in order that we may be sensible how limited are the powers of the human mind, and may be prevented from intruding into that domain, which He has reserved for Himself. For though men may observe and ascertain the phenomena of nature, and what are the laws which govern them, the origin of these laws, and how they exist, is hidden from us. This is especially the case with life whether in its highest or its lowest manifestations; from the infinite God, and heavenly or angelic life, down to its lowest terrestrial forms. If it is beyond our capacity then to seize and define that vital essence – which even in the plant distinguishes it from mere dead matter – how much more profound and impenetrable to us, must be the mystery of the blessed Person, who unites in one combination of glories all that is human and divine; and how vain, and almost blasphemous, the conceit that has assumed to decipher, to define, or limit Eternal Life, or life of any kind, as it exists or is expressed, in Him.

Being what He is essentially, His life is as infinite as Himself; and it is an unwarrantable intrusion into the glory of His Person, to attempt to gauge it. Never before the rise of this system of thought, since Gnosticism had its day, do we find such unhallowed speculations. Nor do we believe that they would have been indulged in, or entertained in the minds of so many, unless, by describing Eternal Life as a sphere or condition, they had first accepted the thought that it could be dissociated, or distinguished from what Christ is personally.

Thus – though that thought is a mistake and profane – the holy fear which would have prevented the enquiry, has been disarmed.

No one denies that “condition” or “sphere,” is a necessary and indispensable accompaniment of life, and that in which the life displays itself; and thus it has come to be used, in a secondary or subordinate sense, for life itself. In intelligent beings, life belongs to, or is what is proper to, a person or being, not to a condition, for the condition only answers to, or corresponds with, that life. Hence Mr. Darby says, “Life is not a condition of being: it characterizes it.”

“Is life in God a mere condition of being? – `Being’ means what has life.” This shows that he does not lose sight of the proper and primary sense of Eternal Life, as being personal which these writers however will not allow in the sense in which it is here maintained, because they say that that would take us into Deity. To speak of it merely as a condition of being, when its essence is in question, destroys its proper nature – life in its primary and proper sense, – and substitutes by a sophism, (perhaps unconsciously), a state in which life is found, for the reality of life itself. This sophism underlies almost all the reasoning of Mr. Raven and those who receive his views; and when it comes to be applied to Scripture teaching, or to the Person of Christ, or to the life we receive, it becomes very serious. Whilst the reader is thinking of life in its proper and original signification, he is unconsciously deceived by the substitution of a condition, without being aware that essential life is either lost or dropped out of view, or the two senses confused.

Is it honest therefore of Mr. R., or his advocates, to say to enquirers, that he “believes Christ Himself to be Eternal Life”; when he is using the term in another sense and means something quite different from what is in the mind of the enquirer?

I do not accept the assertion of some that Eternal Life is an essential title of the Son of God. I am sure it cannot be maintained. I believe it to be a term indicating a condition (Letter of August 25th, 1890 published by Mr. Boyt, p. 4).

In the closing pages (see Appendix A) we have the most distinct proof, that the Eternal Life has always been identified in the mind of saints, with the divine nature and the Person of the Son of God; that it is His own life with the Father in eternity, and is therefore identical in its character and nature with the life that was in the Father, though the relationship of Son is distinct.

The “Word of life” unites the manifestation of the divine nature, with this life, before the universe existed, for the Word is the expression of the mind of God. It was “the Word” that was “made flesh”; and we have also the statement, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” But this differs materially from a “sphere,” “condition,” or “state of blessing prepared for man,” though finally it may be included as proper to it. Hence Mr. Raven carefully separates Eternal Life from Deity and from Sonship saying that Sonship is “greater” than Eternal Life. But He cannot be greater than Himself. This is conclusive. Thus he will not allow that “the Eternal Life” is applicable to, or describes, or is used to distinguish, Christ as a Person.

I strongly object, [he says] to the talk about the Personality of Eternal Life, because (as the reference is to Christ) it makes Eternal Life commensurate with the person of the eternal Son, and this I believe to be very wrong.

For the same reason he will not apply Eternal Life to passages such as, “In Him was life”; nor allow that Christ is spoken of in the Gospel of John as Eternal Life. Nor can he find anywhere that Scripture “says that He was it, though it was manifested in Him.” “Nor do I know,” he says, “where Scripture says, `He was in His own person the manifestation of Eternal Life,’ nor where it says, `It was what He was, not what He enjoyed.’” (Letter of October 1st, 1890).

All this it is impossible to mistake; and though Mr. R. says elsewhere that “Eternal Life is Christ for the believer,” he himself explains in what a limited sense, and with how different meaning he understands this, when he says it was “something that came to light, and is now perfectly expressed in Him.” “A condition of relationship and being” . . . “and seeing that that condition existed, and was manifested, and is now fully expressed, even as to bodily condition, in the Son”– (putting his own construction on J. N. D.’s language) he says, “it is Christ” (Letter of July 24th, 1890). This is perfectly consistent with the previous statements which we have given. If, as he says, Eternal Life is “an integral part of His Person,” as having “embodied” this condition or state of being and relationship when He became Man, the condition became identified with His person, though it was not what He was personally, or His own divine nature in eternity. Indeed we know the explanation given on this very point by a brother: “As my arm is an integral part of myself, so Eternal Life is an integral part of Christ.” But Mr. Darby has given the reply to this, contrasting what the believer is with Christ the Source and Sustainer of life: “My hand is a part of myself, and I may lose my hand, but that is not myself.” To give another figure – which may partially illustrate a sphere or condition or state of blessing – Royalty is a condition attaching to the heir-apparent of the throne when born into this world, and, doubtless, he has a sphere connected with that state or condition; but it is not himself, nor his own essential life and being, though belonging to it, and though (as it has been explained in this controversy) he may enjoy royal life in its completeness when he comes to the throne, when royalty “is fully embodied and expressed in him.”

Condition or relationships are more accidentals than essentials of life. We may have an earthly state of life as in man, or a heavenly as in angels. Royalty or Sonship are conditions or relations of life accessory but not necessary to it. Adam was not a son, nor in the relationship of a son; all are not fathers, nor are all in the sphere pertaining to Royalty.

So that to identify life with a condition is in reality absurd and reduces it to a nullity. Hence, some of Mr. Raven’s passages give the serious impression that he does not believe in the impartation of life and of its real existence in the believer at all. He says “life is presented in Scripture, not so much as a deposit in the believer, though Christ lives in him in the power of the Spirit, but as a state of blessing. Scripture does not, I think, speak of our having had eternal life imparted to us.” (See also passages quoted in Appendix B).

But thus divine truth is undermined in the soul, though the writer is variable and not always consistent in his statements.

But where is there authority in the Word of God for a separation between Life and Eternal Life, when speaking of Christ? He is the Life and the Eternal Life. Both are averred of Him. Mr. R. says

The Life of which we are made participants is not the same life which was proper to the Son of God in His eternal existence . . . I could not make, “So hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself,” and Eternal life to be the same (Some Letters, p. 10).

So that we have this elaborate system built upon the extraordinary theory that the addition of eternal to life, or to the life, makes it “a term indicating a condition,” and a division or separation is made between Life and Eternal Life in Him, because the word Eternal is not always added. Mr. R. does not give the slightest proof of this from the word of God, but merely reasons from the fact that we receive eternal life, notwithstanding that the result of this theory is to make two kinds of life in Christ. Besides, we are as constantly said, to be recipients of life in the Son, as of eternal life.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life and this Life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Here life and eternal life are used interchangeably, as in the Son, and possessed by the believer without any distinction between them.

But it is the Son, though in Manhood, who is spoken of here, and we are to believe that this life in His Son is not identical with “In Him was Life” (Some Letters, p. 15). Mr. R. does not tell us what there is in the word “eternal,” thus to qualify or alter the meaning of Life, nor can we find any such use of it in Scripture. We have “Eternal God,” “Eternal Spirit,” “eternal redemption,” “eternal salvation,” “eternal righteousness,” but in none of these can we discover such a modifying or “technical” use of the word eternal; for though life is mysterious, both in its origin and nature and varied in its developments and manifestations, that is not due to the force of the word eternal, which has a constant meaning of its own. Will Mr. R. venture to say that when Christ says, “I am the Life,” that it is not eternal life?

We subjoin an emphatic passage of Mr. Darby’s on this point

Here again (1 John 5:11, 12) it is evident as to our possession of it, that it is impossible to distinguish eternal life from the possession of life in the Son; that life is eternal life. He that has the Son has life in the Son, eternal life, for He is eternal life, and he that has not that has no life at all spiritually . . . In John 3:36 we have the same truth that Christ is life – eternal life and that he that has not eternal life has none . . . The distinction between life and eternal life is utterly futile” (Collected Writings, vol. 7, pp. 32, 33).

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