Denial of Human Personality in Christ's Person

as published by

F. E. Raven (1837-1903)

T. H. Reynolds 1830-1930)

J. A. Trench (1839-1922)

Hamilton Smith (1862/3-1943)

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His Denial of Human Personality in Christ's Person

F. E. Raven managed in the 1890s to propagate a denial of *human personality* in Christ. He did it in the ancient Apollinarian form of denying that the Lord Jesus had a human spirit. For him, the divine Son formed the spirit of the human body. As A. C. Ord expressed it, such an incarnation amounted to a jewel being placed in a jewel box! So, in effect, what was really of man in Christ was only a body. [1]

The truth is that the seat of personality is the soul, which necessarily involves the human "I" and will. Consistent with his Apollinarian denial of a human soul and spirit in Christ (for he made the Logos to be the spirit and soul in Christ), FER denied human personality in Christ. In addition, he had to (consistently) assert that "spirit" is personality [2] -- because the divine Son was, for FER, the spirit of Christ's body; [3] and therefore since the spirit of Christ's body was the divine Son, there was no *human personality* in Christ. He expressly denied *human personality* in Christ:

> Ques. Why is He not personally man?
>
> F.E.R. He is personally the Son. You cannot have two personalities in one. [4]
>
> 'God and man, one Christ' [5] expresses to me the union of two individualities; those two united in a Person who is Christ. Thus you have

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1. "F.E.R. . . . there is a great difference between God and man.
   R.T. I think we all see that more or less, but we do not see how it applies.
   F.E.R. Christ's body is man.
   R.T. I see now."

   Ministry by F. E. Raven, New Series 13:315.

2. "In the thought of spirit I believe you get personality. 'Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.' It was the spirit of a man, but that man was Son of God" (*ibid.* 8:264).

As James Taylor, Sr., and C. A. Coates expressed it: "He dismissed Himself" when he died; and this amounts to a dissolution of the incarnation. The truth is that the soul and spirit are united to the deity, and when our Lord's body lay in death, the soul and spirit remained united to the deity.

3. "____ accuses me of not holding the real humanity of Christ, because I will not accept his idea of a complete man, 'spirit, soul and body' distinct from Deity. He seems to me to have no idea of the Son becoming Man and giving a spirit to manhood, in fact of the incarnation" (*Letters of F. E. Raven*, New Series, p. 107; July 1, 1895).

4. *Op. cit.*, 8:262.

5. {He is objecting to the statement, "God and man, one Christ."}

> either a change of Person or a dual personality. [6]
>
> If you carry the thought of the incarnation beyond the scriptural limit, that is form (that of a servant) and condition (flesh and blood) you cannot avoid, that I can see, reaching distinct personality, and so making two personalities in Christ, a divine and human. The mystery of the incarnation and the true sense in which the union of God and man can be spoken of is that in one and the same Person God was made manifest to man (in flesh), and man was presented for the good pleasure of God. Unity of Person, or indivisibility, is not, I believe, a thought found in Scripture. [7]

"God and man, one Christ" expresses to me **divine-human personality** (not two distinct, separate personalities, i.e., dual personalities) by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Human personality in Christ means there is **divine-human "I"** in His Person. The Spirit's power brought about that inscrutable union of the divine and human in Christ, the **God-man**. FER's alternatives are false. [8] For FER, Christ's humanity was a "condition" into which the Son entered, and His personality was exclusively divine. There was no real union of the human and divine, regardless of his obfuscating expressions on various occasions.

The denial of *human personality* in Christ does not have to take exactly the Apollinarian form, i.e., the denial of a human spirit in Christ, which FER was guilty of doing. It may be affirmed that Christ had a human soul and spirit, and corrupt the meaning of soul so as to exclude *human personality* in Christ. Implicit in "soul" in Scripture is that there is human "I," i.e., *ego*, and human will. Without both, that is not a human soul. Thus, by denying human "I" in Christ, one holds the evil teaching that there was no *human personality* in Christ. But without human personality, there is no true, complete manhood.

It should be added that the humanity of Christ never had an existence apart from the incarnation. The Word did not take an existent person when taking humanity into His Person. His humanity came from Mary but was not taken by Him as humanity in a fallen state. It was, and is, holy humanity.

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6. *Ibid.*, 8:271.

7. *Ibid.*, 19:519.

8. I have dealt with his ploy about "a change in Person" in my *An Affirmation of: The Divine-Human Personality of the Person of Christ, His Human "I" and Human Will*, p. 9. No one denies that He is the same person.

The Denial of Human Personality in Christ is Fundamental Evil

To deny *human personality* in Christ is a denial of "the man Christ Jesus." Christ is God and man united in one Person. To deny *human personality* in "the man Christ Jesus" is, in effect, to deny that He is truly human. It denies that He is personally man. It denies Christ's individuality as man.

A "soul" without the consciousness of "I" is not a human soul. W. Kelly wrote:

> Consciousness of "I" is in the soul, and on its real existence hangs personal identity. [9]

To deny consciousness of "I" in the soul of the Lord Jesus is, in result, to deny His personal identity as man.

In his paper, "Self-Consciousness and the Infinite," J. N. Darby wrote:

> Personality is evidently in self-consciousness. [10]

Yes, indeed; and the denial of *human personality* (i.e., human "I") in Christ is to deny His *human personality*, i.e., His personal identity as man. The manhood is swept away; the manhood is gone; Jesus of Nazareth is gone; the Savior is gone!

In his "Christological Pantheism," J. N. Darby rejected the doctrine of those who said Christ had no human personality. I have added the emphasis on the denial of human personality in our Lord that JND is objecting to:

> We have thus the Lord's incarnation, the point where (they say) He connects Himself with human nature; not merely personally, or rather not personally (so they expressly say), but in nature as the new head of the race **(He is not a man, not a human personality**, but) with humanity, and that fallen humanity the new head of the race.

In this article JND called the denial of Christ's human personality "heresy":

> And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego, which is really **heresy** (though God and man were united in one person), and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His Person, when He has said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father," is found in the Article of one by no means the worst of their doctors. [11]

The denial of *human personality* in Christ, i.e., the denial that Christ could say "I" *as man*, is "**heresy**," is "**the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the**

9. *The Bible Treasury* 19:18.

10. *Collected Writings* 32:44.

11. *Collected Writings* 29:213.

mystery of His Person." It is the scrutinizing of His inscrutable Person by the finite logic of the human mind intruding itself into the holy mysteries of our most holy faith. Their evil *reasoning* tells them that Christ cannot have human personality, i.e., be fully man.

T. H. Reynolds' Denial of Human Personality in Christ' Person

J. Hennessy wrote: [12]

> An impersonal humanity in Christ deprives us of a *personal* substitute; of One bearing our deserved judgment (p. 21).
>
> It has been truly stated, "The moment you deny personality in the Man Christ Jesus you run into a thousand difficulties and errors" (p. 23).
>
> Let the reader note the presentation of the Lord's divine person on earth, assuming to be what He was not, according to these teachers, who deny to Him a human "I." T.H.R. {T. H. Reynolds} wrote (Letter of December 3rd, 1895, circulated in Dublin):
>
> > The blessed Lord could say "I" as God -- before Abraham was "I" am. He could say "I" as Man -- "I will put My trust in Him (God)," but when we ask who was the conscious "I" the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth.
>
> Thus the blessed Lord is represented as personating a human "I"!! The late Canon Liddon, a Ritualist (Bampton Lectures, on our Lord's Divinity), had recourse to this expedient to meet the objections of a Rationalist, who judged the union of God and man in the Person of Christ "an unintelligible wonder." The Canon expresses F.E.R.'s and T.H.R.'s idea of His humanity thus:
>
> > A vesture which He folds round His person; in it He represents, He pleads. His human life is not a distinct self, but a living robe which, as it was created, was wrapped round His eternal personality.
>
> Where is the Man Christ Jesus in this "I"? This is F.E.R. and T.H.R.'s Christ! **The doctrine involves the denial of Jesus Christ come in the flesh** [13] (2 John 7), for it denies Him to be a perfect human person (pp. 23, 24).

The teaching that the Lord Jesus has no consciousness of "I," as man, in His soul, is indeed **the denial of Jesus Christ come in flesh**. It is a denial that He is actually man. You can see in the above quotation from Canon Lidden how the human mind is at work in defining the union of the divine and human. It shows that the union is being scrutinized by the mind which decides that *this* cannot be because that would mean there were two persons. But it is the incarnation by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) that has caused the union

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12. *Heterodoxy Ancient and Modern on the Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ*," by J. Hennessy, James Carter: London, 1910. Available as a reprint from Present Truth Publishers.

13. {Emphasis added.}

of God and man in one Person. Faith accepts it -- fully God and fully man! -- not, fully God and incomplete man, having impersonal manhood, which is no manhood, and no union.

It is not those who hold that Christ has the consciousness of "I," as man, that subject Him to mental analysis. It is not those who, as J. Hennessy did above, quote the Scriptures that show Christ *as man* saying "I" who are prying; it is those whose view is that as expressed by THR: "when we ask who was the conscious 'I' the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth." *That* is **deadly evil**, **denying the *complete* manhood of Christ**, thus denying that the Word took manhood into His Person.

Because of the union of the human and divine in Christ's Person, all that He said and did as man had a divine spring in it. That is true when He spoke in the consciousness of "I" as a man. There was a divine spring in it. Thus, for example, His sufferings, death, and blood-shedding on the cross have the value and glory of His Person as God and man as *their* value and glory. This is typified in the cloud of incense (speaking of the glory of His person as God and man) accompanying the blood, presented before the cloud on the mercy-seat, the Shekinah, indicating the presence of the glory of Jehovah who sits between the cherubim (Lev. 16). As J. T. Armet pointed out: righteousness meets the claims of righteousness but it requires a cloud to meet a cloud! The glory of His Person, as the God-man, met the glory of the Shekinah as the cloud speaking of Christ's glory rose up from the hot coals of the censer Aaron brought into the holy of holies, and enveloped the mercy-seat. Such is the glory of our Beloved, our great God and Savior. May we have an ever increasing apprehension of the greatness of His glory as fully God and fully man!

In 1903 the *Little Flock Hymn Book* was revised by followers of F. E. Raven and hymn 61 of the 1881 edition (edited by J. N. Darby) was purged out. That hymn did not suit F. E. Raven's teaching concerning Christ's Person, for it spoke of the Son's having *full* part in manhood, and of "the union of both joined in one." Nor did this hymn suit what N. Noel called "The New Formula" stated by THR, quoted by J. Hennessy above; for THR did not believe that Christ had manhood in *full* part. Here are verses 1 and 2 of that purged-out hymn which offends against "The New Formula."

How wondrous the glories that meet
In Jesus and in His face shine,
His love is eternal and sweet,
'Tis human 'tis also divine!

His glory -- not only God's Son --
In manhood He had His full part --
And the union of both joined in one
Form the fountain of love in His heart.

J. A. Trench's Denial of Human Personality in Christ's Person

J. A. Trench was a supporter of FER. The following appeared in his *Truth for Believers* 2:68, 69 and also in *Scripture Truth*, 1929, p. 149. Here is the article in its entirety, with my comments in footnotes in braces { }. The reader is specially directed to footnote 15 which notes the fact that there is a direct connection between T. H. Reynold's evil teaching and J. A. Trench's evil teaching.

THE LORD'S PERSON

That there was distinct individual personality in the "Man Christ Jesus" seems to me so clear that I cannot understand any thoughtful person questioning it. But if it is meant that there was a "human personality" in the Lord Jesus here (and now) as distinct from [14] His Divine personality as the Son, then I should ask for an explanation of what is meant by it.

Two distinct personalities in one person? If I look at Scripture I find He could say "I" as God -- "Before Abraham was 'I' am." And He could say "I" as man -- "I will put my trust in Him." [15] But these were not two I's; the Person was one -- the Son. Individual personality was there beyond a question, a true "ego," but who was the Person?

Depend upon it we shall gain greatly in our souls and in our knowledge of the truth, if we adhere to Scripture. I read there of a Person -- the Word -- existing in eternity, Himself the Creator. I read of that same Person becoming flesh, a Man on earth amongst men, a true, real, individual Man, [16] but the same blessed Person -- God manifest in flesh, the Son whom God sent in the likeness of flesh of sin, God's Son come of a woman. There is no thought of a change in the Person, the real "I." [17] He is always the same, though His "form" is changed, and the condition [18] in which

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14. {Here a straw-man is set up to easily knock down. Who is claiming there was "distinct personality"? The truth is **divine-human personality**, because of the union in Him of Godhead and manhood, by the overshadowing power of the Spirit.}

15. {As J. Hennessy said above, regarding T. H. Reynolds, "Thus the blessed Lord is represented as personating a human 'I'!!" J. A. Trench is repeating what THR said, and quite in agreement with FER's denial of *human personality* in Christ. Notice that the denial of *human personality* and denial of human "I" in Christ go hand-in-hand, and of course so.}

16. {This is obfuscation, if not fraud. Without human personality, without human "I," there is no individuality, no manhood, no "real, individual Man." It is unreal manhood.}

17. {I have dealt with this ploy about "a change in Person" in my *An Affirmation of: The Divine-Human Personality of the Person of Christ, His Human "I" and Human Will*, p. 9. No one that I know of, affirming human personality in Christ, denies that He is the same person.}

18. {Note the Ravenite use of the word "condition," a word that substitutes for the reality of the incarnation, the union of Godhood and *complete* humanity in Christ. "Condition" is a code-word

(continued...)

He has life.

When He took part in flesh and blood, who was "He"? [19] Personal identity does not change, though form and condition [20] may. It lies behind all that we commonly think of a person. If "I" depart to be with Christ, all the affections and interests I have as a man belonging to this condition of life are left behind with the condition to which they belonged; but the "I" remains, and it is the same "I" when it is a spiritual body. "I" shall be "for ever with the Lord," though the conditions of life are totally different. [21]

In our case personality began to exist when we were born, but in the case of the Lord He "came down from heaven" His existence was eternal. He was the "I am," but there was a moment when He "became flesh." In doing so He entered into the feelings and affections which belong to the nature of a man. [22]

It seems to me so beautifully simple if we allow the plain words of Scripture to have their place in our hearts. There we find a perfect, blessed Man -- "full of grace and truth." He was "wearied" at the well. He "loved" Martha and her sister and Lazarus. "He groaned in spirit and was troubled." He "wept" -- all beautiful expressions of human feelings in perfection; but who was "He"? The eternal Word, the Son of God, one with the Father. [23] If you bring in another personality the truth of incarnation is gone. [24]

The fact is, in my opinion, we are scarcely conscious how material [25] our ideas of spiritual things are, and even of God Himself; and how largely they are formed by the creeds, and theology, instead of by Scripture. ❖

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18. (...continued)
used in the Ravenite system to express impersonal manhood in Christ -- and we deny the reality of impersonal manhood.}

19. {The answer is: He was the Son of God who had taken manhood into His Person -- manhood, i.e., of course, body, soul, and spirit, the soul being personal, there being human "I."

20. {Would it not be interesting to substitute the word "circumstances" wherever he uses "condition"? "Condition" is used in the Ravenite system as code-word in an attempt to overthrow the truth of the incarnation, the union of Godhead and complete manhood in Christ, for the word "condition" as Ravenites use it is to overthrow complete, true manhood in Christ.}

21. {Christ in the resurrection state is still, of course, God and man, one Person, the God-man, having divine-human personality. JAT's remarks in this paragraph are nothing but empty obfuscation.}

22. {In his evil scheme, there is no real human "I" that has "feelings and affections which belong to the nature of man." It must be something else that is feeling.}

23. {Observe that there is excluded here any human love for those mentioned, i.e., any love of the human "I," of the man, the Lord Jesus, and by implication none such for you either, reader!}

24. {And, as is usual with evil teaching, the truth is inverted. The fact is, if you do not bring in divine-human personality, the truth of the incarnation is gone.}

25. {Insinuating that the understanding that in Christ there is divine-human personality is **materialism** is also the inverse of the truth. This Ravenistic teaching tends to materialism.}

Hamilton Smith's Denial of Human Personality in Christ's Person

Hamilton Smith expressly sanctioned the words of T. H. Reynolds:

> A well known servant of the Lord has said, speaking of Christ,
>
> > "He could say 'I' as God -- "Before Abraham was I am." And He could say 'I' as man -- 'I will put my trust in him.' But these were not two 'I's,' the person was one -- the Son". Again referring to Scripture he says, "I read there of a Person -- the Word, existing in eternity, Himself the Creator. I read of that same Person become flesh, a man on earth amongst men, a true, real, individual man, but the same blessed Person -- God manifest in the flesh, the Son whom God sent in likeness of flesh of sin, God's Son, come of a woman. There is no thought of a change in the Person, the real 'I'. He is always the same, though His form is changed, and the condition in which He has life. When 'He' took part in flesh and blood who was 'He'? Personal identity does not change, though form and condition may."
>
> These are sound and sober words, and to them we may add the testimony of yet another, who, commenting on our Lord's words, "Before Abraham was I AM" very truly remarks, "I AM is the proper expression of His existence. While time rolls on 'I AM' remains unchanged, and when time has rolled away 'I AM' subsists the same." [26]

You may resent hearing it, but H. Smith was a Ravenite, a denier of human personality in Christ. He wrote:

> . . . the Manhood that He took conferred upon Him no fresh personality distinct from, or in conjunction with, the Person of the Son. The Person was one and to that nothing could be added by what He became. [27]

This is a bald-faced denial that human personality entered into Christ's Person. We need not enter into all his obfuscations of the issue, but there is one more point to quote, i.e., how he gets rid of the human personality, the conscious "I":

> Furthermore we judge that Scripture distinguishes between "personality" -- the conscious "I" -- and spirit, soul and body inasmuch as it does not definitely, and much less exclusively, identify personality with any one of the three. [28]

The ploy is to circumvent personality and "I" being connected in Scripture with *soul*. And, he wanted to parry the charge that such a position as he represented

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26. *The Son of God: His Deity, Incarnation and Manhood*, London, The Central Bible Truth Depot, n.d., pp. 20, 21.

27. *The Son of God: His Deity, Incarnation and Manhood*, p. 19.

28. *The Son of God: His Deity, Incarnation and Manhood*, p. 29.

involved an *impersonal humanity*:

> . . . we have to be on our guard, lest by the frailty of human language it might be argued that an *impersonal humanity* is suggested. [29]

Consider the absurdity of this. He wishes to deny that he holds to an impersonal manhood -- which, of course he does, for that is the meaning of his view of the incarnation. He is engaging in semantic shuffling. Thus he attempted to parry the charge of impersonal humanity:

> Though in Person ever the Son, yet He *personally* entered into Manhood -- spirit, soul and body . . . [30]

So *that* is how, allegedly, Christ did not have *impersonal manhood*! He had *personal* manhood, he says, because the Person of the Son entered into Manhood! -- a manhood, as we saw above that did not have human personality and "conscious 'I.'" So, in his evil scheme, it was the divine Person that gave personality to the Manhood, thus excluding actual human personality; i.e., in the Manhood, there was no human personality; thus, no divine-human personality. In reality, it is FER's doctrine, with the modification that H. Smith expressly allows that there was a human soul and spirit. But there is no human soul without human personality, "conscious 'I'." It is an evil figment of the imagination of those who believe Christ's humanity was impersonal, which is exactly the meaning of H. Smith's teaching about this.

We can see why he expressed himself that "He personally entered into manhood." Of course, Christians might so speak without intending by such words the doctrine that Christ's manhood was impersonal. *In the context of Ravenism*, as H. Smith used these words, *it expresses the inverse of the truth* and therefore when faced with such Christ-undermining evil we must insist that the truth is that ***manhood entered into the person of the Son***. H. Smith's words are meant to parry that truth. Here we again see that the view of the incarnation is that of a jewel entering a jewel box. There is no actual union of Godhead and manhood in Christ, according to this evil teaching.

W. Kelly wrote:

> . . . a divine Person who has taken manhood into His Person.

J. N. Darby wrote:

> But while no man knowing the Son but the Father, the manifestation of God in the Son -- in Jesus -- makes the language of man scarce preservable from error, if we wish to affirm things *separately*, of the natures when affirmed about the Son, yet is that which is revealed very distinct, but it is spoken about ***the Person into which the man***

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29. *The Son of God: His Deity, Incarnation and Manhood*, p. 30.

30. *The Son of God: His Deity, Incarnation and Manhood*, p. 30.

> ***was brought***, and therefore is rightly spoken of Jesus, and the connecting point of faith, not to know there is a Son, but that Jesus is the Son of God. [31]

For F. E.Raven, Christ's humanity was only a "condition." This is true of H. Smith also. In his *The Epistle to the Hebrews, An Expository Outline*, p. 10. H. Smith wrote:

> One has truly said, "he always was the Son and will be the Son, He was the Son here as Man, and He will be no less the Son throughout eternity . . . there is no difference between the Eternal Son and the Son born in time, except as to condition."

This word "condition" is not used innocently here. And who "truly said" what H. Smith approvingly quoted? Not surprisingly, it was said by F. E. Raven (*Ministry of F. E. Raven, New Series* 8:265, 266). It is the doctrine of "condition" taught by FER, not the truth of manhood taken into the Son's Person. The doctrine of "condition" concerning Christ's humanity is the doctrine in which the denial of the union of God and man in Christ's Person is clothed by FER, and here sanctioned by H. Smith. In his paper, *The Person of the Christ*, FER wrote:

> The second error maintains that the truth of *Christ's person* consists in the union in Him of God and man. [32]

Thus the union of the divine and human in Christ's Person is wickedly denied. He went on:

> It is a Person in a condition in which He was not previously. [33]

According to this, the Person, the Son, entered into a condition, i.e., humanity. As A. C. Ord illustrated the meaning, it is like placing a precious jewel into a jewel box! i.e., no union of the divine and human. And this is the doctrine of Hamilton Smith. FER was indeed H. Smith's mentor in this evil.

R. W. Nelson, quoting from a letter of Hamilton Smith, wrote:

> 1922: "I should prefer to stand apart from all brethren altogether than to throw overboard F.E.R. . . . Next to J.N.D. I know no one amongst brethren who has ever thrown so much light on Scripture." [34]

I think it appropriate here to indicate what W. Kelly thought of F. E. Raven's teaching, quoting from *Life Eternal, with F. E. R.'s Heterodoxy as to It, Other Divine Truths, and Above all Christ's Person*, London: T. Weston, 1902. Hamilton Smith said F. E. Raven has "thrown so much light on Scripture," but

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31. "The Eternal Sonship of Christ," p. 1, available from the publisher. Boldface emphasis added.

32. From FER's paper printed in full in *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*, Jackson: Present Truth Publishers, p. 85, 1997.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *". . . Not As Pleasing Men . . ."* Oct. 1972, p. 12.

W. Kelly called it

> pitiable hallucination (p. 37);
> morass of mud and vapor (p. 41);
> witches cauldron of poison (p. 61).
> incredulous banter and a cheat (p. 33);
> smoke from the pit (p. 85);
> light of death (p. 43);
> fundamental error (pp. 69, 91, 99, 103).

How can two judgments be so opposite, you ask? It is because W. Kelly adhered to the truth, rejecting FER's fundamental evils, while fundamental doctrinal evil was at work in Hamilton Smith. W. Kelly said:

> The Son did not change His Person, but took up manhood into unity, and this in soul as in body. [35]

A few quotations from J. N. Darby and this section will be closed:

> He was really a man as any of us, without the sinful part . . . [36]

> We cannot fathom who he was. Our hearts should not go and scrutinize the Person of Christ, as though we could know it all. No human can understand the union of God and Man in His Person -- "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." All that is revealed we may know; we may learn a great deal about Him . . . We know Him to be holy; we know Him to be love, etc. But when I attempt to fathom the union of God and man -- no man can. We know Christ is God, and we know He is man -- perfect man, apart from sin . . . [37]

> The union of man and God is the sole prerogative of the Word made flesh. It is incarnation, and that is true of none but Him . . . He was among them "the holy thing" {Luke 1:35}; but He was alone, God and man in one person . . . having miraculously-formed sinless manhood in His own Person. The union with Godhead was now, for the first time, and only here. [38]

> The λόγος is God -- created everything; and the very essence of Christianity is the immediate personal connection, in incarnation, between God and the creature -- God and man in one person. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him *bodily*. [39]

Reader, think about this: if the humanity was not taken into the Son's Person, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him *bodily*, then the fulness of the Godhead was dwelling in what was not in Christ's Person.

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35. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:79.

36. {Notice: "without the sinful part"; not, 'without the human personality part.'}

37. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 27:357, 358. See also *The Collected Writings of A. C. Ord*, Present Truth Publishers, p. 104 This book is an excellent addition to any Christian's library.

38. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 15:347, 348.

39. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:331.

W. R. Dronsfield's Denial of Human Personality in Christ's Person

His Rejection of the Truth Concerning Christ's Person as Stated by N. Noel

W. R. Dronsfield objects to something N. Noel wrote concerning T. H. Reynolds and F. E. Raven. Let us consider what N. Noel wrote:

> That Christ was God, possessing an *impersonal humanity*, became the Christ of Mr. Raven, as well as of his lieutenants.

The old "formula."

God and Man one Christ. "We say Christ is God, Christ is Man, . . . but it is Christ who is the two." Syn. 5:18.

"The simple faith that JESUS was God and Man IN ONE PERSON can easily be accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny *personality in the Man* Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ's *INDIVIDUALITY* as a Man." Coll. Writings 29:34 {29:212}.

The new "formula."

In Person, God; in Condition, Man.

"The blessed Lord could say I as God . . . He could say I as Man . . . but when we ask who was the conscious "I," the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth."

T. H. R., Letter, Dec. 3, 1895.

Query -- Why is He not personally Man?

Mr. Raven -- "He is personally the Son. You cannot have two personalities in one. He is the Son, but in the condition of a Man." "Truth for the Time." Part 8, May, 1895.

W. R. Dronsfield wrote:

> In the History of the Brethren Mr. Nap. Noel attacks T. H. Reynolds for saying: "The Lord could say 'I' as God, He could say 'I' as Man; but when we ask who is the conscious 'I' the answer is 'The Son of God speaking as Man on earth.'" Mr. Reynolds did not state as he should have done, that the Lord could say "I" as God and Man; he also does not notice the difference in his use of the expression "as Man" in its two occurrences. But that is not the complaint made by Mr. Noel, but that he taught an impersonal humanity. If the Son of God speaking as Man on earth could say "I" as Man in saying "I thirst" what is impersonal about that -- except in the orthodox sense? Mr. Noel by a slavish following of J.N.D. supposes that he must regard an impersonal humanity as unsound. If the whole article by J.N.D. is read it can be seen that J.N.D. is not disputing the

> orthodox doctrine of the impersonal humanity. [40] But the most important thing is that J.N.D. could only be supposed to be disputing with orthodoxy on the assumption that he was a Nestorian at heart and therefore thoroughly dishonest in pretending to assent to orthodoxy. That is -- to me at least -- an impossible hypothesis. From the point of view of understanding 1890 and its catastrophic events I see no way of interpreting Mr. Noel's remarks and his adoption of the remarks of J.N.D. other than supposing that he (Noel) was a Nestorian, or was so confused in his mind that he did not know what he was talking about. [41]
>
> . . . he {N. Noel} calls a perfectly orthodox statement by T. H. Reynolds, "The New Formula" . . . [42]

The reader needs to be aware that by a Nestorian WRD means a person who holds that Christ had human personality, human "I," as N. Noel held. When we clear away obfuscation and semantic juggling, WRD does, in fact, believe in an *impersonal humanity*, i.e., that there was no *human personality* in Christ. He rejects a **divine-human personality in Christ** through the overshadowing power of the Spirit. He will have it so, by his own assertion and definition, that if you hold that there was divine-human personality in Christ, as N. Noel did, you are a Nestorian; i.e., one who believes that Christ is **two** persons. By holding to Christ's *complete* manhood, you are a Nestorian -- because *he says* that you are!

By Christ's complete manhood, I mean human spirit, human soul -- with self-consciousness, i.e., with "I" of manhood, and human will -- and a human body. I believe that this humanity entered into the Son's Person, the union of Godhood and manhood in Him -- yet **one** Person. But no, WRD will tell you that you are a Nestorian if you believe *that*, as he said in the review quoted above. Moreover, in the quotation above he is (ludicrously) implying that JND held his view of Christ, which JND did not.

WRD's assertion about Nestorianism springs from his own heresy. The very charge shows where he is as to this matter of Christ's Person, namely that he denies *human personality* in Christ. Let us review what JND wrote so the reader has it freshly before Him. And what is quoted here was quoted by numbers of brethren against FER, brethren who understood JND's plain words, and I understand them the same way. Note that JND says of the doctrine that there was no human personality in Christ's Person, that "they have no true Christ at all":

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40. {What crass effrontery to say that! The fact is that JND regarded the idea of an impersonal humanity in Christ as "heresy."}

41. The source has escaped me.

42. *Tidings*, No. 822, Aug. 1993, p. 7.

But as I am on this point, I add, they have no true Christ at all. I read,

> How such human nature, as body, soul, and spirit, including a human will, could be held in personal union with the divine, so that this humanity was complete, without a human personality or ego, [43] we cannot understand, but we believe it is a mystery revealed for faith.

Where {is that a mystery revealed for faith}? Why does the blessed Lord say, "Not my will but thine?" Why does He say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" if there was no ego, no human personality? Why does Hebrews quote, "will I sing praise," and "will put my trust in him," "behold I and the children which God hath given me," if there was no I (ego)? Why does He say, "My God and your God, my Father and your Father" (not our), if there was no personality? * And this last remark, that Christ never says "our" with His disciples, I borrow from a European minister of some note, thoroughly imbued with the German system, where it is at home, not borrowed, and itself spoiled, as it is at Mercersburg. And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego, [44] which is really heresy (though God and man were united in one person), and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His Person, when He has said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father," is found in the Article of one by no means the worst of their doctors. [45]

* I am quite aware of and accept the ordinary orthodox statement of two natures in one person, though what was at first insisted on as orthodox as to *upostasis* was afterwards condemned, and the meaning of the word changed; but the statements quoted in the text are really **Monothelite**. It shows the danger of those early discussions, for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one Person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ's individuality as a man, as it is in terms elsewhere {emphasis added}.

W. R. Dronsfield has complained about lack of quoting Scripture. I count here **six** Scriptures quoted by JND. Did not JND bring forward Scriptures concerning human personality, concerning human "I," in Christ? [46] Yes, and here they are. It is quite clear that JND calls the denial of human personality in Christ "heresy":

> And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego,

43. {Take note that JND is refuting the idea that Christ had no human "I."}

44. {Take note that JND equates the human personality of Christ with having an ego, i.e., an "I."}

45. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:212.

46. When the Lord said "I" as man, this was not an independent, separate "I." He always acted in the unity of the two natures.

> which is really heresy . . .

N. Noel was neither a Nestorian nor confused about this. It is WRD's denial of human "I" in Christ's Person, i.e., denial of *human personality* in Christ, that is the troublesome, fundamental evil. It is traceable right back to F. E. Raven! It is the finite mind pretending to explain the incarnation.

In Christ there is *human personality*. It was the overshadowing power of the Spirit that prevented there being two persons though there is human personality in Christ's Person; in fact, by that union, **divine-human personality**. In Christ, Godhood and *complete manhood* are united in one Person. This is the reason that W. Kelly spoke in such terms as:

> . . . made it part of His Person.
>
> . . . unites Godhood and manhood in His own Person!
>
> He took manhood into union with His deity.
>
> . . . a divine Person who has ***taken manhood into His Person*** {emphasis added}.

And that is why J. N. Darby spoke of:

> . . . the union of Godhood and manhood in one Person. [47]
>
> . . . true God and true man, united in one Person. [48]
>
> But while no man knowing the Son but the Father, the manifestation of God in the Son -- in Jesus -- makes the language of man scarce preservable from error, if we wish to affirm things *separately*, of the natures when affirmed about the Son, yet is that which is revealed very distinct, but it is spoken about ***the Person into which the man was brought***, and therefore is rightly spoken of Jesus, and the connecting point of faith, not to know there is a Son, but that Jesus is the Son of God. [49]

WRD does not believe in the "true man" JND spoke of; he holds to a false man, a 'man' without *human personality*; meaning, manhood without being able to say "I" ***as man*** (though never independently of the divine, of course). It is wicked fraud to say that Christ could say:

> . . . I as Man . . . but when we ask who was the conscious "I," the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth.

That is not true man, but as J. Hennessy pointed out:

> Thus the blessed Lord is represented as personating a human "I"!!

The truth is that Christ did speak with the conscious "I" of man, and to deny

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47. *Collected Writings* 29:358; see also 29:212, 213; 15:347.

48. *Collected Writings* 29:283.

49. "The Eternal Sonship of Christ," p. 1, available from the publisher. Boldface emphasis added.

this is fundamentally evil doctrine concerning the Person of Christ. "The new formula," as N. Noel rightly called it, destroys the truth of Christ's Person as "true God and true man, united in one Person," because "the new formula" rejects it that the Son took complete, true manhood into His Person, arbitrarily decreeing that such a teaching means that you are a Nestorian, i.e., believing that Christ is two persons.

WRD's Rejection of Human "I" in Christ's Person

W. R. Dronsfield's evil doctrine of Christ's impersonal humanity (i.e., no human "I") is published in his paper *Tidings*, #949 (2005), as a review of a paper of mine. [50] In this review he objects to the truth that there is human "I" in Christ:

> . . . the object of this book is to promote the wrong and unorthodox idea that as our Lord had two wills (Human and Divine) He must have had two "I's."

Let us stop here to observe that W. R. Dronsfield seems to affirm two wills in Christ. He has complained about not quoting Scripture -- though we saw above that JND quoted six of them. Where has WRD brought forward the Scriptures that show that the Lord has two wills (which our Lord certainly has, but not separate -- He has divine-human will.

> **The question is this: why has WRD avoided bringing forward the Scriptures that show that the Lord had human will? Is it because those Scriptures also show human I?**

Concerning the writers quoted in the paper he rejects, he wrote:

> . . . but not one of them can be found to have said that the Lord had two 'I's'" . . .

This is indulging in a semantical juggling! The issue is not a matter of his demand for an *exact way of stating it*; the fact is that when a person says that the Lord had human personality, or says that Christ's Person had human "I" (which is implicit in having human personality), that is saying because of the union of God and man -- one Person -- there is divine "I" and human "I" in Christ's Person (but not separate and distinct). Because of the overshadowing power of the Spirit in the incarnation (Luke 1:35), there resulted that inscrutable union, and there is in

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50. *An Affirmation of: The Divine-Human Personality of the Person of Christ, His Human "I" and Human Will*, available from Present truth Publishers, in which many writers were quoted, who affirm human personality in Christ's Person, and who WRD, to be consistent, would have to charge with being Nestorians and heretics. He views this paper as heresy, saying:

> This is only a short review. To answer the booklet fully and show the fallacy of R.A.H.'s inferences from all these quotations would take a book, but in view of the clarity of its basic **heresy** {emphasis mine} such a labour is hardly necessary.

Christ's Person ***divine-human I.*** [51] W. R. Dronsfield's tactic is to pick on an expression *while propagating* ***his*** **heresy** around the world in *Tidings*. The real issue is WRD's denial of human personality in Christ's Person. Above, JND was quoted, saying:

> And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego, which is really **heresy** . . .

This quotation indicates where the heresy is. To say that Christ had human personality, ego, is to say that "I" as man is in Christ's Person as well as "I" of deity -- united, of course, in one Person. JND held that Christ had human "ego," i.e., human "I." JND also held that Christ had divine "I." So do other persons orthodox concerning Christ's Person, which WRD is not, while he pretends that impersonal humanity in Christ is the orthodox doctrine, which it is not.

As J. Hennessy wrote:

> FER's doctrine of no human "I" in Christ would exclude *the manifestation of a perfect Man*. Human personality was essential to a human life in Him. [52]

And in view of W. R. Dronsfield's grotesque and deceptive assertion that his view is orthodox (thus, in effect, un-orthodox-ing the brethren quoted against him -- note what the *Westminster Confession* stated:

> . . . two whole perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion, which person is very God and very Man, yet one Christ.

J. N. Darby wrote:

> I am quite aware of and accept the orthodox statement of two natures in one person . . . for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one Person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth . . . [53]

Clearly, WRD's alleged 'orthodoxy' is something opposed to *this* orthodoxy

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51. It might be well to state here that Christ's humanity never had an independent existence, an existence apart from the incarnation. The Son did not unite with an existing person. In the incarnation, the humanity came from Mary. It never had an existence apart from that conception in the womb by the over-shadowing power of the Spirit.

52. *An Answer to . . . What Is Ravenism*, p. 7. WRD wrote "He is a real man . . .," but this statement is absurd, as well as evil, for WRD's view means that Christ's manhood was incomplete -- without human personality -- i.e., not a real man. He brings not the doctrine of Christ. In W. T. Whybrow's *The Truth of Christ's Person: Is It Taught by Mr. F. E. Raven*, he has a heading that reads:

> "TO SAY THAT CHRIST HAD NO HUMAN PERSONALITY IS HERESY."

His paper is reprinted in *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*, pp. 91-97, available from Present Truth Publishers.

53. *Collected Writings* 29:212 note.

concerning Christ's Person.

F. E. Raven said:

> I believe the old notion of the union of God and man to be wrong. I do not think it was meant wrongly, but, in the light of what has come out now, it was incorrect. [54]

"What has come out now" is, in reality, ***heterodoxy***, for the orthodox doctrine is, as stated by A. H. Strong:

> *The Orthodox doctrine* (promulgated at Chalcedon, 451) holds that in the one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. [55]

Yes, there is in Christ's Person a human nature in "its completeness and integrity."

WRD's Slight Adjustment of THR's Statement

THR had said:

> *'The blessed Lord could say "I" as God - before Abraham was "I am". He could say "I" as Man - "I will put My trust in Him (God)", but when we ask who was the conscious "I" the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth'.*

WRD offers an adjustment in his review in *Tidings* # 949:

> The only fault one could find with the quotation is an error of omission; T.H.R should have added "He could say "I" as God and Man", for in most of the Lord's words both His Deity and Manhood can be seen together.

This adjustment is of no avail. THR's evil teaching is not made orthodox by this adjustment; rather, the evil is actually reaffirmed by WRD. It is an attempt at what we shall call finessing evil.

Conclusion

> . . . for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one Person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and

54. *Ministry by F. E. Raven* 17:333.

55. *Systematic Theology* . . . Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1912, p. 673.

> errors. What is really denied is Christ's individuality as man . . . [56]

The five persons reviewed are guilty of holding that Christ was not *personally* man. It is the denial that the Son took complete humanity into His Person. In Hamilton Smith's case he actually quoted FER regarding the Son being here in a "condition." Perhaps all five hold this evil teaching about "condition." Perhaps W. R. Dronsfield holds that Christ's humanity is a "condition." At any rate, the individuality of Christ as man is gone. They reject it that in Christ's Person there was **divine-human personality**, thus rejecting the true **God-man**! [57]

No amount of semantic juggling, shuffling, and obfuscation can get around the real issue which is: *human personality* in Christ is denied; thus divine-human personality in Christ's Person is denied. The five reviewed herein are guilty of fundamentally evil doctrine -- heterodoxy -- leaven. They do not bring the doctrine of Christ!

P. A. Humphreys wrote:

> It is no time for compliments or honeyed words. The truth of the Person of our blessed Lord is at stake, and it behooves all for whom He died, and to whom His name is dear, to take their stand boldly against such corrupting, Christ-defaming notions. [58]

J. N. Darby wrote:

> Moreover, the semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love according to God. It is the taking advantage of the name of love in order to help on the seductions of Satan. In the last days the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another; but the Holy Ghost, by whose power we receive this divine nature, and who pours the love of God into our hearts is the Spirit of truth; and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, and which is indifferent to it, can be of the Holy Ghost -- still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love. [59]

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56. *Collected Writings* 29:212, note.

57. This expression, "God-man," is very precious as bringing before us the union in Him of the divine and the human; that He took humanity into His Person. The reader will find "God-man" scattered in J. N. Darby's writings: *Collected Writings* 10:230; 14:360; 18:83; 21:47; *Notes and Comments* 3:221. Also see *The Present Testimony* 6:461, note.

58. *Remarks on a Paper Entitled "The Person of the Christ,"* by F.E.R., published Sept. 1895, p. 16.

59. *Sysopsis* 5:357, 358.

J. Hennessy wrote: [60]

> Where is the Man Christ Jesus in this "I"? This is F.E.R. and T.H.R.'s Christ! **The doctrine involves the denial of Jesus Christ come in the flesh** [61] (2 John 7), for it denies Him to be a perfect human person (pp. 23, 24).

Our Savior is a perfect, divine-human Person! -- fully God, fully man, the God-man!

> **A little leaven leavens the whole lump (Gal. 5:9)**.
>
> **Let everyone who names the name of [the] Lord withdraw from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).**
>
> **If anyone come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into [the] house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works (2 John 10, 11).**
>
> **And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? (Luke 6:46).**

60. *Heterodoxy Ancient and Modern on the Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ*," by J. Hennessy, James Carter: London, 1910. Available as a reprint from Present Truth Publishers.

61. {Emphasis added.}

Recommended Reading

Recommended reading concerning Ravenism available from Present Truth Publishers:

The Collected Writings of A. C. Ord, containing magisterial papers examining the doctrine of FER and setting forth the truth of Christ's Person. Those papers were highly recommended to me by A. C. Brown many years ago.

"The Man Christ Jesus" 1 Timothy 2:5, Remarks on a Tract Entitled "The Person of the Christ," by A. C. Ord, not found in the above book.

An Affirmation of: The Divine-Human Personality of the Person of Christ, His Human "I" and Human will, With a Note on His Impeccability, RAH.

Human Personality of the Man Christ Jesus Denied by F.E. Raven and T. H. Reynolds {including two papers:} *Heresy as to the Person of Christ*, by W. S. Flett, and *Heterodoxy Ancient and Modern on the Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ*, by J. Hennessy, edited by RAH.

An Answer to the Challenging question frequently heard, What is Ravenism, by J. Hennessy.

Divine Attributes and The Second Man, and *The Truth of Christ's Person: Is It Taught by Mr. F. E. Raven*, by W. T. Whybrow.

The Eternal Relations in the Godhead, RAH, the most complete history of the Raven division, containing exposition of fundamental truths denied by FER, and also containing photostatic copies of numerous papers exposing FER