

An Answer

to the Challenging question frequently heard

What is Ravenism?

by J. Hennessy, 1909

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An Answer
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What is Ravenism?

*Heterodoxy Ancient and Modern,
On the Personality
of the Lord Jesus Christ*

In addition to FER's {F. E. Raven} paper, "The Person of the Christ," which has demanded a vindication of the faith once delivered to the saints on vital truth; also "Some Letters of FER," commented on by Mr. Rule, reprinted verbatim, I have quoted from FER's papers, "Eternal Life," "The Knowledge of the Father and the Son," "Sonship-Readings at Newport, Monmouth," revised by FER and THR {T. H. Reynolds}, Letters of FER, June 29th, 1889, July 3rd, 1890, November 2nd, 1890, November 28th, 1890; Letter of September, 1891, to Mr. {J. S.} Oliphant, all known and of unquestioned authenticity. Letters of T. H. Reynolds dated August 21st and December 3rd, 1895, written in defense of Mr. Raven's doctrine of no human personality in Christ -- one in reply to Dutch Brethren, and one in reply to Irish Brethren -- both printed by Gibbs, Dublin.

Dublin, August 80th, 1909.

DEAR _____,

FER's paper, "The Person of The Christ," I stated teaches fundamental error. So much do I feel the gravity of FER's doctrine that I purpose, if the Lord will, putting into the hands of saints, who may not be too prejudiced to read it, an examination of the doctrine of these papers.

The truth, from the first, and till the deflection of FER from what Brethren held and taught as to the Person of Christ, has been expressed by our beloved

deceased brother and teacher JND (see Collected Writings, Vols. 10, 15, 23, 29, Synopsis, Vol. 3, or Letters, Vol. 1, page 337, from which I quote).

I would add that so deep is my conviction of man's incapacity in this matter, and that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus, that I am quite ready to suppose that even while desiring to avoid it, I may have fallen into it, and thus have spoken in a mistaken way in something which I have said to you.

That He was truly man, Son of Man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in that condition of dependence, truly God in all His ineffable perfection, this I hold I trust, dearer than life. To define everything is what I do not pretend to do. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." If I find anything which weakens one or the other of these truths, or which dishonors Him who is their subject, I shall oppose it with all my might as God may call me to do so.

May God grant you to believe all which the Word teaches with regard to Him -- Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand, and to feed on the other, and to love in every way according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

It is truly grievous to witness, in the writings of FER, teachings, that, if imbibed, corrupt the thoughts of those who love the Lord from simplicity towards Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-4).

I am, yours in Him,

J. Hennessy.

I have omitted and added a few words in this letter.

The Doctrine of the Person of Christ

The Holy Spirit has written (1 Tim. 3:16), "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

That the blessed Lord was a real man, in flesh and blood, is as essential to Christianity as that He was God. This lies at the root and is the essence of Christianity, and a blessed truth it is, unspeakably so to us, as human beings, that is a sinless man, He was a true man, body and soul, and, one might add, spirit. This was called in question by heresy as soon as His deity was (JND, *Collected Writings* 29:324).

Again, JND wrote:

Now I repeat that there may be no mistake, I hold His being truly a man, in flesh and blood, and with a human soul as well as a body, to be vital truth; nor do I think it is half enough taught or believed that He was a true man, while a sinless and holy man (Collected Writings 23:478).

It is of vital importance to think rightly of Christ. The Lord's question to the religious leaders of His people Israel manifested this, while it also disclosed their ignorance of the constitution of His person (Matt. 22). They acknowledged His human personality (Son of David); they were silent as to His divine personality (David's Lord). The Lord's questions to His disciples, "Whom do men say I the Son of Man am?" "But whom say ye that I am?" shows that the Lord looks for and expects a true conception and confession of His Person from His own. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The "I," "The Son of Man," was also "the Son of the living God." Thus a divinely-taught knowledge, that "the Christ" was both God and Man, was expressed in their confession: The evidence of a perfect human personality was present in His Person, day and night, asleep and awake, during the time of their association with Him. The evidence of His divine personality was manifest in the exercise of divine attributes constantly before their eyes, however slow their apprehension of it. "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" after one miracle (Mark 4:41). "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God," after another miracle (Matt. 14:33).

How solemn and affecting are the Lord's feelings, communicating them from the throne of God?

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; so then because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

Who has an ear to hear what the Spirit saith?

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha (1 Cor. 16:22).

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (Eph. 6:24).

The purpose of the blessed God in sending His beloved Son was to bring those who received Him into the enjoyment of Eternal Life -- a life which was with the Father -- and, in order to this, His beloved Son manifested it on earth in His life, in His words, and His works. He became man, and by His death, bearing the judgment due to sin, He thus removed the hindrance to this divine desire and object. The testimony of the Holy Ghost is to this life with the Father and to its manifestation on earth, and to its communication to those who believe on God's Son, constituting them now the children of God (John 1:12), as born of the Spirit, and sealed by the Spirit; enabled to cry, "Abba Father" (Rom. 8:15, 16;

Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13). The Holy Ghost affirms that the possession of eternal life brings now, in this world, into fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and the fact and effect is thus stated:

The life was manifested . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,"

and,

these things write we unto you *that your joy may be full* (1 John 1:1-4).

Its possession is thus characterized by the Lord:

As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (John 17:3).

The Holy Ghost has been sent from the Father and from His rejected, ascended, and glorified Son, to witness to Him, and to constitute those who receive Him, His witnesses, while absent, to His person -- living, dying, risen, ascended, and glorified (John 14:23; 15:2, 26, 27; 16:12-14). This witnessing to His beloved Son is the purpose of God now, on earth and this by the presence of the Holy Ghost, *in* and *with* His people (John 14:17). The Lord said,

He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning.

To be a witness necessarily implies the possession and knowledge of the Father and the Son now; therefore the relegating it to a future out-of-the-world time would frustrate God's object.

As Thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world (John 17:18).

FER writes thus: --

Suppose a Christian dies, what is the effect of death on him? He goes nearer to his blessings. Suppose it is possible for a saint to die in the millennium, he will go away from his blessing. The blessings and privileges God has given to me are completely outside this world of sense (whatever may be said about it). The highest of these lies in the knowledge of God Himself. I merely lay down these two principles. The greatest privilege you can possibly have consists in the knowledge of God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself in His Son, and the blessings peculiar to the Son are outside this world of sense altogether -- FER at Quemerford, July, 1889. ("The knowledge of the Father an the Son," pp. 4-7).

In thus teaching, FER is consistent with his doctrine of eternal life as a future condition.

The Root of FER's Christology Is, Eternal Life, a Condition

Novelty of doctrine, and brevity of language in stating it, constitute a difficulty which many have experienced in apprehending Mr. Raven's theory of "Eternal Life." First, he denies "eternal life" to be a *vital* principle. Second, he affirms "eternal life" to be a condition. Third, he gives new birth as a foundation for "eternal life" thus:

(1) Eternal life for us is not simply a "vital principle," but a new man ("Some Letters," p. 8).

(2) "Eternal life" is a *condition*, but existing and expressed in such a way in a person that it can be said of Him "*He is it.*" ("Some Letters," p. 2).

If I think of Him as the Eternal Life, I think of Him as the glorious Man ("Some Letters," p. 3).

I believe it to be a term indicating a condition which, according to the counsels of God, was to characterize man ("Some Letters," p. 4).

The only time that it is predicated of Christ that He is Eternal Life is in 1 John 5:20, and then He is presented as the One who has come through water and blood, is thus separated entirely by death from the first man, and *is before God as the last Adam, the Second Man in the virtue and power of redemption* ("Some Letters," p. 5).

I believe Eternal Life to be what He is now as man -- in a word, I believe eternal life to mean a new man in a new sphere for man. Hence I conclude that eternal life is a truth that is connected with man, whether in Christ or in us ("Some Letters," p. 11).

It must be remembered that for us eternal life consists in a new man and not simply a new vitality. It is a new creation in us by the quickening power of God ("Eternal Life," p. 7).

New Birth:

I have no question for a moment that a soul is spiritually alive as the result of new birth; still new birth is only a foundation, and is not necessarily in itself the reception of Christ ("Some Letters," p. 8).

I do not regard new birth and quickening as equivalent. In the first I believe a new foundation is laid by the Spirit in man through the Word, while quickening is that a soul is made to live spiritually in the life and relationship of the Second Man. In a word, quickening is the equivalent of 'new creation,' and the result of it is that the believer has passed out of death into life ("Some Letters," p. 9).

I.e. new birth is only, in Christianity, according to FER, the spiritual life of an Old Testament saint. Compare John 1:12, 13, for the truth as given by the Holy Ghost.

But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons (Tekna -- children) of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1 John 5:1).

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5: 4, 5).

FER's theory of eternal life compels him to deny it to new birth in Christianity.

FER's New Birth Without Eternal Life

FER's confessed new and recent conception of "eternal life" as a *future impersonal human condition* necessitated excluding Christ from new birth. It seems almost incredible that, with the inspired First Epistle of John accepted and believed, any teacher could propound that new birth gave spiritual life, in Christianity, without the reception of Christ; or that any Christian should accept such doctrine, seeing the Holy Ghost has written,

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son; and this is the record [witness], 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 hath not life* (1 John 5:10-12).

Again, the Lord affirms,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood *ye have no life in you* (John 6:53).

FER thus describes the development in his mind of this new conception of eternal life:

At the time of the Witney (1888) meeting I was a learner, rather than a teacher, though I cannot say there were many from whom I got help. *It was becoming clear to me* that the term "eternal life" meant for us a wholly new order of relationship, object, knowledge, and blessing, etc., as well as a new being suited to it outside this scene of sight and sense, and that this has been brought to light in the Son having become man, and further that it had its full revelation as *an actual condition* in, and for man in Him as the risen and glorified man (Letter, Nov. 21, 1890).

What is a "condition"? A lexicographer defines it thus:

A particular mode of being applied to external circumstances -- to the body, to the mind and things. The circumstance of a being or thing at any given time.

"Condition" necessarily implies the existence of the person or thing it is a condition of. If used properly "eternal life," as a condition, would apply to the character of the spiritual life of a believer now, as well and as truly as to the state of a believer when in his permanent sphere glorified. The circumstances of the spiritual life differ; therefore to use and apply the term "eternal life" to a future condition in which that life is enjoyed, and to exclude it from the present is to misuse language, and hence the perplexity of many readers of FER's paper, "Eternal Life." J. S. Mill, though an infidel, wrote what rebukes the wrong use of terms:

I take my stand upon the acknowledged principle of logic and morality, that when we mean different things we have no right to call them by the same name.

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. FER excludes the *manifestation* of a divine life in Him also.

The Holy Spirit has written (1 Tim. 3:16),

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.

FER has written ("Some Letters," p. 8):

In His own person He was of course Eternal Life, the Second Man, when here in the days of His flesh, and was manifested as such to the apostles, but the manifestation was veiled by the part He had taken in the responsible life of man on earth.

If eternal life was "essentially," "eternally" in the Son, as God, both in time and in eternity, which FER affirms, then it follows that, in order to veil that life which was essentially in God the Son, no divine characteristic of His life with the Father was manifested to the world. God *veiled to all except* the apostles! We ask, Do not the four Gospels record the manifestation of divine life as well as attributes in Christ to the world? The manifestation is not of divine *glory* to all. That was a privilege given to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16 18). The word "manifest" (phaneroo) in the original, is defined by Greek lexicons, "Make manifest, bring to light; disclose, show forth, make known." Scripture affirms the *manifestation* of God and of eternal life. FER's doctrine would require the flesh to be veiled to all except apostles, for God, was *manifest in* what was *visible* -- the flesh, and so was also eternal life. The thoughtful reader will see that FER's doctrine of no human *person* in Christ precludes a *real human life* from being manifested as well as "a life divine below." The denial of manifestation of eternal life to *men* is the denial of the manifestation of God in Christ, for it is by His life (words and works in life, and love in death) that God was manifested. "*He that hath seen*

Me hath seen the Father,” whoever the “he” may be. “God was in Christ reconciling the world.” If God was not manifest in the life of Christ -- even if FER acknowledged Christ to be a human *Person*, which he does not -- if only a perfect human life was manifested no responsibility attaches to man. The Lord said,

If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.

He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have both seen, and hated both Me and My Father.

Challenged by the High Priest, Jesus answered him,

I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the Synagogues, and in the Temple whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said (John 17:20-22).

The manifestation of God was to men, was not merely to His apostles, but to all. The manifestation of a perfect human life could not be the manifestation of God, that is, of a divine life, and Scripture affirms that the eternal life that was with the Father, before Christ became a man, *was manifested when He became a man*, and how? Certainly by, and in, His life before men. Seeing that eternal life before its manifestation was a divine person’s life, the Son’s with the Father, its manifestation did not cease in its divine character in a divine person on earth. FER only allows Christ’s life on earth to be *consonant* with eternal life (Letters, p. 3). One of the solemn and serious considerations involved in his doctrine of eternal life is the denial of this blessed characteristic of Christ’s life on earth.

The gospel of John presents to us a divine Person come down here -- God manifest in this world; a marvelous fact upon which all man’s history depends. In John it is God Himself, as God, who in a man shows Himself to men having come as a man (JND, “Notes on John’s Gospel,” p. 3).

FER’s Proofs

Any reflecting reader must observe that FER’s proofs of his confessedly novel doctrine of eternal life, a doctrine which involves the person of Christ and Christianity mainly consist of dogmatic assertions, and on a mental psychology, which is the product of his imagination. FER defends his doctrine of Christ’s impersonal humanity (“The Person of the Christ,” p. 1) thus:

In what I have to say I adhere therefore to two points that had been in question which are these. (1) As to whether Christ is ever viewed in Scripture as man distinct and apart from what He is as God. (2) As to

whether the truth of His person consists in the union in Him of God and man; a favorite formula with those so holding is “God and Man one Christ.”

FER’s contention is, that Christ is *viewed* in Scripture as Man, distinct and *apart* from what He is as God, that is, though He is not a human *person*, the human mind can view Him as if He was such -- a divine Person assuming human condition, and, that the truth of His Person is not expressed in the formula, “God and Man one Christ.” There could not be the *union* of God and man in Christ, unless He was a human person as well as a divine person. The denial of the union is the denial of the human personality in Christ.

FER affirms

that the denial of the first is, while claiming to maintain orthodoxy, destructive of Christianity in its real power;

and the assertion of the second is *derogatory* and *dishonoring* to the Son,

and,

both the denial and the assertion are contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

But, if Christ subsists as “God and Man” in any real sense, the assertion of the first, and the denial of the second are fundamental errors, and vitally affect not alone His person, but also His atoning death, His living priesthood, Christ as our Manna, and Christ as Head of the Church, which is His body, God’s oath to David, the Resurrection of Christ, the existence of the Gospel, as well as the doctrine of eternal life. The doctrinal basis of Mr. R.’s doctrine is that Christ, at incarnation, took the *first man’s condition of humanity* -- but an impersonal one, which was “not commensurate with the spiritual being” (“Some Letters,” pp. 7, 8, 12). Therefore its inadequacy and incompetency to exhibit eternal life, and consequently the necessity *that that condition* should be laid aside, and moreover, that from *that condition of humanity*.

“Christ was wholly separated by death, in order to be eternal life” -- “a new man” -- and to accomplish reconciliation, it had to be “*terminated judicially* in the cross, in the Man Christ Jesus” (“The Person,” p. 2).

What follows this ending of Christ’s incarnate impersonal humanity? Mr. R. teaches that a risen and glorified Christ is as to His humanity *a new creation, a new man*, which he affirms equally of Christ and of us (“Some Letters,” p. 5; “Eternal Life,” by FER, p. 7). In His incarnate humanity Christ was the “*old*” in contrast to the “*new*,” which He now is (“Eternal Life,” p. 3; “The Person,” p. 2).

FER wrote:

June 29th, 1889. Then again, as to life, he says: Christ never ceases to be the exhibition of eternal life, from a babe in the manger to the throne of

the Father. *Think of a helpless infant being the exhibition of eternal life, whatever might be there.* Infancy, and all connected with it, does not find place in John. It is simply there “the Word became flesh.” The fact is, there is a tendency to lose sight of the truth, that, as well as being eternal life, Jesus was God, and exercising Divine prerogatives down here. “The Word was God,” and further, in taking part *in human life down here (the life to which sin attached) He took part in that which IN HIM was brought to AN END* judicially in death, and this assuredly was not eternal life.

I beg the reader to note that FER’s doctrine of the Person of Christ, which he states began to be formed in his mind at the time of the Witney meeting (1888), was briefly but plainly propounded in June, 1889. This fact is important, though overlooked by many in judging of its refusal in 1890. Christ’s personality is seriously involved. **First** of all, it denies the *union* of God and man in Him. **Second**, if Christ be not a human *Person* His death was not that of our *substitute*, for we required a personal substitute to bear the judgment for us. “Condition” is not a person, and FER maintains that *personality exclusively* pertains to the Son, *as God* (p. 3 of “The Person”). **Third**, it affirms Christ as “Manna” is not a person to feed on, *but an impersonal side of a person*, and that *on this side alone* He “is placed within the reach of our appropriation.” **Fourth**, that union with Christ is not union with a person; and that Christ, as Head of the Church, is not a person. Union with His Person is declared an “error” (“The Person,” page 3). **Fifth**, that Christ in death did not lay down a personal life, but only a human condition, for His Person, being exclusively divine, could not die. **Sixth**, according to FER’s doctrine Christ’s present human condition is a “new creation,” “a new man.” It follows, He is disqualified from being our High Priest, for in His present humanity He cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. In His present humanity He was not tempted; He did not suffer, for the “old” is ended, according to FER’s idea of His humanity, as “new.” The truth and comfort for us of His priesthood depends on the certainty of His *incarnate* humanity; having been raised from the dead, and still subsisting in heaven. Having suffered for our sins under the judgment of God, He, in the greatness of His love to His Father and to us, laid down His life, which was the separation of soul from body. His precious blood (the life, Lev. 17:11-14) was shed in making atonement. His resurrection was the re-union of soul and body. This the Lord repeatedly affirmed, and ocularily demonstrated, after His resurrection, to His assembled disciples (Luke 24; John 20). The same Jesus that died was buried and rose again; on the truth and reality of which depends the gospel (1 Cor. 15). **Seventh**, that Christ’s prayers to God were not those of a *human person*, if He had only had an impersonal condition of humanity; even His strong crying and tears in Gethsemane were not a human person’s -- But was it not a human person who said, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit”? Was it not, we ask FER’s fellowship, a human person who anticipated

death, when He kneeled down and prayed saying, “O My Father, if it be possible,” if Thou be willing, “remove this cup front Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done”? When there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him, was it a human person or was it only a divine person that the angel was strengthening? FER insists that there was no human *person* in Christ -- only a divine person “acting” as if human (“The Person of the Christ,” p. 3). Was “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me,” the cry of an individual, perfect, dependent man? or was it, as FER teaches, that of a divine Person, in a human clothing, personating? According to FER’s idea of Christ He was *acting a part*, and was not *really* a dependent *Person*. If FER’s conception of Christ be correct we require a new and amended record of Christ’s life, for the four Gospels present a Christ who was, what He said, “a man” (John 8:40), who was also God over all blessed for ever. Every order of being is known and distinguished by certain attributes, whether human or divine. A *man* is a being constituted of body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Christ had the body of a human person. He was wearied, slept, hungered, thirsted, as a human person; He had the soul of a human person. His soul was exceeding sorrowful as a human person. He had the spirit of a human person. His spirit was grieved as a human person. He had the will of a human person. He said. “Not My will, but Thine be done”; “Not as I will.” He died a human person, He rose from the dead a human person. “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Scripture presents Christ with no essential attribute of a human *person* wanting in Him. If His humanity were impersonal it would be a *thing*, a mere robe to cover a divine person. FER’s doctrine would deprive us of “the Man Christ Jesus.”

Christ’s Testimony

The God-man: One Christ, Son of David, as to His Humanity, and David’s Lord, as to His Divinity

The union of God and man in the Person of Christ is the testimony of Psa. 110:1, confirmed by the application of it to Himself by the Lord Jesus, in His question to the Pharisees (Matt. 22:41-46).

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son

of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?

The Holy Ghost adds, “And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither dared any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.” Again, glorified, the word is: -- “I am (not I was) the root (God), and offspring (man) of David” (Rev. 22:16), The one “I” is both. A moment’s reflection on the above scriptures will suffice to settle the union of God and man in Christ. The subject is Christ. “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?” “Son” is a person; “Lord” is a person. Of “Christ” two things are testified to -- He is Son of David, a man, a human person; He is David’s Lord, God, a divine Person, but it is of one Christ, who stood before the Pharisees, that both are affirmed. “Christ” is the personal name of Him who is both, and He is one Christ. In the next chapter, He again uses the term “Christ” as a personal name. “One is your Master, even Christ” (Matt. 23:8). A person of necessity, for only of a person could it be affirmed “One is your Master.” Personality cannot be excluded from the term in Greek or Hebrew. “Christ.” Messiah the Prince (Dan. 9:25, 26). “Christ pleased not Himself.” “The judgment seat of Christ.” “Christ both died and rose (revived), that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.” “Christ died for sinners.” “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” “The sufferings of Christ.” “The precious blood of Christ.” “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory.” “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” etc. Two facts are established by the testimony of Scripture -- “Christ” is a term applied by the Lord to Himself as Son of David, and David’s Lord (God and Man, one Christ), and Christ is a personal name, not limited to His office. “Messiah” when official. “Christ” is a person, even as “Queen,” “Doctor,” “Colonel” are persons, which FER overlooks in his effort to deny the term “Christ” of personality (*vide* “The Person of the Christ,” p. 4).

The Lord recognizes the name “Christ” as that which covers His person as both the Son of Man and Son of the living God. “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” “But whom say ye that I am?” “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “On this rock I will build My Church” (Matt. 16). The Church is built on a person: not on a *condition*, as FER teaches. Again, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). We ask, Was it not a human person “God was with”? even “the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5), of whom Scripture affirms what is a blessed reality. “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col.

2:9).

The Constitution of the Finite Mind

FER offers no proof from Scripture for an impersonal human nature in Christ. The proof he advances is based on an *assumed* inability in the human mind to *unite* singly apprehended thoughts in one complex one, and, as a consequence, the incapacity to think of Christ as God and Man, in *union*, “one Christ.” Is this so? If this theory of mental psychology were true the revelation of God in three persons, would be useless, for if we could not, after having apprehended each Person in the Godhead -- Father, Son and Holy Ghost -- singly, if the finite mind is so constituted that it cannot unite these three single conceptions in one concept “*at one and the same time*,” under one denominative term, “God,” it follows it cannot have a thought of God, as He is now revealed in the Scriptures -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In fact, we could not be Christians; we must be Tritheists, for consecutive thoughts, if not united in one simultaneous one, would leave us such. FER writes of Christ having a place as man “Godward.” What is his conception of the term “man” applied to Christ? He writes: The Person

is the Son.

The person is ever viewed as acting in regard to His form or condition, divine or human. The truth of a divine person assuming a human condition, the Word becoming flesh, and in such wise that He can be viewed objectively as man I believe (“The Person,” p. 3).

So that FER’s conception of Christ as “Man” is that He, without being a human person, has assumed a condition of humanity, in which

the Person is even {sic} *viewed as acting* (“The Person,” p. 3)

a human part without being a “man,” while constantly using the term. This is his idea of incarnation, “*in such wise*,” that in this manner, just as we read of the Lord assuming a human form when He conversed with Abraham and Manoah (Gen. 18; Judg. 13). In principle FER’s conception of Christ as “Man” differs little, if at all, from a Theophany, i. e., a detachable human condition without being a human person.

In order to maintain his doctrine of eternal life, FER adopted an old heresy that denied to Christ human personality. His Christology is thus formulated. Christ is a term descriptive of a divine person (that is, the Son), who, in becoming incarnate, assumed a condition of humanity, without human personality, serving the divine person as a temporary clothing *to act in*, while on earth, and, at death, *laid it aside, ended it, terminated it*, judicially in the

cross, but in a glorified condition *is* “a new man,” a new creation, in contrast to the “old” which He had as born in the flesh, but in which, according to FER, He exists no longer but in a totally new human condition, a created one suited to what He ever was as out of heaven, and thus He is said to be Eternal Life (see “Eternal Life,” pp. 3, 7; “Some Letters,” pp. 13, 14).

The force of “after the flesh” -- Christ after the flesh -- in 2 Cor. 5:16 is not the flesh *terminated* in Christ, else what would His own words, after He arose from the dead, mean? “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken He showed them His hands and His feet.” If the force of after (kata) was *in* (en) it would follow that the apostle knew no one *in* flesh -- “henceforth know we no man.” Therefore “*after*” cannot mean the end of Christ’s humanity, else it would include all men. See the Lord’s use of “after the flesh” (John 8:15), and the difference between “*in* the flesh” and “*after* the flesh” (2 Cor. 10:3). It means the order of condition and relationship which Christ’s rejection and death put an end to. The knowledge of Christ is a new order, “If any man be in Christ,” -- a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). “In Christ” there is neither Greek or Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:10, 11).

FER assumes that God, at man’s creation, constituted him mentally incapable of uniting several singly apprehended conceptions or thoughts in one complex one, which is a new psychology, contrary to fact and experiences. He writes:

The two thoughts (of God and man) are wholly distinct conceptions which cannot be grasped at one and the same time by any finite mind.

Now these two thoughts, though realized in one person, must be separately and distinctly apprehended -- the one presents God, the other man.

While the last statement is true, the former one is not, for if the human mind cannot unite two thoughts, when separately and distinctly apprehended, in one, it can only have *at any given time* Christ as God, and *at another given time* Christ as Man, and, if it cannot unite the two in one complex one, it follows of necessity that it must at one time think of Him as a Deist may, and at another as a Unitarian may, for if the two thoughts are realized in one Person *they must be united to be realized at one and the same time*. Successive thoughts, unless united in one *simultaneous* one, do not, and cannot give a thought of Christ as He now subsists” (since He became Man), *if He is in any sense* God and Man. Christ asleep in the hinder part of the ship on a pillow is a man; Christ rebuking the wind and saying to the sea, “Peace be still,” is God (Mark 4). He is one Christ, God and Man, and the fact is realized in one person by the finite mind.

“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” He is truly the God-Man -- a term refused by FER and THR on his behalf. If

FER’s statement was a fact, that the finite mind is constituted as he asserts, it would follow that no one would be a Christian, because God is one God but revealed in three Persons -- the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And when the finite mind receives in faith the revelation of God, apprehending separately and distinctly the personality of each, it unites the three thoughts in one complex one, under one denominative term “God”; if not, it could not have a true thought of God as He subsists, and is now revealed in Scripture -- Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God. The incapacity of mind, Alleged by FER, would result in Tritheism. The term “man” is a complex conception. We think of his constitution, first of his body, then of his soul; we unite them under one term, “man,” otherwise we could not think of him as a complete being as he exists on earth. In fact what is denied, with a doctrinal object, to the finite mind is a constant exercise of it, viz., uniting single thoughts and conceptions in one complex one. For example, Flock, Church, Congregation, Army, Navy, Parliament, and such like, are complex conceptions made up of single ones united by the mind. A flock is not one sheep, but a number which the finite mind finds no difficulty in uniting under one term. So of the term “church” when used as a congregation, etc.

It is an ordinary operation of the human mind, so constant that it is not observed till attention is directed to it.

John Locke (“On the Human Understanding,” Book 2, ch. 12), writes thus:

As single ideas are observed to exist in several combinations united together, so the mind has power to consider several of them united together as one idea, and that not only as they are united in external objects, but as itself has joined ideas thus made up of several simple ones put together I call complex.

Thomson (“Laws of Thoughts”) writes:

Notions formed from several objects are called conceptions, as being produced by the power which the mind possesses of taking several things together” (Part 1, of Conceptions).

Taylor (“Elements of Thought”) writes:

The power of the mind to decompose its conceptions and to combine the elements of them at its pleasure is called the faculty of imagination.

Dugald Stewart writes:

But we have, moreover, the power of modifying our conceptions, by combining the parts of different ones together so as to form new wholes of our own creation (“Elements,” chs. 3, 4).

“God’s Oath”

FER'S doctrine of the *old* and *new* humanity in Christ would nullify God's oath to David, and, be it noted, that it is essential to his doctrine of eternal life to depreciate Christ's *born* humanity. In 2 Sam. 7, Psa. 86, Acts 2, Psa. 16, the Holy spirit distinctly teaches God's oath to David requires Christ's *born* humanity.

I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn unto David My servant, *Thy seed* will I establish for ever, and will build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Peter, applies "thy seed" to Christ, and to Christ *risen* from the dead, and establishes that it is to the Christ that was *born* and descended from David's loins that God's oath applies, consequently, a Christ, not born, but created "a new man," would not be David's seed, and God's oath would be frustrated. Scripture teaches it as essential that His humanity, as born of Mary, should see no corruption, and that, after His death, His soul and body should be reunited. "This *same* Jesus *whom ye have* crucified is made both Lord and Christ," and *this risen and glorified*. At Corinth some teachers denied the resurrection of the body without realizing its consequences. It involved Christ's resurrection and the gospel itself. The Holy Spirit by the mouth of the apostle points out its result. FER's doctrine of *the old humanity terminated* and the *new humanity created*, involves serious consequences and, it may follow, as a moral sequence, that the gospel, according to 1 Cor. 15, will be eventually given up by those that receive his theory of eternal life. On opening the Acts of the Apostles we find what is insisted on is the resurrection of the same Jesus that was buried, who showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs. In choosing one to take the place of Judas, we read,

Wherefore of these men which accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning at the baptism of John *unto the same day that He was taken up* from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.

Peter charged the Jews with killing the Prince of Life,

whom God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.

The *Prince of Life killed was the Prince of Life raised*. His human personality and personal identity are both asserted.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, *whom ye slew and hanged on a tree*.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

They did not witness to a new man, a new created man but to the same Jesus whose body was laid in Joseph's tomb. We read (Acts 2),

Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of

God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; *whom* God had raised up, having loosened the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved, therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope; because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, *that of the fruit of his loins*, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither *His flesh* did see corruption. *This Jesus* hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made *that same Jesus whom ye have crucified*, both Lord and Christ.

The Lord Himself, after His resurrection, emphatically verified, to His assembled disciples, the identity of His humanity and personality. "It is I Myself." Having shed His precious blood in making atonement, He said,

"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken He showed them His hands and feet (Luke 24).

And, eight days after, He said to Thomas,

Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing (John 29).

We ask any Christian, Could the Lord give greater proof of the *non-termination* of His incarnate humanity, or of His human personality? for soul and body constitute a human person, and their re-union, after death (which was their separation), constituted His resurrection. Our humanity, because of sin, must undergo a change (1 Cor. 15). *We* must be new created to be after the image of Christ -- this corruptible must put on incorruption. Was Christ's humanity (*incarnate*) corruptible? Was it subject to decay or death? The Lord laid down His life; He gave up His spirit, not of necessity, but of grace and voluntarily. "I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18). The lesson of the transfiguration seems

lost on FER. His eternal life doctrine clouds it, but the potentialities of Christ's incarnate humanity *on the Mount* of Transfiguration proves it was not the old but the new man's. Matt. 17, Mark 9, Luke 9, "He was transfigured before them." "When they were awake they saw His glory." He was transfigured without passing through death. Will any one say, with FER, that Christ's born humanity was not intended for heaven? FER's doctrine affirms it was not suitable.

The Gospel of Christ

Further, the doctrine of the *termination* of Christ's incarnate humanity overthrows the gospel, because it denies the resurrection of the Christ that died. It gives a *new man*, a new created man in lieu of the resurrection of the Christ that died. *Risen* does not apply in the doctrine propounded by FER or what has risen must be what was buried, according to 1 Cor. 15, otherwise we are in our sins; but what was buried was *terminated* according to FER's doctrine. Therefore Christ after (by "after" FER means "in") the flesh was not raised. It is essential to the existence of the gospel that the same Christ, as to His Humanity, *who died*, was the Christ that was buried, and that the Christ who was buried was *raised* the third day according to the Scriptures; and this was according to the fact. Now the Holy Ghost warns us that the hearts of the simple may be deceived by good words and fair speeches, and He also gives a protecting testimony, viz., that what is contrary to the revealed doctrine we have received is the characteristic of deceptive teaching (Rom. 16:17, 18). A moment's reflection will leave no doubt that the Christ who *died*, was *buried*, and *rose* again was a human *person*. His humanity united to His Godhead is that which gives His death its infinitely efficacious value, in meeting the righteous claims of God's government against sin and responsible sinners, and thus enables God to proclaim forgiveness and insures salvation to every one that with the heart believes in the Savior, and with the mouth confesses Him Lord (Rom. 10). I pray the reader to study 1 Cor. 15.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died* for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that *He* was buried, and that *He* rose again the third day; and that *He* was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that *He* was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that *He* was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all *He* was seen of me also, as of one born

out of due time.

If Christ had *only a divine personality*, as FER teaches, could it be recorded by the Holy Spirit that *He died, was buried, rose again*. Scripture insists on the resurrection of a human person, but the denial of human personality to Christ makes resurrection inapplicable to Him.

The Priesthood of Christ

Without a human personality Christ would be without the qualification ascribed to Him in Scripture as our High Priest. Could any believing reader of Heb. 2 and 4 fail to see that Christ is a human person?

What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet, for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him; but now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus; who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Who tasted death? Was it a human person? FER and THR say no; it was a condition of humanity. "I will put my trust in Him." Was it a human person that put his trust in Jehovah, or a divine person, speaking *as if* a human person? This is the solemn consideration for any soul that accepts FER's teaching.

Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

Does not the Holy Ghost plainly teach that it is a human person that suffered, that was tempted, that is able to succor?

The Mediator and the Substitute

In becoming a man the Lord of Glory laid aside, not His divinity, or divine personality, but its *status*. So in dying He did not terminate His humanity or human personality, but its *status* -- "as after the flesh." Because He was God and Man, in person, He was qualified to be the Daysman between us (both God and Man, Job 9:33), a Mediator between God and man, and gave Himself (a person) a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:5, 6). Could it be affirmed of a divine person

who had no human personality that He gave Himself a ransom? But this is what FER's doctrine of an impersonal humanity, of no human "I" in the Person of Christ, involves.

An impersonal humanity in Christ deprives us of a *personal* substitute; of One bearing our deserved judgment.

Now this, call it by what word you please, was one person put in the place of another, and then in such sort taking the sins and their consequences on Himself as that they should not come at all upon the person who was himself guilty in judgment for penal consequences. This substitution is as certain a truth as Scripture can afford, that is, one person standing in another's place; bearing his sins in His own body on the tree, bruised for them instead of the guilty, who is healed by the other taking the stripes ("The Place of Sacrifice in the Ways of God," JND's last words, Croydon, March 25th, 1882).

The Constitution of Christ's Person

In lieu of the *union* of God and man in the Person of Christ, which is the doctrine of Scripture, FER and THR substitute a divine person and two natures; one impersonal (without a human "I"), the other personal and exclusively "I," and *thus* constituting His Person. His Person otherwise, with them, must exist in *addition* to the two natures. It is either a Person of two natures, or a Person and two natures. Which? THR (Letter to the Dutch brethren, August 21st, 1896, C. H. Gibbs, Dublin), in defense of FER, wrote thus: Mr. R.

has said that in Christ there was the divine and human nature, but objects to the expression "the union of God and man," as making two personalities in the Lord. (Letter to H. C. Voorhoeve, jun., The Hague, Holland, p. 4).

Again, THR. (in reply to W.R.E. and the late Mr. R. Scott (letter of Dec. 3rd, 1895, Gibbs, Dublin), wrote thus: --

Opposed to this is put forward the statement of the Athanasian Creed, "God and man one Christ," and by W.R.E.'s explanations of the Person of Christ, which are most dishonoring, such as the human nature in personal union with the Godhead (p. 6) -- "the God-man," an irreverent expression.

W.R.E. says (p. 12),

The union now in Him of Deity and humanity constitutes one Person, the Christ of God.

On this THR exclaims,

Can anything be more derogatory to the Son of God than saying He is a constituted Person?

Again, he writes:

I add a line as to Mr. Scott's paper. He says that the truth of the Person of Christ consists in the visible and abiding union in Him of both natures, divine and human. Mr. Scott evidently takes this to be identical with the term "union of God and man," but it is not so. FER holds as firmly as Mr. Scott the union in Him of the divine and human natures, but in *whom?*

Let not the reader be deceived by the subtlety displayed in the use of the term "nature." Nature has been defined as "the sum of the qualities and attributes which make a thing what it is, as distinct from others -- as angel, man, cow, or anything else." FER and THR, in their revised notes of a reading at Newport, July 4th, 1896, affirm:

You cannot talk of the nature of a thing till the thing itself is there ("Sonship," p. 16).

Nevertheless, discarding their own affirmation, both tell us that a human nature was in Christ without the thing itself, that it is the nature of, viz., a human person. Human nature (when a person is in question and not an abstraction) requires a human person whose nature it is. But they witness against themselves by denying human personality to the human nature of Christ. They affirm you cannot talk of the nature of a thing till the thing itself (i.e., in this case, the human person) is there; yet they do so, and this to support their doctrine. They make human nature in Christ a *thing* only, not a person. On the other hand they make divine nature a person, i.e., the only "I" in Christ, thus deceiving their unsuspecting readers, if not themselves, by writing of *human* nature, yet excluding what it is the nature of, viz., a human person. If they used the term "nature," as they were bound to do, they would have to acknowledge the union in Christ's Person of God and man, i.e., of two natures equally personal though great the mystery of Godliness. But the defense of false doctrine is generally characterized by the fallacious use of terms. If THR used the term "nature," as he and FER define it, their doctrine would be overthrown. But they deny to one nature what they admit in the other, viz., personality. If they consistently used the term "nature" then they should give us two personal or two impersonal natures "in whom?" They would then have either a true Christ, or a person and *two impersonal natures added to Him! We ask, What is their constitution of the Christ of God?* Truly the legs of the lame are not equal! T. H. Reynolds has revised hymns in use and excluded No. 61 from JND's Revised Edition of 1881. Why? Is it because it did not accord with his doctrine? It reads:

How wondrous the glories that meet
In Jesus, and from 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 join'd in one,
Form the fountain of love in His heart.

It has been truly stated,

The moment you deny personality in the Man Christ Jesus you run into a thousand difficulties and errors.

In reply to Mr. Sen, JND wrote:

But here is one who was in the form of God, the very *status* and condition of divinity, and takes another form, and goes down to death, even the same divine person, never proved more so than in His humiliation, but who became something (was made flesh). "The Word became flesh," did not cease to be the Word, but was what it was not before -- became something, and subsequently took manhood into divine glory.

Now all this (Sen's doctrine) is the denial of a true Christ in both parts of His being, i.e., the divine and human -- His whole person (*Collected Writings* 15:251. *Notes and Comments* 2:392).

In the Synopsis we read, "His complete person" (5:18). 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." THR 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 FER's and THR'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 FER and THR's Christ! The doctrine involves the denial of Jesus Christ come in the flesh (2 John 2:7); for it denies Him to be a perfect human *person*.

The Misuse of "Abstract Thought"

Professor Sedgwick writes ("Studies of the University of Cambridge"):

It is by the imagination, more perhaps than by any other faculty of the soul, that man is raised above the beast. Beasts have senses in common with ourselves, and often in higher perfection, but of the imagination they offer no single trace. These higher attributes of the soul confer in it a creative energy.

FER wrote ("Some Letters," p. 16) of Mr. {A. H.}Rule,

Certainly he reads Scripture in a different way to what I do. He seems unable or unwilling to seize an abstract thought.

I have before me two letters (October 2nd, 1891), printed and circulated by Mr. Raven, one from J. S. Oliphant to him calling his attention to a "most objectionable sentence" as to Christ, as the last Adam and the Second Man, thus:

To FER, -- You add, "But I believe that He was always such in the counsel, and *I could almost say* in the presence of God, and we find many allusions to this in the Old Testament (Psa. 8:1)."

J.S.O. adds:

But the sentence, "*I could almost say*" shows a want of Scripture basis for the thought. Why not say "Scripture teaches," and then it has the authority of the Word of God? As it stands it bears the meaning that you are venturing on speculation, and then what you do say looks like what {E. H.} Chater is refuting on your behalf, namely, that man or humanity existed in some shape or form before the incarnation, though the Person always existed of course.

To this FER replied:

The idea that a man or manhood or humanity had any existence in fact in Christ until the Word became flesh never entered my thoughts, and I do not believe that any sentence of mine, *read in its connection* and without bias, could fairly bear such a conclusion.

Let the reader compare FER's statement. First, his definition of eternal life. He writes:

I conclude that eternal life is a truth which is connected with man *whether* in Christ or in us.

I believe eternal life to be the life of man according to the purpose of God, and what has come out fully in Christ in resurrection.

In a word, I believe eternal life to mean a new man in a new sphere for man ("Some Letters," p. 11).

This is quite plain. "*Whether in Christ or in us*" eternal life is a new man. And FER, in his paper ("Eternal Life," p. 7), declares that it is "*a new creation* in us." Second, FER's reiterated declaration, that eternal life was "*ever* in the Son," was "*eternally*," was "*essentially*" in the Son, "*an integral part of His*

Person” (“Some Letters,” pp. 4, 7, 8),

I believe it to be a term indicating a condition which according to the counsel of God was to characterize man. That which was to characterize man was what had been in the Son eternally with the Father (“Some Letters,” p. 4).

Again, he declares that what was “*eternally*,” “essentially” in the Son, and an *integral part* of His Person, was not in His person on earth. He writes:

Eternal life when Christ was here was still with the Father” (“Some Letters,” p. 3).

Again, he declares that what was an integral part of His Person was distinct from His Person.

It is distinct from what He was in His own Person, and had ever been (“Some Letters,” p. 12).

Thus “imagination” creates it for His Person, and in His Person, and then excludes it from His Person both in time and eternity. And finally, while thus creating and uncreating, separates His life on earth from His Person.

If we apprehend eternal life to consist in a condition of heavenly relationship and being, such as was ever in the Son, we can readily see, that if He takes part in man’s responsible life on earth the two things must be distinct (“Some Letters,” p. 3).

All this exercise of “abstract thought” is the exercise of “imagination,” which writers of fiction, such as poets, and others, indulge in, but which is evil when applied to Christ’s Person. It is the result of a false conception of eternal life. The statement, in plain English, of this speculation is its refutation. Our minds, in reading the Gospels, would require to be kaleidoscopic to view Christ as FER’s doctrine requires, and abstract from and add to His incarnate condition, His Person, and finally exclude His Person from it. Look at Him asleep in the ship! They awake Him; He commands the wind, and says to the sea, “Peace, be still.” He is God and Man in His Person -- His blessed and adorable Person (Mark 4:35-41). Again in the record in the Gospel of Matthew, ch. 14:22, 23, we see how the disciples were taught to see in Jesus the union of God and man. In the record in Mark 4; their apprehension of Him, at the manifestation of His divinity in commanding the sea, evoked from their minds, “What *manner of man* is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” He was a perfect man asleep, yet God *manifest* awake. In Matthew’s record of another manifestation of His divinity, when He walked on the water, bearing Peter on it into the ship, and the wind ceased, they were led in their conception of Him further. “They worshipped Him saying, *Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.*”

Heretical Objections to the Union of God and Man in Christ’s Person

Of Apollinaris the younger, Bishop of Laodicea, in Syria (A.D. 375), a man thoroughly trained in the study of ancient Greek literature, Neander writes (*Church History*, 4:98, Bohn):

The great effort of this teacher was again to suppress the doctrine of a perfect human nature taken up into indissoluble union with the divine Logos.

Two beings persisting in their completeness, he conceived, could not be united into one whole.

Athanasius, in opposition to Apollinaris, wrote:

How could Christ represent for us the pattern of a holy life after which we ought to strive, if His nature was not entirely homogenous with ours? He could not redeem human nature in its completeness unless He had Himself assumed all parts of which it consists (vol. 4:98, 104).

A Greek theologian, John Damascene (A.D. 750), formally propounded an impersonal human nature in Christ.

He thought that to the divine nature alone pertained the power of constituting personality (Dorner’s *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Division 2, vol. 1, p. 210).

Of Peter Lombard (a Latin theologian), Dr. Dorner writes:

According to the view which Lombard seems finally to adopt, God did not become objectively a man, in Christ, but the humanity of God had an existence solely in the representations and notions of the human mind -- representations and notions which He intended to take such a form. God clothed Himself objectively with the garment of humanity in order to appear as man.

The proposition of Lombard that God did not become anything through incarnation that He was not before, differs in reality very little from that. The incarnation effected, posited nothing -- that it was strictly speaking a mere Theophany (p. 319).

This theory prevailed before the Reformation. Luther opposed it (*vide* Dorner’s *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*). Edward Irving adopted this theory of an impersonal humanity in Christ in order to evade the legitimate consequences of his doctrine of Christ’s fallen, sinful human nature. He wrote:

Such persons as have not reflected on the subject must bear in mind that the only person in Christ is the person of the Son of God, whose identity doth not change by becoming man. Remember that He is one person in

two natures, and that His person was the Son of God before He became man (*On the human nature of Christ*, 1830, pp. 3, 25, 29, 44).

Irving reasoned that though Christ had a fallen human nature He could not be charged with sin, as only a *person* could sin, and He was not a human *person*, having only an impersonal humanity. Dr. John Owen (*Christologia*, 1679), writing against those in his day who denied the union of God and man in Christ's Person says:

This union the ancient Church affirmed to be made with a distinction of natures, but without division of them by separate subsistences; without mixture or confusion; without any change in the Person of the Son of God which the divine nature is not subject unto; without separation or distance; substantially, because it was of two substances or essences in the self-same person, in opposition to all accidental union, as the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily (*vide* Theoderet and Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 300, Bohns).

A late writer, Dr. T. C. Edwards (*Davies Lecture*, 1895, "The God-Man"), has thus written:

All the writers of the New Testament represent Jesus Christ *as a man*, an *individual* man, as well as *the man*, as truly a man as Paul or Peter. They all start with the humanity of Christ, and from it slowly pass to the belief in His divinity. Personal acts are ascribed to His humanity, such as prayer, which can belong only to a creature. In a word, human nature without personality of some sort would seem impossible and inconceivable. It is like assuming all the separate elements of humanity without the *suppositum* which gives them personal identity and continuance. Scripture, for instance, plainly teaches that Christ had two wills -- a human, as distinct from the divine will -- and that is the doctrine of the Church. If He, being a person, in any real and perfect sense became human, then He became a human person. The incarnation gave a divine person human personality, but He has not ceased to be a divine person. It is only a change of condition. As the Logos does not cease to exist in the Trinity by becoming Logos incarnate, so He does not cease to be Logos incarnate by becoming Man.

Luther's conception of the human in Christ, united in a completely incomprehensible manner with the Deity so as to form one indivisible person is contained in his maxim -- 'Finitum capax infiniti,' the infinite person is capable of assuming a human personality.

God the Spirit has written (1 Tim. 3:16),

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness -- God was *manifest* in the flesh.

The blessed Lord declared, as to His own Person, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." The human mind is not satisfied to accept the revelation of

Christ according to the attributes -- divine and human, God and man in union, as revealed in Scripture. It reasons that such would constitute two personalities. In so doing, FER and THR in the twentieth, have followed the heretic Apollinaris of the fourth century. Divines considered orthodox as to the deity of the Son have missed the truth of His eternal Sonship and eternal personality.

Dr. Adam Clarke denied the first, failing to distinguish the divine relationship of the Son to the Father from human filiation, and reasoning according to the latter instead of believing the revelation of this blessed relationship as recorded in God's inspired Word. Others, following the fathers instead of Scripture, have adopted speculations of Origen, who propounded a derivative communication of divinity to the Son from the Father, and thus erring as to the Son's *eternal personality*, while maintaining His divinity (*vide The Testimony of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ*, by Edward Burton, D.D., Oxford, 1829, pp. 346-455). Origen illustrates the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and His proceeding from the Father, by a comparison with vapor proceeding from any substance. Dr. Burton does not approve of this speculation, but it is followed by Hooker (*Ecclesiastical Polity*), Bishop Pearson (*On the Creed*), Bishop Beveridge (*On the Thirty-nine Articles*), and more recently by Bishop Browne (*On the Thirty-nine Articles*). Even the celebrated Dutch divine, Herman Witsins, D.D. (in his *Sacred Dissertations on the Apostles' Creed*), propounded this theory:

By the generation of the Son, then, we understand that act of God by which He has communicated to the Son the same numerical essence which He Himself hath, that the Son may have it in like manner (English Translation, Edinburgh, 1873, vol. 1, p. 153).

The Heresy of the Doctrine of No Human "I" in Christ Incarnate

JND, on "Christological Pantheism," has written of it as follows:

As I am on this point I add they have no true Christ at all. I read (quoting),

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

Where {is that a mystery revealed to faith}? Why does the blessed Lord say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" if there was no *ego*, no human personality? Why does the Hebrews quote, "Will I sing praise unto Thee" and "I 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 ours), if there was no human personality? 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 said, “No man knoweth the Son but the Father,” is found in the article by one, by no means the worst, of their doctors.

Again,

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 (*hypostasis*), was afterwards condemned and the meaning of the word changed, but the statements quoted in the text are really monothelite (i.e. only one will in Christ). It shows the danger of these 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 (*Collected Writings* 29:334).

The way in which God and man, in one Person, are united and presented in the blessed Lord in this Epistle (1 John) strikes me more and more, so that it is impossible to separate and apply them distinctly (*Notes and Comments* 6:74).

Also it must be remembered that that which is said, is said when He is manifested in the flesh, of His complete person man upon earth. Not that we do not, in our mind, separate between the divinity and the humanity, but even in separating them we think of the one person with regard to whom we do so. We say Christ is God, Christ is Man, but it is Christ who is the two. I do not say this theologically, but to draw the reader’s attention to the remarkable expression, “All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him,” “All the fulness of the Godhead was found in Christ” (*Synopsis* 5:18).

According to the apostle’s injunction (2 John 8-11), so serious an error as denying the Person of Christ a human personality demanded from those who love the Lord, not alone its discernment, but also, on the issue of FER’s paper, “The Person of the Christ,” ITS REJECTION WITH DECISION AND THE TEACHER OF IT ALSO. May it please the Lord to give grace to His beloved saints to discern the manifest heresy and plainly and openly refuse it, and thus remove the hindrance to the union in fellowship at the Lord’s table which FER’s doctrine is responsible for the breach of.

The Parting of the Ways on “Vital Truth”

Brethren from the beginning of their testimony have taught and held fast the *union* in the Person of Christ of God and Man, one Christ, (as expressed in the Athanasian Creed), and accepted by all orthodox Christians. Mr. Darby wrote:

The simple faith that Jesus was God and Man in one person can be readily accepted as VITAL TRUTH.

THE UNION of two natures in the blessed Lord I myself adoringly recognize (*Collected Writings* 15:228) .

He had true humanity, but UNITED to Godhead (15:228).

Again, on First Epistle of John,

The way in which God and man are UNITED and presented in the blessed Lord in this Epistle strikes me more and more (Notes and Comments 6:74).

The Logos is God, created everything, and the very essence of Christianity is the immediate connection between God and the creature, GOD AND MAN IN ONE PERSON (10:321).

THE UNION OF GOD AND MAN IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST IS THE CENTER (*Synopsis* 5:203).

In the *Christian Witness*, Brethren’s earliest periodical, I read of the Son, a divine Person:

HE WAS IN PERSONAL UNION WITH JESUS (1:87, 1834).

In *The Present Testimony*, edited by the late G. V. Wigram, I read:

WITH GOD THERE IS NO DIFFICULTY IN THE PERFECT SON OF GOD AND SON OF MAN (*man in His perfectness*) BEING ONE (10:11).

In *The Son of God*, by the late J. G. Bellett, I read:

He took very Man and very God IN ONE PERSON.

I avow with my whole soul the true humanity in His Person.

In the *Voice to the Faithful*, articles on the Gospel of John, by the late J. B. Stoney, I read;

THE UNION of the Son, a divine person, and the Savior’s humanity (19:97).

I need not adduce the testimony of *The Bible Treasury*, edited by the late William Kelly, as he strenuously opposed FER’s teaching, *vide* his paper, “New Development.”

JND, referring to the Athanasian Creed, God and Man one Christ, wrote:

I am aware and accept the ordinary orthodox statement of two natures in one person, the simple faith THAT JESUS WAS GOD AND MAN, IN ONE PERSON, is easily accepted AS PLAIN VITAL TRUTH” (*Collected Writings* 29:322).

FER definitely breaks with Brethren on “Vital Truth.” He states:

As to whether the truth of His Person consists in the union in Him of God and man; a favorite formula with these so holding is, “God and Man one Christ,”

which he characterizes thus:

The second error maintains that the truth of Christ’s Person consists in the union in Him of God and man (“The Person,” pp. 1, 3).

Again,

I think we should be greatly helped if we go on with patience, not calling each other heretics, but seeking to get the mind of God in His Word, *instead of clinging to stereotyped forms of expression*, that had their value in their day (“Sonship,” p. 16).

FER warns saints against zeal for orthodoxy (“The Person,” p. 1). JND says:

It is a great mercy to have orthodoxy professed. By orthodoxy I mean the cardinal truths of the gospel; although, of course, the profession of orthodoxy is not life (*Nine Lectures on First Epistle of John*, p. 71; W. H. Broom, London, 1882).

FER wrote, July 3rd, 1890:

I absolutely accept the teachings of our deceased brother, Mr. Darby.

Without desiring to question FER’s honesty or sincerity, it is difficult to reconcile his statement with fact. JND wrote :

A wondrous and blessed thought! He who had His place with the Father, was made flesh; God’s delight down here; God manifest in flesh; grace to man; grace in man; man taken into union with God, in one person, the pledge of peace on earth. “Glory to God in the highest” (*Collected Writings* 30:222).

JND again:

As to His counsels Christ is the center, and here man has a peculiar place. Wisdom’s good pleasure was eternally in Him, and all is to be under His feet. In order that the nature and counsels of God should not be separated (which indeed is impossible, but what was in His counsels in order that it might not be), God became Man, Christ is God made manifest in flesh, the Word made flesh. Thus the divine nature, the expression of that nature, is found in that which is the object of His counsels -- that which forms their center. Thus Christ is the truth, is. the center of all existing relationships; all have reference to Him. We are through Him, for Him, or we are against Him; all subsists by Him. If we are judged it is as His enemies. *He is the life spiritually of all that enjoy the communication of the divine nature*; even as He sustains all that exists. His manifestation brings to light the true position of all things; thus He is the truth. That which is revealed

in it (the Word) is the divine expression of that which belongs to the Infinite on the one side, and is expressed in the finite on the other; of that which has the profoundness of the nature of God, from whom all proceeds; with whom and with whose rights all is in relationship, but which is developed -- since it is outside God in creation and in the finite. The union of God and man in the Person of Christ is the center -- we may say (now that we know it), the necessary center of all this; and the inspired Word is its expression according to the perfection of God (and we bless God for it), as the Savior is the grand subject of the Scriptures, for said He, “They testify of Me,” in human forms. But this Word being divine, being inspired, is the divine expression of the divine nature, persons, and counsels. Nothing that is not inspired in this way can have this place, for none but God can perfectly express or reveal what God is. Hence Infinite in what flows in it, because it is the expression of, and connected with, the depths of the divine nature, and so in its connection infinite, though expressed in a finite sense, and so far finite in expression, and thus adapted to finite man (*Synopsis* 5:203).

Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father’s only Son;
God manifestly seen and heard,
The heaven’s beloved One.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.

Appendix

The Person of the Christ

By F. E. Raven (propounded in June, 1889) ¹

While extremely unwilling to enter on the field of controversy, especially on subjects touching the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have thought it right, in the interests of the truth and of the Lord’s people, to put out a few remarks on two points of importance which have been in question. In so doing I decline to reply to any attacks which have appeared, based on isolated statements culled from letters I have written, partly from reluctance to notice them, and partly because I see in these attacks the tendency to shift (it may be almost unconsciously) the ground of conflict, in order to gain a point of vantage. In what I have to say I adhere therefore to two points that have been in question, which are these:

1. As to whether Christ is ever viewed in Scripture as man, distinct and apart from

1. {It was one year later (June 1890) that the assembly at Bexhill, England, severed fellowship with Greenwich, England, where FER resided, for sheltering FER.}

what He is as God.

2. As to whether the truth of His Person consists in the union in Him of God and man; a favorite formula with those so holding is “God and man one Christ” -- and with this is connected the idea that every title referring to Christ covers the whole truth of His Person.

Now I affirm that the denial of the first, while claiming to maintain orthodoxy, is destructive of Christianity in its real power; and I would affectionately warn saints against giving up, in zeal for orthodoxy, the blessed foundations of Christianity. Further, that the assertion of the second is derogatory and dishonoring to the Son; and I proceed to show that both the denial and the assertion are contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

The first betrays a singular inability to apprehend the great reality of the incarnation, at all events in a most essential aspect of it, namely, the fact of Christ having by it a place as man *Godward*. As the Word became flesh He dwelt among men and revealed God, and in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell; but He Himself filled and still fills a place as man toward God (see *Psa. 16*); and the two thoughts are wholly distinct conceptions, which cannot be grasped at one and the same time by any finite mind. “No one knows the Son save the Father.” As man He is both Apostle and High Priest. In other words, in the Apostle God has, so to say, come out, and in the High Priest man has entered in. Now these two thoughts, though realized in one Person, must of necessity be separately and distinctly apprehended. The one presents God, the other, man.

The reality of Christ’s manhood in its aspect *Godward* is amply presented in the New Testament. There we have the truth, that Christ, having died to sin once, lives to God (*Rom. 6*). The having put off the old man and having put on the new is said to be, “as is truth in Jesus” (*Eph. 4*). Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession (*1 Tim. 6*). He sings praises to God in the midst of the assembly (*Heb. 2*). He praises in the great congregation (*Psa. 22*). He has entered in for us as Forerunner (*Heb. 6*). He appears in the presence of God for us (*Heb. 9*).

Now, while fully admitting that, morally, Christ’s manhood had its unique and blessed character from God, for in becoming man He gave Character to manhood, yet in the thoughts above presented it is utterly impossible to introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and attributes, because in every case it is man that is presented, or rather, Christ is viewed in the light of man *Godward*.

The refusal of this is destructive of Christianity in its true power, for it is on the side that I have indicated that Christ is placed within the reach of our appropriation, so that we can eat Him and live by Him. He is, as Second Man, the pattern of our blessing, the Leader of our salvation. He draws us to Himself by making known to us His love: and the affection on our part begotten by this appropriates Him as the expression and pattern of what we are according to the counsel of God; and it is in this way that the believer is led into the true sense of the greatness of his portion, and even partakes morally in the life of God. As “Lord” Christ is the Object of faith, as Head He is held by the believer, who is led by him into heavenly blessing. Hence I am entirely at a loss to understand how the truth of Christianity can be maintained in the absence of the apprehension of Christ in His place as man *Godward*, distinct and apart from the glory and attributes which belong only to God, and in which Christ has part as Himself being a divine

person.

I may observe here that Christians are, as a rule, uninstructed in three important points of Christian doctrine.

1st. Reconciliation, which they do not know as in the mind of God. The distance between God and the sinner must have been removed to effect it, and but few know the nature of the distance. They do not see that the man after the flesh has been terminated judicially in the cross in the Man Christ Jesus.

2nd. Christ as manna. They do not apprehend in any degree the manner of life of Christ here as Man, “The life of Jesus.”

3rd. The mystery. They have no true conception that the Church is the complement of *the Man* who glorified God here; but while admitting that all saints are united to Christ, they are leavened with the error that they are united to the Son of God, and they thus betray their ignorance of the mystery.

Hence, it is not surprising that many find difficulty in the apprehension of Christ in the point of view which I have sought to make plain.

The second error maintains that the truth of *Christ’s Person* consists in the union in Him of God and man.

Now, this idea arises, I judge, from confusion of thought as between *person* and *condition*, and has been fostered by expressions found in hymns, and the like, which have been used simply and devoutly by Christians without any very strict inquiry into their real force; but it involves a thought very derogatory to the truth of the Son, namely, that in becoming man a change has taken place as to His Person -- He is in person something which He was not before. This is not the teaching of Scripture, nor do I think that it can be entertained. When I come to the Word I find that while in three Gospels the truth of Christ in certain official positions is prominent, the fourth (*John*) is given to us to afford full light as to His Person, that is “the Son”; and in this respect He is seen in three positions, namely, as eternally with the Father, as come into the world, and as going back to the Father, the same Person unchanged and unchangeable.

Further than this, the Person is even viewed as acting in regard to His form or condition, divine or human; “Being in the form of God, He emptied Himself and took on Him a servant’s form, becoming in the likeness of men.”

He comes to do God’s will in the body prepared for Him.

He raises up the temple of His body.

He gives His flesh for the life of the world. He lays down His life (human condition) to take it again,

We have thus a divine Person presented, even apart from the question of form, and the idea of the unity of the Person in the sense asserted is not found.

The One who being in the form of God, emptied Himself, and took on Him a servant’s form, is the same who having become man, humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross, and is now highly exalted. There is no idea either of unity, or of change in the person. It is the same person in servant’s form, and entering into what that form involved.

The truth of a divine Person assuming human condition, the Word becoming flesh, and in such wise as that He can be viewed objectively as man, I believe; but that is not a question of unity of a person. It is a person in a condition in which he was not previously.

Another idea connected with the above appears to be that every title or name inherited by the Son or applied to Him in Scripture embraces or covers, if it does not describe, the whole truth of His Person. Now I believe this to be a fallacy, and a mistaken way of apprehending Scripture. Unquestionably the Lord is identified or designated, and designates Himself, by official names or titles, as “the Christ” or “Son of man”; but such titles, though serving sufficiently to identify or designate the Person, do not cover the truth of His Person: and different titles applied to or fulfilled in Christ have to be understood each within its own appropriate limits. They describe the office, but not the person that holds the office. In the same way we commonly use official and acquired titles as “The Queen,” “The Colonel,” “The Doctor,” to identify or designate a person, but we have no idea that such a title is descriptive of the person, or covers all that is true of the person, though once the person is so designated, many things can be said which refer to the person, and have nothing whatever to do with the particular designation; for instance, I might say “When the Queen was a child.” She was not queen as a child. It is simply a title used for designation, which has its own particular force and meaning.

Jesus is the anointed of God, that is, the Christ, but not properly so until He was anointed, whatever might be true in purpose. So too, He was not Son of man until He became man, yet He says, “The Son of man came to minister.” “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before.” “The Son of man which is in heaven.” The simple fact is that a title serves to designate the Person, without being descriptive of the Person, or involving any question of the unity of the Person. The titles “the Christ” and “Son of man” are both official titles which could have had no place or meaning except in the Son having become man; and it is remarkable that the Lord does not in the Gospels use what is, perhaps, the nearest approach to a personal name, i.e., Jesus, in the same way.

In conclusion I earnestly entreat saints to come prayerfully and patiently to Scripture to get their thoughts of Christ formed by the Word of God; and not to adopt the creeds or moulds into which men, often with pious intent, have cast the truth in the vain effort to guard against error; and it is significant that those who have of late come forward to expose what they deemed to be error, have shown a tendency in their minds in the direction of a kind of Tritheism. It is not in this way that the truth of Christ’s person is guarded, or that of the unity of the Godhead maintained.

F. E. R.

{Letters}

Wonston, Micheldever,

February 12th, 1891.

Having sent out to America copies of some letters of Mr. F. E. Raven, from which letters Mr. Rule has taken extracts and commented thereon in a pamphlet entitled “Eternal Life and the Person of Christ,” and also in a leaflet, entitled “Note on an extract of a letter, etc.,” I have thought it right to print these letters entire, with permission of the author, in order that saints may see and judge for themselves whether Mr. Rule’s comments are just or otherwise. To me it seems that the quibble which his leaflet begins, shows that he little apprehends the spirit by which he is actuated in thus attempting to fasten evil on a fellow servant of the same Lord whom they both love and desire to serve.

The letter of FER, dated January 29, 1891, having been written in reference to Mr. Rule’s pamphlet, has not heretofore been seen by Mr. Rule.

J. BOYT.

Greenwich, July 25th, 1890.

My Dear Brother,

I will endeavor to answer your questions, though it must be shortly, for I am much pressed.

1. I should not like to say that Christ was not Eternal Life until after the resurrection, because all in which eternal life essentially consists in being and relationship was as true in Him before His death as after. Still it is when eternal life is in the heavenly, glorious condition, which the counsels of God purposed, that Christ is said to be “the true God and eternal life.”

2. All I meant by “in essence” was that it was not in form with the Father until the Son became man, but, as I said, the being, and, in a sense, the relationship was there, but I judge *the thought of eternal life always had man in view*. The wonderful thing being that the Son should connect Himself with manhood (become Son of man), and that we should be brought into that which is *morally divine*.

3. I do not like the expression “exhibition of eternal life,” but if used at all, it could only apply to Christ as He is now -- the last Adam -- the glorious Man. When here in the flesh He had *taken part in the life and circumstances of the first man* (though as to His Person, the second), and hence in that condition it was no question of *exhibition of eternal life*, but of its manifestation by divine grace to chosen vessels, and to this John refers in the beginning of his epistle. In John 3 the Lord speaks of Himself as “the Son of man which is in heaven,” though bodily He was on earth.

4. In 1 John 5:20 you could not make “Jesus Christ” and “eternal life” reciprocal. It is predicated of Him that He is Eternal Life in the same way as He says of Himself, “I am the resurrection,” etc. Eternal life is a *condition*, but existing and expressed in

such a way in a person, that it can be said of Him He is it. But then that same Person is the true God and the only begotten Son.

5. What I meant by condition in 1 John was heavenly condition of relationship and being before the Father, which was manifested in the Son, and which we have in having Him. This is the subject of the epistle.

6. When I think of the only begotten Son, I think of Him in His own peculiar glory (we beheld His glory as of an only begotten one with the Father) and the Giver of eternal life. If I think of Him as the Eternal Life, I think of Him as the glorious Man, though what gives its character to His manhood is what He was eternally and in a sense divinely.

7. If we apprehend eternal life to consist in a condition of heavenly relationship and being, such as was ever in the Son, we can readily see, that if he takes part in man's responsible life here on earth, the two things must be distinct. It is the difference between what He brought and what He entered into here, and this last He left to enter into a new condition wholly suited to what He brought. I do not quite like the sentence you quote as the substance of a letter written by me early last year.

Eternal life when Christ was here was still with the Father; but this life before men was wholly consonant with it, and in words and works He bore testimony to the Father. I add that I have never wished any letters of mine to be kept secret, but at the same time I very much doubt the propriety of all correspondence between brothers becoming public property. It will soon put an end to all liberty of communication between brethren.

Finally, we must distinguish in our minds between the eternal Son and eternal life; for the Son is the object of our adoration and worship. He had part in seen things here, but looking at eternal life abstractedly, I should say it has not, either in the Lord or in us.

(Signed) FER

August 25th, 1890.

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*, which, according to the counsel of God, was to characterize man, and which has now been made manifest by the appearing of Jesus Christ. That which was to characterize man was what had been in the Son eternally with the Father, and was in due time revealed in the Second Man, the One out of heaven. But what characterized the Second Man could not include all that was true of a divine Person as self-existent, having life in Himself, omnipotence, omniscience, and many other attributes of a divine Person; and yet it does include what He was morally in righteousness, love, holiness, truth and nearness to the Father. Hence I said it was an integral part of His Person, but such as could be connected with manhood -- could characterize the Second Man and be communicated to men. I cannot see how there can be any difficulty in it. Christ is "the true God And Eternal Life." We see the same thing in "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It partakes of the nature of the Spirit morally, but is *apart from any question of divine attributes*. The proper glory of the Son we shall see but could not share. I cannot imagine how any one could think that the Second Man covers all that is true of

the Son; yet the second Man was out of heaven, as eternal life was with the Father. The only time that it is predicated of Christ that He is eternal life is 1 John 5:20, and then He is presented as the One who has come through "water and blood," is thus separated *entirely by death from the first man, and is before God as the last Adam, the Second Man in the virtue and power of redemption*.

We are in Him and He is Eternal Life as the full expression and revelation of it, besides being the true God.

I trust that the above may meet your inquiry.

(Signed) FER

November 25th, 1890.

As I gather the truth, Christ is the last Adam -- a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:25), and the Second Man (1 Cor. 15:47). As the last Adam He stands alone as Head (John 17:2; 1 Cor. 11:3). He gives life (who but God could do this?) As the Second Man, He is the pattern of the heavenly family -- "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48). Hence when I view Him thus (though in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily), I think of Him in connection with the family -- of what is true in Him and in them (1 John 2:8). "As he is so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). And this in itself does not involve all that is true of a divine Person, as self-existence, having life in Himself, etc., etc., or it would be true also of us, which is impossible. Christ is the Second Man, and there is that which we have in common with Him. "We are all of one" (Heb. 2:10). But then He is more -- as well as being Eternal Life He is the true God (1 John 5:20), and in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, every divine attribute. There is that Which He has in common with the Father (John 5:26); though He as Son is the eternal source of it. I cannot imagine how any one could think that "the Second Man" covers all that is true of the Son, yet the Second Man was out of heaven.

As regards the second passage underlined, I judge we have Jesus presented as the last Adam in the virtue of redemption in John, 20:22; 1 John 5:6; the One coming, not by water only, but by water and blood (the Spirit also bears witness), and He is the Second Man, for when He is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. In resurrection (1 Cor. 15) He is revealed as last Adam and Second Man, though ever such in His own Person, for the Second Man is "out of heaven."

(Signed) FER

September 17th, 1890.

The first remark I would make on Mr. Rule's letter is in regard to purpose as connected with eternal life. I fail to understand his difficulty. I suppose it was God's purpose that eternal life should be revealed as the condition of the Second Man, and that we should have it in Him.

I am not surprised at his being unable to understand my statements as to eternal life, for we look at things from different points of view. As far as I can gather he regards

eternal life as the life of the Son as a divine Person, as, in fact, equivalent to "In Him was life," while I regard it as a condition which, although ever existing essentially in the Son, is presented in Scripture as characteristic of the Second Man. In fact, it is difficult for me to understand that he sees in Christ a real man, the pattern (though the "Firstborn") of the many sons God is bringing to glory. The failure to see the position of mediation which belongs to "the Man Christ Jesus" is the cause of half the present difficulty.

I fail to find in any of the gospels the statement that Christ is eternal life. On the contrary, eternal life there refers without exception to something given to man, or into which man is to enter. In 1 John the object appears to be to unfold the eternal life, which had been revealed in Christ, in order that saints might know that they had it. I do not believe that the idea of its being an essential personal title of the Son can be maintained; not but what God's purposes of grace and eternal life for man were in Him. He has this glory, He is a quickening Spirit.

Now if eternal life means a condition which (though existing eternally in the Son) characterizes the Second Man, it is evident that the full revelation of it could not be until Christ was wholly separated by death from the first or responsible man lifted up from the earth. In His own Person He was of course the Eternal Life, the Second Man, when here in the days of His flesh (and was manifested as such to the apostles), but the revelation was veiled by the part which He had taken in the responsible life of man on earth, "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," so that He might become a sacrifice for sin; and this condition was real, so that He was a real babe, grew in wisdom and stature, and hence any displays of heavenly relationship and being were until after the cross moral. But in death He was wholly separated from the condition into which He had entered, and in resurrection He is the full and complete revelation of God's purpose -- the Second Man, the Eternal Life.

As to the communication of eternal life, I have no question for a moment that a soul is spiritually alive as the result of new birth: still new birth is only a foundation, and is not necessarily in itself the reception of Christ. Eternal life is in Christ, and in receiving Christ eternal life is received, but it is in Christ (the Second Man) "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." He that has the Son has life. But eternal life is *to live* in Christ, and though it may be said that a soul in receiving Christ is alive in Him, there is no power by which the believer can be formed in the heavenly man until the Spirit is received. Hence in John 20 the communication of the Spirit was connected with the breathing of Christ. Eternal life for us is not simply "a vital principle," but a new man.

As regards speaking of eternal life as a sphere or order of blessing, I think it is justified by such scriptures as John 4:36; 12:25; and 17:3; but it is as living in Christ we enjoy the sphere. I may speak of my home as being objectively my life, but I live in it.

The truth of relationship (as children) runs with eternal life, is in fact inseparably connected with it. In receiving Christ relationship is received, it is that of the Second Man, and we are formed in it by the spirit of sonship.

I do not regard new birth and quickening as equivalent. In the first I believe a new foundation is laid by the Spirit in man through the word, while quickening is that a soul

is made to live spiritually in the life and relationship of the Second Man. In a word, quickening is the equivalent of "new creation," and the result of it is that the believer has passed out of death into life.

I add one word in regard to 2 Cor. 5:21. My object in my letter to Mr. O. was to exclude from the passage any thought of mixed condition, and to show what was true of the believer abstractly as in Christ, apart from any question of what he is practically here. Still "in Christ" involves not only a spiritual but an actual quickening (1 Cor. 15:22), and it is when the saints are in this condition of life that they will be fully the display of God's righteousness, though for faith they are already become that righteousness in Christ.

(Signed) FER

Greenwich, October 12, 1890

My Dear O.

I return you the enclosed papers. I am rather astonished at the way in which H. uses JND against me, for the truth of mediatorship in connection with life is what I have maintained, and I don't know how I could be said to leave out entirely the revealed truth that 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, though of the same moral qualities. I should have thought H. might have seen that this is really what I had maintained. What he meant about the eternal life being constituent in deity I fail to understand, unless he means the same as I did in saying it was an integral part of His Person.

The way in which he strings together John 5:26 and 17:2 is to me most extraordinary. I could not make "So hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" and eternal life to be the same. The former is what is proper to the Son (though because He is man said to be given), and involves self-existence and the power to call the dead into life, while eternal life is what is given *to us*, and is what is true in Christ *and* in us, and does not involve self-existence or the quickening of the dead. Christ is man, and the pattern of the heavenly family; at the same time He is a quickening spirit (in Him is life), and I could not draw a line between the two. So, too, in regard to "eternal life" and the having life in Himself: but I see things in Scripture in certain connections -- life in Himself when the Son is seen as a divine person in John's Gospel -- and eternal life (which He gives) when He is seen as Man (from the beginning, "handled," etc.) in connection with others, the pattern of the heavenly family, the children -- when He is manifested we shall be like Him. Hence I conclude that eternal life is a truth which is connected with man, whether in Christ or in us; but, as I said, when I think of Christ, though I see certain things connected with Him as Man -- firstborn among many brethren, Head of the Church, etc., and other things with Him as divine, such as life-giving, etc. I could draw no line between the human and the divine. I believe eternal life is What He is now as Man, but then it takes its character from what He was eternally as divine. But I believe eternal life to be the life of man according to the purpose of God, and what has come out fully in Christ in resurrection, though manifested in Him even before. In a word, I believe eternal life to mean a new man in a new scene for man.

I should hardly connect John 1:4 with life giving. T., in his paper, quotes some beautiful remarks of JND on it, contrasting it with “the darkness is past and the true light now shines.”

FER

Greenwich, October 29th, 1890.

It is, I judge, a grave mistake to make any essential difference between eternal life as presented in Paul’s writings and in John’s. It is the same subject wherever presented. The apostleship of Paul was especially connected with eternal life (see 2 Tim. 1:1). It is evident that he unvaryingly connects it with the Second Man -- Christ in glory. “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus,” the One who has annulled death and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel. We have in principle the same truth taught in John’s first epistle, “God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Christ is seen in this epistle as with the Father (an advocate, etc.), and in the last chapter God’s Son is carefully identified as Jesus Christ who has come through water and blood, and it is of Him that it is predicated “He is true God and eternal life”; that is, as I understand it, in full revelation.

But it is also taught in John that that eternal life which was with the Father had been manifested to the apostles. Now, though this unquestionably refers to the days of Christ’s flesh, it is distinct from what He was in His own person, and had ever been, though this now gave its character to manhood. He was when here the last Adam, the Second Man, though not yet clothed according to the counsels of God, in a condition commensurate with what He was spiritually in life. What was morally life in Him was what He was with God in spiritual being and relationship (as well as Himself being God), but this was for the moment clothed in a condition pure and immaculate in itself, but not commensurate with the spiritual being. The truth of His humanity is clearly seen in the meat offering; there was pure humanity -- the fine flour mingled with oil -- the divine and spiritual principle. Hence with the Lord here, there was, as we see in the garden and elsewhere, “The days of feeble flesh” (Hymn 281).

Now what came under the eye of God and before the eyes of men, apart from fruits and power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit for service and glimpses of divine glory, was the perfect setting forth of man (and in a sense Israel too) after the flesh. Every detail of life down here was pervaded and governed by the spiritual principle which men knew not of -- the divine nature. What they saw was man after the flesh in divine perfectness before God, and thus everything in Christ was light; there was no part dark. But all this perfectness as man here after the flesh, in which Jesus abode alone, was to end in death, that not only might He become the sin bearer, but in resurrection enter on manhood in a glorious condition suited to what He ever was and had been in heavenly being and relationship, even when here after the flesh.

Now this condition of heavenly being and relationship to which, in Christ, all after the flesh was, so to say, subjected, was made manifest by divine grace to the apostles, together with the Father’s name. They saw that though Jesus had a condition in the flesh here, with the relationships and obligations connected with it, He was at the same time “the Son of Man which is in heaven,” and it was confirmed and verified to them in His

resurrection. Hence there was the revelation to them of eternal life in its true heavenly character in God’s Son.

Thus we see how in itself eternal life was outside all after the flesh, so that what was after the flesh could be laid aside, while the human soul remained, and the Son of Man, which is in heaven could take life again as man but not as after the flesh, but in a totally new condition suited to what He ever was as out of heaven; and thus He is said to be Eternal Life.

Now all this is utterly confused by such a statement as that He never ceased to be the exhibition of eternal life from the babe in the manger to the throne of the Father. The exhibition of eternal life is reduced to the lowest and weakest point of man after the flesh. Christ is not honored by it; and the perfect setting forth (in the power of the divine nature) of man after the flesh is ignored in order to connect the display of eternal life with the details of human life down here -- the life of the first man -- instead of apprehending the truth conveyed in the fine flour mingled with oil of which the memorial was burned with the sacrifices.

All that is now passed: Christ can never be known again after the flesh, and the out-of-the-world heavenly condition of relationship and being in which eternal life consists is now fully revealed in Christ, in whom it ever was both essentially and in the purpose of God. He is declared to be Eternal Life, as He is the last Adam and the Second Man, all fully revealed in His risen glorious person.

I add a word to say that I did wrong in changing Major M.’s expression. “Babe in the manger” to “helpless infant”; but I had no thought in using this latter, save to describe what was characteristic of infancy. The word “monstrosity” was used to express my judgment of Major M.’s statement; and, I need hardly say, had no kind of application to Christ. There is no *irreverence* in it.

FER

January 29th, 1891.

My Dear Brother,

I return you Rule’s papers. In the larger one there is nothing very new; we have had the same things in England. There are many statements in it as to Christ which I should readily accept in themselves apart from the object with which he makes them. But the defect which marks his paper is that he does not rightly divide Scripture. His object is to identify eternal life with the life of the eternal Son as a *divine person* (in Him was life). If this were meant simply in reference to what the life is *morally* I would make no objection, but there is no hint with Mr. R. of any such limitation. As a consequence of this he confounds the revelation (in John’s Gospel) of a divine Person, *as such*, with the unfolding (in the Epistle) of the features of eternal life in the Son as Man that which is true *in Him and in us*. My conviction is that what the Son ever was in nature as divine gives its character to manhood in Him (and in us). But I do not believe that the Son has therefore ceased to have life in Himself in the conditions suitable to deity. He is “the true God and Eternal Life.” The statements as to the Son in the gospel are not all to be merged and lost in the truth of eternal life. Mr. Rule, in his zeal for eternal life, seems to me to be fast letting go the true deity of Christ. He says the eternal Son “ever was, is,

and ever will be in His own glorious person and eternal being the eternal life.” The phrase is high-sounding, but where does he find it in Scripture?

In his little paper he evades the force of the scripture -- “The Second Man is out of heaven” -- by saying that the Person who became Second Man was from all eternity. The point of the scripture is the origin of the Second Man, *as the pattern of the heavenly family*; and so it says immediately, “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” Certainly he reads Scripture in a different way to what I do. He seems unable or unwilling to seize an abstract thought.

FER

P.S. -- I add a further word in regard to the last paragraph. It is said (1 Cor. 15:45 to 48) that the last Adam is “a quickening spirit.” and the Second Man is “out of heaven,” heavenly. It need scarcely be remarked that Christ did not become a quickening spirit nor heavenly by taking manhood for He was already such: but *the* last Adam and *Second Man* is characterized by what was eternally *true* in the person of the Son. This in no way touches the *fact* of His having actually entered on manhood in being “made of a woman” -- though, I doubt not, it was of God in Him eternally purposed.

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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 . . . What is Ravenism*, by J. Hennessy.
- ❖ *The Eternal Relations in the Godhead*, RAH, containing exposition of fundamental truths denied by FER, and also containing photostatic copies of numerous papers exposing FER, as well as being the most complete history of the Raven division.
- ❖ *Divine Attributes and the Second Man*, by W. T. Whybrow; and, *The truth of Christ’s Person: Is It Taught by Mr. F. E. Raven?* by W. T. Whybrow.

Notes