

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

CHRISTOLOGY

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CHRISTOLOGY

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CHRISTOLOGY

One Shepherd - One Fold - One Church - One Savior

I. Introduction

Christology is the study of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ. This is the most important Doctrine of the Word of God, which follows from the fact that Jesus Christ is the Center and Executor of God's plan of redemption from sin, is the only Mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). Everything that God has ever done for man, is doing, or will ever do for man is through Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ. Paul gives the sweeping assertion of Christ being the Sum Total of our redemption and the Focal of all of God's dealings with us in (Colossians 1:13-19). One cannot read this portion without receiving a new impression of the matchless worth of God's dear Son. It places Him far above the puny position in which so much of modern theology places Him, and sets Him forever apart and infinitely higher than the so called religious leaders of the world. He is not another religious leader; He is not another way-shower, (as Eddyism would say), but The Way. He is not another expounder of truth, but The Truth Himself. He, Himself gives meaning to the worship of God the Father by the statement, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). He emphasizes the error and futility of all the other man-made approaches to God by man-made religions in trying to sneak up some other way as, "Liars and thieves." (John 10:1-9; 8:44)

Therefore, all of the teachings of Scriptures which center on Jesus Christ form the most important part of Christian Doctrine. A man may be orthodox to Scriptural accuracy on other doctrines, but if he is amiss on Christology and the kindred Doctrines of Salvation, he might just as well be wrong on all of them, for he is a lost man and incapable of Spiritual discernment of any of the teachings of Scripture (I Corinthians 2:14). Theologians usually divide Christology into two natural divisions: First, the Person of Christ; second, the Work of Christ, but we wish to reserve the Work of Christ for separate consideration under another Doctrine; namely, Soteriology or the Doctrine of Salvation. We shall only consider the Work of Christ here as it throws light upon His glorious Person. Dr. Foster well says, "Christ could have been what He was without doing what He did, but He could not have done what He did without being what He was." He was God before His manifestation in human flesh, and what He was led Him to do what He did to save lost men.

As we view the Deity of Jesus Christ, we shall see that all we are able to understand of Theology concerning the Nature and Attributes of God are true concerning Christ. As the Second Person of the August Holy Trinity, He shares the One Nature of the One Godhead in all its fullness. In fact, all that we can really grasp of God the Father is what is revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Is it to be wondered at that the Modernist in his blindness toward Jesus Christ, in robbing Him of His Deity, misses also a just conception of God the Father? It is a good exercise for your soul to keep in mind all the wonderful revelations of Scriptures concerning the infinite attributes of God while studying Christology. The Christ I worship is Almighty God.

In our study of the Person of Christ, we shall follow the common outline:

The Pre-existence of Christ

The Humiliation of Christ - Incarnation or earthly life

The Exaltation of Christ

II. The Pre-Existence of Christ

A. The Fact of the Pre-existence of Jesus Christ

To answer the question, "Did Christ have an eternal personal existence before He was born of the Virgin Mary?" is to settle many other questions as to His essential Deity, and the existence of the Godhead as a Trinity. Those who deny to Jesus Christ pre-existence to His birth at Bethlehem are those who deny His possession of more than a human nature. They make Him naught but a man, even though the greatest of men. There can be no candid study of the Scriptures without arriving at the fact that they teach that Jesus Christ did not begin His personal existence at birth. Aside from the many implications of redemption, such as the necessity of a pure, superhuman Redeemer, who was sinless, and intrinsically worth more than all humanity, there are a number of plain statements in the Scriptures which teach Christ's pre-existence.

1. The testimony of Jesus Himself

- a. His Oneness with the Father, John 10:30, signifying a co-existence with God.
- b. His existence before Abraham, John 8:58.
- c. John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was;" a very plain portion.
- d. John 17:24 - He claims the Father loved Him from eternity past. Cf. Jn. 13:3.

2. The Testimony of the Prophets. Many could be quoted.

- a. Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7.
- b. John the Baptist. John 1:30 - "He is preferred before me; for He was before me." Yet from Luke 1:26 we find out that, naturally speaking, John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. He could only have reference to Christ's pre-existence.

3. The Testimony of the Apostles

- a. John - Especially John 1:1-5, 14. Here is His co-existence with God from eternity, His identity with God, and His creatorship as God back in creative days.
- b. Paul - All through his writings Paul asserts Christ's essential Deity, therefore, His eternity; such as, Philippians 2:6, and His Incarnation in I Timothy 3:16. Colossians is the book in which Paul opposes the Gnostics of his day who denied the Deity of Christ. Colossians 1:15-16.

c. The Book of Hebrews. 1:2- 3; 13:8

4. The Testimony of Implication.

a. The works of creation are ascribed to Christ - (John 1:3); Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10. He must, therefore, have existed before creation.

b. The many titles of Deity ascribed to Christ relate Him to the Jehovah of the Old Testament; therefore, eternally existing. "The Son of God," "First and Last," "Alpha and Omega," "The Lord," "Lord of All," "The Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "God with us." See how Jesus Himself uses this to affirm His Deity and answer the question of His Sonship. Matthew 22:42-45. This same identification of Jesus Christ by titles is carried over in the New Testament: By the Triune usage of names, such as Matt. 28:19; He is explicitly called God. John 1:1; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8.

c. His pre-existence is implied by the fact that He is to be worshipped as God. John 20:28; Hebrews 1:6 - Worship of the Angels given Him.

d. The attributes of Deity are ascribed to Him. This implies His pre-existence. Life (John 1:4), Self-existence (John 5:26), Immutability (Hebrews 13:8), Omnipresent (Matthew 28:20), Omniscience (I Corinthians 4:5; Colossians 2:3), and Omnipotent (Matthew 28:18).

5. The Manifestation of Christ in the Old Testament. These are called Christophanies (Manifestations of Christ). Throughout the Old Testament there is a majestic personage of Super-natural aspect and workings who acts in the name of Jehovah and bears titles and attributes of Deity. He is commonly called, "The Angel," or "The Angel of the Lord," "The Angel of His Presence (or face)," "My Angel" (God talking) "Messenger of the Lord" (Jehovah), and "Angel or Messenger of the Covenant." He can be none other than Deity, and is identified with Christ. He appears as an Angel and sometimes as a Man in the Old Testament.

Proof that this Angel is Christ - Consider His appearance to Joshua (Joshua 5:13); Accepted worship - Hallowed ground - Captain of Lord's host, as Exodus 3:2, 14. This Captain is the Angel of God presented (Exodus 14:19; 23:23; 32-34). Who was this Angel? Paul tells us - I Corinthians 10:4. Note also Acts 27:23. Cf. all references - Genesis 16:7-13; 18:1; 22:11-18; 31: 11-13; 32:24-32.

B. The Nature of Christ's Pre-Existence

There is all the mystery of the Godhead surrounding the existence of Jesus Christ as one of the members of the Holy Trinity from all eternity past. How can our finite minds comprehend the "glory which He had with the Father before the world was?" What can we know of the fellowship of the Godhead from all eternity past before there was any other intelligent personality to share that communion? What can we know of the infinite workings of the Trinity, each member sharing the one nature of the Godhead, yet so distinct as to love One another? When dealing with the nature of the pre-existence of Christ, it is well to confine our speculations to the Scriptural revelations.

1. Some false theories concerning the pre-existence of Christ.

a. The Christliness theory

This theory would confine all thought of the pre-existence of Christ only to a certain ideal of love and sacrifice flowing through the human race and finally finding its completion and highest expression in Christ. This is the theory of so-called "Theistic Evolutionists." There was a spirit of Christ in all ages culminating in the Christ. This denies any personal pre-existence. Besides being untrue to all Scriptural statements of the personal pre-existence of Christ, one looks in vain for that "Christliness" in fallen man.

b. The Humanistic theory

I have called it thus because of its teachings. It holds that Christ in His pre-existence was not Deity at all but a pre-mundane created being; the true perfect spiritual image of God, the prototype of humanity. Biederman, the German theologian says, "The person, the I of Christ, already before His appearance in the earthly corporeity (flesh), preexisted in a pre-earthly condition, with God - as the human image of God, and consequently as the archetypal pattern of humanity; this is He, the Son of God. The appearance of Christ in the world, sent by the God of love, is not becoming man, but the coming of the heavenly, pneumatic man in the flesh."

How untrue this is to Paul and John may be easily seen. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." How could He do this if He were already flesh? Paul speaks of "God manifest in the flesh." This theory must be the grandfather to the Russellite conception of God the Father as a literal, fleshly, physical man in heaven, also of Mormonism.

c. The Angel theory

The Russelites deny the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. In Judge Rutherford's book, *Deliverance*, he teaches that Christ was a literally born son of God. God had two sons; Lucifer and the Logos (Christ), Christ being a little higher than Lucifer. He was the Creator all right, but only an archangel. After His Incarnation, Christ ceased to be an angel, but was only a perfect man. This man is annihilated and only a spirit Christ lives today. Such is the Christology of Russellism. It is based entirely upon a mistaken idea of the words, "The Only Begotten Son of God," which we shall shortly consider. It distinctly denies what the Scriptures affirm, "The Oneness of Christ with the Father."

d. We might just mention one more, one from which atheistic modernistic modernism seems to draw some of its obnoxious pantheistic teachings. Jesus was human just like every other man. All humanity pre-existed as God, or the impersonal God takes on self-conscious personality in man. Christ only attained the highest degree of God-consciousness. This is mere Eastern pantheism, "God is all and all is God."

All of these theories, and many more shades of them deny the true Biblical portrait of the Christ co-existing with the Father God as co-equal with the other members of the Trinity.

B. The nature of Christ's pre-existence.

In dealing with the term used of Christ, "Only Begotten Son," and "First Begotten," we must come to realize there is something more in the meaning of "Begotten" than is commonly understood of "Birth." When we think of birth, we think of that as the beginning of all personal existence for the individual. In the light of all the plain teachings of the Scriptures concerning an existence prior to Bethlehem for the Christ with a real individual personality, we must find further meaning.

Christ is called the "Son of God" in a unique sense in which we are never so designated; hence five times in the New Testament He is called, "The ONLY begotten of the Father." That signifies uniqueness in Christ being termed "Only Begotten Son." There are sons born unto God by the power of the Holy Spirit every time a sinner is saved, or "born again," but that doesn't make "Christs" of them. You may see the uniqueness, then, of the expression, "Only Begotten Son." Theologians have commonly tried to arrive at a just estimate of the term by saying, "Christ was not begotten in time, but in eternity; therefore, calling it eternal generation of Jesus Christ." The Greek word monogenes literally means, "only born" or "chief born," and is always used in into the world; His taking human flesh upon Himself; seeming to signify the beginning of His dual personality as the Christ Jesus, the God-Man. The first time the expression occurs (John 1:14), we see it related to His incarnation. Also John 3:16. Cf. 1 John 4:9 and Hebrews 11:17 - related to His incarnation and substitutionary death. In Hebrews 1:6 the relation of the term "Begotten Son" is seen as applying to His advent into the world." Here the Apostle is quoting from the only time in the Old Testament the term is used, Psalm 2:7, and is localized. "This day" or Paul says, "Today art Thou My Son." Here is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the Second Psalm. Cf. Psalm 2:7 and its context with Acts 13:32-33, and Hebrews 1:5-6. The phrase, "Only Begotten Son of God," is the term signifying His advent into the world for man's redemption and not a term to signify His creation. As God, He was never created nor had a beginning, since He "created everything that was made" John 1:3.

The nature of His pre-existence was as the Second Person of the Trinity, on equality with God for He was God. "Being in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6), therefore He did not begin His existence at natural birth. Being essentially God, sharing the same essence of the Godhead with the other Two Members, He is eternal; but of that "Glory which He had with the Father before the world was" when "He was in the bosom of the Father," no finite mind may comprehend. All we can state is that as God, His pre-existence was as God in nature and attributes, hence, the statement of Paul - "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh," (1 Timothy 3:16) and the announcement "Thou shalt call His name Emanuel" which being interpreted is "God with us," (Matthew 1:23).

III. The Humiliation of Christ - His Incarnation

In the consideration of the humiliation of Christ, we have to deal with the consideration of His earthly life and mode of existence while incarnate. We have already considered the fact that before His incarnation, He was the Son of God, (not "Christ" this is His incarnation as "Jesus") the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, very God of very God.

There are a number of mysteries attached to His Incarnation as was to His preexistence. We shall consider the question, "What does it mean that the Logos 'took on Him flesh,' and was He

really a man of like passions as we?" That there can be no comprehensive understanding of the Incarnation is at once apparent, both from revelation and reason. Only one who has Himself lived in the highest state as God could fathom the condescension and humiliation of the Incarnation. "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God, was manifest in the flesh." (I Timothy 3:16.)

A. The Fact of the Incarnation

The word "Incarnate" literally from the Latin means, "Enfleshment," the taking of humanity. How plainly that fact of Christ's Enfleshment is seen in Hebrews 2:14 - "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Nothing could teach plainer the Incarnation of the Christ in literal human flesh life. Like portions teach the fact of the Incarnation - John 1:14; Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:4-5. These and the accounts of His birth in Matthew 1:18-25; and Luke 1:26-35 clearly teach that this preexistent Divine Personage came down to earth and took upon Himself a literal human body and nature.

B. The Nature of the Incarnation

To become flesh does not mean merely to inhabit a human body, like one dwells in a house, for in Genesis 18, Christ appeared unto Abram in human form; but that was not an Incarnation. The flesh in the New Testament is very often used to mean the human nature (as "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.") Galatians 5:17). It is evident here and throughout the chapter that flesh is not synonymous with the body; for Paul speaks of himself as before his salvation as being in the flesh, and not pleasing God. He was just as much in the body after salvation as before. He is speaking of his old natural human nature.

When the Scriptures speak of Christ as taking human flesh, it is more than a human body; but also human nature (Hebrews 2:14-17). We live in our human body in a different sense than we live in our house; the roots of the human nature permeate this "earthly tabernacle" and is the life of it; but can live separate from it after death, so that the saved man in Paradise is still a human being, but the human nature as distinguished from the nature of angels. Therefore as we progress in this study, we shall first consider the True Humanity of Christ as well as His True Deity. In the words of the Nicene Creed, "He was very God of very God, and very man of very man."

1. The True Humanity of Christ

There are simple proofs of this Humanity - such as, His natural birth, His natural life with human frailties and feelings, of hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, suffering, weeping, sorrowing, and death. These belong primarily to human beings. God cannot be tempted nor experience any of these other sensations; neither can He be touched with death. He Himself told Thomas, "Handle Me and see, for spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." (Luke

24:39) There is more to understanding the true humanity of Christ than ascribing to Him physical humanity.

God could have given unto Christ an Incarnation apart from "Being born of a woman" but would it have sufficed for the mission He came to fulfill? God could have created both a body and nature for Christ as He did for Adam, but what relation would such a being have to us? He would be isolated from us, not bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; and, though exactly like ours, would in no sense be generically ours. He would bear no more relationship to us by birth than the angels to Adam. He could not "Be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, neither bear the curse of the broken Law." No, Christ took upon Himself human flesh, body and soul and spirit, body and human nature like mine, so that, in truth, He could be called "Son of Man." Christ's humanity was created the same time as mine. In Adam He partook of the common human nature that was created in the first Adam, and generically passed down through the ages. I bear two kinds of brother relationship to the Christ: by natural birth; by blood relation, or generation, and regeneration. Herein is Christ called the "seed of Abraham," (Galatians 3:16), "The seed of David," (John. 7:42) and in (Romans 1:3), "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." See also (Galatians 4:4) Made of a woman," (Romans 9:5) and again (Hebrews 2:16) "Seed of Abraham." To be a mediator between God and man, He must partake of both natures. He must have a true man's nature or He would have no true link with man as He must have a true God nature or He would have no link with God.

All humanity is said to possess the one human nature, and it is of this one human nature of which Jesus partook by being naturally born of a natural human mother. Here is the argument from (Hebrews 2:14-18) - His taking the nature not of angels but of Abraham. He took our nature that we might take His. II Peter 1:4. Note: In all things to be made like unto His brethren, never lose sight of the fact, Christ was truly human in all points.

The only divergency of this fact is stated again and again in the Scriptures. "Yet without sin," but it isn't sin in our natures which makes us human. Adam was a human being before the fall, and we are still human when born again, and shall be human beings yet glorified in Eternity. Sin is not the original, nor is it the essential part of our nature; but rather a perversion and disease permeating all of our nature. Christ must not have this diseased fallen type of human nature, or He could not have mediated and reconciled us to God. When we predicate sinlessness to Christ, we mean more than the fact that He never sinned, but that there never was passed on to Him in natural birth, the sin principle in human nature which constitutes it "fallen." The "Total depravity" of human nature was never His. The words of David, "In sin did my mother conceive me," and "I was shapen in iniquity," were never true concerning Jesus Christ. This is ever mentioned in the Scriptures to make us keep in mind Christ's perfect, sinless humanity. (II Corinthians 5:21); (Hebrews 4:15); (I Peter 1:19); (Hebrews 7:26).

The question, of course, arises, "How could He be born of a human mother, who had a fallen nature, and not be fallen Himself? The Scriptural testimony of His sinlessness is enough if there were no further understanding of the mystery,

but there are some other reasons - One: The miraculous conception - The miracle of His birth. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost. This is not the "immaculate conception" of Catholicism which teaches the sinlessness of Mary in order both to explain the sinlessness of Christ and their own Mariolatry, their blasphemous claims for Mary as "the mother of God." Under the miraculous conception alone is meant that under the workings of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ, there was no transmission of Mary's natural human fallen nature.

Too, there is the explanation from the biological teachings of the Old Testament that the lineage or seed is reckoned only from the male line; therefore, the depraved nature is through the male or father, not the mother. Since Christ had no human father, but that the Holy Spirit was His father, then He did not partake of fallen human nature, but only a human nature from Mary, but sinlessness from the Holy Spirit. In both instances, the Holy Spirit relieved the human nature of the Christ from the disease of sin; so that, though every other human born into the world by natural generation is fallen and needs a Saviour from sin, yet this Christ miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit without human father, was born into the world with a perfect sinless human nature, consecrated with all tendencies aligned and in harmony and willing with God the Father, "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

This affords us the only understanding of the temptation of Christ. It is clearly evident that His Deity could not be tempted with evil, for such is the plain teachings of the Scripture. (James 1:13) How could Christ be tempted "In all points like as we are tempted, yet without sin?" It is the mutable nature which, though sinless, could be tempted as was Adam, yet with this difference; it was joined to a God-nature which of necessity kept it true. The impeccability lay not in His humanity, but His Deity. Being the God-Man, He could not sin nor drift from God, but be the same "Yesterday, today, and forever."

2. The True Deity of Christ

Since we have identified the Christ of the four Gospels as the pre-existent Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, it is not necessary here to enter into a detailed reiteration of the proofs of His Deity, but only to state the fact of His Deity and some Scriptural proofs. It is necessary, however, to emphasize the great truth, that in becoming human, Christ did not cease to be Divine, or God. The assumption of humanity did not mean the cessation of His Divine nature, but only the addition of a new nature. When we read in (Philippians 2:6) that He "emptied Himself", RU, it does not mean that He emptied Himself of nature of God, which He possessed, but of the "Glory of God." The glory consisted of the prerogatives and appearances of Deity, not the essence. This self-emptying could not have been of His Deity for instead of being an instance of Divine humiliation, it would have been a cessation of One of the Members of the Godhead. To empty oneself of His essential nature would be a cessation of that personality entirely. In laying aside His glory, He is no sense laid aside His Deity.

This emptying of His glory was the laying aside of the expression of Himself through His Divine Nature and the expression now through His human nature.

This is seen through the subjection always to the Father. He said, "The works and the words that He did were not His own but the Father that sent Him." (John 14:10; 9:4) etc., thus we see that there were no outward marks of identification upon the Christ marking Him as the Son of God, for He laid that aside henceforth for the work of redemption to only manifest the form of servant among men. There were, therefore, two natures within the Christ. Taking human nature upon Himself, while He must retain His essential nature as God.

The objection has been variously raised, "But how can He reconcile the true Deity of Jesus Christ with True humanity of Christ?" It is well to always keep in mind that our primary business in Bible interpretation is not to reconcile all Scripture with other Scriptures any more than to try to reconcile Scripture with all the ever changing systems of science. Our business is first to ascertain the real meaning of the Scriptures, then if we can reconcile them, that is wonderful. And many times more wonderful if we can't. We should believe both truths in seeing conflict, realizing that there are some things we don't know. Some truth is too large to reconcile with our small degree of present knowledge; such as, the Divine sovereignty of God, and the free moral agency of man.

God sometimes just gives us a pin prick of light here and a pin prick there in the great circle of truth, while He sees the whole circle. Because our little arch of the circle just doesn't join to the other one is no sign there is a contradiction. Such is the great mystery of the Man Christ Jesus. The Bible doesn't hesitate to put the clearest signs of His Deity right alongside of the plainest indications of His humanity. NOTE:

- a. (Matthew 8:24) - Christ asleep. What is more human? In verse 26, He rebukes the wind and stills the seas. What could be more divine? No wonder they ask, "What manner of man is that that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"
- b. (John 11:35-38) - Jesus weeping and groaning in sorrow. What is more human? In verses 43-44, "He cried in a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth." What could be more divine?
- c. (Luke 9:28) - He took three disciples and went up into a mountain to pray. What could be more human than this dependence upon the Father in prayer? Verse 29 - "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered and His raiment became white and glistening," then a voice from God, "This is my Beloved Son." What could be more divine?

He was weary at the well of Jacob, yet could cry out, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest." He was hungry, yet He could create enough bread out of a small lunch to feed the multitude, and say, "I am the Bread of Life." He was thirsty on the cross, yet turned the water into wine to satisfy the thirst at the wedding feast, and say, "If any man thirst, let Him come, and whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again." He suffered excruciating agony upon the cross, yet as God rebuked all manner of diseases. He died as man, yet gives eternal life as God. Here is the greatest paradox in the universe, the God-Man, Christ Jesus, The Perfect Saviour, for as

Man, He touches me, and, as God, He touches God and brings the estranged together in His atoning death.

3. The Union of the Divine and the Human Natures in the Christ

The question naturally arises, what relation did the two natures within the Christ bear to each other, and what modifications did each impose upon the other? In other words, was either of the two natures affected by their proximity to the other? Some theologians have answered in the affirmative by asserting the complete subservience of the human to the Divine, and others to the contrary asserting the obedience and subservience of the Divine to the human. The Lutheran theologians have asserted that the human nature was so affected by the Divine until itself possessed Divine attributes; such as omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence. Thus, they have taught that the human flesh of Christ was an object of worship just as much as His Divine nature. They laid the most stress upon the omnipresence of His flesh or body, like the Catholics, in order to make the Lord's Supper and the mass the literal body of the Christ by the consecration of the elements. This seems to teach that Deity can be transmitted to something else, and the infinite into the finite. The greatest class of Protestant theologians has maintained the dual nature of Christ as God and Man, but in one perfect union so that He is not a dual personality, but God-Man, The Anthropos. (Greek - Theos, God, and Anthropos, man).

This union of His two natures is called in theology, Hypostatic Union or Personal Union. The Chalcedon Creed emphasizes this oneness or union, "This one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only Begotten, is to be acknowledged in two natures, in confusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably." The Westminster Confession says, "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Himself man's nature, yet without sin, being very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man." So the two natures were organically and indissolubly united in perfect union in the one unique person of Christ. Thus, He is not to be thought of as two persons dwelling in man, but God-man. Yet in this union of the two natures, it is well to keep in mind that being Divine He was no less human, and being human, He was no less Divine.

This union of the two natures of Christ into one personality is not the error of the Nestorians who speak of Christ as neither Divine nor human, but a hybrid between the two. That is not the teaching of Scriptures, but that while being God, and Man, possessing both natures, their union was so complete in His incarnation as to make one personality, Christ the Lord; thus, the question of "self-consciousness, both a consciousness from the Divine nature, and the human, or just one consciousness?" From the teachings of the Scriptures of the actions and willings of Christ, the conclusion is surely of but one consciousness. Therefore, you never read in the Gospels of any interchanging of addresses between the Divine and the human, such as we find between the members of the Godhead; but contrariwise He uses the singular in reference to Himself. In all Scriptural references to Him and in Christian consciousness, there is no thought of plurality

when thinking of Christ, but of singularity, so that it is not, Jesus and Christ, making up the human and the Divine, but it is Jesus Christ, One Mediator between God and man.

4. Some of the many Errors about the Person of Christ

In summary, we see the true Protestant doctrine of the Personality of Christ consists of four elements. 1: The true and proper Deity of Christ. 2: His true and proper humanity. 3: The union of Deity and humanity in one person. 4: The distinctions of the two natures, true humanity and true Deity, in one person so that there is neither mixture nor confluence of natures, no hybrid which is neither God nor man. The errors through church history have shaded off into both directions of nullifying either His Deity or His humanity, and sometimes both.

a. The Ebionites. One of the earliest errors arising out of Judaistic ideas of monotheism taught that Jesus was not Divine but purely human until His baptism when an unmeasured fullness of the Spirit rested upon Him making Him almost divine.

b. Decetism. The word from the Greek means to seem to appear, thus no reality, but only appearance. This was an accommodation to the Eastern philosophy of the evil of matter. So, Christ could not have had a real body at all, but merely the appearance of a body. It flourished in the latter part of John's life, and he seems to be combating it in his first epistle, 4:1-4. It was paganism introduced into the church as it had been before and since.

c. Arianism. About the fourth century A.D. Arias, a presbyter of the church of Alexander, began the long line of heresy denying the true Deity of Christ. He taught that He was merely the highest order of created being. That God was not always a Father, but became so when He begot Jesus Christ, who was made from nothing, and, therefore is temporal, changeable, and not eternal. One can see where Russellism began.

d. Appollinarianism. Appollinarius, bishop at Laodicea, fourth century A.D., denied unto Christ a complete human nature. He had a human body, and human soul, but no human rational spirit; but the Logos took the place of that human element of personality, thus Jesus was only two parts human.

e. Monarchianism and Patripassianism. Akin to Appollinarianism, but it denies to Christ any human nature at all. His human body was indwelt by the Divine nature.

f. Eutychianism, confusing of the dual natures of Christ into one new nature, neither Divine nor human.

g. Nestorianism. Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, denied the unity of the personality of Christ and made Him two distinct personalities as well as natures. Note: In all of these errors of ancient times, there is a denial of Christ's true Deity, true humanity, true union of natures into one personality, and denial of distinctions of natures.

Among modern heresies might be named:

h. Unitarianism, nothing but old Arianism, denial of Christ's Godhead.

- i. Christian Science. Docetism revived; a denial of Christ's humanity, denial of the reality of matter. Christ was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God, her ideal; therefore, Christian Science teaches that Christ never had reality, but was Mary's ideal.
- j. Lutheran and Catholic. Christ's Divinity so permeated His humanity as to make it Divine, too, a denial, in fact, of His true humanity. I believe in the immaculate Christ, but not in the Immaculate Conception.
- k. Russellism or Millennial Dawnism goes farther than all the rest in denial of Christ's Deity and present existence. Before His birth, He was not God but an archangel; after birth just a man; then He was annihilated at death; but somehow He is Spirit now, but evidently without reality.
- l. Christ was a begotten Son of the Father in time; therefore, not Divine. He married the two sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha; therefore, he was a polygamist. Therefore, like God the Father, He is only a man.
- m. All the forms of Modernism, a great human Teacher of Morals and Ethics like all the other teachers, and worked His way up to Deity like we may. How different the four orthodox views at the head of this chapter.

5. Steps in the Humiliation of Christ

The one Scripture which outlines the steps in the humiliation of Christ is (Philippians 2:6-8), and we shall see later it gives the steps of His exaltation. We see seven downward steps in the "kenosis," the humbling of the Son of God, His voluntarily emptying of Himself

- a. His Incarnation, the emptying of Himself of His glory as God to take human form. This might be called the "impoverishment of Deity;" the expression of Himself not through the Divine nature, but through the human; the Creator taking upon Himself the form of the creature of His own fashioning.
- b. Taking the form of a servant. As He Himself said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister," to serve. He put Himself under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Father, for the work of redemption. He put Himself in the place not of Lord, but servant. He, who had the inherent right as God to demand the service of all, became the servant of all.
- c. He humbled Himself. Not only to take the "form" of a servant - station - position, but also the humblest of servants. The head of all became the servant of all - to "taste death for all men."
- d. "Becoming obedient to death;" He who had life in Himself, need not to die, and could not die, except He willingly obey death. Here is the depth of His impoverishment. Here the humiliation is complete. Here the human mind fails to comprehend what it means for God the Son to willingly enter the domain of death.
- e. "Even the death of the Cross," Yes, through the worst possible portal of death. According to (Galatians 3:13), this was for Christ to literally become

a curse for us. He who gave the Law of God, He who administers the Law of God, steps down out of the Judge's bench and identifies Himself with the culprit in the docket. Can we measure such condescension? Further Paul says, "For He made Him to be sin for us." (II Corinthians 5:21) He who was the very Holiness of God, the dazzling righteousness of the Almighty, literally became a sin offering for us; (Isaiah 53:10) says, "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin."

f. Continuing under the power of death for a time. The "Westminster Confession" aptly gives the humiliation of Christ as follows, "Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition; made under the law; undergoing the miseries of life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the "a time;" Peter calls the "power of death" (Hebrews 2:24), in Acts 2:24 "The pains of death." It was a mark of His humiliation that He should allow death to reign over Him for a season, for Peter likewise says, "It was not possible that He should beholden of death." He must needs will it so for it to hold Him for a season. Who can understand the humiliation of the Prince of Life, the One Who is life itself being held for a season under the reign of death, the death He came to destroy. Hebrews 2:14 - "That through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death."

g. There is one more step in His humiliation. It is His descent into Hades. Some would place this in His exaltation, but that can't be while death still holds His body in its grasp. This event must be placed under His humiliation. That, Christ after His death descended into the abode of the souls of the dead, is plainly taught in the Scriptures. This place commonly translated "hell" in the Authorized Translation is called in the Hebrew "Sheol" and in the Greek, "Hades." In prophecy the Psalmist prophesied of this, "My flesh shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:9-10). That this is about Christ, there is no doubt, for Peter so applies it in (Acts 2:25-32). The soul of Christ did not stay in the grave, but went as other souls to the abode of the souls of the dead. From (Luke 23:43) we see that Jesus did not go to the abode of lost souls, but of the righteous and saved, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." This is mentioned in Romans 10:7, but clearer in Ephesians 4:8-10 - "His descent into the lower parts of the earth."

As to the work of Christ while in Hades, there is much mystery. He wrested the keys (authority) of death away from Satan, (Revelation 1:18), (Hebrews 2:14) by this He liberated the souls of the righteous from captivity in Hades, or Paradise. (For the locality of Paradise, see the story of (Luke 16:19-31). While there is, of course, much we cannot know of this mission, there is, of course also, much that we cannot know of Christ's activity while in Sheol, but it is intimated in Ephesians 4:8-10; Isaiah 61:1- h. Though there can be some difference of opinion upon such a construction of the latter portion, it is impossible to conceive of Christ being passive while in Sheol. We shall consider a little more on this in class.

C. The Exaltation of Christ

The exaltation of Christ began with His resurrection from the dead, and carries through His ascension; His present position at the right hand of the Father with a "Name which is above every name, whether it be in heaven, on earth, or under the earth;" and could be given as continuing through His coming in great power and glory, establishing of His Kingdom, Judging the world, and bringing in of everlasting righteousness. As the position of Christ as returning King and everlasting Judge belong to the realm of Eschatology, or the Doctrine of future things, we shall not deal at length with them here.

The thoughts on the exaltation of Christ which shall engage our attention here are those dealing with His resurrection, ascension, and position in the Glory-world now. The Scriptures plainly teach that there is a difference between the state of Christ upon the earth in His humiliation, and the state into which He entered after His resurrection. Philippians 2:6-11 gives not only the pathway of His humiliation, but also the consummation in His exaltation. After telling the steps of His condescension, it says, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name;" see Acts 2:33, the vision of Stephen in Acts 7:55 and Hebrews 12:2; compare also the wonderful vision of the glorified Christ as seen by John from the Isle of Patmos in (Revelation 1).

1. The Nature of Christ's Exaltation

- a. A restoration to the primeval glory He had with the Father before the world was. (John 17:5, 24) Also to be seen in the vision of Him in (Revelation 1).
- b. Position at God's right hand, 14 times prophesied. Prophecy, Psalm 110:1; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 3:21; and others.
- c. Assumption of all power. Matthew 28:18; I Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:20-22.
- d. Giver of the Holy Ghost. Luke 24:49; John 15-16.
- e. Headship of the church. I Corinthians 11:3; 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-33; Colossians 1:18.
- f. An attitude of expectancy until He can consummate His sovereign rulership over all things. Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:13.

The exaltation of Christ is not complete until His bride is exalted to His side, and He is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and His enemies are put under His feet, and every tongue confesses His sovereign Lordship.

2. The Steps of Christ's Exaltation

a. The Resurrection of Christ

1. The fact of His resurrection

- a.) The Old Testament seers prophesied it. (Psalm 16:10)
- b.) Christ Himself foretold His own resurrection, (Matthew 20:19; John 2:19-22); five times plainly, and twice prophetic types.
- c.) The Gospel historians all record His resurrection. (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)
- d.) The Apostles preached His resurrection. (Acts 2:24; 17:18; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 15)
- e.) The universal observance of the Lord's Day among Christians declares the resurrection of Christ.
- f.) Every born again believer knows the resurrection of Christ by personal contact with the risen Christ.
- g.) How often the repetition of the fact of Christ's resurrection; it is mentioned more than 100 times in the New Testament.
- h.) It is assigned equal importance as part of the Gospel by Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-4 with His death. It completes the Gospel.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has been aptly called, "The Gibraltar of Christianity and the Waterloo of Infidelity." It is for this reason that God did not leave the resurrection without adequate witnesses and evidence. A famous German infidel stated, "There is not a better attested event in history than the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Luke in Acts 1:3 declares, "To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs." It is with these, "Many infallible proofs" or evidences of Christ's resurrection that we shall now deal with in this topic.

2. Proofs of Christ's Resurrection

- a.) The trustworthiness of the witnesses, or of the Biblical account of His resurrection. It is certain that the New Testament in the plainest of terms says that Jesus did literally arise from the grave. There is no mistaking the terms used, or the language, in describing the resurrection. They cannot be twisted to say that the Disciples did not themselves believe that Jesus arose from the dead. There is no figurative language employed, nor hazy conception, but straight-forward language plainly saying, "He is not here, but is risen," etc. So, the first question is one of believing the report. Here, after all, hinges the whole truth. The believers in Christ accept the authority of the Scriptures as inspired of God and very truth of God; for them there is no question as to the literal resurrection, but it might be noted under this heading that the writers of the account of Christ's resurrection were stable men who gave no evidence of being fanatical nor over-zealous as we read of them in the Gospels.

(1.) They give four individual accounts of Christ's resurrection, not copies of one made up account. The very seeming disagreements are found to be proof of separate eyewitness accounts rather than an agreed story to tell. The various differences of recording seem to contradict, but upon close scrutiny, they are seen to be but the difference of what each saw of the same event. Too close resemblance would have branded their story as trumped up.

(2.) They show marks of being eye witness accounts, not the mere relating of events. The very artlessness of the accounts show them to be eyewitness accounts, telling the story of what happened without trying to draw conclusions of doctrine or applications as it would have been had it been made up to start a religion by some after-writers. They are put in a bad light of unbelief by their own account. Somehow you can hear someone relate an event which happened and from their sincerity, but, most of all, from the small details incidental to the main event, and the order of events, give the conviction that it is the truth; illustrating this - Luke 24:16, His own disciples did not recognize Him at first. What point or who would give that kind of report about themselves if making it up?

Again the appearing of Christ to the women first and making them the first messengers of the resurrection; would that be the way man would make up the story? Mary Magdalene was the first to see Him. Would man make it thus? In fact, would not man have made Christ to at least appear to His enemies and confound them, yet He not once appeared to them. Why? Because that is the way it really was, and not man making up the story. See also the story of John, the younger, outrunning Peter, but not going in. Peter rushes right in to see. (John 20:4-6). That is a real account and not fiction. Many more like this show the story to be the real meaning of events.

(3.) Like the last part of the last paragraph, there are others which show the different natures of the disciples, which would have not been inserted, but must be the marks of the trustworthiness of the recorders as giving what really happened. There is in John 21 the story of John first recognizing Jesus, "It is the Lord." He who leaned on Jesus' bosom would naturally be first to recognize Him; but note Peter, the impetuous, and the one most anxious to show His affections, won't wait for the boat to land, but jumps in and swims ashore to see Jesus. See the nature of Thomas who wouldn't believe until he saw and felt. See Mary, who loved much because she was forgiven much, going alone through the garden looking for Him, and saying, "Show me where you have laid Him, and I'll go to Him," and the method Jesus used to show her He was alive, by just speaking her name.

(4.) The many small incidental things which man would not include in building a great story of a resurrection; such as, Christ eating fish - yea, more - broiled fish. That one adjective, "broiled" speaks a

volume, a whole sermon on the literal resurrection of Christ (Luke 24:42). The words of Jesus "Go tell the Disciples, and Peter," without an explanation for separating him from the rest, yet we can well imagine why. The way the two on the way to Emmaus recognized Him by the way He broke the bread and gave thanks, John 20:7 - The separate napkin.

(5.)The number of witnesses, and circumstances of Christ's appearances, the many times He appeared after His resurrection.

- (a.)To Mary Magdalene alone (Mark 16:9).
- (b.)To the other women (Matthew 28:9); gave them the message to the disciples.
- (c.)To the two on Emmaus road (Luke 24:15).
- (d.)To Peter alone (I Corinthians 15:5).
- (e.)To the ten (Thomas not there) (John 20:19).
- (f.) To the eleven (Thomas there and believing) (John 20:21).
- (g.)At the Sea of Galilee giving the draught of fishes (John 21:1).
- (h.)To above 500 brethren at one time (I Corinthians 15:6).
- (i.) To James alone (I Corinthians 15:7).
- (j.) To the eleven in Galilee giving the great commission (Matthew 28:17; also Luke 24).
- (k.)To disciples at ascension (Luke 24:50; Acts 1).
- (l.) To Stephen at his stoning (Acts 7:55).
- (m.)To Paul at his conversion (Acts 9:1-8)
- (n.)To Paul at Corinth in encouragement (Acts 18:9).
- (o.)To Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-19).
- (p.)To John on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1).

This multitude of appearances is a proof in itself. One man might be mistaken in his vision, but to many separate witnesses all agreeing on the one fact, "He is risen," and what's more, to "above 500 brethren at one time," is a good proof of the fact, and would be undisputed(undeniable evidence in any court of law.

(6.)Collateral Evidence.

There are many logical points of evidence, which attest the resurrection. Reason can add strong collateral testimony to the fact of the resurrection.

- (a.)The undisturbed grave clothes of Jesus. The Jews in self-defense started the story of Christ's disciples stealing the body of Jesus under the very eyes of the Roman guard by paying them to tell it; but if that is the case, "Why did they stop to undress the body and carefully lay them in order just like the

body had lain, and then carefully take time to fold the napkin which had been around His head?" That is an unanswerable question and a strong evidence of His supernatural resurrection, but we shall refer to this again.

(b.) The empty tomb; that Jesus really died was well attested and never in dispute by His enemies, which saw to it, He really did die; that He didn't really die is a last day invention to bolster a weak Modern Atheism. That argument was never advanced in the days after Christ's resurrection. They knew He was dead, and now the tomb was empty. The body was gone. That empty tomb must be explained by those who deny the resurrection of Christ. There are but two alternatives. Either that body was removed by human hands or by Divine superhuman means, which would necessarily be the resurrection. If by human means, there are but two alternatives. It was either by His friends or His enemies.

First - It could not have been by His enemies, for they made sure that He would stay in the tomb. It was to their interest to see that He did. It was this that made them have Pilate set the guard, the great stone, and the seal of Rome. As long as they could point to the body in the tomb, how could His followers ever start the story of His resurrection? If they had removed it, would not they have produced it when the disciples bravely began to preach that He was resurrected? Like Peter who pointed his finger at them and said, "You have crucified Him, but God raised Him." If they had the body, wouldn't they have produced it to squelch this condemning gospel they preached of Christ's resurrection? They didn't produce it, for they didn't have it; therefore, they didn't deny the resurrection.

Second - Did His disciples take His body, as the guards were paid to state? "His disciples came and stole Him away while we slept." Let us examine that story of the guards and see if it can stand cross-examination. Question - "Do you admit being asleep while on guard?" Answer - "Yes, that is what we said." Question - "If you were asleep, how do you know what happened while you were asleep? How do you know it was the disciples who stole Him away? How do you even know He was stolen?" Is a sleeping man's testimony accepted in a court of law? Sleeping folks don't identify people, nor know what is transpiring. There is no answer to this question. Question - "Do you know that for a handful of fishermen, unarmed, to come in the dead of night, pass every sleeping guard lying all around the great stone, break the great seal of Rome, roll away the great stone, enter the tomb, unwrap the body, and rewrap the clothes, fold the napkin, bring the body through the low opening, passing every one of you without even awaking

anyone of the 1.6 of you, is asking me to believe a greater miracle than the resurrection itself?" The testimony of the guard would be laughed out of any court of law. They would never have told that story without being both paid for it and having their own heads secured against beheading by the Roman authority which didn't smile at their guards sleeping while on duty. What advantage would it be to them to steal His body? They themselves before and at first after His resurrection didn't believe in His own testimony that He would arise from the dead. To believe that these disgruntled, disappointed disciples, pictured by their own admission in the Gospels, could be as brave as to defy the guard and steal the body to pawn off a fake resurrection is impossible.

See the two on the Emmaus road. Disappointment is the predominant figure, "We had hoped it was He that should redeem Israel," but now all is up. They are going home defeated. No one even tries to tell that story that the disciples stole His body, too much to believe that while Peter was preaching on Pentecost, he knew all the time where Jesus' body was moldering in a tomb, as did all the other disciples; that the tomb was empty there was no doubt, for the enemies admitted that much and concocted a story to explain it; but neither the friends nor enemies removed the body. Then who did? The other alternative is the only one. God did, Acts 13:30. "God raised Him from the dead." The empty tomb is a mighty evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(c.) Silence of the Jews under the preaching of the disciples of the resurrection, they commanded them not to preach Jesus, and whipped them, but they never denied their account of His resurrection. If they had one shred of evidence to the contrary, don't think for a moment they would not have advanced it to break up the new teaching, as they would have produced the body of Jesus if they could to refute this testimony which undid all the work they had done by getting Jesus crucified. They would have vehemently denied His resurrection and produced the evidence to prove that denial, if they could have done so. That they were silent while running over with hatred at the accusation of Peter, and his affirmation of Christ's resurrection, is positive proof that they knew that something miraculous had happened but as Jesus had said, would not believe it. "They would not believe though one arose from the dead."

(d.) Changed day of worship. There had to be a mighty miracle to make the many Jews, numbering thousands (at least 8,000 two days after Pentecost, 50 days after Christ's passion) to change the most sacred of holy days, their Sabbath, from the time honored, God-given day of the last day of the week to the

first; yet, without any known command anywhere in the New Testament, nor spoken of, with one consent they began to gather and keep the Lord's "feast of charity" on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2.

(e.) Changed disciples, both those who were with Christ, during His life and Jews saved later. The latter like the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost. Some, no doubt, had been in the mob that crucified Jesus. Now, at the testimony of one of His despised disciples, they confess their murder of Christ, and take their place with the disciples believing in the resurrection of the One they helped to kill. The greatest change was in the immediate disciples, as seen in the Apostles. From the uttermost of despair and disappointment, they arose to the most sublime height of confidence and faith. From the picture of the two on the Emmaus road, we get but a small picture of the hopes even the disciples had, and the hopelessness now of their position. "We trusted (hoped) that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel, but now three days are gone by." They had trusted that He would immediately set up His kingdom, with themselves having some chief rooms. As the mother of James and John, "Let my two sons set one on the right hand, the other on the left hand in the kingdom." Again on the way to the cross they were arguing as to "who shall be the greatest in the kingdom." Imagine their despair to have their king dead, themselves despised as His followers and cast out of the synagogue of the Jews (John 9:32). They were excommunicated from the Jews' religion. They couldn't go back to that, and this New Leader they had been following had been put to death by His enemies. Everything looked hopeless to them. They had slinked away from the garden, hiding in back rooms until they could escape from Jerusalem. The leaders of the Jews which had crucified their Lord wouldn't scruple to kill His despised followers. A month and a half later all is changed. With the brightest of faith, these same men come forth from hiding to defy the killers of their Lord, and accuse them to their faces of their act, and preach to thousands boldly in the same city where Jesus had been condemned. What made the difference? It was the firm faith on their part that their Lord had risen from the grave. The resurrection message was their hope. Note the change in Peter, who short days ago backed down at the taunts of a little maid, to vehemently deny his Lord, "I never knew Him."

This plainly showed that the bottom had dropped out of his world; everything in which he had put his trust and built upon for a little over three years had collapsed, and he didn't want to be identified as a follower of the despised Nazarene. Who,

though, was the fearless spokesman for the disciples on the day of Pentecost? It was Peter, who with no fear points the finger of accusation at the Jews in the city of Jerusalem and says, "You took Him by wicked hands and slew Him." The next day he says to them, "You killed the Prince of Life," and 8,000 were saved altogether. It wasn't the condemnation that saved these folks and made them a follower of the despised Nazarene, but the rest of the message, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was impossible that He should be holden of death.

Such a marked change in the disciples has made the skeptics attempt an explanation. Almost without exception they have admitted that the disciples must have been firmly convinced that Jesus did rise from the dead. Renan tried to explain it this way, "The passion of a hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God," (p. 257, Renan, *Life of Christ*.) but the passion of one hallucinated woman isn't enough to account for the results. To change the fear and cowardice of Peter to the fearless fiery preacher of Pentecost, who by his faith in the resurrection converted 8,000 Christ hating, killing Jews into followers of that same Christ; nor to change the unbelief of skeptical doubting Thomas into a firm faith, "My Lord and my God;" nor to convince a hard-headed, practical tax collector Matthew into a gospel writer narrating the resurrection of Christ.

Others have tried to account for the change in the disciples and their faith in the resurrection of Christ by saying that Jesus never really died at all, but sank into a coma from which He later revived and made His disciples believe that He had risen. Such a sham teaching as this shows the extremity to which the enemies of Christ and Christianity are led to try to refute the plain truth. There are some glaring things wrong with this teaching.

(1.) Remember that the Jews stood round to make sure their work of destroying this "imposter" was completed. They would have let up a howl if it were not literally completed.

(2.) Remember that the Romans came around to make sure, and even after they pronounced Him dead, to make sure one took a spear and he knew just where to place it and how far to push it, and he pierced the heart, for blood and water came forth. (See John 19:31-35). John here says "I'm telling the truth." (But along this line also remember all of the prophecies, which foretold that Christ should die for us and all the New Testament teaching of

His death saving us. The heart of the whole Gospel is the fact that He really tasted death for us. Remember that all these attempts emanated from Satan to try to nullify the work of Calvary).

(3.) Remember the weakened condition of Christ after the long night of sleeplessness and bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the trial, smittings, beatings, and agony of six hours on the cross. He would be an utter physical wreck that His disciples would have known by His appearance that He had not really died and therefore not arisen. They would have known how they would have had to nurse Him back to health, bind up His wounds, and the main fact of the change in them would still be unaccounted for.

(4.) How could this emaciated, health-broken, wounded, half-dead man, come among the disciples and convince them or give them the impression that He had conquered death and risen gloriously.

(5.) Greatest of all is the moral argument against this idea. If it were a mere resuscitating then Jesus tried to pawn Himself off as one raised from the dead when He knew it wasn't so. He, then, was an arch imposter, and all Christianity is a fraud. Anyone who can believe the religion of Jesus Christ which teaches the most absolute honesty and purity the world has ever seen is based upon a religious fraud and lie, is himself cankered with dishonesty and hypocrisy, and is a cheat.

(6.) This logically brings us to the last collateral argument for the resurrection of Christ. It has been alluded to in the last paragraph. The disciples could not have concocted the story of the resurrection by deliberate fraud. There is not a skeptic or doubter who himself is worth any moral character but who has to admit that the disciples did not deliberately lie and make up the story. To suppose that a body of men could resolve to establish a religion which teaches the purest morality the world has ever known, which insists upon absolute truth and integrity, which denounces hypocrisy in the severest terms and proclaims the doom of all liars in eternal torment, to suppose that these men deliberately perpetuated a fraud which put themselves under the doom of which they spoke, separated them from all their kinsmen and loved ones, gave them nothing but suffering and privations by holding to it, and, finally, cost them their lives to keep it without possible gain in this life and hell in the life to come, is to believe an impossibility. We have seen that

Jesus did not perpetuate a fraud to claim He had risen from the dead when He hadn't. The disciples did not start a lie as to His resurrection. The only logical conclusion anyone could arrive at, as God Himself foreknew and devised, "but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the fruits of them which slept" (I Corinthians 15:20). Is it to be wondered at that the German infidel called the resurrection of Christ, "The greatest attested fact of all history." God saw to it that Christ would be proved to have been raised from the dead by "Many infallible proofs."

3. The Nature of Christ's Resurrection

a.) Negatively considered

(1.) It was not resuscitation from only a seeming death or swoon. We have already, under proofs of Christ's resurrection, considered in part the theory advanced first by Strauss, which holds that Jesus did not really die at all, but simply swooned from the pain and torture of the cross. He went into a death-like coma from which He revived when He was placed in the cool air of the sepulcher and the stimulus of the spices used in embalming Him.

A modern disciple of the Straussian School of infidelity wrote a book to prove that Jesus did not rise from the dead. The AP carried the notice (I clipped it from the "Asheville Times," March 31, 1932). The report comes from Stockholm by Dr. Hugo Toll, a prominent Swedish surgeon formerly of St. Paul, Minnesota, and then chief surgeon at the Deakonez Hospital in Stockholm. He says, "The Saviour was not dead when taken down from the cross and, that after resting for some time in the grave, He regained consciousness and left the tomb in a normal way." (I'd like to know how He could, in a normal way, leave after all He went through.) He bases his conclusions by analyzing the reports of the witnesses of the crucifixion in the light of modern medical science. (Claims a fuller knowledge of what really transpired after 2,000 years than those who saw it like John or Dr. Luke). He asserts that crucifixion, fastening the victim by nails to a cross, could not have caused death as the nails prevent bleeding (I wonder if he ever saw a crucifixion?). The head, mouth, and throat, however, empty the blood which flows to the lower limbs, therefore he says, "It is likely that Jesus soon fell into a deep stupor of swoon, mistaken by the soldiers and spectators for death." The removal of the stone slab is explained by him as possibly having been caused by an earthquake, "a not infrequent occurrence in that region." Jesus, then, probably walked out of the grave, and remembering His suffering, "obeyed the instinct of self-preservation and hid, (Is anything quite so untrue to the whole Gospel narrative than this?)

showing Himself only occasionally to His most loyal followers and behaving as a man would do under conditions of grave danger." Dr. Toll even names the country to which Jesus fled, "He found His ultimate refuge at Springar on the Cashmere slopes under the name of Izza (Used as alias). There is reported still an Indian sect claiming to be the descendants of the followers of Jesus there."

What a conglomeration of false statements and conclusions. Anyone need not think long before arriving at the Doctor's state of heart. Which is easier to believe, this bunch of ungodly suppositions, or the straightforward account of the Gospels? How any man could read the record and arrive at this type of thing is more than I can fathom. We have already considered the impossibility of Christ's having not really died. The record the doctor is supposed to accept as the basis for his argument is against him. The pierced side letting out the blood of Christ, if the nails wouldn't even, though the two others died the same day, would have killed Jesus; but they found Him already dead. The testimony of the Centurion, who was used to passing judgment on whether folks were dead or not in execution, is enough to satisfy anyone. Mark 15:44-45.

There are a lot of other things wrong with the Doctor's attempt to nullify the atonement made by Jesus; such as, the educated earthquake providentially coming at the time needful, along with the further testimony of all the witnesses as to the literal resurrection, and Jesus Himself. Revelation 1:18, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore." All of the statements, "Christ died for our sins," I Corinthians 15:3, and there are thousands of them. All of Christianity is built upon the two facts, "Christ died and rose again." Both are equally important, and well attested to by adequate witnesses. Christ's resurrection was no resuscitation from only a seeming death. It was not resuscitation but a literal resurrection. The returning of life to a mortal body is not resurrection as was Christ's, or the reviving from a swoon either. Christ was different from both, being a pattern and first fruits of our own eternal resurrection in a resurrection body.

(2.) It was not a hallucination of the overwrought minds of the disciples. Renan gave it this way, "Divine power of love, sacred omens in which the passion of a hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God." Speaking of the appearance of the disciples he says, "The doors were closed, for they were afraid of the Jews. Oriental towns are closed after sunset. The silence accordingly within the house was frequently profound; all the little noises which were accidentally made were interpreted in the sense of the universal expectation. Ordinarily, expectation is the father of its object. During the moment of silence, some slight breath passed over the face of the assembly. At these decisive periods of time, a current of air, a creaking of a window, or a chance murmur, is sufficient to fix the belief of people for ages." (His is worse than any in trying to explain the wonderful change in men like

Peter, Thomas, and Christ-hating Saul of Tarsus). "At the same time that the breath was perceived, they fancied that they heard sounds. Some of them said that they discovered (in the breath of air) the word of greeting by Jesus," and so going on without quoting Renan says, "They all began to believe that Jesus was there. Some pretended to observe the nail prints." The condemning thing against this theory is that the disciples did not expect Christ to arise from the dead. The women went to the sepulcher not to see the risen Lord, but a body; to embalm a dead body. If they were confidently expecting Him to arise, then they might be conceived of as materializing Him by overwrought minds. They were absolutely unbelieving, skeptical, and those kinds of folk didn't have hallucinations of things in which they have no faith. Through the ages, false lying visions are seen by visionaries who work up faith in a thing until they think they see it; but that is not the state of those who wouldn't even believe after they were told by eyewitnesses.

This theory holds for no resurrection at all of the body of Christ. His body still lay in a tomb even if not in the tomb. The disciples imagined, dreamed, and envisioned Christ. It is no theory of the resurrection, but a denial of the resurrection and fails to explain any of the evidence, nor the plain teachings of the Scriptures.

(3.) It was merely a spiritual materialization of the Christ in human form such as occurs so many times in the Old Testament. Some cults have so taught, and some unbelievers. Christ didn't arise, they say, His body still lay dead, but His Spirit appeared in natural form to the disciples. Russellism holds this theory. Russell taught, "Our Lord's human body, was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there, it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples... we know nothing about what became of it except that it did not decay nor corrupt (It must still be somewhere then)... whether it was dissolved into gasses or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience and of our redemption, no one knows; nor is such knowledge necessary" (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Pastor Russell Series II, p. 120-131).

President Knox says he knows what became of His body. "It was dissolved into gases." He has gotten further new light since his founder Pastor Taze Russell ("Watch Tower Magazine," Sept. 1, 1953). There are so many things wrong with this theory that it is hard to give them all. Besides being untrue to all the written accounts of His literal resurrection and the many references to it throughout the New Testament, there are some plain reasons against it. It is against the plain statement of Jesus that He was not spirit. Luke 24:39. "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself handle Me and see; for spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." (It may be noted with interest that Jesus used the same phrase as I have underscored here to dispel the fear and doubt of the disciples as to His being a Spirit when He walked on the water (Mark 6:48-50). You can see from the accounts that the

disciples first thought they saw a vision of a spirit until Christ by literal means convinced them it was He Himself, and not a spirit. The skeptics have it backwards. They say the disciples thought it was Christ literally until they found out He was Spirit, but the account shows the opposite. They thought He was a vision, or spirit until He Himself, convinced them of His literal bodily resurrection.

b. Positively Considered

1.) From a consideration of all the references in the New Testament to Christ's resurrection, no other conclusion can be drawn than that it was literally a bodily resurrection of the same body of Christ as had died and was buried, according to Psalms 16:8-11, prophetically, Christ is talking, for Peter refers it to Jesus on Pentecost, "My flesh shall rest in hope, (of what? being raised, for note the rest of the portion), For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." There was a preservation of the body of Christ in the tomb from decay and mortification. It was kept in a perfect state of suspended animation waiting the change of the resurrection. If Christ is to take this body into the glory world, it must partake of immortality, or be immortalized into the resurrection body. Paul in I Corinthians 15 speaks of the different kinds of flesh there are, and, so, as "we have borne the image of the earthly we shall bear the image of the heavenly"; hence, Christ could appear in the room to the disciples, the doors being shut.

This is the nature of the resurrection of Christ. The dead body in the tomb, preserved by God from corruption, is "changed" (as Paul speaks of our change in I Corinthians 15:51) from a mortal, changeable, dying body, to an eternal, immortal, changeless, glorified body, not affected by earth's changes or laws. This took place when Jesus re-inhabited that body and God raised it from the dead. This resurrection of Jesus Christ both is the pattern of our resurrection and the seal or first fruits of our resurrection. I John 3:2, "When He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." We shall bear in our resurrection the same kind of heavenly body as Christ has now (I Corinthians 15:35-49; Phil. 3:21). Likewise it is not only the type of our resurrection but the seal, "Because I live ye shall live also," hence Paul calls His resurrection the first fruits of the resurrection. If He were not literally raised, neither shall we be. Consider I Corinthians 15:19-23. The literalness of His resurrection is further seen by the fact that He appears in the body bearing the wounds of His death, John 20:27 to Thomas, and in the book of Revelation to John.

4. The Manner of Christ's Resurrection

a.) He was raised by God the Father. Such was the reason for the words of Jesus, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." (Luke 23:46). Christ entered the domain of death voluntarily to taste death for every man, in dependence upon the Father to raise Him from the dead, even as in life He lived a natural life in dependence upon the Father. There are numerous Scriptures, which declare that God raised Jesus from the dead. Ephesians 1:19-20; Romans 10:9; Romans 6:4; Acts 2:24, 32; 10:40; 13:30, etc. by God the Father raising Him from the dead, He set His seal of approval upon all that Jesus did and taught.

b.) He arose from the dead by His own inherent power. Jesus had said, "No man taketh My life from Me, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again" (John 10:18); and His saying, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it" (John 2:19). It means that it was "impossible that He should be holden of death." He had the eternal principle of life of God Himself the very opposite of the death principle.

c.) He was quickened by the Holy Spirit. The word "quicken" means to bring life. I Peter 3:18 - "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." See Rom. 8:11.

d.) This great truth of the entire Godhead at work in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is but the further proof of the Divine Trinity in One, each with His separate office in redemption, but each and all three working in every operation of our salvation. In His crucifixion we find each at work, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." And "He offered Himself up through the eternal Spirit." In our own personal rebirth into God's eternal family through faith in Christ Jesus' atoning blood, and became related to the Father, Christ promised for the entire Trinity to be present and abide in the believer. Compare the following Scriptures. John 14:20 - "Christ in you," vs. 23, both the Father and the Son in you. Vs. 16 is the Holy Spirit abiding with you. The believer becomes the holy temple for the glorious Triune Godhead through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

5. The Importance or Necessity of the Resurrection of Christ.

One modernist has blithely stated, "As far as my faith is concerned, it makes no difference whether Christ ever arose from the dead or not." Further, "It would make no difference in my faith to find out that Jesus never really arose from the dead, but that His body still smolders in the tomb of Joseph." What kind of faith must this person have? It couldn't have been of the same essence as the early disciples, or of Paul, for he distinctly links all that we hope for, both in the Day of Judgment of forgiveness for sins, and our own victory over death with the resurrection of Christ; that He really literally arose from the dead.

- a.) If Christ be not raised then there is no resurrection and the loved ones fallen asleep in Jesus have perished. (I Corinthians 15:18). The Libertine is right, "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die."
- b.) Our preaching is in vain, empty, hollow of a lie, without meaning. What is left of the Gospel if our Leader did not arise, but Himself came under the slavery and bondage of death, defeated. No wonder modernism, which denies the literalness and reality of Christ's resurrection, "Has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof." The power or dynamic of Christianity is the living, resurrected Christ present with His disciples.
- c.) Further still - "Our faith would be vain. (I Corinthians 15:14). Without a living Saviour who is able to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them," then our faith is built upon a dead Christ and a defeated religion, no better than all the other man-made attempts to satisfy man's religious nature to worship. It is without Divine authority.
- d.) Yet more, "Ye are yet in your sins." (I Corinthians 15:17). "For He was delivered for our offenses, but He was raised for our Justification." The freeing from our sins depends upon His resurrection.
- e.) All the disciples who testified to His resurrection are liars, if Christ be not raised, (I Corinthians 15:15), for they gave the testimony that He did arise.
- f.) We who have believed are of all men most miserable, or pitiful. (I Corinthians 15:19). Because we have believed that we should have something better in the world to come. Better by far that that hope had never been excited, than that after faith, it should prove to be a lie, just a hollow pretense, without substance. Better never faith than find it false and your hopes but arise to mock you with their emptiness. But Paul gives the wonderful positive statement - "But now is Christ risen from the dead." Here under six heads Paul shows the importance of the resurrection of Christ by showing what it would be like if He hadn't arisen.
- g.) It was the Divine Seal of God's approval upon Christ, Romans 1:4.
- h.) The resurrection of Christ gives the glorious hope to the saints of a waiting inheritance. (I Peter 1:3-4).
- i.) By the resurrection of Christ, God has set His seal upon the words of Jesus that He had committed all judgment unto the Son, (Acts 17:31); See John 5:22, 27-29.
- j.) It is the grounds and evidence to me that God accepted my substitute on Calvary and has freely forgiven my sins, and cast them from me, and out of His memory, justifying me from all things, Romans 4:25. Here we are accepted in the beloved as our representative.
- k.) His resurrection gives us a Living, able High Priest to Intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25). If you trace the many portions of the New

Testament, which speak of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you will find the sum total of salvation and hope of eternity is wrapped up in the doctrine. How can anyone then say, "It doesn't make any difference whether Christ arose from the dead or not, and that it is only His example and moral precepts which matter." How much is His life or teachings worth without the power of His resurrection? The resurrection of Christ is interwoven with redemption from sin, forgiveness, justification, fruitful Christian life, sanctification, or walking with Him in newness of life, and with our own resurrection. Certainly it ranks co-equal with His death in importance in the Gospel. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures." "He was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification."

b. The Ascension of Christ

He, who conquered death by resurrection and appeared to the disciples again and again, did not succumb to death and be buried again. The disciples knew what had become of Jesus, for He did not secretly leave them to wonder what had become of Him. Before leaving them He gave them the parting commission and benediction, and went home to heaven in their sight, so that in after years they could never speak of Him as of one of whom they are bereaved, but of one whose whereabouts they perfectly knew. The realness of His presence among them was not that of a ghost, or vision, but of a living Christ who left them bodily and alive when He ascended into Heaven. Now, whenever they thought of Him, they could see again His leave taking, and think of Him bodily over in the glory world. It is because He is "alive forevermore" that He is "with you even unto the end of the age." Here is the importance of the great truth of His ascension. This is why it is mentioned at least 33 times in the New Testament. This is why it is so plainly recorded and witnessed by the disciples. His was not a momentary victory over death, only to come again under its sway in defeat. His was an eternal victory over death, "By death He slew him that had the power over death," so that He might destroy the "last enemy which is death." The ascension is an important part of our faith. It gives us a glorified Saviour in Heaven, who bears the bodily image of our own future glorification, and a faithful High Priest, in bodily form, with the same nature which was "tempted in all points such as we are tempted, yet without sin," that He might feel with us. A faithful High Priest - able to be touched with the feelings of my infirmities Hebrews 4:15.

a.) The fact of His Ascension: Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:8.

b.) The nature of His ascension Acts 1:1-11.

"This same Jesus," literally, bodily while talking to the disciples, Christ ascended into the clouds from the view of the disciples. The Jesus who appeared to His disciples after His resurrection was precisely the same Jesus who was crucified and buried. His dual nature as the God-Man was the same, though His

body was now glorified, but it retained its identity, and had flesh and bones. (Luke 24:39). Likewise, it was precisely this same Jesus who ascended into heaven carrying, not only the identical physical identification as while on earth, but the identical human personality with which He manifested Himself while on earth. This is the basis of all that Paul teaches us of His High Priestly sympathy in the Book of Hebrews. See Hebrews 2:16-18 and 4:14-16.

There is a relationship between what Christ was on earth and what He is today over there. He is able to be touched now because He was tempted then, but this would not be the case if it were not "this same Jesus" in His humanity as well as Deity. He had to carry the same tempted human nature into Heaven when He ascended. He is so called as a "man" throughout Hebrews in His office of High Priest. In fact, that is a qualification of a High Priest. He must be a man, (Hebrews 5:1), "Taken from among men for men," so that He might have compassion on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way. Note briefly Hebrews 8:1-6. "This man must have somewhat to offer." In this heavenly tabernacle, chapter 9 tells you what that offering was; His own precious blood. We shall have occasion to note this further in the work of Christ in redemption, but He is a man in the glory today. The God-Man Christ Jesus the Lord.

c.) Purpose of the Ascension:

- 1.) To give the Holy Spirit. John 16:7; Acts 2:33;
- 2.) To prepare a place for His own. John 14:1-4,
- 3.) To give forgiveness and repentance. Acts 5:31
- 4.) To be a forerunner for us. Hebrews 6:20
- 5.) To intercede for us. Hebrews 9:24
- 6.) To await the consummation of His work and subjugation of His enemies, Hebrews 10:12. There must be a period of waiting until all is fulfilled.
- 7.) To finish His exaltation. Philippians 2; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 2:9.

c. The Exalted Position of Christ in Heaven Now

1. The Fact of His Exaltation. There are a great number of passages which speak of this exaltation. We shall give but a few. Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 4:14; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 2:9.
2. The Position of His Exaltation, at the right hand of God, the highest position in God's realm. Hebrews 10:12-13. (In fact almost every portion mentioning the exaltation of Christ speaks of His sitting at the right hand of God, Colossians 3:1 and others). Note: Stephen saw Jesus there (Acts 7:56). This denotes the absolute authority and Lordship of Jesus as over all things (I Corinthians 15:23-38; Ephesians 1:20-23). Every picture is of exaltation. See Revelation 1:13-16, Glorified Christ.

Thus, we see that the weak ideas men have formulated about Christ, and the faded flowers they cast at Him are not sufficient. Man's weak conceptions of Christ do not fit the case. Man may try to estimate Christ and give Him His rank, but they can't. God has already appointed His

Son to His place, high above every name that is named, and all men can do is bow the knee and adore. This exalted Lord of Heaven and earth, placed at God's right hand, far above all principalities and powers, ruler of all things, is my Saviour and concerned about me. That is the joy of the saints.