

**JESUS CHRIST,  
the Only Begotten  
Son of God**



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PERSONAL correspondence on what some call "controversial subjects" is often deemed fruitless, and not only devoid of good, but a cause of engendering a harsh spirit and hard feeling between the contestants. That such is often true there can be very little doubt, especially so when one or both of the parties concerned are unwilling to be convinced of error. On the other hand, when it is recognized that others may differ from us because of conviction, then we are ourselves in a right spirit to learn.

Sometimes the very way an opponent presents his side of the question brings up a new phase that really confirms our view, instead of bringing us to see things as he sees them. Perhaps, too, when cordial relations are maintained, there is no better method of drawing out the best that can be produced on either side than by personal debate, thus giving both contestants and their readers unique opportunity to calmly compare results.

Another advantage is that if the argument is in a right spirit, one is driven to "search and see." In other words, he goes afresh to the Word of God, and this is probably the most important feature that can be desired. In doing this he finds help along the lines of the subject discussed, and many avenues of thought that bring new light and beauty to topics already studied are incidentally opened up.

The writer has for many years had experience along these lines, and has generally sought to converse with acknowledged leaders. He has thus had the benefit of their experience and point of view, and has gained an insight into their wider reading which his

own limited means and opportunities have not permitted.

In a recent discussion concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, a correspondent said, "You do not believe the primal law, 'every thing after its kind'; if you did, you could not reject the deity of Jesus Christ. The Word who took flesh from Mary is as much true and living God as is His Father. He could not be anything else. There are some things God cannot do, and one is to beget a Son who would not be partaker of His own nature, life, and substance. That is a fact. You are free to reject it if you please, but rejecting it does not destroy the fact."

Our correspondent has stated his case well and forcibly. There is no mistaking his position.

### Primal Fact

I believe many in our churches, and other churches, have felt the difficulty in John 3: 16 and elsewhere of the statement that Jesus Christ is the "only begotten Son" of God; but the delicacy of the question has prevented frank investigation of a subject so vitally affecting fundamental truth. Readers of The Restitution Herald are well aware of my belief that any discussion is more than half won if proved fact is made its pivotal center.

Knowing well in my own heart that I did believe the Scripture truth "every thing after its kind," and knowing also that God's Word distinctly declares that "God is one," that He is "the only true God," and that "beside Him there is no God," I felt certain there must be an error in our friend's presentation and support of the trinitarian doctrine. Turning to the passage in Genesis 1 on which the whole weight of his argument is based, we began our study. The old law has

reference to terrestrial life. The means adopted is by what many deem to be the crowning masterpiece of God's creation, the seed, the law, and the means being the same in the vegetable and the animal kingdom, including man. In every instance but one, in the more than one hundred occurrences in Scripture, the seed of the man is the determining factor in giving birth to new life. The one exception referred to is the "seed of the woman." Its application to the birth of Christ is accepted by every believer in the Word of God. Never in all Scripture is Christ connected with any other than human seed. Our correspondent's argument should be regarded with horror by every true Christian as suggestive evidence that God had Himself departed from His own law of the mingling of species. As if to anticipate any such thought and give it flat denial, the Word tells us that Christ was born of a virgin.

Further, it cannot be denied that any such union would result in the break-up of the very law it is so strongly desired to maintain, for the outcome would be hybrid. Under such circumstances it would be impossible for Christ to be "as much true and living God as His Father." Orthodoxy unconsciously recognizes this by calling Christ "the God-man" and this action our correspondent unhesitatingly supports. It is noteworthy that Scripture never makes use of such a term, and that should itself safeguard the believer from accepting any doctrine that cannot be expressed by Scriptural language. The Bible definitely and distinctly informs us that "God is not a man," and it further declares that "there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5, B.V.).

Christ never once claimed to be God, but He did claim to be man (John 8:40). We thus see that the Bible truth, "after its kind," instead of being an argument for the deity of Christ, is in reality a strong argument against it, and against the doctrine of the trinity. Further, if the Holy Spirit is a person, then undeniably he must be the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not the one whom Scripture calls "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In what sense then is Jesus the Christ "the only begotten Son of God? Luke, the beloved physician, is authority for the statement that Adam was a "son of God" (Luke 3:38), using the same expression made use of over seventy times in his genealogy of Jesus Christ. How was Adam God's son? Not by begetting, but by creation! He was "made" (see Gen. 1:26, 1 Cor. 15:45). How was Jesus Christ God's Son? He was "made" and "begotten" (Gal. 4:4; Luke 1:35). He was begotten in Mary through the power of the Highest, that is, through the Holy Spirit. Being thus begotten, He could rightly "be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Being the only Son so begotten, He becomes "the only begotten Son of God."

### The Living Word

"The Globe (Toronto daily) takes up another line of thought in an endeavor to prove the pre-existent deity of Jesus the Christ. In its regular Wednesday editorial on religious subjects, it featured an article, "The Living Word." Like our previously mentioned correspondent, and "orthodox" authorities in general, it assumes without any precedent that "logos" is an actual person, in proof of which we quote the following: "One thing is certain, the Word of God is a person. The

majestic opening of John's Gospel makes this plain. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,' and then, lest we should think the mysterious Word a mere concept or philosophical abstraction, John goes on to declare 'the Word was made flesh'."

So evidently does he see the possibility, nay, the probability, that "logos" may be regarded correctly as a synonym for "speech" or "promise" (for the Hebrew words for "word" and "promise" are the same) that he hastens to attribute a motive to John, of which he has no proof. The "mystery" is his own, and not inherent in the Scriptural statement. The language employed in either the Greek or the English, in its primary sense and its general sense as used in Scripture, has reference to events recorded in Genesis 1. The often repeated phrase "and God said" makes this abundantly clear. Further, both Paul and Peter declare the same truth in agreement with John. The words of Peter in 2 Peter 3:5 are practically parallel to the words of John. "By the word of God the heavens were of old." David, in Psalm 33:6 wrote, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Indeed it is worthy of note that Peter uses the identical Greek word logos that was used by John. Not until he comes to the statement, "the word was made flesh," can the writer of "The Globe" editorial extract personality from the language of John. No true Christian disputes the fact that personality then came to be.

The next point in his argument is that "though John the Baptist was older than the man Jesus, speaking of Jesus he said, 'He

was before me.'” From these words he draws the conclusion that John teaches the personal pre-existence of Christ in some other form than man. His emphasis on the word “man” in the foregoing quotation is intended to imply this. We admit the truth of the statement that “John was older than the man Jesus.” But it is equally true that it was of the man Jesus John spoke when he said, “He was before me.” What then did John mean? He could not have meant that Christ existed before him in the sense of personality, for the reasons and facts already stated. Again we ask, What did he mean? How was Jesus Christ before John? Surely it is clear that he existed in type and symbol as no other man ever existed, or will exist. He was woven by the prophetic Word into the very fabric of national life. As He said to the Jews, “If ye believe not that I am he [the one of whom all Scripture speaks], ye shall die in your sins.” Truly John was unworthy to unloose the shoes of such a man, but it never entered into his thoughts that he would thereby unloose the shoes of God.

Now briefly we refer to a remark in the same article that “Jesus Christ is Himself God.” Some Biblical statements are so emphatic, so clear and precise, that one meaning and one only can be deduced from them. Others admit of more than one interpretation. Among the former class are such positive statements as “God is one,” that He is “the only true God,” and that there is “none other God but one.” On these emphatic statements of God’s Word we may stand as upon a rock, in full assurance that every other text can, without violence, be brought into harmony with them. To say, as some do, that the words “one” and “only” are set against the

“gods many and Lords many” of the heathen does not exonerate the wrong of stating one, were more than one an actual fact. It is true “there are some things God cannot do.” He “cannot lie.” I think also we may reverently add that He cannot alter numerical values, else nothing in the whole universe could be computed.

One of the most serious points in connection with this and kindred subjects is the sad fact that many more sponsors of the doctrine of the trinity are compelled to use language alien to the Scriptures, and statements that are, to say the least, incorrect. Dr. R. A. Torrey, in his “Fundamentals of the Christian Faith,” says the Hebrew word for “one” (echad) “denotes compound unity, not simple unity.” That statement has been widely repeated in Christian journals, such as “The Evangelical Christian” of Toronto, by Prof. Ayngell and others. What are the facts which anyone, with the help of Young’s Concordance, may readily ascertain? Time and time again it is used for simple unity. Strictly speaking, from a numerical standpoint, (and that is the issue here) there can be no such thing as compound unity. The doctor gives as illustrations a bunch of grapes and a bundle of sticks. Clearly the numeral has reference to the bunch. It is one bunch of grapes, as against two or more bunches; one bundle of sticks, as against two or more bundles. It is the bundle that is counted, not the things in the bundle. The Bible truth that God is one, in the strictest sense that word conveys, stands on sure foundations, as I think we have abundantly demonstrated. Let us believe Scripture when it says, “There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5, R.V.).

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