

On the Sonship of Christ

Brother Beebe; - This subject, the sonship of Christ, is one of no trifling importance, in our rightly understanding the great doctrine of salvation. Could we be led to a clear apprehension and reception of the scripture revelation on this point, without blending anything of human wisdom therewith, it would be a precious privilege.

I would here entreat my Old School brethren not to be alarmed though in presenting what appears to me clearly the testimony of scripture on this point, I should give some views not generally received by the professing world, until they have calmly examined the proofs presented, and compared them with such as may be suggested as supporting different views. If after such examination, they find that in this, and in the preceding communication relating to the existence of God, as three and one, I have mistaken the voice of scripture, they will do well to show the mistake.

When we look into the scriptures in reference to this subject, we find the sonship of Christ therein presented to view as threefold; as the Son of man, the Son of David, and the Son of God. Each of these demand some attention, in a careful enquiry on this subject. But the examination of the two former, I intend shall be brief, and indeed of the third also, so far as the importance of the subject will justify.

1st. - What is implied in Christ's being called the Son of man? The term, son of man, we find repeatedly used in the Old Testament. Sometimes in reference to mankind at large, as denoting their vanity, vileness, mortality, &c. See Num.23:19, Job 25:6; Ps.146:3, among other texts. It is a term particularly appropriated to Ezekiel as a prophet. It is said he is so called about eighty-nine times in his prophecy, and Christ about eighty times in the four gospels. I have however not counted for myself. Why Ezekiel is so peculiarly designated, I know not; unless it was to point him out particularly, as typical of Christ, as the Son of man; in its being his lot to prophecy about and in the time of the captivity of his people for their transgressions, and his having representively to bear some of those punishments he was directed to denounce. See chap's. 4, 5 and 12:1-7. Christ is twice, if not thrice, designated by this term in the Old Testament. Ps.80:17 & Dan.7:13. In most instances in which the term is used in the New Testament, the Lord, I think uses it Himself, of Himself. But the enquiry is, why does He so denominate Himself? It is evidently not to designate Him as literally the posterity, or as having come into Adam's place or anything of that kind. For in regard to His assumption of humanity, the scriptures are particular in guarding against the idea of His being literally the son of man. In this point of view He is revealed as the seed of the woman. Gen.3:15. Isaiah also prophesied: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Chap.7:14. And the angel in answer to the enquiry of Mary on this point describes His production thus: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." He adds, "therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:34,35. Here His humanity in distinction from being the son or offspring of man, is declared to be the Son of God. But the term Son of God here I do not understand as denoting the same as His being the Begotten of the Father, &c. The term here I think corresponds with the same term as applied to Adam, (Luke 3:38,) and is designed to denote that His manhood was, as was Adam's, produced by the immediate creating power of God, without the intervention of secondary causes. Hence His not participating in human depravity. Perhaps Christ's being called the Son of man may be designed in part to denote Him as the heir of the world, for as Abraham's seed, He is the heir of the world. See Rom.4:13; compared with Gal.3:16. In thus contemplating Him, we must view Him as in connection with His body the Church; and in this point of view, we shall see Him to be the only heir of creation; He in His church being the whole substance and

object of creation and that for which the world stands. Hence all things were made for Him, as well as by Him. Col.1:16. But in a more particular sense, the Lord's portion is His people, and Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. Deut.32:9. That however which I think is more directly intended by Christ's being revealed as the Son of man, and what constitutes Him more manifestly the Antitype of Ezekiel, was His inheriting, in consequence of inheriting Jacob, their law standing, their sins, infirmities, sorrows, death, and curse. "For as much as the children," (the children God had given Him, but who were the natural heirs, the begotten sons of man,) "were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death," &c. Heb.2:14. Herein was He most astonishingly manifested as the Son of man, in being made under the law, made sin, made a man of sorrows, made a curse, &c., &c. Hence it is, that whilst He is so repeatedly called the Son of man in the Evangelists, He is no where, that I recollect, so called in any other part of the New Testament.

2nd: Christ's sonship as the Son of David is the next subject of our enquiries.

We find Him repeatedly addressed as the Son of David. But Christ indirectly, though clearly, rejects the idea of being the Son of David, on one occasion, that is, of being so in the sense in which the Jews understand the Messiah would be David's son, namely: in a natural sense. Mt.22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37. Hence it cannot be that it was as being a natural descendant of David, that He is called the Son of David. It is true that this name, as does the name Son of man, relates to His being manifested, in the flesh, and to His being of the seed of David; that is, as the Apostle explains it, being "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom.1:3. But I think a due consideration of the scriptures which I will shortly refer to will satisfy the candid enquirer that the sonship of Christ as the Son of David related particularly to His exaltation in human nature as the King of Zion, of Israel; and as the Covenanted Heir of the throne of Israel, as being that seed of David more particularly intended in the covenant God established with Him as mentioned. II Sam.7:4-16; 23:5; Ps.89:19-37. It was necessary that He should be "made of the seed of David," and be born in Bethlehem, the town of David's nativity, that He might be visibly manifested as this Covenanted seed of David, as that "Righteous Branch whom the Lord should raise unto David." Jer.23:5. But that Christ's sonship as the son of David consisted in His being the King of Zion, having His dominion established in the earth, and over the nations of the earth, is evident from the fact, that all those prophecies which speak of Him as the offspring of David thus describe particularly His reign. See Ps.72; Isa.9:6,7 & chap. 11; Jer.33:15-17, &c.; as also from the manner in which He is spoken of, and addressed in the New Testament. The angel Gabriel says unto Mary concerning her son: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32,33. Thus also His entry into Jerusalem as the "King of the daughter of Zion," as foretold, Zech.9:9, as the SON OF DAVID, as He "that cometh in the name of the Lord," &c., according to Luke 19:38, as "the King that cometh," &c., and according to John 12:13, as the "King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord," &c. (Denoting the different modes of expression by which Christ as the Son of David is described - each pointing to His kingly office.) Hence these several terms, KING, KING OF ISRAEL, &c., are by the Holy Ghost used to denote Christ as the Son of David. Hence His being the King of Israel and being the Son of David is one and the same thing.

3rdly. We now come to a consideration of the sonship of Christ as the Son of God.

Here we at once meet with a peculiar distinction of this sonship from the other two. This is a begotten sonship. He is revealed as the only begotten Son of God. The others are not begotten sonships; they relate to His humanity. He became a Son in those respects, in consequence of His union with His people; as in this respect, as it will be shown, His people are sons of God in consequence of their union with Him. Christ is then truly the Son of God. But what does His sonship in this respect consist in? In His Godhead? In His humanity? Or in something else? 1st: That it does not consist IN HIS

GODHEAD, or in His personal distinction in the Godhead, which is the doctrine of the Nicene Creed; I should think has already been clearly shown in treating on God's existence as THREE AND ONE, by the proof produced establishing the fact that Christ in the distinct relation which He sustains in the Godhead, is revealed as the one God, the Jehovah, and therefore as being absolutely self-existent and independent, in His being, as in the Father. 2nd: The idea that His sonship, as the Son of God, consists of His being born of Mary, I should think would be given up on reflecting that His other sonships related to His humanity and were therefore not begotten sonships, whereas in this sonship He is begotten of God. But in the further prosecution of this enquiry other considerations will present themselves in opposition to this idea.

In examining the New Testament on this subject, it will, I think, appear very manifest. 1st: That Christ, as the Son of God, sustains a subordinate relation to the Father. Let us look at some of the principle texts relative to Christ's superior glory as the Son of God. In John 3:16-18, whilst Christ is declared to be God's only begotten Son, the testimony is that God gave His only begotten Son, &c., consequently the Son as such was subject to the Father. Turning to John 5:17, 30, we find the Son declaring His superior authority as such, over the SABBATH and to EXECUTE JUDGMENT, &c.; yet throughout the passage He acknowledgeth His subordination to the Father. His language is, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." (John 5:19) "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," &c. See also John 10:16 - 18. Passing to John chap. 17, and we behold the Son praying to the Father to be glorified with that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, (verse 5,) thus acknowledging a dependence on the Father before the world was. Hence He must have been a Son before He was made flesh. In I Cor. 15:27, 28, Paul having spoken (vs. 24) of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father, saith, "For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Here again the subordination of the Son, as such, to the Father, is declared in language as plain as can be expressed. In Col. 1:12-20, the greatness, the glory, and vast superiority of Christ, as God's dear Son, over every created thing in heaven, and in earth, is declared; and yet all this was by the Father's pleasure; not of His own independent will. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell," &c. vs. 19. Again in Heb. chap. 1, the great superiority of the Son over angels is shown; and yet all this glory, is by the Father's pleasure. He appointed Him heir over all things; He said unto Him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son." vs. 5. (See Ps. 2:7-11; II Sam. 7:14) - "And when He bringeth His first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." vs. 6. Can anything be more explicit than this chapter to show the subordination of the Son to the Father, as well as to show His great superiority as the Son, over the angels? I have selected these texts in which the highest authority, exaltation, &c., of the Son as such is declared, and have shown that as thus presented to view in His exaltation, His subordination to the Father is manifested; so that it cannot with any show of candor be said, that this subordination belonged only to His humiliation, as the Son. Still I know men have said, and will say that it is only as the Mediator, the Redeemer, that He is spoken of in these and the like passages. I will only say in return, that when they can convince me, the Holy Ghost has been mistaken in the terms He authorized to be used, I may admit their right to substitute other terms, conveying other ideas, for those He has employed; but I think not before. Let us however examine one or two of the passages already referred to. Take I Cor. 15:28. And we shall find that instead of the Holy Ghost's intimating that the Son, only in His Mediatorial office, shall thus be subject to the Father, it is expressly affirmed, that the Son also Himself, shall be subject, &c., thus confirming the fact by an emphatic expression, that it is of the Son Himself, the affirmation is made. And in Heb. 1:5, instead of its reading, Thou art my appointed Mediator, and I will be the one God and thou shalt be the one Mediator, the

affirmation is: "Thou art my Son," &c. "And I will be to Him a Father," &c. Thus the idea which I contended for in some of the preceding communications, namely: that a begotten existence, implied a derivative, and as therefore a dependent existence, is sustained by the whole revelation of Christ as the Son of God, by His subordination to the Father, therein manifested. And such subordination in a son is sanctioned by the voice of nature, of reason, and of God. God says, "Honour thy father and thy mother." &c. Ex.20:12. And Christ says, "I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me." John 8:49. Hence it is evident, that the revelation made of Christ as the only begotten Son of God, is not a revelation of the modus of His existence as Jehovah, as the Father's fellow or equal. His sonship therefore must relate to something other than to His essential existence as God.

But the Athanasians say that God in begetting a Son, must have begotten one in His own nature, and must therefore have begotten Him God, &c. This reasoning would be correct if God in begetting His Son was subject to the law of generation, by which man is governed. But the subjection of God to such a law, I think they would hardly contend for. The expression as used in reference to God, is evidently designed to denote the putting forth His producing power, in a way distinct from the act of creation, but peculiar to Himself, further than this we cannot say. But still there is in the person of the Son of God, a conformity to the law of generation, by which everything produces its like. For in His person, whilst He is the begotten Son of God, He possesses also the fullness of the Godhead, is the Jehovah equally with the Father, not as the product of the Father's begetting, but essentially so, of Himself as God. He therefore in His person possesses every quality and lineament of the Son of God, is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. Hence whilst as the Son, He with propriety saith, "My Father is greater than I," &c., (John 14:28,) with equal truth He saith, "I and my Father are ONE." John 10:30. So also, the Father could with truth, on the one hand, address Him, the Son, thus: "Thy throne O God is forever and ever," &c., and on the other hand, say to Him, "God even thy God hath anointed thee," &c. Heb.1:8,9.

This subject being too lengthy for one communication, I will continue in another.

On the Sonship of Christ.

(Concluded)

Brother Beebe: - Having in the preceding Number shown satisfactorily as I trust, from the testimony of the scriptures concerning Christ, that His sonship as the Son of God does not consist in His essential existence as God; because in that He is self-existent and independent, equally with the Father; nor in His assumption of humanity, for in that, He was made under the law, and took the form of a servant, (Gal.4:4; Phil.2:7;) and therefore, surely He has a higher sonship than this; it remains to be shown in what other character He is revealed, in which His sonship as the Son of God may consist. He is certainly revealed as the Head of His church and people, and as so existing before the foundation of the world. He was set up from everlasting, and brought forth when there were no depths, &c. Pv.8:23-27. As God, He could not be set up, as man, He was not brought forth until the fullness of time. "He who was to be Ruler in Israel, had His goings forth from of old, from everlasting." Mi.5:2. Christ as the Head and His church as His body must ever have existed together; for neither can the head exist without the body, nor the body without the head. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you," I Cor.12:21; compared with vs.12. His people as His posterity existed in Him their Head "before the foundation of the world;" for they were

then chosen in Him, and "predestinated by Him to the adoption of children." Eph.1:4,5. If it was as they were predestinated to the adoption, they were chosen in Him, He must as their Head have been, a son also. Thus is it made manifest how Adam was made in the image of God, that is, in the image of the Son, who is God, and by "whom all things were made," and how he was the "figure of Him that was to come;" that is in that Adam was made male and female, as well as made with his posterity in him. See Gen.1:27; Rom.5:14. The Apostle contrasts the two Heads of their respective posterity's in this way, "The first man is of the earth, earthly: the second man is the Lord from heaven." I Cor.15:47. If the first man in being made of the earth was made a servant, then as contrasted with him, He who was the Lord from heaven, was not a servant, but a Son - and so is the contrast between Moses and Him. Heb.3:5,6. Herein, then, as the Head of His church, and of His seed, and as contrasted with Adam as the earthly head, who was made a servant, do I understand the sonship of Christ as the Son of God to consist. I am confirmed in this by the testimony of the following texts which I will notice. 1st: In immediate connection with the text just quoted (I Cor.15:47) we read: "As is the earthly such are they also that are earthly, and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly." Now we do know that the posterity of Adam are born, servants under the law, and that when the posterity of Christ are born, that is when any are born again, they are no more servants, but sons, sons of God. See Gal.4:7; John 1:12,13 & Rom.8:14. If then, in the former class; their being born servants, was in likeness to their head the earthly, then, in the other class their being born sons of God, must be in likeness of their Head, the heavenly. If so, I ask, is not the conclusion irresistible that He as the heavenly Head is the Son of God? The testimony of Rom.8:29 is "for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." It is then in the image of the Son of God, that His people are born sons; but they bear of course the image of their head; it must be as their Head then, that He is the Son of God. But further, if He is the "first-born among many brethren," and He of course was born a Son, then He and they must have been born of the same seed, the same parentage, and be sons together. And how could this be, but as they were begotten and brought forth? And therefore He was the only begotten and first-born of the Father, with a seed, a posterity in Him. In accordance with this idea of a common parentage, He says to Mary: "But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." John 20:17. Again, wherein His people are spoken of as "many sons to be brought to glory," it is said: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying," &c. Immediately after it is added: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me," &c. Heb.2:10-13. Hence Christ recognizes these many sons both as His brethren and as His children. In this is fully carried out the parallel, between Christ as a Son and Head and His seed, as sons with Him, and Adam and his posterity, with him. The posterity of Adam are all the creatures of God, but God finished the work of creation in six days (Gen.2:1-3,) hence the human family are all but that one creation which God made when He "formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," &c. Gen.2:7. As Adam and his posterity were thus all of one lump, of one foundation, so Christ and His people are here all represented as being of one, are of one begetting, one brotherhood, all brought forth in Him, in that life which was in Him, the Word, and which sanctifies them, sets them apart, or manifests them as the children of God. As Adam and his posterity are alike the creatures of God, so Christ is not ashamed to call His people Brethren. Again as the human family are the children of Adam, being born of that life of which he was the head, that is in their distinct manifestation; so the people of God, in their being manifested as such, are the children of Christ, (not mediately, but directly, He being distinguished from Adam in this, that He is the Everlasting Father,) in that they are born of that life which was in Him, the Word, are made partakers of His spirit. John 1:4, Rom.8:9 & Gal.4:6. And indeed Christ is their life. Col.3:3,4. Is it not then manifest that as Adam in being created a human being, was created the head of the human family; so Christ in being the only begotten of the Father, was begotten as the Head of the sons of God? I might pursue this subject and show that throughout the New Testament, His people, in that life which He is to

them, are connected with His sonship as the Son of God. Thus; Does their heirship rest on their being the children of God? They are as such "joint heirs with Him." Is He spoken of in His superior glory as the Son of God? He has "His fellows," and is the Head of His body the church, though Himself in "all things having the preeminence." See Rom.8:17; Heb.1:9 & Col.1:18. But proof sufficient has been brought to establish the point, and here I might close, were it not for the objections against this position arising, from other considerations than want of proof to the point. These it seems proper to notice. 1st: There seems to be among many, very vague and indeterminate ideas as to what constitutes the bond of union between Christ and His people, and consequently wherein His headship consists; some would seem to represent it as merely nominal. From this source therefore objections will arise to the idea I have given of the sonship of Christ. This subject must on this account receive some attention. Whilst regenerating, or quickening is in the scripture ascribed, to each, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and believers are called children and sons of God, I think all consistent Old School Baptists, and I mean by such, those who have searched the scriptures in dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to derive their ideas concerning all parts of religion from thence, instead of taking them second handed from Doctor Gill or any other author; I say such will readily admit that Christ Jesus, the Son distinctively, is revealed as standing in a peculiar relation to His people, such as is not affirmed of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Not only in that they are said to be His as the gift of the Father; redeemed by Him, &c., but they are collectively, that is as His church, declared to be His bride, His body, and even the "fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Eph.1:23. Here the oneness of Christ and His church as she is distinctively manifested, is far more full than that of the type, Adam and Eve. Eve was a rib taken from Adam's side, but the church is His Body itself, the fullness of Him, is Himself, is the Abraham's seed which He is. See Gal.3:16-29. He must therefore be the living and abiding Head of His church. Again, His people are spoken of as His posterity, He calls them His children as has been noticed. Heb.2:13; Isa.8:18. They are called His seed. Ps.22:30, Isa.53:10; Ps.89:29-36. And they are declared to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Eph.5:30. And He is their life and therefore the Head or fountain of it. Col.3:4. On the other hand the testimony of scripture is full to the point that the believer has an existence distinct from that which he derived from Adam. He is said to be born again, in a birth as distinct from his natural one, as spirit is distinct from flesh. John 3:3-6. To be quickened in a sense in which he was before dead. John 5:25; Eph.2:1-5. To be a new creature. II Cor.5:17. And to have been created, not in Adam, in this sense, but in Christ Jesus. Eph.2:10. Now that, of which all these affirmations are true, must be a living principle, real existence. It is declared to be of incorruptible seed, and to be everlasting life. I Pet.1:23; John 3:36. The union therefore of Christ and His people must be a real living union, and He a real head of this union. Of the existence of this new principle the believer is sensible not, by external observation, but by its effects, as we know that the wind bloweth. John 3:8.

Now the point of enquiry is, what is this new life, or existence? It is not the essential nature of God, every believer knows. For as he discovers its existence in Him, he finds it far from possessing the essential attributes of the Godhead, such as self-existence, independence, omnipotency. It is spirituality, holiness, and love, in these things the new man is after the image of Him who created Him. Col.3:10. But some have inferred from what Peter says, that the believer has, in his new birth implanted in him, the divine nature. But what is Peter's statement? "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." To whom were these promises given? To the believer, - that by these, by these promises, he might be a partaker of the divine nature, not that he certainly was a partaker of it in regeneration. And truly God has so given Himself to His people in His promises, that when by faith they can take hold of those promises, they apprehend God in all His attributes, as their help, their wisdom, power, defense, &c. But certainly brethren, we are not gods. The believer is, in his experience much farther from it; than before he believed.

Others suppose that Christ's being made flesh was what constituted the union of Him and His people.

But this would rather make them the head, for it was in consequence of their being partakers of flesh and blood, that He took part of the same. But they were His children before He partook of this nature. Heb.2:13,14. It would make the woman the head, for in His being made flesh, He was manifested as the Seed of the woman. Besides the believer knows that his human nature was derived, not from Him who was the Lord from heaven, but from him who was made of the earth, earthy. He has all the evidence he wants of this, from the earthiness and depravity of his nature.

Some may suppose the preexistent soul of Christ to be that which constitutes the bond of union of Him and His people. If so, why does it not constitute Him the head of all who have souls? But brethren, had you not souls before you were regenerated? And did they not betray their origin as being of the earthy Adam, by their being depraved? Our western brethren, however if I understand them, do not make the preexistent soul of Christ, the bond of union, but the repository of that which constitutes the union. But the scriptures I think reveal a far safer repository for the believer's life than any created being could be, even God Himself, as I shall notice. It must then be that the new man of the believer, that by which he is manifested as the seed of Christ, is distinct both from the Godhead and from humanity. It is not earthly like humanity, but spiritual and heavenly. It is not independent in its powers of action like the Godhead. To will is present with the believer, but how to perform that which is good he finds not. But some one will hastily say, why, to represent Christ as the Head of such a distinct life, would be to represent Him as possessing a third nature distinct from His Godhead and humanity. And does this alarm you, my brother? Though you may not have thought of it in this form, yet have you not in substance believed it. Do you feel that you are as young gods? Or do you believe with the Arminian that regeneration is nothing but giving a new bias to the old nature? If so, it will be of no use to argue this point with you. But if you believe a new principle, a living principle of holiness, righteousness and love is imparted in regeneration, and that this was derived from Christ as the Head, do you not believe that it had a previous existence in Him, and that you therefore existed in Him, in this life, before the foundation of the world? Or what was the existence you then had in Him? But to the law and to the testimony on the point. Let us come to the 1st of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." This Word then who, whilst He is declared as distinct from one who is also God, is declared to be God, and the Maker of all things, must have been essentially life itself. When therefore it is affirmed in vs.4 that, "In Him was life," it must refer to a life in Him, distinct from His essential existence. "And the life was the light of men." Can there be any mistake then in understanding this life as being the life which is communicated in regeneration, and which delivers from the power of darkness? But this was in Him distinct from His essential existence as God. It is also distinct from His humanity; for it is afterwards, vs.14, affirmed of Him that He was made flesh. Need I bring any further proof to the point? We have it in vs.14, compared with vs.16, and with II Tim.1:9, as well as in other texts. That which was His glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was His fullness of grace and truth, of which all believers have received. And truly the life they derive from Christ is grace and truth compared with their life in Adam.

One point more. Does this view of the Sonship of Christ derogate from His divine and essential glory as God? Not in the least. His person is more exalted in this view of the subject, for whilst He is the Son of God, He is absolutely Jehovah, equally with the Father. This life which is the begotten of God exists in the Word or Son, as God, - it never has, nor ever will exist separate from the Godhead, either in the Son or in His people. In Him was life. And of His people He says unto His Father: "I in them and thou in me." John 17:23. As the only begotten Son He is said to be in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18. As Christ He is hid in God, for the life of His people are hid with Him in God. Col.3:3. This life does not exist in His people without God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." I Cor.3:16. See also I John 4:12-15,16; and John 14:15,16. Although believers are conscious of a principle distinct from nature being in them, from the holy and heavenly desires they

have, and from the warfare within, which could not exist were there not two opposite principles within; yet this new principle has no independent powers of action. The believer cannot of himself exercise faith on a single promise, nor bring into exercise a single holy affection to the suppression of those which are unholy. And so we are told, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of His good pleasure." Phil.2:13. Christ says, "without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Herein perhaps is where some have confounded the Holy Ghost, which is God, with the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God's Son which the believer has, Rom.8:9; Gal.4:6, because the Holy Ghost dwells with such.

From a review of this whole subject, well may we exclaim with the beloved disciple, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," &c. I John 3:1. Brethren what an exalted religion doth the believer stand in to God, as having from everlasting been one with His only begotten and well beloved Son. Beloved as He was, begotten in Him, hid in Him, and living in His life. The union does not stop in heaven, they were sons of Adam, of condemnation and death, He became the Son of man, sunk below them under the curse, and raised them when He arose, and made them sharers of His dominion as the Son of David. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," are His words. Sharers they are in His justification from the law, in His triumphs over death, over the grave, over the curse, and in His exalted glory. John 17:22, compared with vs.5.

Here then I have given a view of my sentiments on this important subject. Are they supported by scripture and experience, or are they not? Brethren examine candidly before you join in the cry of heretic which has been attempted to be raised against me on account thereof. And may God lead you to a righteous judgment in the case.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia,

July 28, 1840 – Part 1

Sept.2, 1840 – Part 2

S. Trott.

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