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A MEDITATION ON THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

by

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(Presented by Dr. Leasby)

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CHAPTER I

A religion, to endure as a living force, must have for its object an actually Living Person. Christianity, both as a creed and as a way of life, depends absolutely upon the Person and Character of its Founder, the Living Christ. We can see the Divine Father in what this Jesus is and does as man. The Living Christ manifested within the limits of His humanity supernatural knowledge and miraculous powers, and His entire life may be summed up as an act of uniting us with the God He revealed. Through Jesus, we become one with God; we are all of God, of one Father, realized and accomplished through Jesus Christ, who, being eternally God, humbled Himself to be born in us that we may be exalted to sit with Him on the immortal throne and share His divine Life. It is essential, then, that the Christian church and the individual Christian keep close to the sacred Person of Jesus, who is the uncreated Divine Essence, personally distinct from, and yet literally equal to, Him of whom in Essence He is equal, and is the adequate portrayal.

Jesus acted the most rationally, the most naturally, the most humanly of all men who ever lived. Yet throughout His teachings, He distinctly places Himself on terms of equality with the Father. He claims a parity of working power; He claims an equal right to the homage of mankind. But beyond this assertion of equal operative Power with the Father, and of an equal right to the homage of mankind, is our Lord's revelation of His absolute Oneness with the Father (John 10:38). Jesus consistently sets forth Himself as a Person internal to the Essential Life of God, and within the incommunicable unity of God, is still Himself; He is not the Father, but the Second of the Three Persons of the Godhead. Himself true God, He is also God's Perfect Revelation and Expression of absolute religion before all men.

The Father is no more God without Christ than is Christ God without the Father. Yet both have an inherent and independent, not merely a conditional and relationary, existence. The Divine Christ is internal to the Divine Essence. He is of the one Substance with the Father, and in this sense, as distinct from any other, He is properly and literally divine. In Adam we see God as immanent creative wisdom and power; but in Christ we see God not in a natural operation, but a Person, a personal, spiritual Presence in a transcendental interrelation. This postulates the existence in God of certain real distinctions having their necessary basis in the Essence of the Godhead. That Three such distinctions exist is a matter of revelation. These distinct forms of Beings are named Persons. Therefore we assert that God is One with respect to His Essence, and is Three with respect to the eternal distinctions of that Essence and modes of Being. While the same Essence belongs to each of the Divine Persons, nevertheless there is a Tripersonality of the Godhead, three eternal distinctions in the Substance of God, three distinct hypostases or subsistences, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ, the Second of the Holy Trinity, is God's appeal to our hearts. He is Divinity's call to us. He is the Author, the Completion of our faith; He is Himself Divine Expression of Divinity who has made a perfect identification with us in nature and attainment. Yet theories of subordination, distinctions of the derivation from the absolute Divine, to views of Christ as a sort of secondary God, simply do not measure up to the Biblical Trinity of the three eternal aspects of the Divine Nature, facing inward on each other as well as outward on the world. Jesus Christ is eternally, essentially, and inseparably God. He is Divine Truth transcendental, our pattern. He is also Truth immanent, the Divine Principle and Eternal Process Incarnate.

The application to Christ of titles and names exclusively appropriated to God has been thought by some as not fitting, inasmuch as they regarded Christ as a subordinate and created being. In harmony with this line of reasoning, these opponents of Christ's absolute Divinity have propounded various theories of subordination that have professed denial of our Lord's real Divinity; have denied that the Son is personally distinct from the Father, and maintained that He is one side or one phase of the Father's character--an obvious revival of the notion of emanation from the Godhead, and fatal therefore to the real permanent coherence of God and man to the one person of Christ. Yet it is because Jesus Christ is perfect God that He is perfect Love and the infinite Power of God unto our salvation. He is Divine Love and Power incarnate. In Him we see not only God in man, but the Eternal God in Person; and it is the sting and poison of an excess of dogmatism founded upon a mass of abstract words to darken human thought that would take from Jesus His rightful place in the Divine Godhead.

Heathen concepts of the Word and Wisdom, which expressed no clear idea of personality, were clothed with Christian phraseology in an attempt to incorporate them in Christian beliefs. There was apparently a failure to recognize that if it had pleased God to embody the Eternal Abstract of His Wisdom in a personal substance for the creation of the world, the being so employed was only a creature, distinguished by greater responsibility from the things he created. It became necessary for God to use the Apostle John to present to us a consistent view of the Divine Word, Wisdom Incarnate, Jesus the Word.

The most startling revelation God ever made was Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. This coming of God in the flesh lies at the very beginning of the Gospel. The Incarnation is the great objective fact of Christianity;

God entered into relations with mankind, He set forth Himself as their Deliverer. Jesus makes vivid the Personality of the Divinity.

The Incarnation, then, is a central point from which we may approach the eternity which preceded it, as well as the eternity which follows it. The taking by Jesus of the natural flesh of the Virgin Mary is the only thing upon which our minds can fix which at all resembles a beginning of His being. Man's eternal salvation, and the union of the human race with God, which are secured only in Christ, are intelligible only when Christ is recognized as the Godman in whom two natures are so perfectly united that each has the virtue of both. Therefore the truth of Christ's humanity, His human glory, fades from our eyes when we make an attempt to conceive of it apart from the eternally fixed truth of His Divinity. He is only Perfect Man because He is Perfect God.

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ was not the conversion of Godhead into flesh, but the taking of manhood into God. Human nature, which exists only in individual persons, Jesus took for the earthly clothing of that Divine Personality in which He must ever continue to exist. What Christ associated to Himself was no individual man, but that common nature of which Adam was the first example. Therefore Jesus embodies the powers and attributes of two natures; in His Person two natures are organically and indissolubly united. Christians recognize in Christ a single and undivided Personality. It is not that He assumed a man's person unto His own, but a man's nature to His own Person, and therefore He took the seed of Abraham, the very first original element of our nature, before it was come to have any human subsistence. Jesus took that common nature of man which is handed down through an innumerable series of personal inheritors. He who was personally God, took His place in that series by Incarnation, and thus assumed a common relation to all its possessors. In His conception in the Virgin's womb He took the original

elements of our being, and into those weak and poor elements of our nature there flowed the very might, wisdom, and purity of Eternal Deity. He yet possessed all the attributes of Godhead. His humiliation merely meant that He chose not to employ the independent exercise of those attributes.

Therefore, in Jesus Christ the human and the Divine natures are not mixed together so as to form a third, for then the result would be neither God nor man, but some kind of compound nature; it must be the conjunction of one Personality with two natures; Christ is One, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person. Further, in Christ, the human is not so completely identified with what is Divine as to be its measure or limit, but with the Godhead and manhood intimately allied in the One Person, we have, not a loss of the finite nature, but that it is comprehended in the Infinite. So accepted, not only is Christ the central point of Christianity, but He is Christianity itself, the embodied Reconciliation.

Each Person of the Godhead is the measure of the Other. We cannot be united to Divinity, but only to humanity comprehended in Divinity. Therefore humanity was joined to Divinity in Christ, and is the means that unites us to the Godhead. This union is by spiritual power, and not by any material contact. The possibility of the union of Deity and humanity in one person is foreshadowed in the original creation of man in God's image and likeness. In Adam the original material of humanity, in Christ the original idea of it in the Divine mind, have a personal existence. In them is humanity concentrated, therefore Adam's sin is the sin of all, and Christ's sacrifice a universal atonement. In Eden Adam needed corroboration, but not improvement. He came from his Creator's hands, perfect in his parts, with his whole being in complete harmony, and with the whole of his being in subordination to the higher. Sin broke the harmony, and unbalance resulted. Nevertheless, man's possession

of a rational and spiritual nature became indeed a condition of the Incarnation.

Jesus took upon Himself this unbalanced human nature in its reality and completeness (Luke 2:52); so that our Lord's limitations and increase of knowledge, for example, are due to the fact that as man knowledge came through His manhood. Of Omniscience, as with other Divine attributes, Christ partakes in that He is God; but in that He is also man, He can receive knowledge (or any other virtue) only so far as His human nature is its fit recipient. The possession of the union of the two natures does not involve a double personality. Therefore Christ does not possess two consciousnesses and two wills. Therefore Divine wisdom produced its impression on Christ's human soul according to the occasion. It is this fact that precludes any absurdity in supposing that Christ during the time of His mission on earth, when such knowledge was needless to Him, should have been ignorant, for example, of the Day of Judgment, or the day of the Second Coming. The Incarnation of Jesus was as great an abeyance of the Divine (if it is permissible so to speak of Divine Persons) as it was an exaltation of human nature; and it must have been in reference to this second fact that the Psalmist expressed himself:

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thine footstool (Psalms 110:1).

The Gospel of John is the most conspicuous written attestation to the Godhead; the most numerous and direct claims to the Divinity of Jesus are to be found in the Gospel of that Apostle. The first fourteen verses of the fourth Gospel should suffice to persuade the believer in the Holy Scriptures of the truth that Jesus is absolutely God. We present here a brief meditation on the prologue to the Gospel of John.

CHAPTER II: PROLOGUE TO JOHN'S GOSPEL

The Divine titles of Christ are independent of the economy of redemption, and apart from all official relations and prerogatives, pertain to His eternal nature. Therefore He is revealed in His Divine titles, either in His personal Divinity, or in the relations which He sustains to the Divine Trinity.

The Apostle John was a child of Zebedee and Salome, a sister of the Virgin Mary, therefore a maternal cousin of Jesus. In his Gospel, he is anxious to prove the truth of Jesus as the Son of God to a generation which had not seen Jesus in the flesh. His fourth Gospel is a profound study of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the Word that became flesh, and of the eternal Deity of Christ.

The Apostle John wrote his Gospel towards the close of the first century A.D. Now an elderly person, one who had passed through a rich and varied experience, the aged apostle looks back and selects for us the outstanding events and incidents of the life of Jesus. John is now the elder theologian, ὁ θεολόγος¹ who has tested the claims of Jesus. He gives us a series of amazing word pictures of the eternal relations of God and Christ; he is profoundly assured of the eternal Deity of Jesus and the Incarnation of Christ.

John, like Paul, was a thinker and a mystic; the mystical side of religion appealed more to him than the ethical. Both men were missionaries. And as with the missionary of today in India, in China, in Japan, who must set forth his God and religion in terms intelligible to believers on other gods, so John and Paul were empiricists in comparative religions. Comparative

¹One versed in the science of God.

religion was no academic subject to these pioneer missionaries. And in expounding Jesus, Eternal God, John had learned to use language that is outstanding in its bold expression of thought. He did as the modern, worthwhile missionary must do--he took the language of the people among whom he worked, and filled it with the rich content of Christian thought. Old words took on new meanings to express the new ideas; and the language of the heathen philosopher was made to tell the eternal realities of the pre-existent God who became man. So we find in John a man like Paul (one all alive to the thought of the educated men of his day), bold to take current philosophic terms to expound the nature and mission of Jesus in the world.

The Apostle Paul had declared around A.D. 58 that a "man in Christ is a new creation"² (καινῆ κτίσις).³ This thought is connected by John with the ἐν ἀρχῇ⁴ "in the beginning" of the first chapter of Genesis. John begins his teaching of the λόγος,⁵ the creative Word, however, by stating a fact that immediately breaks the resemblance with Genesis, that states indeed an antithesis, for the story of Genesis indicates the beginning of time and creation with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But speaking of Jesus, who was the thought of God manifest in the flesh, John said, "In the beginning was the Word, . . ."⁶

Here is the great antithesis to the record of Genesis. John asserts that in the beginning the Word then was; which is to say, He was not created, neither did He then begin to exist. In John's belief Jesus did not become

²II Corinthians 5:17. ³"kainē ktisis."

⁴"en archē." ⁵"logos."

⁶John 1:1.

(γενομαι)⁷ in the beginning; He was not made; but He eternally was. If we may be allowed to paraphrase John 1:1, we would present it as follows:

In the beginning was (in existence) the (personal) Word, and the Word was with God (the Godhead), and the Word was God (Himself). 1 (p. 1)

John's statements on Christ in these verses have been made the source of endless controversy; and man's reasonings have been prolific in initiating many hurtful lines of thought, even to the extent of teaching that Christ is a created Being, that there was a point in time at which He did not exist; therefore, essentia, He is inferior to the Father. To hold such a position is to destroy the very best basis and foundation of Christianity; for an eternal salvation demands an indestructible faith. Such a faith depends upon a Saviour who is eternally God. The quality of God's law is seen in its absolute eternal character of holiness; and any adequate doctrine of the Atonement that could make amends for that broken law must begin with a realization of the greatness of this thought. God suffered and died in the flesh; and the New Testament principle of mediation was manifested in and carried into effect by a Divine Eternal Person. Aristotle

The word that John uses to describe Christ was no new word; it was, indeed, a very familiar one. So he uses it naturally; he gives no exegesis to explain it; he is apparently quite expectant that his readers would know he was describing not an abstraction, but a personality; not a personification, but a person. ✓

We believe that this Word, this creative λόγος is identical with Jesus Christ, as the pre-existing God. Further, Jesus is the Word of God, not because He speaks the Word, for then John would have written the present

⁷"ginomai."

active participle, ὁ λέγων;⁸ not because He is the One spoken of, or else John would have written the present passive participle, ὁ λεγόμενος;⁹ nor because He is the author and source of the Word, any more than the fact that He is called the light (φῶς),¹⁰ and life (ζωή)¹¹ implies only that He is the Giver of light and life. But as He is the light so He is the Word; and the word dwells in Him, and speaks forth from Him, just as light and life dwell in Him and come forth from Him.

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, known as the Dark Philosopher, the founder of Greek metaphysics, taught that fire is the primary substance, of which the soul is made, and which is transformed into other elements. He used the term λόγος to denote the principle which maintains order in the world. The Stoics had similarly used the word; and Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor Stoic philosopher (A.D. 161-180), had used the phrase σπερματικὸς λόγος,¹² the law of generation, that containing the germ of things, to express the principle or creative force in matter, in nature. The question has arisen, Where did John get his idea of the λόγος? Scholarship tells us that John got the idea from the Jewish Targums (paraphrases of Scripture); others again say that the λόγος was a mixture of Jewish and Greek philosophy, the so-called theosophy of the Alexandrine Jews. In other words, that it was a compound of Judaism, Platonic philosophy, and Oriental mysticism, which was prevalent in Alexandria and Ephesus, and of which Philo (A.D. 40-50) was the leading representative. But it is impossible to fit John's λόγος into the wisdom of Philo, Plato, or Heraclitus. John is not concerned with the abstract, philosophical conceptions of his predecessors, but he uses the language of his

⁸"ho legōn." ⁹"ho legomenos."

¹⁰"phōs." ¹¹"zōē." ¹²"spermatikos logos."

day to outline the broad features of the eternal relation, and the unique Incarnation, God's Living Speech, the Eternal Idea of God projected and presented in flesh.

As used by the heathen philosophers, the Λόγος was a species of divine dynamic, an energy gifted with a certain intelligence. But according to their teaching there could be no divine personal Creator. Their conception is the common one met in various modifications in Hindu, Egyptian, and Persian philosophic thought. Over against these philosophers, the Apostle John, in his prologue, enunciates three great truths:

1. The eternity of the Word.
2. The personality of the Word.
3. The divinity of the Word.

The Text: "In the beginning the Word was." Such is John's opening sentence, and it takes one back immediately to the words of Genesis 1:1, but with a pregnant difference. If בְּרֵאשִׁית¹³ at the opening of Genesis signifies the actual initial moment of time itself, then the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ¹⁴ rises to the absolute conception of that which is anterior, or rather, independent of time. In Genesis 1:1 we find an act performed in the beginning. That was the first moment of time for this world. And there is a significance that should not be forgotten, that the word בָּרָא,¹⁵ to create, in the Qal form of Genesis 1, is restricted to divine workmanship, and always implies the production of something new in matter or substance. Further, it is never followed by an accusative of material, and thus implies the unconditioned operation, absolute causality, of the agent. But in respect to John's account of the

¹³"bere'shith"--in the first time, or in the beginning.

¹⁴"en archē." ¹⁵"bara'."

Word, he insists that in the beginning, the Word was ($\eta\nu$).¹⁶

The imperfect form, was, of the verb $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$,¹⁷ to be, in John 1:1 must designate, according to the ordinary meaning of this tense, the simultaneousness of the act indicated by the verb with some other act. The simultaneousness is here that of the existence of the Word with the fact designated by the word beginning: When everything that had a beginning began, the Word already was. So John begins his hymn on the creative Word farther back than the record of Moses. Before anything is said about creation, he proclaims that the Word was already in existence, in the beginning.

This is the language of eternity. This transcends time. In the beginning--place it where you will, push it back as far as you can think--the Word is already in existence. That is to say, God the Word is before all time; He is eternal. Such language certainly implies the eternal pre-existence of the Divine Word as a Person.

Christ Eternal From All Eternity.
The world was made by Him, and without Him was not made anything that was made. If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

X "There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible."¹⁸ - *R.H.W., Apr. 5, 1906, p.*

Here, then, lies the significance of John's use of the imperfect tense $\eta\nu$ of $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$, to be. It must be taken in its absolute sense of to be in existence. How carefully John has avoided here the verb $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, to become.

16" $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$." 17" $\epsilon\iota\alpha\iota$."

X 18Mrs. E. G. White, Review and Herald, April 5, 1906.

John & the Eternal Person

The Word, as God, did not come into being in the beginning; but, before the first moment of time, He already was in existence. It has been taught that there was a point of time in history when the Son was not in existence, but John says distinctly that the Son, the Word, was in existence before time began, i.e., from all eternity. We must seek to be clear in our thinking, and realize that metaphysically one cannot separate Christ's Divinity from His Eternity.

A Contrast. In 1:14 John says, καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο¹⁹—"And the Word became flesh." Here he uses the verb γίνομαι,²⁰ to become; for indeed Christ became flesh. There was a time when He was not flesh; but there never was a time when He was not God. He always was:

Existed as Eternal Son of God.
 "But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. . . .²¹ RFA, Apr. 5, 1906, p. —

"From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father. . . .²² — *Desire of Ages (1898), p. 19, 530*

"The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.²³

That is to say, Christ was able voluntarily to descend from heaven, and to assume our nature without ceasing to be identically God as He was before.

Philo never conceived of the Word as a person; he never taught the pre-existence of the Word. This is John's great contribution, inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament there are allusions, rays, seeking as it were to break forth into the pure light of revealed truth. There are

¹⁹"kai ho logos sarx egeneto." ²⁰"ginomai."

²¹Mrs. E. G. White, loc. cit. *RFA Apr. 5, 1906*

²²Mrs. E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 19. *1898*

²³Ibid., p. 530.

allusions and suggestions in the Old Testament of a divine Word--a personality, as it were:

The Messenger of Yahweh: Genesis 16:2-9.

The Messenger of the Presence: Exodus 32:34; 33:14.

The Messenger of the Covenant: Malachi 3:1.

These characters John gathers together into the personality of Jesus, a Divine Person.

This, then, is the greatness of John's revelation. Others, priests, prophets, philosophers, had approached this doctrine of the Word as the thing uttered (ῥῆμα);²⁴ or, the word spoken (ὁ λεγόμενος);²⁵ or, as the speaker (ὁ λέγων);²⁶ or, again, as a principle or attribute, as wisdom (σοφία),²⁷ intelligence (νοῦς);²⁸ but John's Word is the Son of God, existing from all eternity, yet, in point of time, manifested in time and space in human form as Jesus Christ, Son of Man:

Distinct Person From All Eternity —
 "The Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God."²⁹ — *Rev. Apr 5, 1906, p.*

"And the Word was with God." The salient word of this second assertion is the preposition πρός,³⁰ which, with its objective word in the accusative, denotes the movement of approach toward the object or the person serving to limit it. The meaning then is quite different from what it would have been if John had said μετά,³¹ in the society of, or in the bosom of, or παρά,³² near to, as in John 17:5:

²⁴"rhēma." ²⁵"ho legomenos." ²⁶"ho legōn." ²⁷"sophia."

²⁸"nous." ²⁹Mrs. E. G. White, Review and Herald, April 5, 1906.

³⁰"pros." ³¹"meta." ³²"para."

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with (παρά) thine own self with the glory which I had with (παρά) thee before the world was.

But the preposition πρός is equivalent to "was in relation with God," "stood over against," not in space or time, but eternally and constitutionally. Here we have a preposition of motion combined with a verb of rest, which signifies that this motion was His permanent state, that is to say, His very essence. Πρός, with, in John 1:1, carries the meaning of personal intercourse. We might translate it, "face to face with God," or "at home with God." An example is found in Matthew 13:56: "His sisters, are they not all with us?" It is the preposition of personal intercourse, and therefore of separate personality. It marks both the substantial union and distinct personality of the Son, as to the Father; it speaks of immanence, yet with distinct and separate personality:

One With the Eternal Father.
 Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,--one in nature, in character, in purpose,--the only being who could enter into the counsels and purposes of God.³³ *Whitcomb & Simpson, p 34*

Now a Time When He is Evident.
 In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when he was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.³⁴ *Signs, August 29, 1900*

"And the Word was God." Not, "The Word was a God." Such an expression would have been an abomination to a Jew; but, the Word was one with the Divine Nature, not identical with the Divine Person, yet truly God. Therefore it may be paraphrased:

X The Word existed from all eternity, distinct from the Father, and equal with the Father.

³³Mrs. E. G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 34.

³⁴Mrs. E. G. White, Signs of the Times, August 29, 1900.

How is the Word other than eternal, if He is thus identified with the everlasting Being? πρὸς τὸν θεόν ³⁵ expresses, beyond the fact of co-existence or immanence, the more significant fact of perpetuated intercommunion. The Word is not merely a Divine Being, but He is in the absolute sense God. Thus from His eternal existence we ascend first to His distinct Personality, and then to the full truth of His substantial Godhead.

The absence of the article before θεός is significant. To have inserted it would have been to destroy the distinction of personality, and to confound the Son with the Father.

Equal Rights with God. —
 "Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred and of the same character with that which engaged his Father in Heaven." ³⁶

Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. ³⁷

Christ, then, partakes of θεότης, ³⁸ Deity. And to the plenitude of His life there appertains the existence of a Being eternal like God, personal like Him, God like Him, living for each other. One can see, then, how the preposition πρὸς carries with it the mutual activities, interactive of God and Christ.

Christ Speaks. In this connection we must recognize the supreme importance of the teaching of Christ Himself concerning His person. In certain passages of His teaching concerning Himself, Christ speaks out of an eternal consciousness, an age-abiding consciousness:

I, even I [the emphatic ἐγώ ³⁹] am proceeding forth from God, and here I am. ⁴⁰

³⁵"Pros ton Theon."

³⁶Mrs. E. G. White, Signs of the Times, August 29, 1900.

³⁷Mrs. E. G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 495.

³⁸"Theotēs."

³⁹"egō."

⁴⁰John 8:42.

Here we have ἦνω⁴¹--the present emphatic tense. This is the very word used by Greek dramatists announcing the arrival of one of the cast on the stage: I am come from such and such a place, and here I am.

Here the real suggestion of Jesus is not that He came from the presence of God as an angel, but that He being the very essential Being of God, came to this world as such to be incarnated for man's sake, so He says, "And here I am." Here is simply existence with no note of beginning or end. He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as One upon whom time has no effect, and for whom it has no meaning. He knows no past, He knows no future. He is unbeginning, unending Being. He is the eternal Now.

Person God, Man, He became Man.
But although Christ's divine glory was for a time veiled and eclipsed by his assuming humanity, yet he did not cease to be God when he became man. The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human. This is the mystery of godliness. The two expressions of human and divine were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality. Though Christ humbled himself to become man, the Godhead was still his own. His Deity could not be lost while he stood true and faithful to his loyalty.⁴²

Amazons Opposites Meet in Christ.
What opposites meet and are revealed in the person of Christ. The mighty God, yet a helpless child! The Creator of all the world, yet, in a world of His creating, often hungry and weary, and without a place to lay His head! The Son of Man, yet infinitely higher than the angels! Equal with the Father, yet His divinity clothed with humanity, standing at the head of the fallen race, that human beings might be placed on vantage-ground! Possessing eternal riches, yet living the life of a poor man! One with the Father in dignity and power, yet in His humanity tempted in all points as we are tempted! In the very moment of His dying agony of the cross, a Conqueror, answering the request of the repentant sinner to be remembered by Him when He came into His kingdom, with the words, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

all the fulness of the Godhead in Christ.
Christ was God manifest in the flesh. In Him divinity and humanity were united. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He lived in this world a perfect life, revealing the character to which, through divine grace, man may attain. In His life He left an example that every true Christian must follow. No falsehood ever fell from His lips. Never did He do a dishonest act. He stood forth in unsullied purity and goodness, revealing what man must be before he can enter the holy city.⁴³

⁴¹"ἦνω."⁴²Mrs. E. G. White, Signs of the Times, May 10, 1899.

⁴³Ibid., April 25, 1905.

So when Christ said, Here I am, He was announcing Himself as the I Am, equal with the Father, come as man to save sinners.

"Before Abraham was [came into being], I am" (John 8:58). Here we have a contrast between the two verbs γίνεσθαι,⁴⁴ to become, and εἶναι,⁴⁵ to be. The contrast is as unmistakable as the Greek of Psalms 90:2 (LXX).

Πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη γενηθῆναι . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος
σὺ εἶ.⁴⁶

Before the mountains came into existence . . . from the eternities thou art.

Of God as God, it could not be said that He became, that He came into being, for He is, eternally is. That John means to represent Jesus as thus claiming for Himself the timeless being of Deity, as distinct from the temporal existence of man, is clear. Such is the significance of the present, I am, of the verb to be: it denotes perpetual divine existence, independent of all time. Thus Jesus identifies Himself with Yahweh. That He was stating His eternity, and that the Jews so understood it, is plain from their attitude, for they took up stones to kill Him, knowing that by these words He made Himself equal to His Father.

I am come out from the Father, and am come into the world, and I go unto the Father.⁴⁷

Here we have a perfect summary of the whole mission of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, ". . . from the Father . . . into the world . . . leave the world . . . go unto the Father." In brief, Christ referred to Himself in such a way that the implications of His references are those of an age-abiding existence. It is important to notice the persistence of the Ego, the "I" of the person:

⁴⁴"ginesthai." ⁴⁵"einai."

⁴⁶"Pro tou orē genēthēnai . . . apo tou aiōnos heōs tou aiōnos su ei."

⁴⁷John 16:28.

I come forth.

I am come from God.

Before Abraham came into existence, I am.

I came out.

I come into.

I leave.

I go unto.

Here is stated the consciousness of a persistent existence. These are the eternal words, the age-abiding terms, in which He spoke of Himself. The inevitable implication is that of an eternal, age-abiding consciousness:

Handwritten: "Analogy: God and Man united in Christ."
 "Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, he became one with us. In him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father."⁴⁸

Handwritten: "Inshman, Nov. 24, 1895, p. 1."
Handwritten: "Self-Existent from Days of Eternity."
 "With solemn dignity Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.'"

"Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, 'Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.'"⁴⁹

A special feature of the manner in which John reports the words of Jesus is the use of the phrase, ἐγώ εἶμι,⁵⁰ I am. Thus are the personal claims of Jesus introduced in the Fourth Gospel. There is nothing quite similar to it in the Synoptists. The frequency with which the language of Jesus is marked by personal pronouns is a special feature of John's style. Thus ἐγώ, "I," is found 134 times in John, as against 29 occurrences in Matthew, 17 in Mark, and 23 in Luke. In large measure this is due to the

⁴⁸Mrs. E. G. White, The Youth's Instructor, November 21, 1895.

⁴⁹Mrs. E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, pp. 469-70.

emphasis which the Fourth Gospel lays upon the personal claims and personality of Jesus. The combination that is especially frequent in John is ἐγώ ειμι, I am. Further, its use is very distinctive, it is the style of Deity, and its impressiveness is quite unmistakable. We give a few Greek instances from the LXX in which in each case Yahweh, the Godhead, Jehovah, is the Speaker:

Genesis 17:1--Ἐγώ ειμι, ὁ θεός σου.⁵⁰ "I am thy God."

Exodus 15:26--Ἐγώ γάρ ειμι Κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ἰώμενός σε.⁵¹ "I am the Lord thy God, the One healing thee."

Psalms 35:3--Σωτηρία σου ἐγώ ειμι.⁵² "I am thy salvation."

Isaiah 61:8--Ἐγώ ειμι Κύριος ὁ ἀγαπῶν δικαιοσύνην.⁵³ "I am the Lord who loves righteousness."

Isaiah 51:12--Ἐγώ ειμι, ἐγώ ειμι ὁ παρακαλῶν σε.⁵⁴ "I am, I am the one comforting thee."

Isaiah 43:25--Ἐγώ ειμι, ἐγώ ειμι ὁ ἐξαλείφω τὰς ἀνομίας σου.⁵⁵ "I am, I am the one wiping away thy lawlessness."

Jeremiah 3:12--Ἐλεήμων ἐγώ ειμι.⁵⁶ "I am the merciful one."

Jeremiah 23:23--θεὸς ἐγγίζων ἐγώ ειμι.⁵⁷ "I am the God who is near."

The translation of the Hebrew of God's name is: I AM. This same style of Deity is in the Apocalypse:

⁵⁰"Egō eimi, ho Theos sou."

⁵¹"Egō gar eimi Kurios ho Theos sou ho iōmenos se."

⁵²"Sōtēria sou egō eimi."

⁵³"Egō eimi Kurios ho agapōn dikaiosunēn."

⁵⁴"Egō eimi, egō eimi ho parakalōn se."

⁵⁵"Egō eimi, egō eimi, ho exaleiphōn tas anomias sou."

⁵⁶"Eleēmōn egō eimi."

⁵⁷"Theos engizōn egō eimi."

Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13--'Εγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠμέγα.⁵⁸

"I am the Alpha and the Omega."

This style of Deity is based on such Old Testament verses as Isaiah 41:4; 48:12--'Εγώ εἰμι πρῶτος καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.⁵⁹ "I am the first and I am to the ages."

This same phraseology is in Revelation 2:23; 22:16, etc. It is clear, then, that the ἐγώ εἰμι of these sentences of the Apocalypse is a reflection of the speech-phrase singularly appropriate to the Godhead in the Old Testament, and being placed in the mouth of Jesus, involves His ^{Deity} Divinity and therefore His eternity.

We now approach the similitudes by which Jesus describes Himself in the Fourth Gospel:

6:35--'Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς.⁶⁰ "I am the living bread."

8:12--'Εγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου.⁶¹ "I am the light of the world."

10:7--'Εγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων.⁶² "I am the door of the sheep."

10:11--'Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός.⁶³ "I am the good shepherd."

⁵⁸"Egō eimi to Alpha kai to Ōmega."

⁵⁹"Egō eimi prōtos kai egō eimi eis ton aiōna."

⁶⁰"Egō eimi ho artos tēs zōēs."

⁶¹"Egō eimi to phōs tou kosmou."

⁶²"Egō eimi hē thura tōn probatōn."

⁶³"Egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos."

11:25--'Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή.⁶⁴ "I am the resurrection and the life."

15:1--'Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή.⁶⁵ "I am the true vine."

14:6--'Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή.⁶⁶ "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

8:18--'Εγώ εἰμι ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ.⁶⁷ "I am the One bearing witness of myself."

This is clearly the style of Deity, of which we have had examples in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation. One can understand that the readers of the LXX, the Scripture of the early church, would fully appreciate the significance of this particular form, this style of Deity, being applied to Christ. This, however, merely introduces this subject, and notes but a few of the places where this formula is used.

Become Surety of Our Deliverance From Sin.
 By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came "in the likeness of men," He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh." And to us He says, "I AM" the Good Shepherd." "I AM the living Bread." "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." "I AM the assurance of every promise." "I AM; be not afraid." "God with us" is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven." DA, p 24

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in

⁶⁴"Egō eimi he anastasis kai he zōē."

⁶⁵"Egō eimi hē ampelos hē alēthinē."

⁶⁶"Egō eimi hē hodos kai he alētheia kai hē zōē."

⁶⁷"Egō eimi ho marturōn peri emautou."

Offered Himself as Common Priest
 the path of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
 As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him."⁶⁸

Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God.⁶⁹

This truth of Christ's equality and eternity is restated in John's prologue: "The same was in the beginning with God." This again states that the Logos was eternally in relation with God. The previous statements in verse one are thus stringently enforced. The three utterances of verse one are declared in three clauses:

1. The Logos preceded the origination of all things, was the eternal ground of the world.
2. His unique personality, so that He stands over against the eternal God, in mutual communion with the Absolute and Eternal One.
3. Maintains that the Logos is not a second God, or merely Divine ($\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$), or God-like, nor is He described as proceeding out of God ($\epsilon\kappa\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$), or from God ($\alpha\pi\omicron\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$), but "God" ($\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$)--God in His nature and being.

We turn now to the verse that is the climax of John's thought in the prologue.

"And the Word became flesh." This statement is the climax of the Johannine doctrine of Christ as the Word. It is a new and suggestive truth that must be added to what has preceded. This verse, in reality, is the climax and powerful antithesis to the opening clauses. The Logos which in the beginning was, has now become. The Logos which was God, has now, in addition, become flesh. The Logos which was with God, has now become one with

⁶⁸Mrs. E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, pp. 24-25. ✓

⁶⁹Mrs. E. G. White, Signs of the Times, July 30, 1896. ✓

men, has cast His tabernacle among theirs. The Word became flesh (σάρξ),⁷⁰ the term which is used to denote the whole of humanity. It signifies man's nature as a whole, his rational soul. It is almost equivalent to saying "άνθρωπος",⁷¹ generic manhood, but it is more explicit than that would be.

Somehow--we cannot analyze it--the whole nature of the Godhead and the perfect nature of manhood are blended in one personality. The becoming flesh did not annihilate the Logos. When the water was made wine, the water was not obliterated, but it took up by the creative power of Christ other elements to itself, constituting wine. When the Logos became flesh, He took up humanity with all its powers and conditions unto Himself, constituting Himself Jesus, the Saviour of men. Yet He is no less God:

. . . We beheld His glory, the glory such as the only one receives with the Father (John 1:14).

The preposition John uses here is παρά, the expression of verse 14, with the Father. The meaning is alongside, beside, vicinity, close proximity. It appears in the English parallel, paradox, parable. It is very common in composition like παραπλέω,⁷² to sail by; παραρρέω,⁷³ to flow by; παρακαλέω,⁷⁴ to call to one's side. In fact, we get our English word Paraclete, Holy Spirit, from this compound word. No matter with what case παρά is used, it always connotes immediate vicinity, near by, beside, in the presence of, at, alongside of. The glory then is that which the only, unique One received with the Father:

clothed, identified with humanity as Paul Humanity -
 "The Redeemer of the world clothed his divinity with humanity, that he might reach humanity; for, in order to bring to the world salvation, it

⁷⁰"sarx." ⁷¹"anthrōpos."

⁷²"parapleō." ⁷³"pararrheō."

⁷⁴"parakaleō."

was necessary that humanity and divinity should be united. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man, and humanity needed divinity, that a power from above might restore man to the likeness of God. Christ was God, but he did not appear as God.⁷⁵

Signs, Feb. 20, 1893, p. —.

⁷⁵Mrs. E. G. White, Signs of the Times, February 20, 1893. ✓

CHAPTER III: THE TERM "MONOGENĒS"

This brings us to a consideration of the word monogenēs, which has been translated "only begotten." This Greek word is used only nine times in the New Testament. As applied to Christ, it occurs in John's writings only, five times: John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9. It also occurs in expressions referring to others than Christ, in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; and Hebrews 11:17. In the LXX it occurs in Psalms 21:20 (Psalms 22:20); Psalms 24:16 (Psalms 25:16); Psalms 34:17 (Psalms 35:17); Judges 11:2.

The word μονογενής is generally used of an only child, the emphasis being on μόνος, only, rather than on γενής, kind. Thus we find Plato speaking of μονογενής οὐρανός; ⁷⁶ and Clement of Rome (252) describes the legendary bird, the Phoenix, as μονογενής since it is the only one of its kind, unique. The same idea is in the LXX where this word is used. There is no reason why the nine times μονογενής is used in the New Testament it should be translated other than only, single, unique, that which exists once only, that is, singly in its kind.

To take Luke 7:12 as an example of the use of μονογενής applied to someone other than Christ:

Now when he came to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

The word here correctly translated only is μονογενής. It is the fact of his being the only son of his mother, and that she is a widow, that constitutes the peculiar pathos of the incident. The mourning of the widow for an only son is typical for the extremity of grief. This is further

⁷⁶Plato, Timaeus, 31. (English translation by R. G. Bury, The Loeb Classical Library.)

emphasized by the dative case of mother instead of the usual genitive case. It is the expressive dative of advantage, denoting the preciousness of the son, an only child. But that he was the only child to whom the woman had ever given birth, we do not know; and we cannot say that he was an only begotten.

This fact is further seen in Hebrews 11:17, where the same word μονογενής is used, and is translated in the KJV Bible, "offered up his only begotten son." But Isaac was not an only begotten son, neither was he the eldest child of Abraham. Here, as in Luke 7:12; 8:42, and 9:38, the translation should be only, sole, son. Similarly in respect to the five texts in John's writings of Christ, the translation should be one of the following: precious, only, sole, unique, but not only-begotten. The best Greek authorities bear out this statement, where under μονογενής we read in the Greek-English Lexicon:

The only member of a kin, or kind; hence generally only, single.⁷⁷

. . . Is literally "one of a kind," "only," "unique" (unicus), not "only begotten," which would be μονογέννητος (unigenitus), and is common in the LXX in this sense.⁷⁸

. . . (hic. unigena; Vulg. in Lk. unicus, elsewh. and in eccl. writ. unigenitus) single of its kind, only . . . used of Christ, denotes the only son of God.⁷⁹

Thayer's Lexicon, in respect to the findings in the papyri, is very much out of date; but his statement in parenthesis above is interesting, that μονογενής has been translated unigenitus in ecclesiastical writings, a

⁷⁷Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, II, 1144.

⁷⁸James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, pp. 416-17.

⁷⁹Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 417.

translation that is incorrect. In this connection we give the statement found in the International Critical Commentary on John 1:14:

Some of the O. L. texts (a e q) render μονογενής here by unicus, which is the original meaning, rather than by unigenitus, which became the accepted Latin rendering so soon as controversies arose about the Person and Nature of Christ.⁸⁰

This is a confirmation of the Greek authorities quoted above, wherein Moulton and Milligan declare μονογενής does not mean only-begotten, with Thayer's statement that "in ecclesiastical writings" μονογενής has been translated unigenitus, i.e., only-begotten.

This, then, is a development that took place in ecclesiastical writings. But we can hardly depend on ecclesiastical writings as the basis of our faith, and we should scarcely appeal to them aside from their value as sequences in history and development in thought. However, we suggest that to speak of an "official" doctrine of Christ in New Testament times is quite impossible; that His Divine uniqueness was everywhere acknowledged, that all believers held to Him an attitude of worship, that they prayed to Him as God, but were content to have life through His name, and did not question themselves particularly as to the bearing of His uniqueness on the axiom of the Divine unity.

Further, that in the subapostolic age, Gospel traditions kept men aware that the self-consciousness of the historic Christ had been more than human, while His post-resurrection appearances, due to His own direct agency, supplied a final proof of His Divinity. And certainly no one operated with ideas like the modern "personality"; but it was never doubted that the spirit of Jesus was essentially divine and pre-existent; that He was always viewed as both things: heavenly Divine Spirit, and true man who had suffered and died; that in prayers and hymns He was worshiped along with and on equality with God the Father.

⁸⁰J. H. Bernard, The Gospel According to St. John (International Critical Commentary), I, 23.

When we come to the writings of the so-called Apostolic Fathers, from the year 90 to 140, we find a striking variety of ideas. There is, however, general agreement that Christ existed before His birth on earth, in a state of glory and power. On the whole His eternal prior existence was simply assumed. When Jesus is called "Son of God" in literature of this period, the name is connected "more especially with the human life by which it was manifested."⁸¹ Again, as late as 325, Christendom as a whole had as yet no written creed at all. The so-called Apostles' Creed may be older than 340, but then it first appears, and only as a personal confession of the heretic Marcellus. Different churches had varying creeds to form the basis of the catechumen's teaching; all were couched in Scripture language, variously modeled on the Lord's baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19).

Origen introduced the phrase "eternal generation," which was immediately adopted by the whole church as expressing Christ's relation to the Godhead, thus securing the notion of a perpetual generation, in which time had no part; and thereby escaping the Sabellian confusion that the personality of the Son is not distinct from the Father:

Est namque ita aeterna ac sempiterna generatio sicut splendor generatur ex luce. Non enim per adoptionem Spiritus Filius fit extrinsecus, sed natura Filius est.⁸²

The following facts are, to say the least, interesting and certainly have a bearing on our problem. They may be read in Vol. II, Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes, by Philip Schaff.⁸³

⁸¹H. B. Swete, The Apostles' Creed, p. 29.

⁸²De Principiis, 1.2.4. Migne, Patrologia Graeca, vol. 2, col. 133.

⁸³"The Rules of Faith and Baptismal Confessions which we find among the ecclesiastical writers of the second and third centuries mark the transition from the Bible to the OEcumenical creeds. They contain nearly all the articles of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and some are even more full,

These give the translation of $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ as only, unique:

Ignatius of Antioch, A.D. 107. The Greek recension does not use $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$, and makes no statement of an "eternal generation."

Irenaeus, A.D. 180. First Form a longer confession than that of Ignatius, has no doctrine of "eternal generation" and no $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$. These two are in Greek.

Second Form, in Latin. Gives no doctrine of "eternal generation."

Third Form, in Greek. No doctrine of "eternal generation," and no $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$.

Tertullian, A.D. 200. First Form, Latin. No doctrine of "eternal generation."

Second Form, Latin. This contains the words:

ut unici Dei sit et Filius,
Sermo ipsius, qui ex ipso processerit,
per quem omnia facta sunt,
et sine quo factum est nihil.
Hunc missum a Patre in Virginem,
et ex ea natum
hominem et Deum, Filium hominis et Filium Dei.

And the Son of the unique God
His very word, who proceeded from Him,
by whom all things were made
and without whom nothing was made.
This was sent from the Father into the Virgin,
and was born of her,
both Man and God, Son of Man and Son of God.

This is not "eternal generation."

Third Form, Latin. No "eternal generation."

Cyprian, of Carthage. A.D. 250. Latin, no "eternal generation," but only the statement:

especially those of the East; for the Greek Church was, at an early period, disturbed by heretical speculations and perversions, and had a greater talent and taste for metaphysical theology than the less learned but more sober, practical, and steady Church of the West. I have included here also some creeds of the fourth century, to facilitate the comparison with the Apostles' Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan symbols."--Introductory Remarks, vol. 2, p. 11.

in Filium Dei, Christum Jesum.

(I believe) in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Origen of Alexandria. About A.D. 230, Latin. This gives the "eternal generation" as an article of faith:

Tum deinde, quia Jesus Christus ipse, qui venit, ante omnem creaturam natus ex Patre est.

Then, secondly, that Jesus Christ himself, who came, was born of the Father before all creation.

Gregorius Thaumaturgus, of Neo-Caesarea. About A.D. 270. Greek.

Εἰς θεὸς πατὴρ λόγου ζῶντος, σοφίας
ὑφ'εστῶσης καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ
χαρακτῆρος αἰδίου, τέλειος τελείου
γεννήτωρ πατὴρ υἱοῦ μονογενοῦς.

There is one God, the Father of the living Word, who is the substantive wisdom and eternal power and image of God: the perfect begetter of the perfect one: the Father of the unique Son.

Here we have a statement on the sonship with the word begetter from the root γεννάω,⁸⁴ and the word μονογενοῦς,⁸⁵ to describe Christ as the only, single, unique son, but translated by English, in ecclesiastical usage, only-begotten.

Lucian of Antioch, the teacher of Arius, A.D. 300. Greek.

καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν
τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, τὸν μονογενῆ θεόν.

And in the one Lord Jesus Christ His Son, the unique God.

Private Creed of Arius. A.D. 328.

καὶ εἰς κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν
υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρὸ πάντων
τῶν αἰώνων γεγεννημένον.

⁸⁴"gennaō." ⁸⁵"monogenous."

And in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, who was begotten of Him before all ages.

Note here that Arius does not use μονογενής but the word γεννάω, which is correctly translated begotten.

Eusebius, of Caesarea, a Semi-Arian, A.D. 325.

γεγεννημένον

Begotten of God before all the ages.

Eusebius, like Arius, uses the correct word for begotten, which word is not used in the Bible of Christ for any eternal generation.

Cyril, of Jerusalem, A.D. 350.

καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ,
τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα,
πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God the unique one,
the one begotten out of the Father
before all the ages.

Here Cyril records an eternal generation, but uses the verb γεννάω, to beget, which is the correct word, but which word is not used in the Bible of any eternal generation of Jesus. In fact, such a statement is a contradiction in terms.

The final verse of John's prologue, the 18th, is extremely interesting. The Authorized Version reads as follows:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

The first suggestion we would make is that the verse read, ". . . the only son . . ." not only begotten; for the word here is μονογενής. Second, we would call attention to the text. For the best old manuscripts we possess (Aleph, B, C, L) read μονογενῆς θεός, the only God, and not the only Son.

This is undoubtedly the true text. An exhaustive examination of the textual evidence was made by F. J. A. Hort,⁸⁶ and his conclusion that the true reading is μονογενῆς θεός, has been generally accepted. The reading θεός is commended to us as the true reading, alike by the character of the authorities who support it, taken separately, and by the analogy of readings having a similar history in ancient times. Probably some scribe changed it to μονογενῆς υἱός to obviate the blunt statement of the deity of Christ, and to make it like John 3:16. The following statement from Cambridge Greek Testament, on the true text of John 1:18, is typical of such commentaries as The International Critical Commentary; The Expositor's Greek New Testament; The Pulpit Commentary; Robertson's Word Pictures; Alford, etc., etc.:

The question of reading here is very interesting. Most MSS. and versions read ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός, or μονογενῆς υἱός. But the three oldest and best MSS. and two others of great value read μονογενῆς θεός. The test of the value of a MS., or group of MSS., on any disputed point, is the extent to which it admits false readings on other points not disputed. Judged by this test, the group of MSS. reading μονογενῆς θεός is very strong, while the far larger group of MSS. reading υἱός for θεός is comparatively weak, for the same group of MSS. might be quoted in defence of a multitude of readings which no one would think of adopting. Again, the revised Syriac, which is among the minority of versions supporting θεός, is here of special weight, because it agrees with MSS. from which it usually differs. We conclude, therefore, that the very unusual expression μονογενῆς θεός is the true reading, which has been changed into the usual μονογενῆς υἱός (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9).⁸⁷

The reading υἱός in place of θεός spoils the inner harmony in the reading of the old uncials. The Logos is plainly called θεός in verse 1; and there can be no doubt that the evidence of the MSS., versions, and Fathers is overwhelmingly on this side. It is not difficult to see that as μονογενῆς is used in connection with υἱός by John, there could easily arise

⁸⁶F. J. A. Hort, Two Dissertations.

⁸⁷A. Plummer, St. John, p. 70. (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.)

the tendency of scribes to replace the more difficult θεός here by the familiar υἱός as they have done; while there would be no temptation to replace υἱός by θεός. It has been suggested that it may be that μονογενής, the only, sole, unique one, θεός, God, and ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, who dwells in the Father's bosom, are three designations of Christ, who is the Exegete, the Interpreter, of the Father. Certain it is that this last phrase used in the 18th verse of John's prologue expresses the intimate relationship of love that exists between God and Christ, who shares in all the love, activities, and secrets of Deity. The present participle (ὢν) of the verb to be stands for eternal being, and represents the relation between God and Christ prior to the Incarnation. With His Incarnation He became the Divine-human Revealer of the Father, the Interpreter. As the Interpreter He claimed infinite existence, in that while He was yet present in the limitations of time and space, He spoke of being in the bosom of the Father, and in heaven itself. He claimed indestructible existence in that while He spoke of laying down His life, He declared He would take it again, and that no man could destroy it. When, therefore, preachers and teachers speak of Christ as an "only-begotten" Son, and refer that to a pre-incarnate begetting of Jesus, then we must reject that doctrine, knowing that it is not taught in God's Word, that Jesus did not teach it, and that the word "only-begotten" μονογέννητος, does not exist in the Greek New Testament nor in the LXX. Jesus is, however, the μονογενής, that is, correctly translated many times in the LXX and in the New Testament, the unique, the single, literally, only one of his kind. In no Scripture is He called the μονογέννητος,⁸⁸ the only-begotten; but He is emphatically

. . . the Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Great One, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

⁸⁸"monogennētos."

Christ the Spring and Fountain of Life.
 All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are recipients of the life of the Son of God . . . they are replenished with life from the source of all life. He is the spring, the fountain, of life. Only he who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, should say, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."⁸⁹ — *Youth's Instructor*, Aug. 4, 1898, p. —

The Spring, the Fountain of Life, the Father of Eternities, is forever the I AM. There was never a time when He was not; and He never became until His incarnation, for He was always God.

In closing these brief meditations on John's prologue, we would suggest that the current idea of a pre-existent eternal Sonship is an ecclesiastical conception, a formal definition of a theological dogma that the Koine Greek of the New Testament time cannot support on the basis of the word μονογενής. We rather suspect that John had in mind, in the use of this word, not merely only, unique, which is its true, basic meaning, but precious, dear. At Christ's baptism He was addressed by the Father as ". . . my Son, the Beloved, in thee is my delight." The Messiah is in a far higher sense than Israel the Son and the dearly Beloved of God. At the baptism there is this consciousness of the unique sonship which Jesus had assumed. This sonship, with its connotation of service to the Father, suggests personal relationship. The same thought is placed forward at the transfiguration, when we have the words: "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him." The unique Son of God is one with the Father, equal to Him, but now also in terms of a Son and a Servant, which involve an additional personal relationship involving mutual love issuing forth in service.

In harmony with this we find μονογενής in the LXX used to translate the Hebrew דָּרְוֹן, most dear, darling, in Psalms 22:20 and 35:17, where we

⁸⁹Mrs. E. G. White, The Youth's Instructor, August 4, 1898. ✓

would expect ἀγαπητός, beloved, precious, dear. Conversely, ἀγαπητός, beloved, is used for an only son in Genesis 22:21. However, in classical Greek (see Liddell and Scott for many examples), the term ἀγαπητός denotes an only child, therefore very precious, even as in Genesis 22:2, etc., where Isaac is called thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest. And it is because of this connotation of preciousness that μονογενής is used to translate טיבִּי. So in every place where John has μονογενής we might readily substitute ἀγαπητός, beloved, precious, with little material change in the sense of the verse involved. This would certainly be in harmony with the teaching of Paul, who continually uses a periphrasis of ἀγαπητός when speaking of Christ as the Beloved of God. The phrase, The Son, in the primitive church, was a distinctive term for the sonship of Christ; and when beloved (ἀγαπητός) was added, it certainly meant to the early Christians what it means to us in English, one precious, dear, uniquely so; so that the phrase meant just about what John was saying in his use of μονογενής.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS

The title, Son of God, describes, we believe, a relation between God and Jesus Christ. It is a relation that belongs to Christ's complex personality only. By a figure of speech, it describes an economical relation, the mode of His human production.

This, of necessity, precludes our acceptance of what is called Christ's eternal, Divine filiation. We reject both its legitimacy and its validity, and believe that between the ideas severally of filiation and divinity there is essential incongruity.

In filiation are implied generative production, identity of essence, inferiority of nature. Ordinarily the word son conveys the ideas of derivation, and of inferiority, both in dignity and in time. An eternal son is a contradiction in terms. An eternal generation in the true philosophical sense of the word eternal is another contradiction.

The term son includes a relative idea, which implies priority of existence in the father, and subsequency of existence in the son. Generation or production, like creation, necessarily implies beginning; therefore it contradicts absolute eternity. Insofar as Christ is divine, consubstantial with the Father, He must necessarily be self-existent. It signifies existence in absolute and separate independency.

Our Saviour, when viewed on the inferior side of His being, that side on which He was genealogically allied to David, was characterized by manifold infirmity. He hungered; He thirsted; He became wearied; He fainted. He was capable of dying. He died. He was crucified from weakness (ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας).⁹⁰ And when His body was buried, it was, like all other

⁹⁰"estaurōthē ex astheneias."

exanimated bodies, "sown in weakness."⁹¹ Indeed, it was a matter of high moment that we should not have a high priest "who could not be [sympathetically] touched with the feeling of our infirmities."⁹² Hence our Saviour "took part of flesh and blood."⁹³ Nevertheless, it was only on the one side of His complex being--His theanthropic being--that there was any scope for weakness. On the other hand He was ever in power. He was "the mighty God."⁹⁴ He was "the Almighty."⁹⁵ He was and is "the power of God."⁹⁶ He was made our great High Priest after "the power of an endless life."⁹⁷ And hence He is "able" to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him."⁹⁸ Even while He was on earth, He manifested, very gloriously, His divine power. Thence emanated His miracles. "Virtue," that is, power (δύναμις),⁹⁹ "went out from Him."¹⁰⁰ With power (δυνάμει), as well as with authority (ἐξουσίᾳ), He "commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out"¹⁰¹ of their victims. He also communicated of His power to His disciples. He gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.¹⁰² And, after He ascended, His power had still wider and unfettered scope. His scepter is a "rod of strength" (δυνάμειως; see Psalms 110:2). His power was exerted through His disciples in the working of miracles (Acts 3:12-16). It was experienced within them, in ethical results, which were akin to moral miracles. He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength [my δύναμις] is made perfect in weakness." "Most gladly, therefore," continues the apostle, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of

⁹¹I Corinthians 15:43. ⁹²Hebrews 4:15. ⁹³Hebrews 2:14.

⁹⁴Isaiah 9:6. ⁹⁵Revelation 1:8. ⁹⁶I Corinthians 1:24.

⁹⁷Hebrews 7:16. ⁹⁸Hebrews 7:25. ⁹⁹Mark 5:30.

¹⁰⁰Mark 5:30. ¹⁰¹Luke 4:36. ¹⁰²Luke 9:1.

Christ may rest upon me."¹⁰³ He says again, in language that exhibits a glorious reflex in miniature of the Saviour's omnipotence, "I can do all things"--all things which it beseems me to do--"through Christ who strengtheneth me" (ἐνδυναμοῦντι; see Philippians 4:13). He sought likewise to know more and more the "power of Christ's resurrection," which is just the power of Christ as risen (Philippians 3:10). And hence both in terrestrial and in celestial ascriptions of praise, the words are befitting, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive [the acknowledgement of] power," as well as "riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."¹⁰⁴ It is added, in verse 13, "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

¹⁰³II Corinthians 12:9.

¹⁰⁴Revelation 5:12.

Christ Eternally God in the Highest Sense

APPENDIX: THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

4. (1895) Life—Original, Unborrowed, Underived.—

"Jesus declared, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. 'He that hath the Son hath life.' The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life."--The Desire of Ages, p. 530.

5. (1895) Jesus Is Our Everlasting Father!—

"However much a shepherd may love his sheep, he loves his sons and daughters more. Jesus is not only our shepherd; He is our 'everlasting Father.' And He says, 'I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.' What a statement is this!--the only begotten Son, He who is in the bosom of the Father, He whom God has declared to be 'the Man that is My fellow,'--the communion between Him and the eternal God is taken to represent the communion between Christ and His children on the earth!"--Ibid., p. 483.

10. (1905) Father and Christ—Two Distinct Personalities.—

"Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. But the unity that is to exist between Christ and His followers does not destroy the personality of either. They are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father."--Review and Herald, June 1, 1905.

13. (1906) All the Fullness of the Godhead Bodily.—

"The Father cannot be described by the things of earth. The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' . . . Here is shown the personality of the Father."--Bible Training School, March, 1906.

16. (1912) Inherent Life of Christ Underived.—

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' It is not physical life that is here specified, but eternal life, the life which is exclusively the life of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual received. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. 'I lay it down of Myself,' He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived."--Signs of the Times, February 13, 1912.

17. (1917) Ever at Right Hand of Father.—

"Christ was the Son of God; He had been one with Him before the angels were called into existence. He had ever stood at the right hand of the Father."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 38.

7. (1900) Eternal Self-Existing Son.—

"Christ is equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man's freedom. He is the eternal, self-existing Son, on whom no yoke had come; and when God asked, 'Whom shall I send?' He could reply, 'Here am I, send me.' He could pledge Himself to become man's surety; for he could say that which the highest angel could not say,--I have power over my own life, 'power to lay it down, and . . . power to take it again.'"--The Youth's Instructor, June 21, 1900.

8. (1900) Pre-Existent, Self-Existent Son of God.—
 "Before Abraham was, I am.' Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. The message He gave to Moses . . . I AM hath sent me to you.' . . . Through Solomon Christ declared, 'The Lord possessed Me . . . always before Him.'"—Signs, Aug. 29, 1900
9. (1900) Never a Time When Not With Eternal Father.—
 "In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him."--Signs of the Times, August 29, 1900.
14. (1906) From Everlasting Mediator of Covenant.—
 "The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant. . . . Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. . . ."—R4H, Apr. 5, 1906
15. (1906) God Essentially in Highest Sense.—
 "Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. . . . There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible. . . ."—R4H, Apr 5, 1906, p. —
- "God and Christ knew from the beginning, of the apostasy of Satan and of the fall of Adam through the deceptive power of the apostate."--Review and Herald, April 5, 1906.
3. (1898) Golden Chain Binding Souls to God.—
 "The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject we do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truths."--The Youth's Instructor, October 13, 1898.
11. (1905) All the Fullness of the Godhead Manifested.—
 "The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Here is shown the personality of the Father. . . ."—Series B, No. 7, p. 62. (Nov)
12. (1905) Three Living Persons of Heavenly Trio.—
 "There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ."--Series B, No. 7, pp. 62-63. (Nov)

1. (1894) Gave Security for Both Parties. —

^ "Jesus alone could give security to God; for He was equal with God. He alone could be a mediator between God and man; for He possessed divinity and humanity. Jesus could thus give security to both parties for the fulfillment of the prescribed conditions. As the Son of God He gives security to God in our behalf, and as the eternal Word, as one equal with the Father, He assures us of the Father's love to us-ward who believe His pledged word."--Review and Herald, April 3, 1894.

6. (1900) Equal Authority With Father. —

^ "The world's Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father. The authority by which He spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly His own, yet He assures us that He and the Father are one."--Review and Herald, January 7, 1890.

2. (1897) Christ's Life Original Unborrowed Underived. —

^ "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God the life giver takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. 'I lay it down of myself,' he said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He can not earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour."--Signs of the Times, April 8, 1897.