

## **The Deity of Christ.** **pp. 177 - 191**

In the following pages A and B discuss the subject of The Deity of Christ. The standpoint of B represents the standpoint of *The Berean Expositor*; the arguments of A are an attempt to present justly the views which *The Berean Expositor* here entirely repudiates.

### **The Subject Stated.**

A.—The Scriptures teach that there is “one God”, and one mediator, “the man” Christ Jesus. The “one God” is the Father, the man is “the Son”, and therefore I cannot believe what is commonly called the Deity of Christ.

B.—Before we enter into any argument over this subject I trust we are both conscious of the solemnity of the question.

A.—Truth is one, and I do not believe we are right in speaking of one part as of more importance than another.

B.—Truth is one indeed, and every part fundamental, yet Scripture makes a distinction which I am bound to follow. John in his second epistle says:--

“Every one that taketh a lead, and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God”  
(II John 9).

### **A Dividing Doctrine.**

In some cases divergent views were to be tolerated and those holding them were to consider that both may hold them “unto the Lord”, but John in speaking of this doctrine takes a different attitude, saying that such a one “hath not God”, and further, “receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed”. You will understand therefore that it is impossible for those responsible for *The Berean Expositor* to have fellowship with those who deny the Deity of Christ. This may sound narrow and bigoted, but it is the scriptural attitude, and we have no alternative.

A.—I cannot understand how you can believe the Son of God to be God without at the same time believing that there are two Gods.

B.—I am sure that by speaking of the Son of God in this way you are approaching the subject from the wrong end. May I suggest that we seek to understand this deep doctrine by studying the teaching of Scripture along the following lines:--

- (1). GOD . . . . . *Absolutely.*
- (2). GOD . . . . . *Relatively.*
- (3). GOD . . . . . *Manifest.*
- (4). GOD . . . . . *Manifest in the flesh.*

## No Philosophy of God in Scripture.

As to “God absolutely” we know nothing. Throughout the whole range of Scripture there is not to be found one statement that speaks of God Himself alone without relation to His creatures. The attitude of Scripture is expressed in the words, “He that cometh to God must believe that He is”. Philosophy would discuss the being of God; Genesis assumes His being, and proceeds to His works and ways.

A.—Do you not think this passage speaks of God absolutely?

“Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy” (Isa. lvii. 15).

B.—If you had continued your quotation you would see that this revelation of the Godhead is *relative*, for the passage immediately adds:--

“I dwell in the high and holy place, WITH HIM ALSO that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. lvii. 15).

You will see that the reference to the nature of God is not given for its own sake, but in order to emphasize the condescension of Him who dwells with the humble and the contrite.

A.—John says, “God is Spirit”.

B.—Yes, but only because he would emphasize that “They who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John iv. 24).

Perhaps if I read you a short extract from “*The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*” by Isaac Taylor, it may make my meaning clear:--

“If for a moment they (the Hebrew writers) utter what might have the aspect of an abstract proposition, they bring it into contact, at the nearest possible point, with the spiritual wants of men, or with their actual moral condition; as thus—‘Great is the Lord, and of great power, and His understanding is infinite. He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by their names’, but this infinite and almighty Being is He that ‘healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds’. It is the human spirit that is the central or cohesive principle of Hebrew Theology. The Theistic affirmations that are scattered throughout the books of the Old Testament are not susceptible of a synthetic adjustment by any rule of logical distribution . . . . the several elements of this Theism are complementary one of another only in relation to the needs, and to the discipline of the human mind; not so in relation to its modes of speculative thought, or to its own reasons. If we were to bring together the entire compass of the figurative Theology of Scripture (and this must be the Theology of the Old Testament) it would be easy to arrange the whole in periphery around the human spirit, as related to its manifold experiences; but a hopeless task it would be to attempt to arrange the same passages as if in a circle around the hypothetic attributes of the Absolute Being. The human reason falters at every step in attempting so to interpret the Divine Nature.”

Put into language more readily acceptable, these pregnant words tell us that we are not to look for a philosophy of God in the Scriptures, but that the whole revelation of the Godhead is limited to that which is circumscribed by the purpose of the ages.

A.—I think I perceive your meaning, but can you give some more concrete example?

### **Jehovah, The Age Title.**

B.—The title *Jehovah* will provide a good example. In Gen. xxi. 33 we read (A.V.):--

“And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-Sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.”

The meaning is just the reverse of this. The words, “The Lord, the everlasting God” are in the original, *Jehovah El olam*, “Jehovah, God of the age”. In Exod. iii. 14 we have the title “I Am”, which is expanded as follows:--

“The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob . . . . This is My name for the age, and this is My memorial unto all generations.”

In Rev. i. 4 we have a New Testament, unfolding of the title *Jehovah*, which supplements the “I am” of Exod. iii. 14:--

“Him which is (I am), and which was, and which is to come.”

This expanded title occurs in varied orders according to the requirements of the context, but in Rev. xi. 17 we read (R.V. and critical texts):--

“O Lord God Almighty, which ART and WAST”;

the future is omitted, the reason being:--

“because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and reignest” (not hast reigned or will reign).

It is the glory of this great title that it does not last for ever, but that the Lord fulfils it. The eternity of the invisible God is nowhere in view. We shall have taken a step towards clearer understanding when we realize that the revelation of God is relative, and must always be considered as touching the purpose of the ages.

### **God--relatively.**

A.—As there seems nothing revealed concerning God, except as related to the purpose of the ages, are we to expect a fuller revelation in the life to come?

B.—In John xvii. 3 we read:--

“And this is *aionian* life, with the object that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ.”

During the “age to come”, when *aionian* life will be enjoyed, those thus privileged will get to know God, in order to equip them for their share in bringing about the happy condition when:--

“The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas” (Isa. xi. 9).

We know God now only through Christ and in no other way. The relationship which Christ bears to the ages may be seen by comparing the following Scriptures:--

“Christ is all and in all”	\	During the ages.
( <i>Ta panta kai en pasi Christos</i> , Col. iii. 11).	/	
“That God may be all in all”	\	When the ages finish.
( <i>Hina e ho Theos panta en pasin</i> , I Cor. xv. 28).	/	

You will see that when we deal with the scriptures that speak of God relatively, we are compelled to consider those scriptures which are ranged under our third heading:--

### **God--manifest.**

It is in connection with this aspect of the subject that most of our difficulties occur. Let us examine the teaching of four passages of Scripture, viz., John i. 1; Col. i. 15, 16; Heb. i. 1-3; and Phil. ii. 6-11. Let us commence with John i. 1:--

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

A.—There are some important alterations necessary in this translation before we have the truth. First there is no word for “the” in the phrase “in the beginning”.

B.—That is true, and but confirms our suggestion that the Bible is not occupied with the beginning, which must of necessity be beyond the grasp of human understanding. It refers to that period when Creation was contemplated.

IN that beginning WAS the Word.  
SINCE that beginning the Devil sinneth, and was a murderer.

A.—There is a far more important alteration necessary. Instead of reading “the Word was God”, we must read “the Word was A God”, for the article is omitted. If we give full value to the article we shall read “the Word was with THE God, and the Word was A God”, THE God referring to the one true God, and A God to God in a subordinate and lower sense.

B.—You therefore believe in two Gods, a greater and a lesser.

A.—No, I do not accept the idea of a number of persons in the Godhead.

B.—Then He who is A God is really no god at all?

A.—I hardly know how to answer you, but I have the warrant of great Bible Students for my translation.

B.—Do you ever use a Concordance?

A.—Why, man, am I not continually urging the “Concordant method”? And is not this new translation vouched for by those who advocate the Concordant method?

### **The Concordant Method.**

B.—I am afraid I am not greatly moved for all the “urging” and “advocating” of the Concordant method. What I ask you is, Have you tested this matter out for yourself?

A.—Well, I must confess that I have not.

B.—Let us do so, and we will start with John i. Here is a Greek Concordance; find the word *Theos*, and tell me whether it occurs in John i. without the article.

A.—

“The Word was A God” (verse 1).

“There was a man sent from A God” (verse 6).

“Power to become children of A God” (verse 12).

“Which were born of A God” (verse 13).

“No one hath seen A God at any time” (verse 18).

B.—Thank you, that will suffice. Is it necessary to emphasize how utterly false and untenable your interpretation becomes when tested? Did God in a subordinate sense send John the Baptist? Is the Father God in a subordinate sense? Then look at verse 18. The invisible God must be THE God.

A.—Yes, I agree.

B.—Yet, with the first verse hardly dry, the inspired penman (according to your teaching) makes the most atrocious blunder. Do you not agree that he forgot to write the article here in verse 18?

A.—I can hardly do that, for I believe that all Scriptures is inspired.

B.—Then I see no alternative for you but to agree that the Concordance disproves the theory of your teachers?

A.—I am afraid it is so, yet how is it that men who evidently have a knowledge of the original can have missed so obvious a refutation?

B.—My dear friend, believe me, it is not the office of the writer to sit in judgment upon the motives of others. We are simply dealing with facts. Their teaching when weighed in the balances is found wanting. We therefore, as simple followers of Christ, unhesitatingly reject it; we do no more, but we can do no less.

## A Parallel Usage.

A.—I should like to know what I am to believe regarding this Greek article; I understood that its presence or absence is of great importance.

B.—You are quite right; it is the false deductions that you have to guard against.

A.—Could you give me something of a parallel with John i. 1?

B.—We find one in this very chapter, viz., verse 14, “the Word was made flesh”. It is manifestly absurd to translate, “the Word was made A Flesh”, yet the case is parallel. “The Word was *Theos*”, “the Word became *sarx*.”

There is something more than the question of the article in John i. 1; there is also the order of the words. In the original the sentence reads, “And God was the Word”. This alteration of the order draws attention to the statement concerning the Deity of the Logos. As our subject is “*God—manifest*”, we must not leave John i. without a further glance at verse 18:--

“No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

This passage really comes under the fourth heading, “*God—manifest in the flesh*”, and we may have to return to it. Here however it is closely connected with the verse which teaches that God is manifested in the Word, and so claims our attention. There is a reading favoured by Lm., Tr., WH., Rm., endorsed by the Numeric Version, Rotherham, and above all by the Syriac Version, which gives “God only begotten” instead of “The only begotten Son”. I would not build a doctrine upon this reading, but it cannot be ignored.

The prologue of John’s Gospel occupies verses 1-18. The whole passage is an introversion, verse 1 balancing verse 18. The three clauses of verse one find an echo in verse 18, thus:--

a		In the beginning the <i>Word</i> .	\	
b		The Word was <i>with God</i> .	}	God manifest.
c		The Word was God.	/	
c		Son (or God) only begotten.	\	
b		In the <i>bosom</i> of the Father.	}	God manifest
a		He hath <i>declared</i> Him.	/	in the flesh.

Before the birth of Christ at Bethlehem He is called the Word, and revealed *God*. After His birth at Bethlehem He is called the Son, and revealed the *Father*. We must take this further when we come to the question of the Sonship of Christ.

Let us pass to our next passage, viz., Col. i. 15, 16.

## The Image of the Invisible God.

The word translated image is *eikon* from *eiko* = to resemble. Matt. xxii. 20 uses it of the image of Caesar stamped on a coin. The word implies much more than a resemblance as may be seen in Heb. x. 1:--

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very *image* of the things.”

Image, being opposed to shadow, implies the idea of substance and reality. In Col. i. 15 the reference to the image of God is followed by a statement concerning Creation. In Col. iii. 10 the reference to the image is followed by a statement concerning the new creation, a parallel with John i. 1 and 18:--

“And having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

### Firstborn of every creature.

A.—How do you understand the title “firstborn of every creature”? If Christ be the first of all creatures, He, however so great, could not be God.

B.—The word “firstborn” is *prototokos*. It is used in Luke ii. 7 of the birth of Christ as Mary’s firstborn. The word however contains in it more than birth. It emphasizes the dignity and honour that went with primo-geniture, and some translate the passage “Prince and Lord of all created things”.

This idea of dignity and pre-eminence is found in the context of Col. i. 15, “He is *before* all things” (verse 17). The title “The firstborn of every creature” is balanced by the words, “Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the *pre-eminence*” (verse 18). Speaking of the resurrection, Psa. ii. 7 says, “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee”. This is parallel with the title “the firstborn from the dead”. Do you understand this passage to teach that on the resurrection morning Christ began for the first time His existence?

A.—Certainly not, the question is absurd. He took up the life which He had previously laid down for our sakes.

B.—Well then, by parity of reasoning, when He first appeared as the firstborn of every creature, it does not mean that He then began His existence, but that He Who was God manifested Himself in the Person of the Son, Who became the Chief, Lord and Heir of the creation the followed. You will find this idea of pre-eminence in Rev. i. 5:--

“The first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

Passages from the LXX where *prototokos* is used with the meaning “superior”, “greater”, “most loved” or “exalted” are II Sam. xix. 43; Exod. iv. 22; Psa. lxxxiv. 27; Jer. xxxi. 9. The nation of Israel is called the firstborn, but it would be difficult to prove

that it meant anything more than dignity and inheritance. It is illuminating, so far as the usage of the word is concerned, to know that the Rabbins spoke of God as “The firstborn of the world”, and Paul’s usage, “the firstborn of every creature”, is parallel. In Col. i. 16 the apostle shows what he intended by the title by commencing the verse with the word “for”. Christ is the firstborn of every creature *for* He is the Creator. To say that Christ was the firstborn of His own creation is absurd.

As to the invisible God . . . . . Christ is the IMAGE.  
As to the old creation . . . . . Christ is the FIRSTBORN.  
As to the new creation . . . . . Christ is the FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD.

and in both creations He is *pre-eminent*.

### **God has Spoken in Son.**

Let us now turn to Heb. i. 1-3, our third passage. You will find here an opportunity for observing the presence and the absence of the Greek article.

God in times past spake to the Fathers . . . . . *by the prophets.*  
God in these last days has spoken to us . . . . . *in Son.*

A.—“In Son”! that does not seem good sense.

B.—It is hardly good English perhaps, but a profound truth in here. “The prophets” were messengers used by God, but when Christ walked the earth He was not merely another and greater messenger. It was God now speaking “in Son”, God manifest in the flesh. To the prophet the word “came”; Christ however was the Word Himself.

A.—May we not translate the words “in a Son”?

B.—No, I think not, because the idiom is found in the Hebrew and would be known to the readers of the epistle. Will you turn to Exod. vi. 3.

A.—(*Reads*).—“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty.”

B.—The Hebrew reads B’EL SHADDAI, literally “in God Almighty”. To these patriarchs God appeared “in God Almighty”, to their N.T. descendants He appeared “in Son”. The one invisible God remains the same, whether for His purposes He is known as the Almighty God, or The Son. This will be more easily understood when we have considered the meaning of the words, “the form of God”, as used in Phil. ii. 6. Let us notice what is said of the Son in Heb. i.:--

“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb. i. 3).

The R.V. reads:--

“Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance.”

When we come to Phil. ii. 6 we shall have to enquire into the words “Who being”. Let it suffice for the moment to draw attention to the fact that in Phil. ii. 6 we are dealing with the very being of the Lord, while in Heb. i. 3 we are dealing with the characteristics of the “Son”, the Word “made flesh”—two distinct phases the confusing of which is the cause of much understanding.

### **The Brightness of the Glory.**

The “brightness” (or “effulgence”) translates a word (*apaugasma*) which occurs nowhere else in the N.T. We may get clearer light if we turn to the typical people Israel. When the ark was taken from Israel, the wife of Phinehas named her son *Ichabod*—“Where is the glory?” saying:--

“The glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken” (I Sam. iv. 21, 22).

The Psalmist’s comment is:--

“He delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy’s hand” (Psa. lxxviii. 61).

A.—This shows that Israel’s conception of God was very limited, and even though you proceed to show that Christ was the Jehovah of the O.T. that will not lift Him beyond “A God”.

B.—Hezekiah may correct your mistake:--

“O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the Cherubim--,”

A.—As I said, Israel localized the Deity.

B.—You did not allow Hezekiah to finish:--

“O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the Cherubim, Thou art THE GOD, even thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth” (II Kings xix. 15).

The glory of the Lord is “above the heavens” (Psa. viii. 1); yet Hezekiah’s prayer teaches that for the purposes of grace that infinite and incomprehensible glory could be attached to the ark of the covenant, even as in the fulness of time it should be manifest in the flesh. Ezekiel says:--

“And the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it . . . . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord” (Ezek. i. 26-28).

Thus it is that Eph. i. 17 says that “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” is “the Father of *the glory*”.

## The Image and the Substance.

A further title is “the express image of His substance”. “Express image” is the rendering of *charakter*, from *charatto* “to engrave”. *Charagma* is translated “graven” in Acts xvii. 29:--

“We ought not to suppose a gold or silver, or a stone *sculpture* of man’s art and device to be like the Deity.”

One of the dictionary meanings of “substance” is “that which underlies all outward manifestations”. God is invisible. Christ is the image of the invisible God. God’s “substance” is manifested in Him Who is the express image of the unseen underlying substance. Faith is the “substance” of things hoped for (Heb. xi. 1). Works, walk, witness give expression to the unseen faith (Heb. xi.). No laws, fasts, feasts or sacrifices, no series of typical men could ever be the *express image*; Christ’s alone occupies that place.

As I trust you will treat all that is put before you in a true “Berean” spirit, the following comparison of passages may be of service.

### A Threefold Testimony.

<b>John i.</b>	<b>Colossians i.</b>	<b>Hebrews i.</b>
The Word. No one ever saw God. All things made by Him.	The Image. The invisible God. By Him all things created.	The express Image. The Substance. By Him the ages made. Heaven and earth also. Angels worship Him.
His fulness.	He is before all things. All fulness. By Him all things consist.	All things upheld. Thy throne, O God.
The Word was God. The only begotten Son.	Firstborn.	Firstborn.

*He Who made all things, upholds all things, by Whom all things consist, is no lesser Deity; He is God and no other.*

### The Form of God.

A.—I should be glad if you would now turn to Phil. ii. 6-11. If you are unprejudiced and closely observe what the passage actually says, if you will but “try the things that differ”, you will notice that the passage does *not* say that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is GOD, but Lord, to the glory of God-THE FATHER. The one Who is God is The Father, Christ is but the Lord. This is a confirmation of my interpretation of “A God”, “God in a subordinate sense”.

B.—Before we deal with this closing verse we must look at the earlier verses and also consider the context. The reason for this marvellous passage is in the words of Phil. ii. 4, 5:--

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.  
Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

The context therefore prepares us to see that Christ laid aside something that was really His own for the sake of others. Now let us examine the actual wording of the passage:--

“Who being in the form of God” (Phil. ii. 6).

The word “being” is the Greek *huparchon*, and is given in the R.V. margin as “being originally”. It refers to the time previous to the birth in Bethlehem.

A.—I believe the words “being originally” are correct, and that whatever it was that is referred to was laid aside when Christ became man.

B.—We will test that. Turn to Luke xxiii. 50-53 where we read:--

“Behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor . . . ., this man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.”

B.—The Greek reads *Ioseph bouleutes huparchon*. Do I understand you to believe that Joseph of Arimathaea ceased to be a “counsellor” as soon as he begged the body of Jesus?

A.—No, I see no necessity.

B.—Turn again to Acts ii. 30, 31 and read:--

A.—

“Therefore being a prophet . . . . spake of the resurrection.”

B.—The Greek reads *prophetes oun huparchon*. Do you believe that David ceased to be a prophet when he spoke of the resurrection of Christ?

A.—No, I do not; what is your purpose in these examples?

B.—My purpose is to show by these parallels that there is no warrant for assuming that Christ “ceased to be in the form of God” when “He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant”.

A.—I cannot agree with you, for the Lord Jesus was certainly not in the form of God when he walked the earth. The Samaritan woman when she saw Him said, “How is it that thou, being a Jew”, and that is evidently the “form” that all saw.

B.—We can go no further until we have studied the expression “form of God”, for you evidently look upon the word as being synonymous with “figure” or “shape”. The word form is a translation of the Greek word *morphe*, and is simply the same word twisted round as it passed through the Latin. It occurs only three times in the N.T., Mk. xvi. 12,

Phil. ii. 6, 7. In the LXX we find it translated in Isa. xlv. 13 as “figure” and in Job iv. 16 as “form”. Job makes a distinction between “form” and “image”, saying “I could not discern the *form*, an *image* was before mine eyes”. When Christ said concerning the Father, “Ye have not . . . . nor seen His *shape*” (John v. 37) the word is *eidos*, not *morphe*. *Morphe* is used by the LXX to translate the Chaldee “splendour” in the Book of Daniel.

### **The True Meaning of “Form”.**

In Daniel we have the record of the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. There we read that he was driven into the fields and ate grass like an ox. When the time came for his restoration we read:--

“And for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness (*morphe*) returned unto me” (Dan. iv. 36).

There is no idea that Nebuchadnezzar meant that his *shape* changed, for the Chaldee word used does not allow the thought. Even the word *shape* bore something more than external figure, as may be seen in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. Like Nebuchadnezzar, King Lear had left his throne, but as a result of his daughter’s wickedness he says:--

“Thou shalt find that I’ll resume *the shape* which thou dost think I have cast off for ever.”

### **Hooker and Bacon.**

The A.V. was made in the year A.D.1611. In A.D.1594 Hooker wrote his *Ecclesiastical Policy*, and in A.D.1620 Bacon wrote his *Novum Organon*. These writers come on either side of the date of the A.V. They are both writers who used language with precision. Hooker says:--

“*Form* in other creatures is a thing proportional unto *soul* in living creatures.”

The modern meaning “figure” or “shape” cannot possibly fit this definition except in the world of crystals where shape is inherent and essential. Bacon says:--

“The form of a nature is such that, given the form, the nature infallibly follows. Therefore it is always present when the nature is present, and universally implies it, and is constantly inherent in it. Again the form is such, that if it be taken away, the nature infallibly vanishes.”

Bacon could not have meant external shape by form here.

A.—It looks as though Hooker, Bacon, Shakespeare and the A.V. used the word *form* in a much deeper sense than we do at present, and more akin to the usage of the LXX in Dan. iv.

B.—Let me take an illustration from the works of God. Water is composed of two gases in chemical combination: Hydrogen and Oxygen. The chemical formula for water is H<sub>2</sub>O. The word formula is but the diminutive of *forma*, the Latin for *morphe*. Bacon’s

words are exact when spoken of formula. Wherever we have H<sub>2</sub>O we must have water, it “infallibly follows”, and as soon as that formula is altered, water “infallibly vanishes”.

Now, water exists in three different states, each having distinct and in some cases opposite characteristics. Water may be solid, liquid or gas—ice, water or steam. Yet with all the tremendous differences which are observable under these three states, the formula remains unchanged. Ice is H<sub>2</sub>O; to become water the external “fashion” changes, but the “form” remains. Steam, a mighty power, is invisible, yet its “form” is precisely the same as that of ice and water.

### **Form and Fashion.**

In the immediate context of Phil. ii. the apostle uses a word which means outward shape or figure when he says, “and being found in fashion as a man”. Here the word used is *schema*. The constant *morphe* of water is H<sub>2</sub>O; its *schema* (fashion) may be either solid, liquid or gas.

A.—I remember reading the following in *The Berean Expositor* in connection with Phil. ii. 6, 7:--

“Here the ‘form’ of God is seen exchanged for the ‘form’ of a servant.”

How do you reconcile this statement with what you have just brought forward?

B.—I do not reconcile these statements. The passage you quote was written in 1913, eleven years ago. We make no claim to infallibility, but pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and when this is granted it often couples *un-learning* together with learning. There are many items in past volumes that would need altering if re-issued. Every statement we make is presented to those who will “search and see”, proving all things and holding fast that which is good.

The Lord could exchange the glory of Heaven for the humility of earth, without touching the form of God.

A.—I understand that if Christ were God, such an expression as “thought it not robbery to be equal with God” would be superfluous. No one thinks of robbing himself of his own essential nature. Paul did not say Messiah was “equal with God”, but “He reckoned equality with God not a thing to be grasped after”. THE God was self-sufficient. Messiah reckoned self-sufficiency not a thing to be clutched at. Here Messiah stood where Satan fell.

*(To be continued).*

## The Deity of Christ. pp. 1 - 10

### Form and Fashion (continued).

B.—What do you understand by “equality with God”?

A.—I take it to mean *the same essential nature*, and that Christ did not aspire to the supreme Godhead, but was content with His subordinate position as indicated in John i. 1.

B.—Seeing that “form” like “formula” means essential nature, this new statement must indicate something else. The R.V. reads “on an equality with God”. *Isa Theo* indicates not essential nature, but mode of existence. Now one mode of existence may be relinquished for another without touching the nature. The words of II Cor. viii. 9 are an illustration, “Though He was rich, yet He became poor”. “Rich” and “poor” are modes of existence, but “He” who made the exchange remained the same.

A.—What does the statement mean then?

B.—Christ, though essentially God and therefore surrounded with the accompaniments of Deity, voluntarily laid all this glory aside and came to earth and was found in fashion as a man. “The form of God” has as its proper mode the being “on an equality with God”. “The form of a servant” has as its proper mode “the fashion as a man”.

The counting it not a prize that He was on an equality with God is further explained by the words, “He made Himself of no reputation”, or more literally, “He emptied Himself”. Of what did Christ empty Himself? The answer must be, He emptied Himself of that which He did not regard as a prize. He did not lay aside His essential nature, He did lay aside the glory that was His own proper right. Let us now look at the words:--

“He made Himself of no reputation” (A.V.).  
“Emptied Himself” (R.V.).

The two words “Not . . . . but” leave no room for doubt as to what was “emptied”. The being on equality with God, the ministry of thousands of angels, the glory; this He voluntarily laid aside. The two statements:--

Himself He emptied.  
Himself He humbled.

explain one another. Chrysostom in his commentary on Philippians says:--

“What then should we say in answer to Arius, who said that the Son is of other substance (than the Father)? Tell me what is the meaning of this--*He took the form of a servant*? He became man says Arius. Therefore also *subsisting in the form of God*, He was God . . . . *The form of a servant*—man by nature; therefore *the form of God*—God by nature.

Bishop Pearson draws attention to the inexactness of the A.V. In the A.V. we read:--

“He made Himself of no reputation, AND took upon Himself the form of a servant, AND was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. ii. 7).

Here we have two copulative conjunctions “and”, and three distinct propositions. The original is not so. The words together give one expression of the condescension of Christ:--

“But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.”

The humiliation thus commenced goes down to the death of the cross; then comes the glorious exaltation:--

“Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. ii. 9-11).

We now reach the verse to which you drew attention. Your comment was, I believe, that every tongue is not going to confess that Jesus Christ is *God*, but *Lord*, to the glory of *God*, Who is not Christ, but the *Father*.

A.—Yes, that was my statement.

B.—In the first place we have seen that the Saviour laid aside His glory, but not His Godhead. That glory we see given back in the great exaltation. This exaltation answers John xvii. 5:--

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”

The structure of the passage may be helpful to us:--

A1 | EQUALITY. The accompaniments of Deity.  
B1 | a1 | He emptied Himself.  
b1 | Servant. To obey.  
c1 | Likeness of men. Kinsman redeemer.  
d1 | Found in fashion as man.  
a1 | He humbled Himself.  
b1 | Obedient. As servant.  
c1 | Death. Kinsman redeemer.  
A2 | EXALTATION. The accompaniments of Deity restored.  
B2 | a2 | Name.  
b2 | Every knee.  
c2 | In heaven.  
In earth.  
Under earth.  
b2 | Every tongue.  
a2 | Lord.

Looking at the structure, what do you say is the name which is above every name given to Christ at His exaltation?

A.—I should say “The Lord”, only that title is used of Christ before the day of His glory.

B.—I think upon examination you will see that the title is invested with a great fullness in this passage. *Kurios*, “Lord”, is the constant translation of the Hebrew “Jehovah”. He Who humbled Himself even unto death will be confessed in that day as Jehovah.

### **The Testimony of a Quotation.**

The words of Phil. ii. 10, 11 are a direct quotation from Isa. xlv. I want you to repeat your comment upon this passage in Phil. ii. before I read the quotation from Isaiah so that we may place them together.

A.—I said that every tongue is not going to confess that Jesus Christ is GOD, but *Lord*, to the glory of God, Who is not Christ, but the FATHER.

B.—I will now read Isa. xlv. 18-22:--

“For thus saith *the Lord* that created the heavens, GOD HIMSELF that formed the earth and made it . . . . I am the Lord, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE . . . . There is NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME . . . . Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, FOR I AM GOD, and there is NONE ELSE.”

Are you satisfied that “the Lord” here is GOD HIMSELF and none else?

A.—Most certainly, that is the plain language of the Scripture.

B.—You are sure “the Lord” here does not mean a lesser Deity, “God in a subordinate sense”?

A.—No, the passage will not allow the thought. This is the Creator of heaven and earth Who is speaking.

B.—I will continue the quotation from Isa. xlv.:--

“I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, THAT UNTO ME every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear”  
(verse 23).

Will you dare repeat your comment upon Phil. ii. with this testimony before you?

A.—No, I dare not. I must come like Philip and kneel before Him Who is both Saviour and Creator, both God and man, and say, “*My Lord and my God*”.

B.—Praise God for that confession. Difficulties you will still have, problems unsolved and beyond your understanding but your heart will be free, and the consciousness of loyalty to the Lord is beyond description.

A.—It would appear that “Jesus” of the N.T. is none other than the “Jehovah” of the O.T. Is this borne out by any other quotations?

B.—Yes. For example Isa. vi. There we have a vision of the Lord. Before His glory the Seraphim veil their faces while they cry:--

“Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”

There can be no doubt that this was a vision of God. Let us consider the testimony of two witnesses:--

HEZEKIAH.—“O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, Thou that dwellest between the Cherubim, THOU ARE THE GOD, even THOU ALONE” (Isa. xxxvii. 16).

JOHN (Quoting Isa. vi. 9, 10).—“These things said Isaiah, when he beheld His (Christ’s) glory, and spake of Him” (John xii. 41).

Scripture declares that the Lord of Hosts is THE God, John declares that the Lord of Hosts is Christ. Your teachers, whose doctrine you have renounced, told you that John taught that Christ as A God, but *not* THE God!

A.—They did, and I believed them, denying the very Lord that bought me.

B.—Not only have we definite quotation, but the fact that “Jehovah” and “Jesus” are one and the same is assumed on every hand. Isa. xl. 3 says:--

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the *Lord*, make straight in the desert a highway for our *God*.”

The Gospels declare that John the Baptist is “the voice”, and that he was sent to prepare the way for Christ, Who is both Lord and God.

### **Jehovah not limited to Israel.**

The Lord is the God of Israel. He that dwelt between the Cherubim was no God in a subordinate sense. He is confessed as the God of Israel, the God alone of all the kingdoms of earth, the maker of heaven and earth (Isa. xxxvii. 16). Solomon confessed that this same God was not limited to Israel or the temple, saying:--

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee” (I Kings viii. 27).

I want you to see clearly that any reservation in the mind as to the full Deity of Christ blights the faith and is unscriptural. Take the title “Saviour” in Titus:--

“According to the commandment of God our Saviour” (i. 3).

“Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour” (ii. 10).

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (ii. 13).

“The love of God our Saviour toward man” (iii. 4).

“Through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (iii. 6).

The title “Saviour” is used of “God” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” without distinction. Further, here we have definite statement, that Christ is “The Great God and our Saviour”. Not only is Christ here called “The great God”, but Psa. lxxviii. 35 says:--

“God was their rock, and the HIGH GOD their redeemer.”

That redeemer was Christ. In verse 56 the same title comes again:--

“They tempted and provoked the MOST HIGH GOD.”

They tempted Christ.

A.—How do you know that?

B.—I Cor. x. 9 says:--

“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted.”

In I Cor. x. 4 we also find, “That rock was Christ”, which looks to Psa. lxxviii. 35. There can be no good done by lengthening this study. You have your Bible, and you may add to the passages already brought forward.

The High God.	\	
The Most High God.	\	
THE God.	\	Christ.—God manifest in the flesh.
Jehovah.	/	
Creator.	/	
The Great God.	/	

Which will you believe, this glorious testimony of Scripture:--

JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT GOD

or

He is a A God, God in a subordinate sense?

You will remember that we opened this discussion by saying that “the one God” is “the Father”, and that “the man” is “the Son”, and therefore could not be God Himself. I suggested that we were dealing with the question at the wrong end. The Father must be greater than His Son. He Who sends is greater than the one sent. This is all true, but reasoning that holds good with men may not hold good with one Who is both God and man. We have seen that He is God, even the Great God, Jehovah, God Himself. Therefore we must distinguish things that differ. When He took the form of a servant it was to obey. He took flesh and blood that He might obey. In Heb. x. 5-7 is a quotation from Psa. xl. 6-8. Will you compare the two passages and note any important difference?

## **The Willing Servant.**

A.—Apart from minor differences that are the result of translation, there is one that does call for explanation. In Psa. xl. 6 the words “mine ears hast Thou opened” are replaced in Heb. x. 5 by the words, “A body hast Thou prepared me”.

B.—In the margin of the Psalm you have a note to the effect that “opened” is really the word “digged”. The typical principle of interpretation which we have discussed upon previous occasions comes to our aid here. In Exod. xxi. 1-6 we have the law pertaining to a Hebrew servant, which limited his servitude to six years, except under the following exceptional conditions:--

“If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges, he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for the age.”

The “digged ear” was the symbol of loving willing servitude, entered for the love of those who would otherwise have been left behind in bondage. The Lord of glory, the Creator of things seen and unseen, when He entered out of love His period of willing servitude, took the form of a servant, and entered the body “prepared” for Him, which body was the symbol of lowliness, and pierced for our sakes upon the cross.

Shall we abuse the very condescension of the Lord and make of it an argument against His very Deity?

A.—I never saw the shameful ingratitude of the doctrine I held that used the language of the Saviour’s period of servitude to deny His Godhead.

B.—When people begin arguing that the “Son” must necessarily be less than the “Father” they are wasting time, for Scripture teaches the same thing. The Son and the Father speak of that relationship which commenced when the fullness of time came for Christ to be born of a woman. He can expressly do the will of Him that sent Him, and took the “form” of a servant and the “fashion” as a man in order to accomplish that purpose. This voluntarily assumed subordination cannot be used as an argument when dealing with His essential Deity.

A.—Do you not believe that Christ was “The Son” from eternity?

B.—You are asking a question which the human mind cannot answer unaided, and upon which Scripture never speaks. As I have said, I am no philosopher, all I know is already written in the Word. What I find there is that Christ

“Originally was in the form of God.”  
“In the beginning He was the Word.”

When the fullness of time came the Word became flesh, and then, the Scripture says, “we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father”. Luke i. 31-35 makes a very complete statement. Let us read it:--

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest . . . . Then Mary said unto the angel, How shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD.”

The words “therefore also” put the matter beyond question. The great confession of Matt. xvi. 16:--

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,”

and the words of I John iv. 2 are complimentary:--

“Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”

There is no reference to His Deity, but to His Mediatorship. The way in which many who attacks the doctrine of the Lord’s Deity use the title “Son” is but the old abuse of the man of straw.

A.—What do you mean by this “man of straw”?

B.—It means that for the purposes of argument a person first collects together a series of statements which have no real place in the argument, but which appear valid to the ordinary hearer, and then having built up this “man of straw” he proceeds to display his ability in knocking it to pieces. To those who see that the Sonship of Christ is essentially a part of that great voluntary self-emptying, when the servant’s form was taken at Bethlehem, the spectacle is a pitiable exhibition of either ignorance or prejudice.

A.—There does not seem much more to be said. I think however that you ought to face I Cor. viii. 5, 6 before concluding.

B.—By all means. What is the context of these verses?

A.—Idolatry.

B.—So then we have a statement concerning the Christian faith as opposed to idolatry. In contrast with the “gods many and the lords many” of paganism, we have the sublime teaching of Scripture:--

“But to us (here we have the ‘relative’ argument brought in, to which we devoted some time at the opening of our discussion) there is but one God, the Father, out of Whom the all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom the all things, and we through Him.”

The “lords” of paganism were mediators between men and the more remote “gods”, and this statement becomes exactly parallel with that of I Tim. ii. 5:--

“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.”

The question of the Deity of Christ is not in view. It is the “Mediator” and the “Man” that is in question. None of these things, nor all that Scripture says concerning Christ as the Servant or the Son, the Sent One or the Sacrifice, the Shepherd or the Sufferer, can have the remotest influence upon the revealed facts of Scripture that this same Christ is also “The Great God”, “The High God”, “The Almighty God”, “The Creator”, and “Jehovah”.

It is essential to our redemption and to the purpose of reconciliation that Christ shall be *man*. It is also the continual teaching of Scripture that He was *God*. Faith believes the complete statement. The mere multiplying of examples cannot make the doctrine more true nor more plain. I am not aware that any passage has been passed over that would cause any alteration of the doctrine I put before you. If you do find such a passage please write to me, and I will gladly consider it in *The Berean Expositor*.