

# OUTLINE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

by

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## CHAPTER SIX

### CHRISTOLOGY

#### PART ONE. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

#### TOPIC ONE: THE PREEXISTENCE OF CHRIST

##### I. PROOF

The Scriptures clearly and distinctly teach that, as the second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ existed before His incarnation: John 1:1-5; 8:58; 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:13-17; Hebrews 1:2, 8; 2:10.

##### II. NATURE

This was twofold, viz: as to God, and as to creation.

###### 1. As to God.

As to God, Jesus Christ was “**the only begotten Son**”: John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9.

**NOTE:** AS the Son, “**the only begotten of** (Greek, *para*, from) **the Father**,” Jesus Christ was begotten not in time, but in eternity. Theologically, this truth is called “the eternal generation of the Son.” In the historic development of the doctrine of the trinity in the Scriptures, not the Father, the first person, but Christ, the second person, is first revealed. As we have seen and shall see again, Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who made and preserves the universe, and revealed Himself in many ways to His ancient people. The revelation of Christ in the relation of Son, and the consequent revelation of the first person of the trinity in the relation of Father, comes out in connection with the doctrine of the Kingdom. See II Samuel 7:12-17; Psalm 2:7-9; 89:24-29.

###### 2. As to Creation.

As to creation, Jesus Christ is “**the firstborn**”: Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18.

**NOTE:** In Colossians 1:15, Jesus Christ is declared to be “**the firstborn of every creature**”; while in verse 18 He is declared to be “**the firstborn from the dead.**” These, then, are the two relations in which He is “**firstborn**”; in creation and in resurrection. As applied to Christ, believers cannot share the title “**only begotten**”; but by spiritual sonship and resurrection we share with Him His title of “**firstborn**”: Romans 8:29; Hebrews 12:23. In the latter passage, the Greek word “**firstborn**” is in the plural. See Revelation 3:14.

### **III. PRIMEVAL GLORY**

The character of the preexistence of Christ cannot be better expressed than that of primeval glory: John 17:5, 24; Philippians 2:6, 7; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.

**NOTE:** Just what this primeval glory was we do not know.

Jesus speaks of being “**in the bosom of the Father,**” John 1:18; and of being loved by the Father “**before the foundation of the world,**” John 17:24. These and other phrases express ineffable relationships within the Godhead, which we cannot comprehend. On Philippians 2:6 Thayer’s Greek Lexicon says: “Form (Greek, *morphe*) is that by which a person or thing strikes the vision, the external appearance.” There is nothing in this passage which teaches that the Eternal Word (John 1:1) emptied Himself of either His divine nature or His attributes, but only of the outward visible manifestation of the Godhead. “He emptied, stripped Himself, of the insignia of Majesty” (Lightfoot). “When occasion demanded, He exercised His divine attributes” (Moorehead).

### **IV. OFFICE WORK**

In His preexistent state, a threefold office work, in particular, is ascribed to Christ, viz:

#### **1. Creator.**

In our study of the doctrine of God, under the topic of Creation, we have seen that the created universe is the work of Christ: John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3.

#### **2. Preserver.**

Under the topic of Preservation (doctrine of God) we have also seen that the created universe is sustained and controlled by Christ: Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3.

#### **3. Framers of the Ages.**

In Hebrews 11:3, we read that “**the worlds were framed by the Word of God.**” Literally the ages were framed (or fitted together) by the utterance of God. This passage teaches us a stupendous and glorious truth, which we shall study more fully when we come to the doctrine of Eschatology, or the Last Things. It is that the dispensations, extending successively from creation to the new heavens and the new earth, have been planned and executed by Christ.

As is well known, we are now in the Dispensation of Grace, which began at Pentecost and will end with the Parousia.

## V. OLD TESTAMENT APPEARANCES

From Genesis to Malachi there are frequent instances of Christophanies, or appearances of Christ to His ancient people. These were two kinds, namely: material symbols, and manifestations in human form. The latter were Theophanies or Christophanies proper. (*Theophany* means an appearance of God; *Christophany*, an appearance of Christ).

### 1. Material Symbols.

From the days of the Garden of Eden till the time of the destruction of Solomon's temple there was a sensible representation of God upon the earth. Our first parents were permitted to see the face and hear the voice of the Lord God: Genesis 3:8. In this verse the word presence is literally face. Here there was a divine manifestation to both the eye and the ear. After the Fall, God placed at the entrance of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, visible manifestations of His presence. It was before this presence of God that Cain and Abel brought their offerings, and from it that Cain fled. Moreover, the Lord spoke to Cain concerning his murderous deed: Genesis 4:4, 5-16.

To the patriarchs, the Lord both appeared and spoke in a manner sensible to the eye and ear: Genesis 17:1; 18:1; Acts 7:2. Again, to Moses at the burning bush the Lord God both appeared and spoke: Exodus 3:1-6. Finally, in the pillar of cloud and fire and in the Shekinah glory in tabernacle and temple, the Lord repeatedly appeared and spoke to His servants Moses and Joshua, and made known His will to Israel: Exodus 13:21; 14:15; 19:24; 20:1-26; 40:34-38; I Kings 8:10, 11; II Chronicles 5:13, 14. There was no visible manifestation of the presence of God in the temple of Zerubbabel or in the temple of Herod.

### 2. Manifestations in Human Form.

In the Old Testament mention is made of an august, celestial Personage, "who acts in the name of the Lord, whose name is used interchangeably with that of Jehovah, and who received divine honor and reverence." The more prominent names given to this heavenly being are: the Angel, the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Presence (or, face), and the Angel, or Messenger, of the Covenant. He can be none other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament, or the Christ of the New Testament—He who became the incarnate Word, or logos: Genesis 16:10-13; 18:16-22; 22:11,12; 32:24; 48:16; Exodus 3:2; 23:20-25; 32:34; 33:21-23; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 13:3-20; Isaiah 63:9; Daniel 10:13; Zechariah 1:11, 12; Malachi 3:1.

**NOTE:** The identity of the material symbols of the preexistent Christ with His manifestations in human form is clear from such passages as Exodus 3:2 and 14:19. Nor is there any doubt that these symbols and theophanies were manifestations and appearances of the preexistent Christ. "The glory of the Lord" and "The Word of the Lord" are frequent Old Testament names for the sensible representations of God—the former describing them as they appealed to the eye, and the latter as they appealed to the ear.

In the first chapter of John, these same descriptive expressions are applied to Christ. In verse 14 we read, “**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (lit. tented, or tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, even the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**”

Corroboration of this fact is found in the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament, which were made for the use of those who returned from the captivity in Babylon and could not understand Hebrew. There the expression “**Word of the Lord**” is commonly substituted for the name of the Lord God. Thus, “**They heard the voice of the Word of the Lord walking in the garden**”: Genesis 3:8. Again, “**And Jacob vowed a vow to the Word, saying, If the Word of the Lord will be my help,**” etc.: Genesis 28:20. Now, the Jews to whom John wrote his gospel were familiar with the Chaldee Targums, and understood the expression “**the Word of the Lord**” or “**the Word**” to refer to Jehovah. Of course John himself so understood it.

Accordingly, as Dr. Wickes says, referring to the logos or Word of John 1:1, 14: “It is not possible to vindicate the apostle’s reputation as a man of common sense and honesty, if he employed this term out of its usual meaning, without giving any intimation of the fact. He of necessity used the term in its commonly accepted meaning.”

Theologians are accustomed to trace John’s of the term “**Word**” (Greek *logos*) back to Philo, an Alexandrian Jewish writer of an earlier date. But Philo used the term more in the sense of reason, or utterance. Moreover, such a connection cannot be established. It is not necessary to go so far afield.

As we have shown, the Old Testament Scriptures clearly and satisfactorily explain the origin of the term, that by its use John meant to teach that Jehovah of the Old Testament became incarnate in the Christ of the New Testament. Modern Bible students feel the necessity of proving the Deity of Christ. Not so John; his contention was that He whom we now know as the second person of the trinity, Jehovah of Old Testament revelation, became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.

## **VI. THREE PROPHETIC PICTURES**

There are three pictures of the preexistent Christ, so striking and beautiful as to deserve special attention and emphasis:

### **1. The Slain Lamb.**

This is a picture of the Passover Lamb: Exodus 12. John the Baptist identified Christ as the sacrificial Lamb: John 1:29. John the seer on Patmos had a vision of our Lord as the bleeding Lamb: Revelation 12:11.

### **2. The Obedient Servant.**

This is the picture of Christ portrayed in Psalm 40:6-8. See Hebrews 10:5-10.

Undoubtedly the primary reference of these passages is to Exodus 21:2-6, where we read of the Hebrew bondsman, who, unwilling to claim rightful liberty because of his love for master, wife, and children, submitted to have his ear bored with an awl as the seal of voluntary and perpetual service. In Psalm 40:6, the word opened means digged or bored, a reference to Exodus 21:6. This picture of our Lord is fulfilled in the Gospel of Mark, which represents Him as the Servant of God.

### **3. The Beloved Son.**

This is the picture presented in three passages we have already considered in a similar connection: II Samuel 7:14-16; Psalm 2:7; 89:26-29. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father identifies Him as His well beloved Son: Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22. This was repeated at the transfiguration: Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35. See Isaiah 42:1; Ephesians 1:6.

## **TOPIC TWO: THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST**

### **I. PROOF**

It is the clear and distinct teaching of Scripture, both by way of prophetic utterance and historic statement, that Jehovah of the Old Testament became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of God: Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14; Acts 10:38; Romans 8:3, 4; Galatians 4:4; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14.

**NOTE:** Incarnation is a word from the Latin; it means, literally, *enfleshment*, i. e., the assumption of humanity. This is brought out particularly clear in such passages as Romans 8:3, and Hebrews 2:14.

### **II. PURPOSE**

It is the clear and distinct teaching of Scripture that the purpose of the incarnation was redemption: Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 1:21; 20:28; Luke 1:68-75; John 3:16, 17; Galatians 4:4, 5; I Timothy 1:15; I John 3:8; 4:10.

**NOTE:** There are those who assert that, if our first parents had not sinned, Jesus Christ would have been born into the world just the same. This may be true, but we know no Scripture which proves it. On the contrary, the above and many similar passages unmistakably teach that the incarnation was in order to the atonement.

### **III. CONDESCENSION**

It was an act of condescension for the Lord God to assume human form. Says Dr. Farr: "As we have seen, we cannot say that Christ did not come to the race till it was 4,000 years old. The incarnate Logos, wherein we see the departed divinity reinstated in humanity, is the greatest mystery of the gospel: I Timothy 3:16; Matthew 11:27; Colossians 2:2.

“It was an unspeakable act of condescension for the Son of God to stoop and take into personal and perpetual union with Himself a nature infinitely lower than His own. It is so represented in Scripture: Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8.”

**NOTE:** Westminster Confession: “Christ’s humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition; made under the law; undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.”

#### **IV. PERPETUITY**

It is the unmistakable teaching of the Scriptures that the Son of God assumed forever the humanity which He assumed at His birth by the virgin. The incarnation is in perpetuity. For this there are, principally, three reasons:

##### **1. It is essential to the integrity of our Lord’s manhood.**

Jesus Christ is the God-man, possessing a divine-human person. According to the Nicene Creed, He is “very God of very God and very man of very man.” Before the virgin birth, we can speak, of course, of the Son of God only; but after that miraculous historic event we can speak also of the Son of man. Again, the incarnation was voluntary; it was not by compulsion that “**the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**”: John 1:14. But having voluntarily assumed our humanity, Jesus Christ could not lay it aside without ceasing to be the Son of man. He is now and forever “**the Man in the Glory**.” The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus give indubitable evidence that He possessed a literal but glorified body: Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:3, 15, 30, 31, 40, 42, 50; John 20:17, 22-29; 21:7, 15. Further, the ascension appearances of Jesus represent Him with a literal but glorified body: Acts 7:56; 9:4-6; Revelation 1:9-18. Finally, the teaching of the epistles is conclusive as to the perpetuity of the incarnation: Romans 4:25; 6:3-5; 7:4; 8:11; I Corinthians 15:3-8, 20, 23; Ephesians 5:30; Philippians 3:20, 21; I Thessalonians 4:14; Hebrews 2:14-16; 13:8, etc.

**NOTE:** The glorified humanity of Christ is the source of our physical quickening by the Holy Spirit: Romans 8:11; Ephesians 5-30; the ground of His sympathy and succor: Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16; 7:25; and the pledge and pattern of our own raised and glorified bodies: I Corinthians 15:20-30; Philippians 3:20, 21; I Thessalonians 4:14-16; I John 3:2.

##### **2. It is essential to our Lord’s high-priestly intercession.**

Without a literal but glorified body, Jesus Christ would be disqualified from exercising His high-priestly ministry of intercession: Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:14-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 6:20; 7:23-28; 9:24; 12:2.

Says Dr. Farr: “The essential condition in the exercise of that office, ‘High Priest,’ is the sharing of our nature; and, therefore, able, as one touched with. Matthew 4:1 (see James 1:13); suffering, Hebrews 2:9, 18; etc. etc.

**3. His death,** Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30-34.

## **B. His Deity.**

This is attested by:

**1. Prophetic utterance:** Psalm 2:2-9; 45-6, 7; 110:1; Isaiah 7:13, 14; 9:6, 7; Micah 5:2.

**2. Christ's own claims:** John. 8:56-58; 10:30-32.

**3. The ascription of divine attributes:** Matthew 28:20; John 3:13 (omnipresence); Mark 11:2, 4; John 11:11, 14 (omniscience); Matthew 28:18; Luke 7:14; John 5:21-23; 6:19 (omnipotence).

**4. The employment of divine titles:** John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 1:4; 9:5; II Thessalonians 1:12; I Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; I John 5:10.

**NOTE:** Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew O. T. the name Jehovah occurs some 11,600 times; yet in the A. V. it is found only four times, viz: Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4.

The reason of this is that the Jews superstitiously avoided the pronunciation of their sacred name for God, that is, *Jahwe*, substituting therefore *Adonai*, which signifies Master or Lord. The O. T. Greek translation (the LXX) rendered *Adonai* by *Kurios*, which is the Greek for Lord. And in this way the word "Lord" found its way into our English Bible as the rendering of the Hebrew name *Jahwe*. Capital letters indicate this connection, i. e. LORD.

Dr. A. T. Pierson says: "Were this great name (that is, Jehovah) always reproduced in the English and especially in New Testament quotations from the Old, it would prove that our Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely equal and identical with the Father; for passages which, in the O. T. contain the name 'Jehovah' are so quoted and applied to Him in the New as to demonstrate Him to be JEHOVAH-JESUS, one with God of the eternal past, Himself manifested in the flesh, in the present, and the coming God of the future. This is the climax of all arguments and evidences touching our Lord's Deity." See Psalm 102:25-27 and Hebrews 1:10-12; Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3; Jeremiah 23:6 and Romans 3:21-26, and I Corinthians 1:30.

**5. The homage of divine worship:** Matthew 2:11; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9; Luke 24:52; John 20:28.

**6. Forgiveness of sin:** Mark 2:5-7; Luke 7:48; 24:47.

**7. The possession of absolute holiness and the resurrection from the dead:** John 8:46; Romans 1:4.

## **VII. NAMES**

Some suggestive and striking names are applied to Christ. Such are the following:

### **1. Jesus.**

This word means Saviour or salvation, and links the Redeemer with humanity: Matthew 1:21.

## 2. Christ.

This word means anointed; it is the Messianic name, and links Him with prophecy, which He came to fulfil: John 1:41.

## 3. Lord.

This word means Master; it is the Jehovah name, and links Him with Deity, which He came to represent and reveal: Acts 9:5.

**NOTE:** The historic order of these three names is given in Luke 2:11: “**a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord.**”

- During the days of His flesh it was preeminently Jesus;
- During His high-priestly ministry it is preeminently Christ;
- During His millennial reign it will be preeminently Lord.

Thus,

- Jesus suggests His prophetic office;
- Christ, His priestly office;
- Lord, His kingly office.

“These three names likewise suggest man’s relation and responsibility— obedience to Him as Prophet; faith in Him as Priest; surrender to Him as King” (Pierson).

## 4. The Alpha and Omega.

The beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Lord, Who is and was and is to come: Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 22:13. Says Dr. Pierson: “Alpha and Omega, first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, suggest literature—the written Scriptures; Beginning and End, the material creation; First and Last, the historic ages, or time-worlds; Who is and was and is to come, Jehovah’s eternity. Thus He is here declared, declares Himself, the subject matter of all Scripture; the Creator of all worlds and creatures; the Controller of all history, and the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah.”

## VIII. PERSONAL ONENESS OR HYPOSTATIC UNION

The human nature and the divine nature—each in its completeness—are organically and indissolubly united in the one unique person of Jesus Christ. This is called in theological language, “*the hypostatic union*,” or personal union. In our thinking and preaching we must exercise extreme care neither to divide the person nor confuse or confound the natures of Christ. It is not Scriptural to say that Christ was God and man, but that He was the God-man. This is expressed by the Greek *theanthropic* (Greek *theos*—God, *anthropos*—man).



1. There is no interchange of personal pronouns, as “I” or “Thou,” between the human and divine natures in speaking of or referring to Christ, as there is between the three persons of the trinity: John 14:26; 17:23. John 3:11 may be explained as referring to both Christ and His disciples.

2. Neither the human nor the divine nature acts independently of the other; but in every thought, word, and act both natures are so inseparably united that the thought, word, or act is the product of one single personality. Thus, we cannot say that as man Jesus was born, while as God He received divine titles and worship, wrought miracles, and forgave sin. But we must say that as the God-man He was born, suffered the manifold experiences of humanity, died on the cross, received divine titles and worship, wrought miracles, and forgave sins.

“The characteristics of the two natures are ascribed to the one Christ; and conversely, the works of the one Christ are ascribed to either of the two natures, in a way inexplicable except on the basis that they are united in one Person. This may explain many paradoxes of Scripture; i. e., we say that Christ existed before Abraham and yet was born in the reign of Augustus; that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and yet that He wept, was weary, suffered, bled, and died” (Farr).

3. The union of the two natures in one person is essential for Jesus Christ to be the Mediator between God and man: I Timothy 2:5. “Christ’s twofold nature gives Him fellowship with both parties, since it involves an equal dignity with God and at the same time perfect sympathy with man. Being man, He can make atonement. Being God, His atonement has infinite value. A merely human saviour could never reconcile or reunite us to God”: Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16; 7:25.

## **IX. CHRISTOLOGICAL ERRORS**

Beginning in the days of the apostles and extending into the present time, many errors have been held concerning our Lord. These errors may be traced to one of two causes: first, failure to make a clear distinction between His two natures; and second, failure to hold fast the unity of His person. This subject belongs properly to Church History; but we can treat its doctrinal aspects here. The principal Christological errors are the following:

### **A. Errors of the Early Centuries.**

#### **1. Ebionism.**

Ebionism is supposed to come from a Hebrew word signifying poor; this error closed about the end of the first century. It was the denial of the reality of the divine nature of Christ. “It held our Lord to be merely man, whether naturally or supernaturally conceived. This man, however, held a peculiar relation to God, in that from the time of His baptism, an unmeasured fulness of the divine Spirit rested upon Him. Ebionism was simply Judaism within the pale of the Christian Church, and its denial of Christ’s Godhead was occasioned by an apparent incompatibility of this doctrine with monotheism” (Strong).

## **2. Cerinthianism.**

Cerinthianism comes from Cerinthus, a heretic who flourished in the days of the apostle John. It was an offshoot of Ebionism, holding that there was no real and essential union of the two natures of Christ prior to His baptism. This error founded the deity of Christ, not on His supernatural birth, but on His baptism and enduement of the Spirit.

## **3. Docetism.**

Docetism comes from a Greek word signifying to seem or appear; this error flourished from the latter part of the first to the latter part of the second century. It was the denial of the humanity of Christ, and was attacked by the apostle John in his first epistle: 4:1-3.

In denying the reality of Christ's body, Docetism showed its connection with Gnosticism and Manichaeism. "This view was the logical sequence of their assumption of the inherent evil of matter. If matter is evil and Christ was pure, then Christ's human body must have been merely phantasmal. Docetism was simply pagan philosophy introduced into the church" (Strong).

## **B. Errors of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries.**

### **1. Arianism.**

Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, Egypt, in the fourth century denied the deity of Christ and also His eternal generation from the Father. Arianism was condemned at the Council of Nice in A. D. 325.

**NOTE:** "Arius denied the integrity of the divine nature of Christ. He regarded the Logos who united himself to humanity in Jesus Christ, not as possessed of absolute Godhead, but as the first and highest of created beings. This view originated in a misinterpretation of the Scriptural accounts of Christ's state of humiliation, and in mistaking a temporary subordination (i. e., of office) for original and permanent inequality (i. e., of nature)" (Strong).

### **2. Apollinarianism.**

Apollinarius, bishop of the church of Laodicea, in the fourth century denied the completeness of our Lord's human nature.

Accepting the threefold division of man, namely, into body (Greek, *soma*), soul (*psuche*), and spirit (*nous* or *pneuma*), Apollinarius denied to Christ a human soul (*psuche*) supplying its place by the divine Logos. In this way he made Jesus only two parts human. The good bishop's motive was a worthy one, but his reasoning was faulty and led him into most serious error. He regarded the human soul (*psuche*) as the seat of sin; Christ was sinless; therefore, Christ could not have possessed a human soul. Apollinarianism was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in A. D. 381.

### **3. Nestorianism.**

Nestorius, bishop of the church of Constantinople, in the fourth century denied the unique personality of Christ by separating and erecting the two natures into distinct persons. Thus he made of our Lord two persons instead of one person. The motive of Nestorius, like that of Apollinarius, was praiseworthy; but, like the latter, he himself fell into most serious error. Indeed, it was in combating the Apollinarian heresy of mutilating our Lord's humanity that Nestorius evolved the equally unscriptural position that the two natures of Christ constituted separate and distinct personalities. In modern times, R. L. Stevenson in his book, "*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," has given dramatic expression to the old Nestorian heresy of dual personality. Nestorianism was condemned at the Council of Ephesus, A. D. 431.

### **4. Eutychianism.**

Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople, in the fifth century denied the integrity of our Lord's two natures by confusing them (that is, running them together) so as to make a third nature separate and different from either the human or the divine nature. Out of Christ's two natures, Eutyches constructed what has been called *a tertium quid*, or third nature. Eutychianism, known also as Monophysitism (from *mono*—one, and *physis*—nature) was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in A. D. 451.

### **5. Monothelitism.**

In comparison with the above this was a minor but still a serious error. It alleged that while Christ had two natures, He had but one will (*mono*—one, and *thelema*—will). "In opposition to this the sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (A. D. 681) adopted the doctrine of two wills in Christ (*duo*—two, and *thelema*) as the orthodox doctrine, but decided that the human will must always be conceived as subordinate to the divine": John 6:38, 39.

**NOTE:** Says Dr. Strong: "All controversies with regard to the person of Christ must, of necessity, hinge upon one of three points: first, the reality of the two natures; secondly, the integrity of the two natures; thirdly, the union of the two natures in one person. Of these points, Ebionism and Docetism deny the reality of the natures; Arianism and Apollinarianism deny their integrity; while Nestorianism and Eutychianism deny their proper union."

## **C. Modern Errors.**

### **1. Unitarianism.**

In short, this is the old Arian heresy revived—the denial of the deity of our Lord.

### **2. Christian Science.**

In short, this is the old Docetic heresy revived—the denial of the humanity of Christ.

Christian Science denies the reality of matter. As our Lord's body was material, it must have been phantasmal, that is, shadowy and unsubstantial.

### **3. Millennial Dawn.**

“Russellism” seems to go farther than any or all of the ancient heresies. It virtually denies the present and personal existence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It makes Him a myth, like Jack-the-Giant-Killer or Alice in Wonderland.

**NOTE:** “The orthodox doctrine (promulgated at Chalcedon, 451) holds that in the person, Jesus Christ, there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity; and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, to use the antiquated dictum, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures” (Strong).

## **TOPIC THREE: THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST**

### **I. PROOF**

The Scriptures clearly and distinctly teach that at the conclusion of His work on earth, our Lord was exalted to the right hand of God in heaven: Acts 2:33; 5:31; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 12:2.

### **II. STAGES**

Historically, the exaltation of Christ was accomplished in two stages, viz:

- 1. His resurrection:** Acts 2:24, 31, 32; 4:10; 17:31; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 8:34; I Corinthians 15:4, 20, 23.
- 2. His ascension:** Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; 2:33; Ephesians 4:8-10.

**NOTE:** In Philippians 2:5-11 we can trace seven steps in the humiliation and seven steps in the exaltation of Christ. The depth to which Jesus voluntarily descended measured the height to which He was exalted by God in honor and glory.

Upon verse 7, the doctrine of the kenosis, so called, is founded—that is, the self-emptying of Christ. The nature and extent of this act are controversial questions.

### **III. CHARACTER**

The exaltation of Christ is marked by the following characteristics, viz:

- 1. Restoration to primeval glory:** John 17:5; Hebrews 1:8, 9; Revelation 5:9, 10.
- 2. Session at God's right hand:** Psalm 110:1; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; Revelation 3:21.
- 3. Giver of the Holy Ghost:** Luke 24:49; John 15:26; 16:7; 20:22; Acts 1:8; 2:32, 33; 5:32.

**4. Dominion over creation:** Matthew 28:18; I Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 2:8.

**5. Headship of church:** I Corinthians 11:3; 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:23-33; Colossians 1:18.

**6. Ministry of intercession:** Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1.

**7. Expectancy of return:** Psalm 110:1; Acts 3:20, 21; Hebrews 1:1, 13; 10:13.

### QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Give Scripture proof of the fact that Jesus Christ existed before His incarnation.
2. What was the twofold nature of Christ's pre-existence?
3. What was Christ's threefold office work in His preexistent state?
4. In what two forms did the Lord appear in the Old Testament times? Discuss one of them.
5. What are the three prophetic pictures of the preexistent Christ?
6. What are the principal Scripture passages that teach the incarnation of Christ?
7. What was the purpose of the incarnation?
8. Why was the incarnation an act of condescension?
9. Why is it perpetual?
10. How is it a revelation?
11. What are the proofs of Christ's humanity?
12. What are the proofs of His deity?
13. Discuss some of the N. T. names applied to Christ.
14. What is meant by "the hypostatic union"?
15. What was the error concerning Christ's person known as Ebionism?
16. Known as Cerinthianism?
17. Known as Docetism?
18. Known as Arianism?
19. Known as Apollinarianism?
20. Known as Nestorianism?
21. Known as Eutychianism?
22. Known as Monothelitism?
23. What are some present day Christological errors?
24. What Scripture passages set forth the fact of Christ's exaltation?
25. In what two stages was it accomplished?
26. What are some of its characteristics?

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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