

# REMARKS ON A PAPER ENTITLED "THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST,"

By F. E. R.

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The further developments of Mr. Raven's doctrines being set forth in this paper which has been translated into other languages and widely circulated, it behoves all into whose hands it may fall to consider what is now at stake, and their own position with regard to such teachings. Whatever may have been thought hitherto as to them, there can no longer be any question as to the doctrines being a regular and fully thought out system, of which the paper now under notice gives the keynote.

I may mention first that I have seen the German translation, and noted an alteration from the English original now before me. I refer to page 2, line 41, of the paper. In English it is: "They do not see that the man after the flesh has been terminated judicially in the cross *in* the man Christ Jesus." In the German translation it is: "They do not see that the man after the flesh has been terminated judicially in the cross *of* the man Christ Jesus." The italics are mine. No one can truthfully say that the difference is too slight to be of any moment; for the difference is just that which changes truth into blasphemy. No doubt the German translator made the change with good intention, stating what he felt to be truth, for the sentence as it stands in German may express what is true, but it does not represent what Mr. Raven says, for as it stands in his own words in English it is blasphemy, and is a repetition of what Mr. Raven has again and again taught in his Lectures on Colossians, etc. One or two sentences only from them need be quoted in evidence: "What I mean is this; that for Him (Christ) circumcision has actually taken place in the cross, and that He is actually cut off from everything after the flesh in

order that He might be exclusively unto God" (page 45). "Circumcision which cuts Him off from all here, and He lives unto God" (page 47). "It was the blessed will of God that He should come down, and bring to an end *in* Himself the moral condition of man." Lectures on 1st Ep. of John, page 17, by F. E. R. I need not pursue this further; the reader can judge for himself which of the two sentences is truth, and which error; but we may ask, why did the translator alter it in German?

It may be noted as further proof of how slight a change in words turns truth into error, the way in which Mr. Raven asserts, in the letters printed by Mr. Hunt, that he and Mr. Darby mean the same thing, when he says our Lord is "viewed in Scripture distinct and apart from what He is as God," and Mr. Darby says: "Our Lord is seen as Man apart from God." Here again the reader must judge for himself as before God and as responsible to Him, bearing in mind the Apostles closing injunction to Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words."

No one can doubt for a moment that subjection to the Word of God is of the first importance, and that putting a construction upon Scripture other than it is intended to bear is the most certain way of error, especially when the subject is the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can know nothing of Him but what is divinely revealed, and Scripture is as clear in its statements about Him, as God can make it, for it is His own blessed revelation of His Son, and of all His purposes and counsels concerning Him, and their fulfilment too. It is an infinite mercy for us that He has preserved His Scriptures in all their purity and fulness in spite of the attacks made upon them by the enemy through the infidel mind of man, the feeble apologies of half-hearted believers, and the scoffings of science falsely so called. Never in all the history of the Church has the need of subjection to the Scriptures been more striking, and surely never have its precepts and directions been more blessed and more sustaining to the people of God than at this present time.

Let us now see what Mr. Raven says. First, he claims to put forth his views "in the interests of the truth and of "the Lord's people" "on two points of importance," and at

the same time declines "to reply to any attacks which "have appeared, based," he says, "on isolated statements "culled from letters" he has "written, partly," he says, "from reluctance to notice them, and partly because" he sees "in these attacks the tendency to shift " "the ground of "conflict, in order to gain a point of vantage." I annex, in full, a copy of a letter written by Mr. R. to a brother in Italy, in Dec., 1894, and I will also refer to the correspondence printed by Mr. Hunt in Feb., 1894, which, and also the paper under notice, show that those who refuse Mr. R.'s doctrines have never shifted "the ground of conflict," nor have they any need to do so. The truth at stake is plainly before us, and no "point of vantage" is required or sought for. That Mr. R. should harbour such a thought only shows that his object is more to defend himself and his own position than ought else. The truth defends itself, for it is God's truth, and moreover it exposes and judges what is false. Mr. Raven does not specify what the change of ground is, and this is not to be wondered at, as it does not exist.

The first "point of importance" he remarks upon is "as to whether Christ is ever viewed in Scripture as man, distinct and apart from what He is as God," and he asserts that "the denial" of this "is destructive of Christianity in its real power," and he then warns "saints" in regard to it "against giving up, in zeal for orthodoxy, the blessed foundations of Christianity." He goes on to say that to deny that "Christ is ever viewed in Scripture as man, distinct and "apart from what He is as God" is "contrary to the teaching "of Scripture," and "betrays a singular inability to apprehend "the great reality of the incarnation" . . . "in a most "essential aspect of it, namely, the fact of Christ having by "it a place as man *Godward*." To explain this, he says: "As the Word become flesh He dwelt among men and "revealed God;" . . . "but He Himself filled and "still fills a place as man toward God (see Psalm xvi)" and that "the two thoughts are wholly distinct conceptions, "which cannot be grasped at one and the same time by "any finite mind." In support of this he quotes: "No "one knows the Son save the Father." It will be noticed by the reader that Mr. Raven in his letter of Dec. 7, 1893, printed by Mr. Hunt, objects to the use of this quotation

from Matt. xi, 27, by those who refuse his teaching, as their ground for declining to discuss any question tending to dissect the Person of our Lord, and to decide when and where He is viewed as Man "distinct and apart from what He is as God," and when and where He is viewed as God. Mr. R. now himself uses this quotation in support of his assertion that no "finite mind" can grasp at one and the same time the two thoughts of the Word becoming flesh and revealing God to man, and at the same time filling "a place as man towards God." A believer, honestly reading the Word of God, will at once refuse such a use of the passage, and reject the application of it to the point to which Mr. R. forces it. Its simple meaning is that no one knows the Son Himself save the Father, it declares the incomprehensibility of His being is known only to the Father. His Person was too glorious to be fathomed or understood by man. Mr. Raven's use of it is wholly false, and even if it could be applied as he seeks to do, it would preclude all knowledge of the Son at all by man, whether as revealing God or filling "a place as man toward God." We can but repeat that the quotation cannot, in any sense whatever, be made to apply as Mr. Raven seeks to apply it, and that his use of it is not only forced, but wholly opposed to its true and simple meaning. It neither has nor can have any application whatever in the sense in which Mr. Raven uses it.

"*No one knoweth Him but the Father.* Who among the proud could fathom what He was? He who from all eternity was one with the Father, become man, surpassed in the deep mystery of His being, all knowledge save that of the Father Himself. The impossibility of knowing Him who had emptied Himself to become man maintained the certainty, the reality of His divinity, which this self-renunciation might have hidden from the eyes of unbelief. The incomprehensibility of a Being in a finite form revealed the infinite which was therein. His divinity was guaranteed to faith, against the effect of His humanity on the mind of man." J. N. D.

Mr. Raven then says: "As Man he is both Apostle and High Priest. In other words, in the Apostle God has, so to say, come out, and in the High Priest man has entered in.

“ Now these two thoughts, though realised in one Person, must of necessity be separately and distinctly apprehended. The one presents God, the other man.” Mr. Raven cannot with any truth say that it is taking new ground to charge him with here dividing the Person of our Lord ; it has been the line of his doctrine all through, and has been repeatedly pointed out and contested during the past five years.

He says : “ In the Apostle” (Christ), “ God has, so to say, come out, and in the High Priest man has entered in,” and that “ these two thoughts, though realised in one Person, must of necessity be separately and distinctly apprehended.” It is surely true that in Christ God has come out, and that in Christ man has gone in, and that the two acts are distinct, such as coming out and going in must ever be ; but in Scripture there is no view that separates the Deity and humanity of Christ in regard to these acts. He was ever God Himself manifest in flesh when down here as Man, and He is ever the wondrous God-Man now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He was the God-Man come out, and He is the God-Man gone in. Mr. Raven, in referring to the “ Apostle and High Priest ” (Heb. iii. 1.) ignores verse 3, where He is referred to not as the Man (Apostle) come forth merely, but as the Builder of the house in which Moses was faithful, and in verse 4, as He that built all things, God. Here the separate and distinct apprehension demanded by Mr. Raven is not only avoided but absolutely excluded, the Apostle and High Priest being God Himself. The truth insisted upon in this passage is not that the humanity shall be viewed distinct and apart, but it is the Deity of Jesus both as Apostle and High Priest, too. The word “ Man ” is not even mentioned in the whole passage (verses 1—6) as may be seen by referring to the original or to the new translation. In verse 6, the house being God’s, Christ is declared to be Son over His house. Let the reader take his Bible, and read the first six verses of Heb. iii, and ask himself whether they support in any sense Mr. Raven’s division of the Person of our Lord, and whether the “ finite mind ” is called upon to consider the two things separately and distinctly in order to apprehend this passage, or whether both are so placed before us

as setting forth the one and same Person as the God-Man, that to separate them even in thought from the unity of that Person as both God and Man is to lose the sense of His Person. No believer denies that Christ is viewed in the light of Man Godward; Scripture so presents Him to us again and again; Ps. xvi, to which Mr. Raven refers, does so in a special manner. But Mr. R.'s point is that "Christ is viewed in the light of Man Godward," "distinct and apart from what He is as God." His doctrine separates the humanity of our Lord entirely from His Deity, and demands that we should so contemplate our Lord, and he asserts that those who do not do so are unable to apprehend the incarnation, are in danger of giving up the blessed foundations of Christianity, or at any rate of destroying it in its real power.

In support of this he adduces Rom. vi, 10, Ephes. iv, 21, 1 Tim. vi, 13, Heb. ii, 12, Ps. xxii, 25, Heb. vi, 20, and ix, 24. We will quote the passages in full in the order given. First, as to Rom. vi, 10. It says: "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Now Mr. Raven's assertion is that our Lord is here presented "distinct and apart from what He is as God," and that "it is utterly impossible to "introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and "attributes" into this, "because it is man that is presented, "or rather Christ is viewed in the light of man Godward." The reader must not be deceived by seemingly fair words, when Mr. Raven speaks of Christ being viewed as man Godward, he means that our Lord is viewed "distinct and apart from what He is as God;" he distinctly says so. Thus according to him our Lord in Rom. vi, 10, died to sin once "distinct and apart from what He is as God." And so Ephes. iv, 21, "as is truth in Jesus" must, according to Mr. R. be taken in regard to our Lord in the same way as Rom. vi, 10, just as if it had a personal application to Himself on His own behalf, instead of its being the truth concerning those who through grace believe in Him, those who had been "alienated from the life of God." Let the reader read the whole passage from verse 21, and he cannot fail to see the true meaning of the Scripture, verses 22, 23, 24, explaining what the "truth in Jesus" is in regard to believers.

But his next reference, 1 Tim. vi, 13, shows still more clearly his ignorance and misapplication of the Word in his quoting verse 13, as applying to our Lord "distinct and apart from what He is as God," whereas the rest of the passage to the end of verse 16, shows our Lord most distinctly as God, "the blessed and "only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no "man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can "see : to whom be honour and power everlasting." Mr. R. may say that this refers to God, and so it does, but it is God and "our Lord Jesus Christ," not looked at as "distinct and apart from what He is as God," but in distinct connection with His own Godhead and glory. "The supreme invisible God is maintained in His majesty ; and He presents the Lord Jesus Christ in the creation as its centre and repository of all His glory—He who dwells in light inaccessible, whom, in His divine essence, man has not seen and cannot see. This character of the epistle is very remarkable. Nowhere else is the inaccessible majesty of God as God, thus presented. His character is often the subject of instruction and manifestation. Here He alone has essential immortality. He dwells in inaccessible light. He is ever invisible to the eyes of men. He alone has power. He has dominion over all who reign. It is God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His majesty, veiled to all men. Now Christ will be the centre of the visible glory. Having part in the divine glory before the world was, He displays, in the human nature in which He took part, this glory, which is rendered visible in Him, causing His own to participate in His joy and in all that He has in this character ; but here, He is manifested by God, and in order that all should acknowledge Him. And it is our responsibility, faithfulness to which will be manifested in that day, which is here set before us. However small may be our share of responsibility, it is of such a God as this that we are the representatives on earth. Such is the God before whom we are to walk, and whose majesty we are to respect immediately in our conduct, and also in our relations to all that He has made." J. N. D. Syn. vol. 5.

Let us turn to the record, given us in the Gospels, of our Lord's confession before Pontius Pilate. In John xviii, 36, 37, was our Lord considering Himself, or speaking of Himself as Man "distinct and apart from what He is as God," or was He confessing Himself and His kingdom to be Divine in a world of sin and corruption before an arrogant (xix, 10) timid, and man-pleasing governor? It may suit Mr. Raven's theory to exclude our Lord's Divinity from all this, but no believer who knows his Lord and who prizes the blessed Person of Him who was God manifest in flesh, and yet who died for him, a poor, hell-deserving, helpless, God-hating, sin-loving creature, will accept such teaching, clothe it, as Mr. R. may strive to do, by pious utterances of His giving "character to manhood," which may mean anything he pleases. There is no such thing found in Scripture as Mr. Raven teaches by these words. To whose or what manhood did He give character? His own was perfect in every sense; perfect Man and perfect God. Our Lord did not give "character to manhood" in any way that the words may be twisted to mean that He altered manhood, or made it to be what it was not before; on the contrary He was the one Perfect Man here below, who as such lived not of bread only, but of every word that proceeded from the mouth of God, who was always and in every case Divine as well as human, and yet who never was the less human because He was Divine.

That the manhood of man was and is defiled and degraded by sin is surely true,—our Lord's manhood was perfect, ever perfect, and He maintained it so. He certainly did not give character to man's manhood, for he showed it to be what it was, and left it where it was. "Ye must be born again" settled the whole question as to that. His own manhood needed no character given to it—it had its own, and was perfect in every detail—a perfection Mr. Raven later on shows he has no conception of, for he speaks of it as being merely "human condition."

Mr. Raven next adduces Heb. ii, 12, a passage cited in that epistle from Ps. xxii, 22, and asserts that here again our Lord is looked at as "man distinct and apart from what He is as God." If this be so, then there is no ground whatever for considering our Lord in any other way

throughout the entire Psalm, and yet He is spoken of as "Jehovah" every time He is named, as has long since been noted. "It was a new scene, which none had been ever like, nor ever will be, in the history of eternity; which stands alone, *The Righteous One forsaken of God.*" "But the Lord gives Himself for this—He who was able to bear it, and, in the lowest humiliation of those He took up, to accomplish it in their nature, He bears in His soul all that God is against evil. Tremendous moment! It is this alone which makes us in any way apprehend what righteousness and judgment are. This is what is shewn to us here. It is shewn in the utterance of Christ, shewing the fact and His sense of it. What it was in its depths no human heart can fathom. It is the fact which is given here, but as felt by Him. Yet we see the consciously righteous One, but the perfectly submissive One, the sense of His own nothingness as to His position, of the certain and immutable perfectness of Jehovah. He is righteous; He can say, "Why?"—submissive: "Yet thou continuest holy;" no working of will, calling God's ways into question; the clear and perfect state thus, which sees God's perfectness, come what will." "He who was the very delight of Jehovah all through could not be heard till all was accomplished; though more gloriously, and deservedly more gloriously, Jehovah's delight than any living righteousness, though ever so perfect, could claim to be. In that living righteousness He had glorified God about good, perfect in His obedience as Man, and perfect in manifesting His Father's name of grace, declaring what God was, cost what it might." J.N.D. He had likewise glorified God about evil, being obedient even to death (the wages of sin), which in grace to us, and in perfect obedience and submission to the will of God He voluntarily underwent: "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again," and "This commandment have I received of my Father."

Mr. Raven says that into all this "it is impossible to introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and attributes, because in every case it is man that is presented, or rather Christ is viewed in the light of man Godward." Theology is always feeble; Mr. Raven's is worse than

feeble, for it divides between the humanity and divinity of our Lord, and refuses to admit the thought, even the thought of His Divinity into the most marvellous, sublime and stupendous period of our Lord's life here below; Heb. ii, vi, ix, and Psalm xxii.

But note further Mr. Raven's notion (for one can call it nothing else) of our Lord's humanity is that He was a divine Person in a human condition when down here in this world. He may say, as he does, that it was "in such wise as that He can be viewed objectively as man," and he may say: "The reality of Christ's manhood in its aspect Godward is amply presented in the New Testament." But when Mr. Raven speaks of either the life or the manhood of our Lord down here, it is simply human condition and nothing more that he means; he says so plainly enough. I will quote his precise words, the parenthesis is Mr. Raven's own, comp. John vi., 51 and x., 17: "He gives His flesh for the life of the world." "He lays down His life (human condition) to take it again." Now if the latter of these statements is true, and means only what Mr. R. allows in his parenthesis, the Atonement is gone; for human condition could not suffice to make atonement; it would be mere condition and not life at all. In order to make atonement, there must be an actual life laid down, not a mere condition given up. See Heb. ix. "Christ . . . by His own blood has entered in once for all into the holy of holies;" "The blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God." 1 Peter i, 19 "With the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Heb. ix, 22. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Deut. xii, 23 (comp. Lev. xvii). "The blood is the life." Mat. xx, 28. "Even as the Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many," and numerous other passages. With regard to the first assertion: "He gives His flesh for the life of the world;" let us turn to Scripture, John vi, 51. Our Lord there says: "The bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This caused contention among the Jews as to how it could be, whereupon the Lord goes further and says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk His blood, ye have

no life in yourselves. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him." Here again, if Mr. Raven's definition of our Lord's flesh being mere human condition is true, the whole of this passage is reduced to eating and drinking "human condition," for he insists on our Lord's life here as Man being "human condition," which he says "He lays down." Can folly go further? Truly when the mind dabbles in Divine things, and tries to explain them to its own satisfaction, it exposes its utter incapacity to understand them, and reduces the most blessed and holy truths to the folly it is itself full of.

Here are Mr. Raven's words (*italics are mine*) p. 3 of his tract: "It is a Person in a condition in which He was not before." "The truth of a divine Person assuming *human condition*, the Word become *flesh*, and in such wise as that He can be viewed objectively as man, I believe; but *that is not a question of unity of a Person*," lines 43 to 46. Of course it would not be, *if that were all*, but that is not all: Scripture does not reduce the truth that "the Word was made flesh" to a divine Person and human condition. Our Lord died actually and absolutely, and He did so, He the Son of Man, and in the nature He had assumed (Luke xviii, 31—33). That nature was not mere human condition. As has been said: "He needed to live as Man in order to die, and He has given His life. Thus His death is efficacious; His love infinite; the expiation total, absolute, perfect."

"Christ was a man in the truest sense of the word, body and soul. He had true humanity but united to Godhead.\* He was God manifest in the flesh. Scripture speaks simply, saying, He partook of flesh and blood. That is what the Christian has simply, and as taught of God to believe." "Nothing can be more important than the close and inseparable connection of the Divine glory (flowing from His nature too) and human nature of Christ. Christ the human Person is all this." Heb. i, 2, 3. And again: "I learn that the Word, who was with God and was God, was

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\* Mr. Raven calls this "a profane thought," p. 10 Mr. Hunt's correspondence.

made flesh, and dwelt among us, the Father sending the Son to be the Saviour of the world. That He, as the Christ, was born of a woman, by the power of the Holy Spirit coming on the Virgin Mary, true Man, without sin, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the promised seed of David according to the flesh, the Son of Man, and Son of God, determined to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, one blessed Person, God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, the anointed Man, Jehovah the Saviour." J. N. D.

Again in Heb. ix, 14 : "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Did He offer Himself merely as a Divine Person in a human condition ? If so, to what does the "without spot" refer ? According to Mr. Raven it would be to the "human condition," for he could not refer it to the "divine Person as such." Scripture applies it to Himself—"Himself without spot"—the wondrous, the perfect God-Man, who offered Himself, not mere "human condition," without spot unto God. Mr. Raven may say, if he pleases to do so, that it was the Divine Person in human condition who thus offered Himself, but in that case there is no sense in the "without spot," for it can only refer to Himself as the One Man who could offer a spotless offering—Himself, His own blessed self. How poor, nay, how vile are the thoughts which Mr. Raven tells us "can be and are connected with Him," "presented as man," "such as could not be connected with the simple thought of God." Our Lord was true God and true Man, united in one Person. Every believer in the Lord Jesus owns it and delights in it. Let Mr. Raven deny it if he please ; he does so to his own cost and at his own risk. He says that this truth, which he calls an "idea," "involves a thought very derogatory to the truth of the Son, namely, that in becoming man a change has taken place as to His Person—He is *in person* something which He was not before." But the futility of this reasoning is but one more proof of the inability of human reason to grasp the great central truth of Christianity that our Lord was true God and true Man united in one Person. Mr. Raven professes to be jealous for the Deity

of our Lord, the Divine Person of the Son, which, altogether apart from what He had become, is all that Mr. Raven will admit with regard to the unity of His Person. But this is not the point at issue, though the tendency of Mr. Raven's doctrine is such that even this truth must eventually be renounced if his teaching be received. It is by Him, the true Christ, that we do believe in God. No believer denies, or questions in the most remote way the Deity of our Lord—he would not be a believer if he did.

Mr. Raven's doctrine is that our Lord's humanity was no part of His Person, but only a condition which His divinity assumed or entered upon. Being unable to reason it out mentally, he fails to see that so far from being "a thought very derogatory to the truth of the Son," the very glory of His Person shines out in His being true God and true Man in one Person—His own blessed Person—the only Being in all the universe of God who is what He is, true God and true Man in one Person. And see where his theory leads; according to him our Lord's Person does not include the nature He assumed at all, but only a human condition which He dealt with as He thought fit, for Mr. R. says: "The Person is even viewed as acting in regard to His form or condition, divine or human." But Scripture, Heb. iv, 15, says: He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Moreover the devil's temptation (Mat. iv, 2) was: "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread," etc. Was this merely a Divine Person, in human condition, tempted, or was it the real Man, in His own Person tempted and withstanding. The devil knew better than Mr. Raven, when he tried to lead our Lord to make use of His godhead power to supply His manhood need. A Person only Divine would have had no such need, or have been an hungred, but He was human as well as Divine, and thus the need arose, and the enemy sought to gain an advantage by it. There was and there is no sin in being hungry; sin comes in by the way in which hunger is sought to be met. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," was our Lord's simple and blessed answer, enough in itself to foil the enemy's attack.

But this is beyond Mr. Raven, for he refuses to admit the human (the Divine-human) personality of our Lord, and declares Him to have been only a divine Person in a human condition. And, let me ask, had our Lord a human soul or not? Was He or was He not as truly Man as He was truly God? According to Mr. Raven, our Lord's humanity was an impersonal thing, a mere condition assumed by a Divine Person—a thought as far from Scripture as can well be.

See too the irreverence that goes with all this mental effort. Mr. Raven tells us that "the Christ" and "Son of man" are both official titles and merely serve "to identify the person" spoken of, such as "The Queen," "The Colonel," "The Doctor," and it is in this sense only the believer is united to Him; "all saints are united to Christ" he says, but not "united to the Son of God," and that it is error to say they are united to the Son of God. Here the Person is lost, and the official title is all that remains—a cold, lifeless, heartless thing, as Mr. Raven teaches it, merely serving "to designate the Person, without being descriptive of the Person, or involving any question of the unity of the Person." (Page 4 of the tract, lines 29 to 31.) These are Mr. Raven's own words. How differently Scripture speaks of Him who is our Life, our All! "The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." And note here it is not "Christ" or "Son of man," but "Son of God." Will Mr. Raven, or anyone else, dare to bring in "official title" here? It is true—Scripture says so—that "Christ died for our sins," but it is He who is the Christ that has done so. Mr. Raven separates "the official title" as he calls it from the Person, and then says that "the idea" that "every title or name inherited by the Son or applied to Him in Scripture embraces or covers, if it does not describe, the whole truth of His Person," is a fallacy, that "such titles as "the Christ" or "Son of man," though serving sufficiently to identify or designate the Person, do not cover the truth of His Person," and that they "have to be understood each within its own appropriate limits." Let us see what Scripture says about it. First in John i, 51; we have "the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." Here, beyond all question, the whole truth and glory of

His Person is set before us as the glorious Object of the Angels ascending and descending. And note we have the "ascending" before the "descending," shewing the position of the glorious Person spoken of. In chap. iii, 13 He is, although then speaking personally upon earth, "the Son of man who is in heaven;" in 14, He is "the Son of man" who "must be lifted up," and in 16, it is "God . . . gave His only begotten Son," and in 18 it is "the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now here the Spirit of God makes no distinction whatever between the Person and His titles. He is the Son of man come "down out of heaven," "the Son of man who is in heaven," "the Son of man lifted up," the "only begotten Son of God" given, "the Son of God" sent, and "the name of the only begotten Son of God" to be believed on. It may suit Mr. Raven's system to make a distinction, but Scripture speaks of our Lord Jesus as the one blessed Person, both Divine and human, who was Son of man and Son of God. To say that His title of Son of man does not cover all that He is in Himself is simply going in direct opposition to what Scripture states. It is but human reasoning that takes up the mere letter of the title, and ignores the personality of the One to whom it applies.

And remark, too, the insidious way in which this is sought to be covered over by such phrases as "I earnestly entreat saints to come prayerfully and patiently to Scripture to get their thoughts of Christ formed by the Word of God." Would indeed saints did so! The evil of Mr. Raven's theories would soon be exposed and rejected. Where is there anything in Scripture to sanction the notion that the title "Son of man" has "appropriate limits" regarding the Person and glory of our Lord, or that the title "Christ" has similar limits? Take again Matthew xvi. Our Lord puts the question to His disciples: "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" They reply, some one person, some another. He then puts the question to them personally, and Peter replies: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answering said to him, "Blessed art thou," etc. Here in the fullest, simplest way we have the four names all brought together as being what they really are, the names embracing the blessed Person of Him who was God manifest in flesh—"The Son of man,"

He calls Himself—the Holy Ghost through Peter calls Him, “The Christ, the Son of the living God,” and then the Holy Ghost says of Him, “And Jesus.” Mr. Raven, under the plea, the false and crafty plea, of maintaining the divinity of our Lord’s Person, would reduce all these except “the Son of God,” to mere “official names and titles” “serving to identify or designate the Person;” not even admitting that the name which always sounds so sweetly in the Father’s ear, and, through grace, in that of every believer, is more than “perhaps the nearest approach to a personal name”—the name of Jesus! (Page 4, lines 35 and 36.)

Further quotations are scarcely needed to show how opposed to Scripture Mr. Raven’s views are, but Matt. xxv, 31—46 especially brings our Lord before us as Son of Man in His glory, sitting upon the throne of His glory; and all the holy Angels with Him. Here He acts as King, and speaks of His Father, and the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Mr. Raven says the title “Son of man” “though serving sufficiently to identify or designate the Person, does not cover the truth of His Person.” Why “sufficiently”? In whose estimation is it sufficient? Ah! dear reader, all these notions and ideas of human reasoning come not from Him of whom the Blessed Son is the “brightness of glory, and the express image of His Person,” but from him who hates that Blessed One, and who entered into the heart of Judas in order to achieve His destruction if he could. The Lord bears now with those who have such notions, most evil and impoverishing to the soul though they be—who when gazing on His blessed face in the glory will dream of such things then? Who among the lost will dare to harbour such thoughts when standing before His judgment seat? Who can limit the “Son of man” in the foregoing passage to an official title? Yet Mr. Raven says it does not cover or embrace “the whole truth of His Person”!

It is no time for compliments or honeyed words. The truth of the Person of our blessed Lord is at stake, and it behoves all for whom He died, and to whom His Name is dear to take their stand boldly against such corrupting, Christ-defaming notions.

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Since the foregoing was written, a copy of "Notes of Addresses and Readings, at Quemerford, May, 1895," has reached me. They show still more clearly the system of what Mr. Raven teaches in his tract. He says: "But it is the same Person. The eternal Son was ever there, and there could be no difference between the eternal Son and the Son born in time, except as to His condition." Page 137.

Some one remarked "Mr. Darby says in the Synopsis on Colossians i., Christ is God and Christ is man; one Christ." Mr. Raven's reply was: "Yes; but you must be careful how you take up an expression like that. In Person He is God; in condition He is Man."

(Reference to the Synopsis shows that what Mr. Darby does say is: "Christ is God, Christ is Man; but it is Christ who is the two." A flat denial of Mr. Raven's theory.)

However, a questioner asked: "Why is He not *personally* man?" The sophistical nature of Mr. Raven's reply needs little comment to any simple-hearted believer. It was: "He is personally the Son. You cannot have two personalities in one. If He is the Son, He cannot be any other Person. He always was the Son, and will always be the Son. He was the Son here as man, and He will be no less the Son through all eternity. He was that Divine Person, and He was exactly that same Divine Person when He became man. The proof of this is John v.: 'The Son can do nothing of Himself.' He is the Son but in the condition of a man. People are getting to the idea of two personalities. Unity is not a happy word as applied to the Lord. The teaching of Scripture is incarnation. The Scriptural thought is: 'The Son became man; the Word became flesh.'" Pages 132, 133.

The pretence that the truth leads to the doctrine of a dual personality ("two personalities") is mere dust for the eyes; every believer can see that the truth of the unity of our Lord's adorable Person, God and Man, but one Christ who is both, can involve no such absurdity.

Here however are Mr. Raven's doctrines. He says, the thought "that the Son of Man is man united to the divinity is profane"; that our Lord's humanity was mere

human condition, "a divine Person in a condition in which He was not previously"; that "the idea of unity of a person" is "perfect nonsense"; and that "God and Man one Christ" "is not the language of Scripture," and does not "convey at all accurately the truth of Scripture." Mr. Raven may deny, may argue or explain as he pleases; his doctrine, as was pointed out more than five years ago, divides the Person of our adorable Lord, and in doing so the Person is lost.

Fellow-believer will you not reject these teachings in the name and for the glory of Him who gave Himself for you? Will you not for His glory stand apart from such teaching? May His Holy Spirit and conscience work for His glory.

P. A. H.

11, *Marlborough Buildings, Bath* ;  
*Sept., 1895.*

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[APPENDIX.]

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE,  
GREENWICH, S.E.,  
13 Dec., 1894.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

In making a few comments on the passages underlined in pencil in my letters to Mr. Hunt, I begin by noticing the last of such passages referring to the terms in which Mr. Hunt expressed his own faith, such as "God and man one Christ." Now if anyone ponders for a moment, this expression shuts out the idea of a distinct person such as we have in "the Son." The name of God includes the three Persons of the Trinity. Man is the appellation of a race or condition, and Christ is an official title meaning "the Anointed." Thus in such a phrase as Mr. Hunt uses, the idea of a distinct Person who has become man is lost. The statement is not Scripture nor accurate. The foundation stone of Christianity is that one of the divine Persons included in the Godhead—the Son—became man, entered on that condition (Phil. 2) though in so doing He could not cease to be divine. From that point Christ is presented to us in Scripture as man, either on earth, or in glory at God's right hand, or coming again, though with the fullest and constant testimony to His deity "God over all blessed for ever"—"the true God," etc., etc.

But being thus presented as man, a great many thoughts can be and are connected with Him such as could not be connected with the simple thought of God, for example those I have named in my letters to Mr. Hunt. They are offices that must be established in man. But this cannot for a moment affect the truth of the Son's Person, which ever was, and is unchangeably the same. I believe the point insisted on in the second letter, viz., the unchangeable personality of the Son, in spite of any change of condition, is a point of the last importance, and I regard it as of equal importance to distinguish between the general thought of God and the persons comprised in the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I think the above explains as far as I can the passages underlined, and I trust may be helpful to the saints at Spezia.

Your affectionate Brother,  
F. E. RAVEN.

*Copied from the original letter.*