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THE DEITY OF CHRIST by CHARLES
LONGACRE 1871-1958

About the Author

Charles S. Longacre, 1871-1958

Evangelist, author, editor, minister and administrator, Charles S. Longacre is best remembered for his work in Religious Liberty. Born in 1871 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Charles Longacre heard the Advent Message in 1895. By 1898 he had completed the ministerial course at Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, Michigan. He then worked in the Pennsylvania Conference in evangelistic work until 1907. In 1908 Longacre moved to South Lancaster, Massachusetts to teach Bible history at South Lancaster Academy, where he remained until 1913 as principal. From that date until 1936 he became secretary of the Religious Liberty Association, editing Liberty, the association's journal for twenty-eight years, remaining on the editorial staff until his death in 1958. In 1919 he was also secretary of the General Conference Home Missionary Department. From 1932 until 1941 he also served as secretary of the American Temperance Society.

Granted a Bachelor of Arts degree by Emmanuel Missionary College, Michigan (now Andrews University) in 1914, Longacre also received a B.A. in Philosophy from George Washington University, Washington D. C. with a minor in International Law. He also completed a three year law course with La Salle Extension University, Chicago. He wrote many articles for SDA and other periodicals. Author of books such as: Freedom: Civil and Religious, The Church in Politics, Religious Liberty and Civil Government, and Roger Williams - His Life, Work, and Ideals, Longacre received medals from Freedoms Foundations, Pennsylvania in 1955, 1956, and 1957, "for outstanding achievement in bringing about a better understanding of the American Way of life." In 1956 he also received a citation from Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State "in appreciation of his decades of distinguished service in behalf of religious freedom."

THIS RARE MANUSCRIPT WAS WRITTEN BY C. LONGACRE TO COMBAT THE APOSTASY THAT WAS COMING INTO GOD'S CHURCH. HE WRITES CLEARLY AND PLAINLY SETTING FORTH THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH ON THIS VITAL AND CRUCIAL TOPIC: THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

LONGACRE GIVES A PERSONAL TESTIMONY TO A PRECIOUS TRUTH UPON WHICH THERE WAS "ENTIRE UNANIMITY" AMONG THE BRETHREN..

MANY PEOPLE WOULD PREFER THIS MANUSCRIPT NEVER TO BE PUBLISHED, FOR IT COMES AS A STANDING REBUKE TO THE CHERISHES FABLES HELD BY MANY TODAY. IT WAS ONLY BY GOD'S DIVINE PROVIDENCE THAT THIS MANUSCRIPT CAME TO LIGHT AND IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO SEE "WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO!" <http://cgi.ebay.com/The-Deity-of-Christ>

This manuscript, The Deity of Christ, was written but never widely circulated. It shows Longacre to be a clear thinking Bible student, with spiritual discernment typical of many of the Advent Pioneers. Longacre could see apostasy coming into God's Church, and this was one of his attempts to combat this, striking the axe at the root of the problem.

For a biography of Longacre, refer to Charles S. Longacre, Champion of Religious Liberty, by Nathaniel Krum. Review & Herald Publishing Association, Washington D.C.

The Deity of Christ
Charles S. Longacre

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord," Rev.1:8, Again the Lord said: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:" Rev. 1:11.

Not everything has a beginning nor does everything have an ending. God Himself never had a beginning and He will not have an ending. He is the self-existent One, who never had a beginning. Eternity itself never had a beginning and never will have an ending. Space has no beginning and no ending. Everything else had a beginning, but not all things that have a beginning are going to have an end.

Of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it is said in the Scriptures, "He is the only Begotten of the Father." The Son of God was not created like other creatures are brought into existence. He is not a created but a Begotten Being, enjoying all the attributes of His Father. Christ Himself explains His own relationship to the Father as follows: "As the Father had life in Himself," unborrowed, underived, original, independent, and immortal, "so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. And God gave Christ "authority to execute judgment, also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:27. If He had been God in His own right, the Father could not have delegated to Christ authority in the execution of judgment but it was delegated to Him

"because He is the Son of man." "I can of my own self do nothing." John 5:30.

If Christ had been God in His own right, co-equal with God, co-eternal with God, or self-existent, instead of being Begotten of the Father, why did Christ say, "I can of my own self do nothing...I seek not my own will but the will of the Father?" Why did Christ say of Himself, "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour"? Isa. 43:10,11.

The word "God" is spelled with a capital 'G', and in the text following (verse 12) the Lord saith "there was no strange god among you." Here the Bible uses a small 'g' for god. This text in Isaiah 43:10 clearly proves that He, Christ, the only Saviour of the world, was the only God that was formed. Before Him "was no God, formed." Then we must conclude that He was the first and only God that was formed, because after Him was no God to be formed.

If there is one truth that the Bible teaches, it is that there is only one absolute God and none beside Him who is an absolute God. In the 15th chapter of First Corinthians, Paul teaches this doctrine so there can be no doubt as to Christ's subordination and submission to the Father. Paul says: "Then cometh the end, when He (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; ... For He (the Father) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But that He (God) is excepted, which did put all things under Him (Christ). And when all things shall be subdued unto Him (Christ), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under Him (Christ), that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

Here Paul clearly teaches that God is not subject to Christ, but that Christ is subject to the Father, who gave all authority to Him. Whatever Christ is, whatever authority He has, whatever attributes He possesses, may be all in all and above all. Paul says, "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:23. Again says Paul: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ ... and the head of Christ is God." 1 Cor. 11:3. Christ Himself said: "I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I." John 14:28.

But Paul taught that Christ was "equal with God," and that God Himself had "exalted" Christ to that position. For says Paul, "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name," and therefore we are to "confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil 2:5-11.

Why are we to give the glory of Christ's exaltation above every other name than the name of God Himself, to God the Father instead of to Christ in His own right? Because it is God the Father who has thus exalted Him. Paul makes this great truth of Christ's dependence upon the Father still more evident when he saith to Timothy: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things...who is 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 honor and power everlasting." 1 Tim. 6:13-16.

God "only hath immortality." He alone is the only self-existent God. But He gave His Son when He was Begotten the same life he had in Himself, therefore when Christ offered His life as a ransom for the sins of the world, He and He only could make an atonement for all the sins of all the world, because he made "infinite sacrifice," and it required an Infinite sacrifice to atone for all the sins of mankind and angels who had sinned, in order to satisfy the demands of the law of God and infinite justice.

We are told that Christ died for our sins, that angels could not atone for our sins. Angels were finite beings just like men are, but men are a lower order of beings. Christ had un-conditional immortality bestowed upon Him when He was Begotten of the Father. Angels had conditional immortality bestowed upon them when they were created by Christ in the beginning. Angels are immortal but their immortality is conditional. Therefore angels do not die but live on after they sin just as Satan or Lucifer lives on in sin. But since Lucifer and the fallen angels only enjoy conditional immortality, God ultimately will destroy them and take from them the gift of immortality which Christ bestowed on them when He created them. Whatever God bestows he can take away whenever He sees fit. In the resurrection, immortality will be bestowed upon every saint that is raised to life through Jesus Christ. Then and not until then is eternal life bestowed upon the Christian. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5:11. But this same eternal life is also in the Father. For saith Saint John: "The Word of life ... was manifested ... that eternal life, which was with the Father." 1 John 1:2, 3. Here we are plainly told that the same eternal life, immortal life which is with the Father, was manifested in His Son, and will in the resurrection be bestowed and imparted to all the saints in Christ. But we must never forget that it is an imparted immortality. We thus see that eternal life and immortality may be bestowed upon beings who were not co-existent with God. It is the same eternal life that is in God, and when human beings are thus made immortal it is said of them that they are "filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. 3:19.

But Christ, the only Begotten of the Father, made in the "express image" of the Father in person. God not only appointed [Him] to be the Saviour of men, but He appointed Him "heir of all things," "being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He (God) at any time, Thou art My son, This day have I begotten thee?" Heb. 1:2-5. Here we are told that the expression "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee," refers only to Christ and not to any of the angels. Then there must have been a time, a day, when the Son of God was begotten by the Father. On that day, the Father saith unto His only Begotten Son: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ... therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands." Heb. 1:8-10. Paul says: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom." Eph. 1:17. The Father is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ - he is the Father and Christ is His Begotten Son.

Again Paul says. "There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all." Eph. 4:4-6. Again Paul says: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him...There is none other God but one." 1 Cor. 8:6, 4. The prophet Malachi says: "have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Mal. 2:10.

In "Patriarchs and Prophets," Sister White quotes Prov. 8:22-26, and applies those texts to Christ's pre-existence. The original Hebrew text says: "the Lord possessed Me - the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting... When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." In the original Hebrew, the word re'shiyth (raysheeth), which means "the beginning," is exactly the same word as we find in Gen. 1:1. But in Gen. 1:1 the word (raysheeth) has the preposition "in" prefixed to the Hebrew word "bere-shiyth." That preposition (in) or "Be" is not attached to the word (ray-sheeth) in Prov. 8:22. Translated literally, it ought to read "The Lord possessed Me - the beginning of His way." Twice the expression is used in Prov. 8:22-30. Before "ever the earth was... I was brought forth." The words brought forth come from one Hebrew word, Chiyl (Kheel) which literally means to be begotten, to bring forth, to be born, to be shapen, to be formed. Here Christ speaking of Himself saith: "I was brought forth, when there were no foundations abounding with water ... or ever the earth was."

I was begotten, I was formed. These expressions agree with what Christ saith of Himself in Isaiah 43:10,11:

"That ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour." Another translation of this text reads: "Before Me there was nothing formed of God." The implication in our King James translation is that He, Christ, was "formed" as God, equal with God, but beside Him was no God formed and be-side Him was no Saviour appointed. But the other translation quoted makes the Son of God the "first-begotten before all creation," as Paul puts it in Col. 1:15. Christ Himself admits that the secret things belong to God, and that He Himself as the Son of God, does not know the day and hour of His return to this earth the second time. Jesus said: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32. And in Matt. 24:36, Jesus says, "but My Father only" knows that day and hour.¹ Christ acknowledges that all He possesses of wisdom, of power, of authority, and of life itself, all was given to Him from the Father. His exaltation was from the Father.

Spirit of Prophecy on Deity

The Spirit of Prophecy says that there was and still is a difference in rank between God - the Father, and God's Son. We read in Vol. 1 of the old Spirit of Prophecy [p.17] thus: "Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son."

1 Publisher's note: Alternatively, these verses can also be understood in this manner. "An old English version of the passage reads, "But that day and hour no man maketh known, neither the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This is the correct reading, according to several of the ablest critics of the age. The word know is used in the same sense here that it is by Paul, in 1Cor.2:2: "For I determined not to know [make known] anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Men will not make known the day and hour, angels will not make it known, neither will the Son; but the Father will make it known." (James White, The Second Coming of Christ; or, a Brief Exposition of Matthew Twenty-four, p. 53)

The implication is that God stands first in honor, His only begotten Son comes next, and Lucifer was next to the Son of God. If God and His Son were co-eternal, co-equal, and co-existent so that there was no difference between them then we should not say Lucifer was next to the Son of God but next to God as well. Again we read: "Jesus, God's dear Son, had the pre- eminence over all the angelic hosts. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone." Why on Christ alone? Why not on God? Because Satan knew that the Son of God had come forth from the Father and was His Son, and he felt he should share equal honors with the Son. Again

we read: "The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself, so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes, but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him." [Ibid-pp.17, 18]

It will be noticed here that Sister White says that God the Father, "conferred special honor upon His Son"; and that "it was ordained by (God) Himself, that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself," and that God "had invested" His Son "with authority to command the heavenly host." This is in harmony with Christ's own statement concerning His being equal with the Father in the beginning. Christ said: "for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will ... that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father... For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son." John 5:21-27.

What kind of life did the Father have in Himself? In God "is life original, unborrowed, underived," "immortal," "independent." "He is the source of life." Christ says, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given" - the same life, original, unborrowed, underived life to the Son. It was "given" to Him by His Father. Christ was made the source of life just as the Father was the source of life. Christ had the same life the Father had in Himself in His own right. He did not have to derive or borrow it, it was now original with Christ just as it was with the Father. Christ's life was independent of the Father, hence not dependent, derived, or borrowed. He could bestow and give life and create just as the Father could, but the Father gave this life to His Son. When this same life the Father had in Himself was given by the Father to His Son so He too had it "in Himself," we are not told. Nor does it make any difference how long it was before anything was created, the fact remains that the Son of God proceeded from the Father, that He was in the bosom of the Father, that His life, "underived, unborrowed" and "given" to Him by the Father, that the Father "ordained" His Son "should be equal with Himself;" that the Father "invested" His Son "with authority," and that the Son does "nothing of Himself alone." We read again from the Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1, p.18, that the Son of God "had been taken into the

special counsel of God in regard to His plans." The plans are God's, not the Son of God's. The Son of God is taken "into the special counsel of God."

Again we read, "Christ was acknowledged Sovereign of Heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself." God's authority is absolute, Christ's sovereignty of Heaven is "acknowledged." Again we read: "All the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, Satan bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred ... Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host.... As one aggrieved, he related the preference God had given Jesus to the neglect of himself... for had not a Ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ." Again we read: "There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son Jesus, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son." [Ibid-pp.18, 19]

"Angels that were loyal and true ...justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Jesus Christ, and with forcible reasoning sought to convince Satan that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which He had conferred upon His Son. They clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created: and that He had ever stood at the right hand of God, and His mild loving authority had not heretofore been questioned." [Ibid] How long it was since the angels were created and how long it was before the angels were created we are not told, and how long it was before the millions of worlds in the universe of God were created we are not informed, but we are told that all the honor which the Son of God had was at a certain time "conferred upon His Son" by the Father, and that Lucifer and the angels lost no honor because the Son of God existed before the angels and "before the Father had proclaimed the honor which He had conferred upon His Son." Why did not the loyal angels say that "the Son of God had no beginning, that the Son was not really a Son of God because He co-existed with God, and was not next to God but co-equal, that the life He had was not given to Him by His Father, but He always possessed this life; that He should not stand at the right hand of God but really ought to sit on the throne by His own right." But the loyal angels did not advance the argument of One in three and indivisible. Did not the loyal angels know how to argue this question, as well as Athanasius did during the fourth century of the Christian era? Why did the loyal angels make a distinction between the Son

of God and the Father? Because they knew that the Son of God had proceeded from the Father and that the Father was above all. We read again: "The loyal angels hasten speedily to the Son of God, and acquaint Him with what is taking place among the angels. They find the Father in conference with His beloved Son, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down... He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with His own Son and His loyal angels." [Ibid-p.21]

Notice, the Father was in conference with His beloved Son, and not the Son in conference with the Father. The Father always comes first and the Son occupies a subordinate position. The Son occupied this subordinate position in the days of eternity before the worlds were created; and after all enemies have been put under the feet of Christ and Christ reigns supreme over all, Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:28, "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, (Christ) then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under Him (Christ), that God may be all in all."

Here we are plainly told that the Son of God is subject to the Father and that the Father is not subject to the Son but is above the Son and subduing all things under the sovereignty of the Son. The Father does all this for His Son, but does not subject Himself to the authority of the Son but makes the authority of the Son subject to the Father so God may be above all and overall. Again we read in the Spirit of Prophecy, Vol.1, p.22: "The angels were marshalled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angels at their head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, Heaven's Great Commander. "All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God, and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand His purposes. God informed Satan that to His Son alone He would reveal His secret purposes, and He required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield Him implicit, unquestioned obedience." - Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1, p 22.

"'Why,' questioned this mighty angel, 'should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?'" "Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels." - Patriarchs and Prophets, p 37.

"Then there was war in Heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of Heaven, and His loyal angels, engaged in conflict with the arch rebel and those who united with him. The Son of God, and true and loyal angels

prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from Heaven." - Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1, p 23. The Apostle Peter tells us "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartaros) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2:4. The Greek word "tartaros" literally means, the lowest depth of a dark abyss and is a synonym with "abusses," which is usually translated "bottomless pit" in the Bible and similar to the expression found in Genesis 1:2, "And darkness was upon the face of the deep." It was into this darkness that Lucifer and his angels were cast. This occurred before man was created upon the earth, and before God sent His Holy Spirit to garnish or beautify the earth and before He said: "Let there be light," because the Spirit of Prophecy, Vol.1, p.23, expressly says that after the angels were cast out of heaven, that the "Angels in Heaven mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in Heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make men to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels." Thus we learn that gross darkness surrounded the earth, which was without form and void, before it was made ready for man's habitation. It was into this darkness and chaotic condition of the earth that Satan was cast, just as he will be cast into it with all his angels again for 1,000 years, after all the saints are taken to heaven. We shall now deal with the two main theories of the Trinity, the one that holds the Son of God never was begotten, that He was co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father; and the other that the Son of God was begotten before all creation, and all that He is and all that He ever was and ever will be was given to Him by the Father, and thus He came to be co-equal with God and possessed all the properties, all the essence and all the virtues, and the same life that God Himself possessed, as the Self-existent One.

Origin of Athanasian Theory

"In the second century, the word trias (Greek), Trinitas (Vulgate), was imported from the Platonic School, to express the union of the three persons; and the whole succession of the Ante-Nicene fathers, although their illustrations are not always the most pertinent, discover by innumerable passages that they worshipped the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, as constituting what Tertullian calls, in the second century, Trinitas unius divinitatis, and Cyprian, in the third Adunata trinitas, and Athanasius, in the fourth adiairetos trias." - Hill's Lectures in Divinity, p.369.

Sabellius invented the orthodox Catholic system of the Trinity during the middle of the third century which was later called Sabellianism. His theory was based upon the Platonic philosophy that "God is one Person, who at his

pleasure, presents to mortals the different aspects of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In respect of His creating and preserving all things, He is the Father; in respect of what He did as the Redeemer of men, He is the Son; and in respect of those influences which He exerts in their sanctification, He is the Holy Ghost. The accounts which ancient writers give of the opinions of Sabellius lead us to think that he considered the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as merely nominal, called God, Trionumos...." (having three names). God was one Person, assuming different aspects of manifestations, and different names at different times. Sabellianism or the orthodox Catholic view of the Trinity destroys the distinction of Persons which the Scriptures so plainly teach, confounding the sender with the person sent, Him that begat with Him that is Begotten, and the Holy Ghost with the Father, from whom He is said to proceed. Tertullian opposed this doctrine of the Trinity advanced by Sabellius because it ascribed to God, the Father of all, the sufferings and the final death on Calvary which the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus Christ, the Son, and not the Father who quickened Him and raised Him again from the dead. "The beginning of the creation of God" in the original Greek arche - tes ktiseos tou Theou, means not the first who brought forth but the first who was brought forth. It is used in the passive sense, not the active. It literally means, says Justin Martyr in the second century: "Begotten before every creature," as John says, "He was before me." "He was the first." "The first born or Begotten." "The only Begotten." "Begotten before the whole creation."

Different Views Held

There are some who deny the divinity of the Saviour and some deny the distinction of Persons in the God-head. Some believe that the God-head is one personality manifesting Himself in various ways and others believe the God-head to be three distinctive Persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some believe that the God-head is indivisible, and that the three Persons in the God-head from all eternity held equal rank and were co-existent and self-existent in their own right. Those who believe that the God-head is indivisible also hold that the God-head being one Person is incapable of change because the divine nature cannot be extended or communicated to three Persons or two Persons after having been peculiar to One, and because the Deity or Trinity would lack the element of eternity and immutability, two essential properties of the divine nature. But the Scriptures clearly teach that the Son of God, as Paul says, was "begotten before all creation" or "the firstborn of all creation" or "creature." He does not say the "begotten when brought into the world," or "the firstborn into the world," or "the firstborn of the dead" through the resurrection as he did in Acts 13:33, 34, but "the firstborn of all creation" or "before all creation." The word "first begotten" is applied in the Scriptures to three different phases or experiences in the life of Christ. Paul applies it to the time when the Father caused His Son to

proceed from His own bosom before anything else was created in the universe as set forth in Col. 1: 15, where he says of the Son of God, "He is the likeness of the Invisible God, - the Firstborn of all creation." - Emphatic Diaglott. In the second instance Paul applies the word "first - begotten" to Christ's incarnation, when he says in Heb 1:6, "When He bringeth the first-begotten in to the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." And again, in Revelation, Chapter 1:5, John the Revelator refers to Christ as "the faithful Witness, and the first-begotten of the dead." We must rightly divide the Scripture and not put all texts in the same pigeon-hole. "First-begotten" may refer to Christ's resurrection, or to His incarnation, or to His proceeding from the bosom of the Father. The Apostle John also calls the Logos, who was with God in the beginning, "the only begotten Son," "the only begotten of the Father," "which is in the bosom of the Father;" "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son;" and again, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God." In 1 John 4:9, the Apostle John says: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." And in Hebrews 11:17, the Apostle Paul declares that Abraham who "received the promises offered up his only begotten son" who was "a figure" of the Son of God. The phrase "the only begotten Son" as applies to Christ invariably refers to His divine nature and His relationship to the Father rather than to his human nature and His relationship to the Virgin Mary. The expressions "the Son of God" and "the Son of man" respectively refer to His divine nature and His human nature. This is made very evident when the Angel Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. "That holy thing" was His divine nature - "called the Son of God" which tabernacled in human flesh. His corporeal body of blood, flesh, and bone, born of the Virgin Mary was "the Son of man." He was God or Divinity manifested in the flesh. He had two natures - one divine and the other human. He possessed two sonships - one as "the Son of God" and the other "the Son of man." He was "the Son of God" before He became "the Son of man." Sister White says: "His divinity was veiled with humanity - the invisible glory in the visible human form." Desire of Ages, page 23.

"By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who (as the Son of God) from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, 'I AM THAT I AM.... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent Me unto you... so when He came in the likeness of men,' He declared Himself the I AM. The child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God manifest in the flesh." - Id. p.24. "God gave His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human

nature... God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the 'Son of man' who shares the throne of the universe. It is the 'Son of man' whose name shall be called 'Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'" Id.p. 25. Since the incarnation Christ is declared to be both "the Son of God" and "the Son of man." The fact, however, remains that in both cases He was begotten. As "the Son of God" He was begotten of God, as the Apostle Paul says, "before all creation." (Col. 1: 15). As "the Son of man" He was begotten when God the Father clothed His Son's divinity with humanity, 4000 years after the creation of man. The argument that Athanasius and the Catholic Church Councils since the days of the Nicean Council in 325 A.D. sets forth is that pure reason cannot conceive of the three Persons in the God-head lacking the two essential properties of the divine nature, namely, eternity and immutability. But the Old and the New Testaments both teach that "there is but one God," and beside God there is no other God. Moses said: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. 6:4. The Apostle Paul said in the New Testament, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." 1 Cor. 8:6. Again Paul says, in the 4th verse; "there is none other God but one."

Pure reason tells me, and the Bible tells me there can be but one absolute God who must possess the two essential properties of eternity and immutability. If pure reason can conceive of three Persons being co-existent, co-eternal, co-immutable, co-immortal, co-powerful, co-omnipotent, and co-equal, then why does pure reason stop with three Gods? If pure reason can have three Gods, co-equal and co-eternal, why can it not have four, five, six, yea, a million such Gods. If we have three absolute God[s], three first causes and three last effects, three Alphas and three Omegas, all of equal status, why can we not have any number? There is nothing in nature or in pure reason that teaches us that we could have only three. But the Scripture explicitly says: "There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things," and "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." This text makes God absolute and supreme over all, and Jesus Christ the agent of the Father and subordinate to His authority, and their oneness and unity consists of their being in agreement and in harmony with each other in all things, and not a oneness in personality. Eternity and immutability can only be applied to God the Father - the one absolute God, and not to God the Son, or God, the Holy Spirit. If eternity and immutability were applied to the Son of God, then the Son of God never took any chances so far as His existence was concerned when he came into this world to meet all the temptations to sin. If it were impossible for the Son of God to make a mistake or commit a sin, then His coming into this world and subjecting Himself to temptations were all a farce and mere mockery. If it were possible for Him to yield to temptation and fall into sin, then He must have risked

heaven and His very existence, and even all eternity. That is exactly what the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy say Christ, the Son of God did do when He came to work out for us a plan of salvation from the curse of sin. We read in the Spirit of Prophecy as follows: "God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss." - Desire of Ages, p.49.

Again we read in "Desire of Ages": "Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam's position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain... But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation." - p. 117.

Again we read from the same book, Jesus left the glories of His eternal home for us and "He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss." - p. 131.

"Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption heaven itself was imperiled." - Christ's Object Lessons, p.196. If Christ "risked all," even His eternal existence in heaven, then there was a possibility of His being overcome by sin, and if overcome by sin, He would have gone into Joseph's tomb and neither that tomb nor any other tomb would ever have been opened. All would have been lost and He would have suffered "eternal loss," the loss of all He ever possessed - His divinity and His humanity and heaven itself would have been "lost - eternally lost," - C.O.L. p 196.

It is very apparent that the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity is not sound when applied to all three Persons in the God-head. The eternity and the immutability of the Son of God was conditional and predicated upon the fulfilment or the failure of those conditions. If He had failed, His immutability as well as His eternity would have been forfeited and eternally lost. It is thus apparent that the two essential properties of eternity and immutability are applicable only to God, the Father, but not to the Son of God. It was possible for one of the God-head to be lost, and eternally lost - and if that had happened, and it was possible to happen, God, the Father, would still have remained as the One and only absolute and living God, reigning supreme over all the unfallen worlds, but with all the human race blotted out of existence on this earth. If the God-head is indivisible, as Athanasius and the Catholic hierarchy claim, and all three Persons in the Trinity constitute one personality but three heads or manifestations of the one and same God and are one indivisible Substance, then, pray tell me, who died upon Calvary? If God and His Son are one inseparable personality, instead of two separate and distinct personalities, who died upon Calvary? Did the

God-head die? If the God-head died, who was reigning upon the throne of the universe during the three days that Christ was in the tomb? What kind of sacrifice was made upon Calvary? Was it only a human sacrifice? Was it only a finite human sacrifice or an infinite sacrifice? Did the King of glory die as the Son of God or did Jesus only die as the Son of man in his humanity? This answer is found in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Paul says: "Christ died for us." Again he says: "We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

Rom.5:8,10. "God gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16. Peter said to the Jews: "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just.... and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead;" Acts 3:14,15. As Christ expired on the cross, we read in the "Desire of Ages," p.752. "And now the Lord of Glory was dying, a ransom for the race." "Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author." "There was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." "Complete darkness ... enveloped the cross." In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden.... God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed.... He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes." When Christ exclaimed: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," the dying Son of God did not know that His Father was by His side. That cry was uttered at the termination of the three hour darkness which enveloped the cross. After that God revealed Himself to His Son and comforted Him. When Christ said: "Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit," "a light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun. He then bowed His head upon His breast and died." p. [753, 754,] 756.

The Father was then not in heaven, nor were the holy angels in heaven. They were here on the earth enveloped in the darkness which was over all the earth for three hours. The Son of God did not send His Spirit to heaven, His immortal life, His Deity, His Divinity, that life which His Father had given Him - the same life His Father possessed - "original, unborrowed, underived," that Divine life Christ committed to His Father. But His Father did not take it back to heaven with Him. He left it here on earth with Christ's body in the tomb. For we read in Vol.3 of the Spirit of Prophecy, p.203: "When He (Jesus) closed His eyes in death upon the cross, the soul of Christ did not go . . . to heaven. . . . The spirit of Jesus slept in the tomb with His body, and did not wing its way to heaven, there to maintain a separate existence, and to look down upon the mourning disciples embalming the body from which it had taken flight. All that comprised the life and intelligence of Jesus remained with His body in the sepulchre; and when He came forth it was as a whole being; He did not have to summon His spirit from heaven. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again.... It was no marvel to the heavenly host that He who controlled the power of death, and had life in Himself, should awaken from the

sleep of the grave. But it was a marvel to them that their loved Commander should die for rebellious men." pp.203-204.

Since the Spirit of Prophecy and the Scriptures are both inspired, we should be able to harmonize the Spirit of Prophecy with the Bible. The Bible tells us that when a human being dies that "the spirit (of man) shall return unto God who gave it." Ecc. 12:7. Our life is derived from God. Our breath, our life and our times are in God's hands all the time. But our life is not "original". That is, we do not have life in ourselves. But Christ had life in Himself. His Father gave His Son the same life that He had in himself, "original, underived and unborrowed," "independent" and "immortal." The Son of God had life in Himself just as the Father had life in Himself. But Jesus says His Father gave Him this kind of a life - self-existent. Therefore, Jesus had the power in Himself to lay down His life - this eternal and immortal life - His Deity - and He had the power to take it up again. In that respect, he was different as the Son of man than what we are. Our life is finite - His is infinite. Ours is mortal - His is immortal. Our spirit is finite, His is infinite. We cannot take up our life after we lay it down. He could, so long as He did not commit sin. But if he had yielded to temptation and become guilty of sin, - and this was possible - His very existence, his eternal existence and heaven itself was possible of being forfeited. If it was not, then He never took a risk; and we are told He "risked all," even heaven itself, as "an eternal loss." This being so, then His corporeal body was not only put in jeopardy but His Deity. Because, if He could exist as a separate Deity, independent of His corporeal body, after He yielded up His life on Calvary, then He did not risk heaven nor would He have suffered "all" as "an eternal loss." Since His spirit did not go to heaven, but the Father committed Christ's spirit to the tomb and it slept with His body in the tomb, and "all that comprised the life and the intelligence of Jesus remained with His body in the sepulchre," we must conclude that if Christ had sinned all that ever belonged to Christ would have forever remained in the tomb and Christ would have suffered the "loss" of His eternal existence. Then God would have taken back to Himself what He gave to His son, namely, the same life He gave His only Begotten Son when He proceeded from the bosom of the Father in the beginning when He became "the First-born before all creation," as Paul puts it.

Thus and only thus, can it be true that the sacrifice which Christ made for all the sins of the world was "an infinite sacrifice" and not a mere human or finite sacrifice. Repeatedly we read that Christ laid down His life, and that means, all there was of Christ, both human and divine. His Deity did not die, for Deity we are told in the Spirit of Prophecy "cannot die." An immortal being cannot die. But immortality after it is bestowed can be withdrawn. He who imparts immortality to a being that God brought into existence can withdraw that gift. What God gives He can take back. Lucifer was created an

immortal being. Though he sinned, he has not yet died because of his sin, nor have the angels died who sinned, but finally God will destroy Satan and his angels in the lake of fire, and their immortality will be taken from them and returned to God who gave it to them. The righteous saints in the resurrection shall put on immortality and be made equal to the angels who have never sinned. God does not bring a free moral agent into being and make it impossible for Him to get rid of him if he is disobedient and rebellious. All life which God imparts, be it mortal or immortal, may be withdrawn and return to Him who gave it in the beginning.

While the Deity of Christ did not die, He laid it down, and was willing to surrender to for all eternity, and so He made an "infinite sacrifice" for the sins of the world. No angel could make an atonement for sin. All the angels combined could not make an atonement for the sins of the world. They were all finite beings, and the total number of finite beings added together can never measure up to infinity. We are told it required an "infinite sacrifice" to atone for the sins of the world, and the divine Son of God, who was infinite because He had life in Himself - the same life the Father had in himself, was the only One who could ransom the lost human race. He did it by laying down both His Deity and His corporeal body as an "infinite sacrifice," surrendered if God so required for all eternity. The transgression of God's law demanded the life of every sinner, and in order to save all the sinners of the world, it was necessary that an "infinite sacrifice" be made to satisfy infinite justice and save God's law and the sinner both. For we read in Psalms 138:2 "Thou (God) hast magnified thy word above all Thy name." God's law is His word. In the death and sacrifice of Christ God exalted His law above all His name. Christ vindicated the honor of God and satisfied infinite justice and so established the law of God for all eternity and saved the law and the sinner for eternity by the "infinite sacrifice" He made for us. While Christ laid down His life, He did not take it up again Himself. Over and over we read in the New Testament "God raised Christ from the dead." But God wrought this miracle through the Holy Spirit and the same as He did His incarnation when the Holy Spirit descended upon Mary and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. For we read in Paul's letter to the Romans, 8:11, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit." Before Christ came into this world He was equal to God, "being in the form of God," and "the express image of His person," yet He "counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." - Desire of Ages, p.22, quoting Phil. 2:6,7, R.V., margin.

What does the Scripture mean when it says, "He emptied Himself." Paul defines this expression when he says: "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It was then that

Christ "emptied Himself." He laid all He ever possessed upon the altar - as Sister White says, "a voluntary sacrifice," yea, "an infinite sacrifice." He voluntarily chose to give up His glory and His throne, and His scepter, and His life - eternal life "into His Father's hands." He emptied Himself. He was willing to risk all, even His eternal existence and be lost, and eternally lost and annihilated, if only thereby the sinner might be forgiven His sins and saved. He said to His Father in heaven: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." "A body hast Thou prepared for Me," referring to His incarnate body of flesh and bone and blood. But He had a body in heaven in the form of God known as the Logos of God. This heavenly body "in the form of God," was also prepared by God for Him. What was the Logos of God? Sister White says that before Christ came to this earth, the divine Son of God was the Logos of God, and when He dwelled with us, He became "God's thought made audible." From the days of eternity, He was "the express image of His Person," "the outshining of His glory." - Desire of Ages, p. 1

In "Patriarchs and Prophets" p.36 we read: "The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both." It does not say that the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son encircled both, but "the glory of the eternal, self-existent One," not two, "encircled both."

When Satan questioned "the supremacy of the Son of God," it says, "The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son, and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. . . . Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven, the King declared that none but Christ, the only begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes.... The Son had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven.... Christ was still to exercise divine power in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's Plan." [Ibid] Here we have clear statements that the only begotten Son was exalted by the Father to an equality with Himself, and that the Son could not act contrary to God's plan and God's will. He was subject to the Father in the beginning of creation and He will be still subject to the Father at the final culmination of the plan of redemption when all enemies shall have been put under Christ's feet, and He reigns supreme in the universe, yet says Paul, "when all things shall be subdued unto Him (the Son), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him (the Son) that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. 15:28.

We read in "Desire of ages," p. 785: "When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying, 'Thy Father calls Thee,' the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. Now was proved the truth of His words, 'I lay down My life, that I might take it again... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'"

Jesus said: "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He (the Father) given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. This life Christ surrendered to His Father as He died on the cross of Calvary when "He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He, gave up the ghost" (spirit, His life). Where was His life while He lay in the grave? It was in the Father's possession, or as the apostle John says, "in the bosom of the Father," when "the only Begotten Son" came in the beginning. Christ of His own accord laid down His life, when He freely gave His life for us, and while He had power to take it up because of His sinless state, and therefore sin could not hold Him in its power, yet He did not raise Himself from the dead. Peter on the day of Pentecost said: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Acts 2:22-24. Again Peter repeats it: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Verse 32. Again Peter says in Acts 3:15: Ye "Killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead." The apostle Paul likewise wrote to the Romans, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father... But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." Romans 6:4, 8:11. Thus we see from the teaching of the Scriptures that it was God - the Father - who through the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. This was fulfilled when "the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying: 'Thy Father calls Thee.'" Then Christ was again "begotten" "from the dead," and another prophecy was fulfilled as stated by Paul: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Acts 13:33. This is the third time the Son of God was "begotten" by the Father. As Sister White says: "All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only he who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death." -Desire of Ages, p. 785.

Christ, when He surrendered His life, laid down His divinity as well as His humanity, because He made more than a human, finite sacrifice. Sister White says that when "the Lord of Glory was dying, a ransom for the race ... that an infinite sacrifice had been made for the sins of the world." - Id. pp 752, 774. If an "infinite" instead of a finite sacrifice was made for the sins of the

world, then more than His humanity was offered as a penalty to atone for the violation of God's law. If it was "the Lord of glory" who died, then it was more than the Son of man that was sacrificed. Sister White says: "God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.'" Id. p. 762. When Christ said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," He made "an infinite sacrifice," because He not only gave up His humanity but His divinity and committed all into "the possession of God" who gave Him "to have life in Himself" in the beginning when "the Son of God" was "Begotten before all creation," as Paul said in Col. 1:15, literal Greek translation. If Christ had yielded to temptation and committed one sin, both He and the human race would have been lost. Both His humanity and divinity would have been lost. Both His humanity and divinity would have been forfeited forever, and there would have been an eternal separation between Him and God. Sister White says: "Christ risked all," even "heaven itself" when He condescended to meet the great tempter in the sinful flesh of man, and subject Himself to temptation as the Son of man in His humanity. Sister White says: "the Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb....He feared that sin was so offensive to God, that their separation was to be eternal." - Desire of Ages, p. 753.

If it was impossible for Christ to lose His divinity as well as His humanity, then why should He fear "that their separation was to be eternal"? If His divinity could not be sacrificed and lost because of the guilt of sin, then how was it possible for "Christ" to risk all even heaven itself? He did risk His eternal existence or He did not risk anything. Since it was possible for Him to yield to sin in the flesh, it was possible for Him to lose His divinity and only in that sense did He make "an infinite sacrifice" and thus risk His eternal existence. While it is true that divinity cannot die, in Christ it was possible to lose His divinity when he "was in all points tempted as we are," and ran the risk of yielding to sin. If this is not so, then He ran no risk of eternal separation from God and heaven. He could have gone back and enjoyed His existence in His divinity the same as He did before He came into the world as man's Redeemer. Those who hold that the Son of God only surrendered His humanity and that His divinity was with Him in the grave and was never given up and never could be surrendered and lost because of sin's guilt, hold that Christ was conscious instead of unconscious in the grave. If Christ retained His divinity and never surrendered and gave it back to God, and His divinity was present with Him in the grave instead of in God's possession, then the only logical conclusion that can be drawn is that the Son of God was conscious in the grave and that He did not lose consciousness. If death is consciousness in the grave or some other place, then death is not really death but a higher form of existence independent of the body, and a person is still conscious and free to communicate with God and others, outside of the body, and that is exactly

what Satan told Eve when he tempted her to sin: "Thou shalt not surely die." Gen. 3:4. But Christ tells us that the devil "is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

When Christ surrendered His life and His Spirit to God on the cross, "Christ died" and was unconscious in the grave, just as the sinner is unconscious when he dies and pays the penalty for his sins in the final judgment day and suffers the second death. Christ paid the penalty of the second death for all who accepted Him, so they may escape that death which is eternal. But the second death, the penalty for sin, could not hold Him because He Himself was without sin and He made "an infinite sacrifice ... for the sins of the world." None of the angels could make the sacrifice for they were finite beings, and "an infinite sacrifice" was required to atone for the sins of the world. There was just One in all the universe of God who could pay the penalty for the transgressions of the law of God and satisfy infinite justice and that was the divine Son of God, whom God "made equal with the Father," and "invested" with His own attributes, by sharing the glory and divinity of the Father. All this was done when Christ was "Begotten before all creation," and "The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both" before "the creation of all the hosts of heaven," and "the creation of the earth and its inhabitants," and the Son of God became "the express image of His (Father's) Person" and "the brightness of His glory."

Sister White wrote in "The Signs of the Times," August 29, 1900: "Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.... In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him."

This statement has been used by some to convey the idea that the Son of God was co-existent with the Father and self-existent in His own right without deriving His existence in the beginning from the Father. We must interpret this statement in harmony with other statements Sister White has made in connection with the Deity of Christ, and how and when He obtained it. Sister White's statements when taken as a whole and altogether are in perfect harmony with what Christ Himself and all the prophets have said and written about His self-existent state and how He acquired it from the Father in the beginning before anything was created that afterwards was created. John, the apostle, said; "No man hath seen God at any time; the only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18.

Christ always existed in the bosom of the Father, even before He was Begotten as the Son of God, and God and His prophets counted "things which are not," as though they were even before they were manifested.

Thus we read that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and that "Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot... was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times." So Christ existed in the bosom of the Father from all eternity but was manifested when He was begotten by the Father as His Son, as the apostle Paul says, "before all creation." God views things against the background of eternity. When He spoke of being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were dead, He did not count them as dead but as living. Jesus said: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Matt.22:31, 32. God counts some people as dead while they live. Paul in speaking of a bad woman, said: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." We are apt to view things against the background of time, but God views things in the light of eternity. As Paul says, God "hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world." Before we existed He counted us, and after we die He counts us as living because of the resurrection from the dead.

Only in this sense was Christ the Son of God with the Father from all eternity. There was a time when Christ was begotten, and He was "the only Begotten Son" of the Father.

There was a time when the Son of God was made equal to the Father, for says Sister White: "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son." - Testimonies Vol. 8, p.268.

According to this statement, Christ did not in His own right possess equality with the Father until God gave it to Him. He was "made equal with the Father" by the Father. That is exactly what Christ Himself said concerning His relationship to the Father. He said: "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. What kind of life does the Father have in Himself? He "only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," says Paul. The Father hath "self-existent" "life original, unborrowed, underived." This same kind of "life, original, unborrowed, underived" the Father "gave" to His Son. The Son of God Himself says that His Father gave to His "Son to have life in Himself," the same identical life the Father had in Himself. In this way, the Father "made" His Son "equal" with Himself. Both the life and the equality of God were given to Christ by the Father when the Father begat His Son. God gave His Son the same kind of immortality as He had in himself and made Him the source of life so His Son did no longer have to depend upon His Father nor had He any longer to go to the Father and borrow it from Him. The Son could now

impart life and create life as well as worlds, and people them. But we must never forget while Christ the Son of God had this independent life and creative power in Himself, yet all things were created by God through His Son because God gave Him to have life in Himself. The Father and the Son are one, but not one personality. Christ prayed that we might be one with Him as He and the Father were One. Sister White says that this "unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one." Testimonies Vol. 8. p. 269.

In the word, God is spoken of as "the everlasting God." This name embraces past, present, and future. God is from everlasting to everlasting. He is the Eternal One. Testimonies Vol. 8, p.270.

the end