

SECTION II

DEITY—FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

Various Texts on the Deity.

1. How are we to understand the following scriptures: Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 42:8; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Deuteronomy 6:4?

2. Can we conclude, from Revelation 3:14 and Colossians 1:15, that our Lord Jesus had a beginning, and there was a time when God the Father was alone?

1. Psalm 90:2 would seem to apply to our Lord. The term used is not "Jehovah," but *Adonai*, which, without question, is applied to Christ; and this is the One whom Moses is addressing. He declares, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." And this is in harmony with Micah 5:2. Isaiah 42:8 evidently has reference to God. It is Jehovah Himself who speaks: "I am Jehovah, that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise unto graven images." That is the family name of the Godhead. Sometimes our Lord is called Jehovah. This is emphatically true in Jeremiah 23:6. In verse 5, He is called the Branch. "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness."

1 Corinthians 8:6 presents before us the agencies by which the earth is created, the relative positions of the two Persons: "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." The same thought is expressed in John 1:1-3 and in Colossians 1:16,—that all the creation was wrought by God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:4 is simply an expression of the unity of the Godhead: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Many times, when mention is made of God, it simply implies the Godhead. Of course, there is absolute unity in that, just as truly as though there were but

one person; and therefore it is spoken of as one. Our Lord's prayer in John 17 indicates the same thing: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." And then He prays that the same unity may exist among His followers.

2. Yes, some do conclude, from Revelation 3:14, that there was a time when the Son did not exist, save in the all-comprehending purpose and potency of God. Yet there are others who still hold—and there is nothing to the contrary in the text—that "the beginning of the creation of God" means the One in whom the creation began, as declared in Colossians 1:17, "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." The finite cannot grasp the infinite. Let this suffice,—that our Lord is God with the Father "from the days of eternity;" that "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist;" and He brings to all those who believe in Him the plenitude of the power of the Deity according to our needs.

Of course, sometimes expressions such as that used in Colossians 1:15, "the first-born," refer to pre-eminence rather than to priority. God calls Ephraim His first-born, although Manasseh was the first-born. He calls Israel His first-born, while Esau was the first-born of Isaac. That is, God had adopted these as such. They became pre-eminent because of character. So Jesus is called the first-born of the dead, and is pre-eminent above them all, and only by His power do all the others live.

The Pre-existence of Christ.

Was Christ a personal being before He came to this earth?

Whether our Lord existed before He was born of the Virgin Mary is a purely Biblical, not philosophical, question. If we depend upon our early teaching, upon human reason, upon some theological system, we shall go astray; if we take the literal teaching of the word, there will be no difficulty. Briefly we present the following evidences of our Lord's pre-existence as a personal being:

When God created the heavens and the earth, He addressed not creatures, but someone His equal, possessing creative power. "Let

Us make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness." Gen. 1:26. The very term "*Elohim*," from which "God" is translated, is plural.

There is one Being, existing at least four hundred years before Christ, whom Jehovah designates "My Fellow," who was in future to be smitten. Zech. 13:7. The context clearly shows that the term refers to Him who became Jesus, the Great Shepherd of His sheep.

There is one Person revealed to us in the Old Testament again and again, called "*the Angel of Jehovah*," the especial representative of God in ministering to His children. Of Him the great God declares, "*My name is in Him*." Ex. 23:21. He is called, in Isaiah 63:9, "the Angel of His presence." When this Angel came to Abraham, it is said, "Jehovah appeared unto him." Gen. 18:1. Jacob met Him by the brook Jabbok, in the night of wrestling, and said in the morning, "I have seen God face to face." Gen. 32:22-31.

This Angel-Jehovah bore a name among the angels; namely, Michael, the meaning of which is, "*Who is like God*." He is represented as a person, one who goes and comes, greater and mightier than Gabriel. Dan. 10:13. In fact, He is called "Michael the Archangel," the chief of all the angels. Jude 9. It is His voice that raises the dead. 1 Thess. 4:16. But our Lord shows that it is His own voice that will raise the dead (John 5:28, 29); the personal Michael of the Old Testament is identical with the Christ of the New.

Seven centuries before Christ, a prophet of God foretold our Lord's birth as a human being, and His birthplace. Micah 5:2. Out of Bethlehem would come "One . . . whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting"—language that could not refer to an abstract word. It implies that the "One" referred to is as personal before that time as He was after it.

Paul, in speaking of the Son of God's love, calls Him "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," and says that "in Him were all things created," and that "He is before all things." Col. 1:13-18. Surely this language applies to a person, and fits that in Genesis, "*Let US make*." The same thing is taught in Hebrews 1:10, 11: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish; but Thou continuest."

One more evidence from among others, the words of our Lord Himself: "And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which *I had with Thee before* the world was." John 17:5. "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them." Verse 18. The apostles were persons before they were sent. Even so our Lord was a personal being.

As a member of the great Godhead, our blessed Lord stepped down to live a servant of God, an angel among the angels, a man among men, filled all vacancies with His fullness of life and character, and triumphed for every sinful soul. But all the mysteries, we may not, cannot, understand, any more than we can understand the creation of life.

Has Christ Creative Power?

Did our Lord exercise creative power in the feeding of the multitude, or was all that He did done through angelic ministration?

There are repeated evidences that our Lord exercised creative power. The angels may have done His bidding at times, but all Christ's miracles were done through the Spirit. Said the Roman centurion, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus sent His word and healed him. The poor, decaying, corrupt leper said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." The cleansing of that leper meant creative power, the absolute renewing of his entire being; and Jesus touched him, and said, "I will; be thou clean." There came to Jesus at another time one sick of palsy, and Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And the multitude murmured, saying that only God could forgive sins; but in order that He might demonstrate that He had the power of God to forgive sins, He said to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." And creative power restored the incurable of the palsy.

It was not angels that said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," but Christ; and it was not angels that healed the sick of the palsy, but Christ. It was so when the multitude was fed. As the bread left

the hands of the Master, it multiplied, and it multiplied in the hands of His disciples, through His own power. The only hope that the poor, sinful soul has is in the creative power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the reception of His word.

This does not mean that He did not use at different times and on various occasions—and most occasions, in all probability—the help of angels. He does not do this because angels are necessary, but in order that there may be that blessed and divine co-operation which will make other hearts glad as well as His own. Even so He uses human beings. He could have said to Paul: “Thy sins are forgiven thee. Arise and be baptized.” But He wanted Ananias to have a part in it, and He wanted His angel to have a part in it, and so He sent an angel to Ananias, and Ananias told Paul, and both of them were blessed in Christ in the work which they did; but the power was of Christ. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,”—literally, a new creation.

The Genealogy of Jesus.

I would like light on the genealogy of Jesus, as there is a very great difference in the record of Matthew and that of Luke.

There are two objects in giving the genealogies.

1. That of Matthew is to give the kingly side of the genealogy, and show that Jesus is the rightful king, the rightful heir of Abraham. Some of the generations are omitted. The Spirit thought it wise to divide them into three groups of fourteen generations each. It may be said, however, that it is not an uncommon thing in the Bible to omit a generation. Sometimes a grandfather is called a father, because he was the leading type, just the same as the Jews are called children of Abraham, though many generations intervened between those so called and Abraham himself. The kingship came through the male line. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus, and he therefore is given as the ancestor of our Lord. Christ received legally the kingship through him.

2. Luke, however, gives the mother's side, with a different object in view—to show that Jesus was of man, of the human family. But as it was not customary to trace the genealogy through women, the male members are mentioned instead of the female, the husband of Mary instead of Mary herself. And through this side of the family, the human side, the genealogy is traced back to Adam, the very first man, and still back of Adam to God Himself. So the Son of God was truly the Son of man. When the two lines are compared from David on, it will be seen that they meet in Zorobabel and Salathiel (Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27), so that the blood of Solomon as well as the blood of Nathan was in both Joseph and Mary.

The Brothers of Jesus.

Some Bible readers are puzzled over the question of the brothers of Jesus. Was Jesus the older? Or were His brothers older than He?

While the original word *adelphos* means brother, one born of the same mother, it is used in the New Testament in a far broader sense, for brothers in the faith or of the same nation. This is its general use, especially in the plural. See Luke 22:32; John 20:17; Acts 2:37; 7:23; 1 Cor. 8:13; 16:12. Members of the same family or household could properly be called brothers. This has led some to believe that the “brothers” of Jesus were His cousins.

That Jesus was the first-born of Mary is very clear from the record in Luke 1.

The “brothers” of Jesus seem to have been older than He. If younger, brought up with Him as they were, they would naturally believe on Him; but for some time they did not. John 7:5.

Assuming to advise Him as to His duty would indicate they were older. John 7:3, 4. They felt that He needed to be controlled. Luke 8:19; Mark 3:31; Matt. 12:47.

That so many of the brothers of Jesus were well known, and that in the mention of them in connection with Him, He alone is designated as the son of Mary, would also indicate that they were

older than He, by another mother. See Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3. The other scriptures, such as 1 Corinthians 9:5 and Galatians 1:19, are not out of harmony with this.

Then, too, if Mary had had other sons, would Jesus at His death have commended His mother to John? John 19:26, 27. Joseph must have died long before this, as we find no mention of his living after the early days of Jesus.

Therefore, it seems to us, the easiest solution of the problem is that the brothers of Jesus were sons of Joseph by a former marriage. A far more important question with each of us is, Are we brothers and sisters of Jesus? We may be. See Matt. 12:50.

Christ on the Cross. 1 Peter 2:24.

Did the wrath of God, and man, and Satan all meet on our Saviour as He hung upon the cross? or was it *we* who "esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"? Was He not that same beloved Son in His darkest hour as He was at His baptism?

Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, as the apostle declares. 1 Peter 2:24. See also Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 11. God made Him to be sin for us, and therefore He bore the consequence of sin, which is death. In this sense only did the wrath of God rest upon Him. Of course it was Satan's hope that He might be destroyed, and so it was the hope of Satan's agents,—wicked men. The prophet, speaking for the Jews at the time of the crucifixion, says, "We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," but He was not so because of His own sins, but because He bore our sins. He was indeed the same beloved Son when He hung upon the cross and the horrors and darkness of death were around Him as He was at His baptism and His transfiguration. The crucifixion was but the culmination of all that He did for man. He humiliated Himself for man, even unto death. Death was the climax of all. But in it all He was submissive to God's will, and in it all God regarded Him with the most tender favor. It was our sins that He bore, that hid from Jesus, through His humanity, the Father's face,

and caused Him to cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Sometimes an overwhelming sense of our own sins brings the same feelings to us; but that does not mean that God has forsaken us.

"Made Like Unto His Brethren." Heb. 2:14-17.

Was it no special advantage to Christ that He was of divine origin, "the only-begotten Son of God"? How can we who are born in sin be what He was, when He knew no sin?

Jesus was not only divine, but human. He was as truly human as any man who walks upon the earth. Let us consider:

He was one with the Father "before the world was," God's "Fellow," the One in whom "were all things created," the eternal Logos. John 17:5; Zech. 13:7; Col. 1:16; John 1:1-3.

"From the foundation of the world" Christ gave Himself, "emptied Himself," that He might break the power of sin, unify God's broken creation, and save man. Rev. 13:8; 1 Peter 1:20; Phil. 2:5-8. When He did this, He gave up all, "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped;" He "*emptied* Himself," laying aside His Deity, "taking the form of a servant."

In this step the eternal Logos "became flesh," the same as we; for He was "born of woman, born under the law," under its condemnation, as a human, having the flesh with all the human tendencies; a partaker of the "flesh and blood" of humanity; "in all things" "made like unto His brethren," "suffered being tempted." Phil. 2:7; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14-17. And He met all the temptations even as you and I must meet them, by faith in the will and word of God. He overcame all the tendencies found in the flesh of humanity.

Was it no special advantage to Christ that He was of divine origin, "the only-begotten Son of God"? That He was of divine origin was no special personal advantage, for He used no inherent divine power in His conflict with evil. His victory was of faith. His divine origin was against Him; for all the powers of evil were hurled against Him as against no other. But it was of special ad-

vantage to be the Begotten of God; yet that same advantage comes to every soul of earth who will accept of Christ. For "as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born [margin, "begotten"], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13. And thus, though we were born in sin, we by faith "become partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." 2 Peter 1:4. God thus places us on "vantage ground" in Christ Jesus, and so He will every soul who receives Him. He "emptied Himself" of all His glory and deity, so far as using it in His own behalf, to become one with us, in order that we might empty ourselves from all our selfishness and become one with Him. "Him who knew no sin He [the Father] made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full." Col. 2:9, 10. If the work were of ourselves, we might well be discouraged; but if *we* are *willing*, He will make us what He was and what He is. God gives us in Christ Jesus all the vantage ground that He possessed; shall we not accept it, and rejoice in it? Of course it means conflict and struggle; it did to Jesus; but He conquered for us, that He might conquer with us and in us. See Heb. 2:9-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-9; 7:25.

Christ's Age at Baptism. Luke 3:23.

Please explain Luke 3:23 in the Revised Version. Jesus was baptized at the age of thirty. His ministry began 27 A. D. Did His ministry begin three years before His baptism?

Our inquirer has confounded the beginning of the Christian era with Christ's birth. The beginning of the Christian era is about four years this side of the birth of Jesus. It was not placed there until the thirteenth century. Roger Bacon found that the paschal full moon 33 A. D. fell on Friday, and this circumstance led him and several others, as Scaliger, Ussher, Pierson, to conclude that this was the year of the crucifixion; but Dr. Hales' Chronology

shows rather that it was not the year of the crucifixion. Christ began His ministry at about thirty years of age, in the autumn of the year 27 A. D. He closed it in the spring, 31 A. D., three and one half years later. The Christian era was invented by a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, in the sixth century, and has been quite generally adhered to although it is everywhere recognized that he was in error as to Christ's birth about four years.

The Personality of the Spirit.

1. Some say the Holy Spirit is a person; others say He is a personality; and others, a power only. Till how long should this be a matter of discussion?

2. Some say that Christ was both divine and human while on earth; others say, No, He was only a man, and that miracles were performed through Him by the Holy Spirit. Which is correct?

1. The personality of the Holy Spirit will probably be a matter of discussion always. Sometimes the Spirit is mentioned as being "poured out," as in Acts 2. All through the Scriptures, the Spirit is represented as being the operating power of God. "The Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1:2, A. R. V., margin. Job tells us that God by His Spirit garnished the heavens. The psalmist, in speaking of the death of living creatures, and their restoration, declares that God sends forth His Spirit and "they are created." By that same Spirit Jesus was begotten. By that same Spirit He went about doing good. By the gift of that Spirit men are begotten again, regenerated; and by the same Spirit there are bestowed upon them gifts for service.

We cannot define too closely God or the Godhead. We must not try to do it, because it is beyond our limitations. We may know this,—that there is a great threefold manifestation of Deity. Jehovah is our God and Father; Christ Jesus, His only-begotten Son, is our Saviour and Elder Brother, bringing to us all the potency of the Godhead; the Holy Spirit is our regenerator, and the constant companion of every soul who believes in Christ Jesus.

The reason why the Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit as a person, it seems to us, is that it brings to us, and to every soul that believes, the personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said (John 14:18), "I will not leave you desolate," or orphans. "I come unto you." He tells us in verse 16 how He will come. The Father will "give you another Comforter, that He [the Father] may be with you forever." In verse 23, He declares that the Father and He will come to the man who loves Him and keeps His word, and that They will make Their abode with him. But both the Father and the Son come by the Holy Spirit. To the Holy Spirit is given power to make the Father and the Son present to the believer.

We may perhaps obtain a clearer idea of this from the following illustration: Suppose the President of the United States wishes to speak to all the people of the country at once, as he has done from time to time in recent years. He notifies the broadcasting companies of his desire, and at the appointed hour the air is cleared for him. People sitting by their radios in all parts of the country hear his message at practically the same instant. Everybody recognizes his voice. In a certain sense he is present with every one of them. He seems to speak personally to all. In the near future, when television is perfected, and moving pictures of the speaker himself are transmitted simultaneously and appear upon a screen in every home, this impression will be still more deeply marked.

Wireless telephony furnishes perhaps an even better example still, for in this case the distant person can not only be heard, and perhaps seen, but answered. Wireless telephony has been practiced between God and His children for ages.

If mortal, finite man can do such things as outlined above, what cannot the infinite God do! When Jesus was here upon the earth, His personality could be present in only one place at a time. His disciples could not comprehend any power beyond that. Even those who loved Him so intensely, as did Martha and Mary, said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." They could not grasp the idea that He could exercise power apart from His immediate personal presence. It was left for a Roman centurion to seize the truth. He said, "I am not worthy that Thou

shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." He could understand that Christ had power which could be exercised at a distance. And Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Because of the lack of faith, it was "expedient," necessary, that He should go away; for He declared, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7. His disciples could not realize the presence of the Spirit of God as long as Christ was with them personally. In that sense, He could be with those only who were in His immediate presence. But when He went away, and the Spirit came, it could make Christ present with everyone, wherever that one was—with Paul in Athens, Peter in Jerusalem, Thomas in India, John in Patmos.

These are simply illustrations. Wherever God's children are, there is the Spirit. That Spirit is placed upon God's messengers, the angels; but the angels are not the Spirit. That Spirit is placed upon God's servants, His human messengers; but the human messengers are not the Spirit. They are possessed by the Spirit, and used by the Spirit, and have within them the power of the Spirit; but they are not the Spirit. The Spirit is independent of all these human or material agencies. Why not leave it here? Why not know that that Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Deity, goes out into all the earth, bringing the presence of God to every heart that will receive it?

2. Our Lord, while here upon the earth, was both divine and human. He did not lose His identity. He was the Christ of God. There are various scriptures upon this. We read but one. Jesus asks His disciples, "Who say ye that I am?" "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What did Jesus say to this? "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven." See Matt. 16:15-17.

It is an utter perversion of God's truth to say that one of the Deity came down here to earth, and lost His identity, so that He was only a human being while He was here; and that when He returned to heaven, He became Deity, and lost His humanity.

Read the blessed story in brief form in Philippians 2: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." Verses 5-9.

And He it was that in the fullness of time was born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law. Gal. 4:4. He it was who died, and all creation responded to the agony in the great earthquake that took place. He it is who gives us this message from glory: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and *I was dead*, and behold, *I am alive* forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Being divine and using His divine power are two different things. Our Lord, we may believe, wrought His miracles through the Spirit. He met temptation by His faith in God's word. He did all His work by the power of the Spirit in response to faith. But He was still the divine Son of God.

Could Christ Have Sinned? Heb. 2:14-17.

Was it possible for Christ to have sinned during the temptation of Satan, and during His life?

The simple words of Scripture are, that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." That is, though thus tempted, He did not sin. Was it possible? Truly it was; else where the temptation? For He was not only tempted in all points as we are, but "it behooved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren." "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself *in like manner* partook of the same." He "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh." The temptation cost Him conflict, "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save." But He overcame, pre-

ailed. He took man's nature with the awful risk. As long as the will of God reigned supreme in His life, He could not fail. But if He had sought His own pleasure, He would have failed. Read Hebrews 2 to 5.

Spiritual Bodies.

Can a spiritual body be made visible to mortal eyes?
See Luke 24:39; John 4:24.

There is a difference in the meaning of the various uses of the term "spirit." Sometimes it means simply the life, the life God-given; sometimes it means a spiritual being. In such a way it is used in John 4:24, "God is a spirit," or, as the margin of the Revised Version reads, "God is spirit."

Spiritual beings have the power to make themselves visible or invisible to humanity. Angels of God are around His children on every occasion. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34:7. Sometimes these angels have been made visible. Generally they are not. Sometimes they appear as men. Our Lord, as a spiritual being, walked with the disciples on their way to Emmaus, sat with them at the table, and then vanished from their sight. He returned an invisible being with them to Jerusalem, although they did not know that He was present. But shortly after they had met with the disciples at Jerusalem, He again appeared to them, and said to them, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." The evident thought implied in Luke 24:39 is that the disciples themselves thought Jesus was a ghost.

It is pre-eminently true of fishermen that they are superstitious; so they thought it was a ghost they saw when Jesus walked on the sea. His purpose in eating before them was to show that He was not a mere phantom; He was a real being with substance—flesh and bones. He showed them His hands and His feet that had the marks of the nails.

In fact, spiritual beings are more real than these mortal beings. They are composed of finer material, but it is not the less substan-

tial. "The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." 1 Cor. 15:45. And so, according to the previous verse, there is the natural body and there is also a spiritual body. Mortal man, corruptible man, shall not inherit the kingdom of God; but the purified spiritual beings shall enter it.

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit.

Please explain the meaning of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, as referred to in Mark 3:29.

God has but two agencies for saving men. These agencies are the blood of Christ for the washing away of our sins, and the eternal Spirit by which we are sanctified and made strong to serve Him. If man utterly rejects these, the Lord has no other means of reaching him. He has chosen his own doom. In other words, he has "counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." Heb. 10:29.

Read the context in Mark 3. Jesus had been among the Jews, and wrought such miracles as they had never known before. All these miracles were in harmony with their own Scriptures; yet right in the face of the blessed and divine working, these Jews, who should have been a light to the world, declared that He cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. In other words, they attributed to the devil the work of the Spirit of God.

The Lord did not arbitrarily cut them off because of that. He does not arbitrarily cut anyone off; but when man comes to that place where he will declare that the manifest working of God's Spirit is of the devil, he by that act cuts himself off from the very means which God has of reaching him. That is what sin against the Holy Spirit is. It is setting aside the work of the Spirit of God as though it were wrought by the evil one. Doubtless there have been many who have done this in ignorance, and God has accepted them, just as He did the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 1:13); but he who does that and persists in it, shuts himself off from eternal life, and commits an eternal sin.

SECTION III

THE NATURE OF MAN

Have We Eternal Life Now?

Am I mistaken in the teaching of John 5:24 and 1 John 5:10-13, that we have everlasting life in this life by believing in Christ?

That the believer has now everlasting life the following propositions and Scripture texts clearly show:

Mankind by nature are "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), being sick with sin (Isa. 1:5, 6; Rom. 3:23).

The disease of sin (unless divine power interposes) ends in death. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:15.

Because men are sinners, they are ignorant of the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3); being victims of sin, "children of wrath," or death, they are "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18); for righteousness is life (see Rom. 5:17, 18).

Therefore, they who through Christ receive the righteousness of God by faith (Rom. 3:22), receive also the life of God, from which they are no longer alienated.

Again, Christ is the manifestation of God to us (John 14:9), or, in other words, "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19); Christ was, therefore, the righteousness of God and the life of God (John 14:10).

When we accept of Christ by faith we have the "righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:22), and the life of God, or everlasting life (John 3:36). So Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is* passed *from* death *unto* life." John 5:24. "He that hath the *Son* hath the *life*; he that hath not the Son of God hath *not* the life. These things have I written unto you, that ye may *know that ye have eternal life*, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God."