

The following letter, written in reply to a paper which is being somewhat extensively circulated, contains, among other things, so simple and lucid an exposition of the truth as to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it was thought that it might be of great service, at this particular moment, if it were available to all. Permission was, therefore, asked and obtained from the writer to publish it.

I shall be glad to forward copies on receipt of stamps to cover postage.

August, 1895.

T. WILLEY, SEAFORTH, MALVERN.

BURFORD, OXON,

August 21st, 1895.

To H. C. VOORHOEVE, Jnr.,
The Hague, Holland.

DEAR BROTHER,

As one of those brethren for whom your "Appeal" is intended, I address these lines to you. You must permit me in the first instance to say that you make a very grave mistake at the beginning of your "Appeal," when you address the large company of saints in England and elsewhere from whom you have separated as those "in fellowship with Mr. Raven." Mr. Raven's name is not the bond of our fellowship, nor do we gather round a leader, but seek to follow righteousness, faith, &c., with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. ii. 22). Mr. Raven is an esteemed servant of the Lord among us, and we desire to give him only the place which the Lord gives him. Thus in the very principle of your "Appeal" you betray ignorance of the true ground of the fellowship marked out for us by Scripture.

Let me next ask you what force, you think, such a sentence as this—"We are all bound together with inviolable ties," can have with me when you broke this inviolable tie so easily by accepting the so-called judgment of a small meeting in England, who never had the matter, and could not have had it really before them? And further let me say that, in order to justify the breach of this inviolable tie, you say things of Mr. Raven which are not true. If it were a mere question of discussing a doctrine, one might think more lightly of what you affirm; but when it is affirmed for the express purpose of dishonouring and blackening a servant of the Lord, it is wicked. That you do not in the least understand what Mr. Raven teaches is evident, and want of understanding is no sin, but, in such a case,

to state things which are not true is very evil. Surely you must know that such expressions as the following used by you—"He was a man and nothing but a man;" "He was a man, but not at all the Almighty, the Omniscient, who knew all that was in the thoughts of men;" and again, "So Mr. Raven teaches that the Godhead and manhood of Christ are to be totally separated from one another," are utterly untrue. Again, you attribute to Mr. Raven an expression as to the Lord having to return to the enjoyment of communion with His Father. This is also untrue, and the brother who did thus speak was put under discipline for it. All this is very evil, and as you refer to our beloved brother C. H. M., I can tell you his words to me a few days ago. He said that Mr. Raven had been "ignorantly misunderstood and wilfully misrepresented."

I don't believe C. H. M. understood Raven a bit. — N/V.

What Mr. Raven has taught is that the Lord Jesus Christ was "the Son" in manhood, and that "He could not be any other Person" (I quote his own words). "He always was the Son, and will always be the Son; He was the Son here as man, and He will be no less the Son through all eternity. He *was* that divine Person, and He was exactly that same divine Person when He became man." Again, "You must maintain the oneness of the Person, because the one (manhood) derives from the other (God)." But that one Person, Mr. Raven maintains to be "the Son," in whom there was the perfect manifestation to man of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost (for the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him), and in that same Person—"the Son"—there was the presentation to God of man in perfection. So far from separating, Mr. Raven says, "continually the two thoughts come close together (*i.e.*, in Scripture), because one derives from the other. Christ is endeared to our hearts by the revelation He brings to us of God; then we can appropriate Him on our side, and claim Him as 'the firstborn among many brethren.'"

The sentences I have quoted were uttered before 300 brethren and sisters, and were taken down and approved by himself.

And now let me add a word as to the doctrine you have so grievously misunderstood and misrepresented. It is clear to me from Scripture that if I could not view the blessed Lord apart from His Deity (not that He is separated, but viewed apart), I could have no part in Him, for I can have no part in Deity; nor could I be of His body, for I am not united by the Spirit to the Son of God, but to the Christ—the anointed Man. This is carefully distinguished in Scripture, see Gal. ii. 20. "Christ liveth in me," says the Apostle, but in

flesh ^hHe lived by "*the faith of the Son of God.*" The Son of God is an object outside of self for faith to live by. Again, the Apostle travailed in birth again that *Christ* might be formed in the Galatians. And to the Ephesians he writes (ch. iv. 13), "Till we all arrive *at the knowledge of the Son of God,*" but "at the measure of *the stature of the Christ.*" The saints are to grow up *into Christ* in all things—our bodies are members of *Christ*. The creation in Christ of one new man would be impossible if you could not view the Son in manhood apart from Deity. And this is the essence of Christianity, that Christ having entered into the presence of God as man, has made a place for man, for us, in that scene where He lives to God; and also that not only is God presented to my heart and conscience in holy love in the Lord Jesus Christ for my faith, but that I can put on the new man. There is that which is true in Him and in us, which could not be unless viewed apart from Deity, though in Him manhood derived its perfection from His being a divine Person. And though you do not seem to know that the sentence, "the life of Jesus," is taken from the Word of God, for you deem it an irreverent saying of Mr. Raven's, yet "the life of Jesus" is to be manifested in the bodies of those who bear about His dying (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11). Blessed be God that in the Son we have the perfect revelation of the Father to us, and by the Spirit we can appropriate all that is in Him as man before God. And you ask me to give this up? I trust, through God's mercy, never! Believe me, you will never justify the ground you have taken by such untrue statements as you publish.

I conclude by asking you to read Mr. Darby's exposition of Psalm xvi., from which I quote two or three extracts which show how preciously Mr. Darby unfolded the truth to which Mr. Raven has sought to awaken the saints. Mr. Darby says, "Note here it is His perfection as man, and before God, and toward God; it is not divine perfection—God manifested to man—but what he was as man dependent upon God:" "It is man trusting God, deriving his pleasure and joy from God, living by faith, and in that sense apart from Him, not God manifested in the flesh, which we know was also true of the blessed Lord." Again, "The state described in this Psalm is that of a man considered apart from God (I do not mean, of course, morally separated, nor touch upon the union of the divine and human nature in Christ) it is man partaker of the divine nature, for so only it could be, but having God for His object. . . . This could only be in one personally partaker of the divine nature, as Christ was, or derivatively as in one born of God. . . . The divine presence in Him is viewed, not in the manifestation of God in Him, but in its effect

in His absolute perfection as man, He is walking as man morally *in view of God*." All this Mr. Raven has expressed in other words; he has said that in Christ there was the *divine and human nature*, but he objects to the expression "the union of God and man" as making two personalities in the Lord, when the Person was only and ever "the Son," who, having taken part in flesh and blood, manifested God to man and presented man in perfection to God.

But I quote further from Mr. Darby, "He had taken a *place*, while never ceasing to be God, and which Godhead alone could fulfil the conditions of, outside Godhead, but in which, as man, to satisfy God, to glorify God. . . ." No words of Mr. Raven's could be stronger than these, which state that the Son is seen as man glorifying God, never ceasing to be the Son, though viewed apart from Deity, (but all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily), taking a place as man in view of God, that is "towards God."

I cannot conceive how anyone can deny that the two thoughts presented in John i. and Psalm xvi. of the revelation of God, and of the presentation of man to God, though realized in one Person, must of necessity be viewed apart. And, let me ask, if they are realized, as Mr. Raven says, in one Person, how can they be separated? It is an untrue statement that he does so, on the face of it.

Yours in the Lord,

THOMAS H. REYNOLDS.

Editor with Raven
after Stone's death
of Voice to the Faithful.
Raven was of late
years a kind of
sub editor to Stone