

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### *The Divinity, Incarnation, and Union of Two Natures in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

In the previous chapter we have shown that the Mediator had to fulfil four conditions. He must be 1) very God, 2) very man out of man, 3) a holy man, and 4) God and man in one Person. We also have shown the Lord Jesus Christ to be this Surety and Mediator. It is therefore also essential that these four conditions are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

We first of all wish to affirm that there is only one God, and not two or three gods. There is neither an inferior nor a superior God. God is superior to all creatures, but this is not true in reference to another god, for there is no other god. “For though there be that are called gods ... to us there is but one God” ([1 Cor. 8:5–6](#)).

Secondly, we affirm that this one divine Being subsists in three independent Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost” ([1 John 5:7](#)).

Thirdly, we affirm that these three Persons are neither separate from the divine Being, nor from each other. There is but one God. “... and these three are one” ([1 John 5:7](#)).

Fourthly, we affirm that these three persons are distinct, so that one Person is not identical with another Person. Each Person is a different Person, and yet not a different God. “Another Comforter ([John 14:16](#)) ... whom I will send unto you from the Father” ([John 15:26](#)).

Fifthly, we affirm that each Person is the one and only

true God.

### *The Lord Jesus Christ is Very God*

It is first of all necessary to show that *the Lord Jesus is very God*. The *Socinians* and *Anabaptists* deny this. We, however, uphold this as a major tenet of the Christian religion. This is evident from all those proof texts by which we are convinced that *Jehovah* is God. We shall prove that *Jehovah* is God from the fact that,

- (1) He is called *God* everywhere in Scripture. It is without question that whenever *Jehovah* is called *God* the reference is not to angels or authorities, but to the eternal God;
- (2) He is eternal, infinite, omniscient, and omnipotent;
- (3) He has created heaven and earth and still upholds and governs the same;
- (4) He must be honored, worshipped, believed, feared, and served.

There is no one who would dare to cast doubt upon these proofs. These proofs being an absolute certainty, the *Lord Jesus* is therefore very God, for there is abundant testimony in Scripture that these four matters are stated in reference to Him. It is therefore blasphemous if one would dare to deny that the *Lord Jesus* is very God, and to suggest that He is merely called God because of His miraculous conception, His mission in this world, God's love towards Him, His miracles, His ministry, His resurrection from the dead, and His glorification. None of these things render one divine. They are the proofs of, rather than the basis for, His divinity.

That Christ is the true, eternal God is therefore evident from the four aforementioned proofs.

First, He is referred to as *God* throughout Scripture, and

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the context of these references is such that all evasive arguments are silenced.

(1) Only consider these texts: “Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” ([Psa. 45:7](#)).<sup>1</sup> That this initial reference to *God* relates to the Lord Jesus is evident when we read, “But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: ... therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee” ([Heb. 1:8–9](#)).

Without a doubt *thy God* refers to the true, eternal God. How can this be confirmed? The answer is that He is expressly called *God* here. Likewise the Lord Jesus, is also here called God as well as is the Father: therefore He is the eternal, true God.

(2) Add to these the texts in which He is called *Jehovah*. In the entire Scriptures this name is neither attributed nor can be attributed to anyone else but the eternal, true God—a truth which we already have confirmed in chapter three. The fact that the Lord Jesus is called JEHOVAH is confirmed for instance in [Jeremiah 23:5–6](#), where we read, “I will raise unto David a righteous Branch ... and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD (that is, *Jehovah*) OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” That the Lord Jesus is here called *Jehovah* is confirmed by the fact that He is the *Branch*, the King of Zion, who is here called by this name. Thus, the Lord Jesus is the true and eternal God.

(3) Add to these from the New Testament, [Romans 9:5](#), where we read, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.” In the preceding context no mention is

<sup>1</sup> The Statenvertaling reads as follows: “Daarom heeft U O God! uw God gezalfd,” that is, “Therefore Thou, Oh God! hast been anointed by Thy God.”

made of God the Father, but only of the Lord Jesus, and He is said to have come from the fathers as concerning the flesh. It is beyond all controversy that the reference here is to the Lord Jesus and His human nature. Of the very same Person it is said immediately (as in one breath) that He is God who is to be blessed for ever. I repeat, as in one breath, for nothing separates these two clauses, neither a *period*, nor a *colon*, but only a *comma*, upon which follow the words ὁ ὦν (*who is*), which always refer to the antecedent and relate to whomever had just been mentioned. The Lord Jesus is therefore the God who is blessed forever, this expression being a description of the eternal God. “To whom be glory for ever.” (Rom. 11:36); “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory,” etc. (Rev. 4:11); “God is ... to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him” (Psa. 89:7); “For the LORD is a great God ... above all gods” (Psa. 95:3); “The LORD ... is high above all the people” (Psa. 99:2).

(4) This is also confirmed in 1 John 5:20, where we read, “This is the true God.” It is not written here that He is God, nor merely that He is truly God, but rather that He is the true God, and thus the only God. He is also said to be ἐν μορφῇ (*in forma*) Θεοῦ, that is, *in the form of God* (Phil. 2:6), χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, (*the express image of His Father's Person*) (Heb. 1:3), and that the Name *Jehovah*, that is, the essence of *Jehovah*, is in Him (Exo. 23:20).

*Evasive Argument:* The use of this name cannot be the basis for concluding the eternal Godhead of Christ, for governors are also referred to as gods.

*Answer:* When they are called “gods,” the context is such that one is able to observe at once that the name is contrasted with actual existence (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5–6). In such descriptions one can perceive at a glance that the reference

is to creatures to whom special gifts from God are ascribed, as is true in [Psalm 82:6](#). In verse 2 of this psalm the reference is to ungodly judges who are threatened with death in verse 7. When the [Lord Jesus](#) is called “God,” however, He is called *Jehovah, God to be praised for ever, the true God, the form of God, and the express image of His Father’s Person*. Neither angels nor authorities are referred to as *God* in the *singular*.

The second proof for the Godhead of the [Lord Jesus](#) can be deduced from the divine *attributes* which are ascribed to Him. He who is eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent, is the true God. This is undeniably true. Since all this applies to the [Lord Jesus](#), He is thus very God.

(1) Christ’s *eternity* is confirmed in the following text: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah … out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” ([Micah 5:2](#)). [Matthew 2:6](#) and [John 7:42](#) confirm that this refers to the [Lord Jesus](#), who, according to the flesh, would come forth out of Bethlehem. This very Person was from eternity. He is consequently also called the “everlasting Father” ([Isa. 9:6](#)), the One who existed “before Abraham was” ([John 8:58](#)), and the “… [Alpha and Omega](#), the beginning and the ending … which is, and which was, and which is to come” ([Rev. 1:8](#)). This is an express description of eternity, which can only be properly ascribed to the true God. “And Abraham … called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God” ([Gen. 21:33](#)). Thus, Christ is the true God.

(2) Christ’s *omniscience* is confirmed by the following texts: “… I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts” ([Rev. 2:23](#)); “And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man” ([John 2:25](#)). This is a

divine attribute: “For Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men” ([1 Ki. 8:39](#)). Thus, Christ is the true God.

(3) Christ’s *omnipotence* is confirmed by the following texts: “... the Almighty” ([Rev. 1:8](#)); “... according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” ([Phil. 3:21](#)). However, only God is omnipotent: “... the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” ([Rev. 19:6](#)). Thus, Christ is the true God.

The third proof for the Godhead of the Lord Jesus we deduce from divine works. He who has created heaven and earth, upholds and governs everything, of Himself performed miracles, regenerates man, and resurrects the dead—He is the true God. No one denies this (cf. [Jer. 10:11–13](#); [Isa. 44:25–28](#)). Since this all applies to Christ, however, He is therefore the true God.

(1) [John 1:3](#) confirms that Christ created the world, for we read, “All things were made by Him (the Word); and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” Christ is the Word (vs. 1). Creation here does not refer to regeneration, but to the generation of everything out of nothing. “All things”—therefore nothing is excluded. This is also found in [Colossians 1:16–17](#), where it is written, “For by Him (the image of the invisible God) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth ... all things were created by Him, and for Him.” Through Him, that is, not as a means or instrument (for even then He would have existed prior to creation), but rather through Him as the energizing cause, since the preposition “through” refers to the initial energizing cause. “Through Him ... are all things” ([Rom. 11:36](#)); “... by Jesus Christ, and God the Father ...” ([Gal. 1:1](#)). All things are also *unto* Him, which can

be ascribed only to the initial energizing cause and not to the instrument. “... to Him, are all things” ([Rom. 11:36](#)).

(2) That Christ upholds and governs all things is also evident. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work ... for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” ([John 5:17, 19](#)). When it is stated that He cannot do anything of Himself unless He sees the Father do them, this refers to the manner of subsistence and operation of the three Persons in the divine Essence, as well as to His mediatorial office. Consider also the following texts: “By Him all things consist ([Col. 1:17](#)) ... upholding all things by the word of His power” ([Heb. 1:3](#)).

(3) That Christ performs miracles by His own power is evident “... there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all” ([Luke 6:19](#)); “... I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me” ([Luke 8:46](#)). When the apostles performed miracles, they did not do so by their own power, but by the power of Christ. “Why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? And His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong” ([Acts 3:12, 16](#)); “... even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole” ([Acts 4:10](#)).

(4) That Christ resurrects the dead is evident, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.” “All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth” ([John 5:21, 28–29](#)). All of this is the work of God alone, and thus Christ is the true God.

The fourth proof we deduce from His divine honor. He who must be honored in like fashion as the Father—in whose Name one must be baptized, whom one must worship, in whose name one must believe and in whom one

must trust—is the true God (cf. Isa. 42:8; Matt. 4:10; Jer. 11:5, 7). All of this applies to the Lord Jesus, and thus He is the true God. This is true:

(1) in reference to honor: “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23);

(2) in reference to baptism: “... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mat. 28:19);

(3) in reference to worship: “And let all the angels of God worship Him” (Heb. 1:6); “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:13);

(4) in reference to faith: “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1). When we read that Israel believed Moses (Exo. 14:31), this refers to the doctrine of Moses, and that they believed Moses to have been sent from God. When we read that Israel was baptized unto Moses (Exo. 14:22; 1 Cor. 10:2), this means that it was performed by the hand of Moses and by His service;

(5) in reference to trust: “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Psa. 2:12).

Each of these proofs is sufficiently forceful to believe in the Godhead of the Lord Jesus. When considering all these proofs together, we can only lift up our hearts to the Lord Jesus and exclaim, “*The Lord Jesus is God.*”

*Objection:* The thought could occur that some may not be able to harmonize various expressions in the Word of God with the aforesaid. How ought we to understand that Christ is said to 1) be less than His Father? “For My Father is greater than I?” (John 14:28); 2) not be able to do anything of Himself (John 5:19); 3) receive everything from the Father (2 Pet. 1:17; Mat. 28:18); 4) be God’s servant (Isa.

[42:1](#)); 5) be sent of the Father ([John 10:36](#)); 6) pray to the Father ([Heb. 5:7](#)); 7) be distinguished from the Father ([John 17:3](#)); 8) be the firstborn of all creatures ([Col. 1:15](#)); 9) and the beginning of the creation of God ([Rev. 3:14](#))?

*Answer:* These difficulties will at once be resolved when one considers:

(1) Christ has two natures, and that some things about His Person are said about His natures.

(2) To consider Christ in His divine nature is an entirely different matter than viewing Him in His mediatorial office and administration. Respecting the latter He is said to be less, to be a servant, to pray, to receive, and to have been sent.

(3) He is distinct from the Father, but not severed from Him as a Person, and thus coessential with the Father. [John 17:3](#) neither denies the Godhead of Christ nor states that the Father alone is God in distinction from Christ, but rather that the Father is the *only* God in distinction from idols. Likewise the Son and the [Holy Spirit](#) are the *only* God. In this text Christ is distinguished from His Father in reference to His mediatorial office, a distinction that must be understood in order to obtain eternal life.

(4) Although He is called the *firstborn* of all creatures, He is never called the *first-created*. He is the firstborn of the Father by eternal generation; in reference to the creature He is the heir of all things, and as Mediator He has the Old Testament right of the firstborn.

(5) When He is called the *beginning* of creation, this must not be understood in a *passive* sense, as if He were first created, but in an *active* sense, having created all things, and all things having their origin in Him. All things must thus end in Him, He being their origin.

The Lord Jesus, being true and eternal God, has assumed the human nature. Neither the divine Essence, nor the Father, nor the Holy Ghost became man, but only the second Person, the Son. According to His Godhead, Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal Father by an eternal and incomprehensible generation, and thus He is called the Son par excellence (Heb. 1:5). “... His own Son” (Rom. 8:32); “... the only begotten Son” (John 1:18); “... the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15); “... the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3). This Son causes all believers to be sons and daughters of God by their betrothal to Him as bride to her Bridegroom, but also by faith as members of Him their Head.

### *The Lord Jesus Christ is Very Man*

The Lord Jesus is not only true and eternal God, but He is also very man—a man out of man. I repeat, He is very *man*. This is not merely so in appearance, but in very truth, having that very nature.

First, He is frequently referred to as a man. “... which is by one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:15); “... the last Adam ...” (1 Cor. 15:45); “... the man Christ Jesus ...” (1 Tim. 2:5).

Secondly, He had:

(1) a *true human body*; “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2:14); “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have” (Luke 24:39);

(2) a *true human soul*; His Godhead was not a substitute to Him for a soul. “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mat. 20:28); “My soul is exceeding sorrow-

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ful, even unto death" (Mat. 26:38).

Thirdly, He was subject to various human afflictions and emotions, however, without sin. He was an hungered (Mat. 4:2), thirsted (John 19:28), was sorrowful (Mat. 26:38), wept (John 11:35), was glad (John 11:15), and was wearied (John 4:6). Thus, Christ was very man.

He did not bring this human nature with Him from heaven; it was not created out of nothing, nor from some matter as some Anabaptists insist. He is *man out of man*, in order that He would have the *identical* nature (not merely a *similar* nature) which He would redeem. This is confirmed in the Old Testament by way of prophecy, and in the New Testament by way of fulfillment.

In the Old Testament He is called the *Seed of the woman*. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head" (Gen. 3:15). "Thee" refers to the serpent, the devil, who beguiled Eve (2 Cor. 11:3). *The seed of the serpent* refers to the ungodly, the children of the devil (1 John 3:10). *The woman* refers to the woman who had sinned, who had been beguiled by the devil and who would have sorrow in carrying and bearing children. This woman was Eve, the wife of Adam, the mother of all living. *The Seed of the woman* does not refer to all mankind descended from her, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is confirmed not only by the mere fact that the word *seed* is used in reference to Christ in Galatians 3:16, nor that He is called the fruit of Mary's womb (Luke 1:42), and was made of a woman (Gal. 4:4), but particularly because whatever is written concerning this seed can only be applicable to Christ—that He would bruise the head of the serpent; that is, that He would conquer the devil (Heb. 2:14).

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Furthermore, consider those texts in which Christ is called the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Gen. 22:18](#); [26:4](#); [28:14](#)). This *seed* should not be understood to refer to Isaac and Jacob, since the very same promise was made to them. Abraham and his godly descendants did not receive the promise (cf. [Heb. 11:39](#)). He had, however, already received Isaac. Yet, neither in Isaac nor in Jacob were all nations of the earth blessed, but only in Christ; He is the seed of Abraham. “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ” ([Gal. 3:16](#)). The reference is not to a spiritual seed, for Christ was not the spiritual seed of Abraham. Such are the believers who walk in Abraham’s steps and do Abraham’s works. Christ is called the seed of Abraham because He came forth from His descendants according to the flesh as can be observed in the genealogy of Christ in [Matthew 1](#) and [Luke 3](#). This is also evident in [2 Samuel 7:12](#), where we read, “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels,” etc. It cannot be denied that this text refers to Christ, for in [Acts 2:30](#) we read, “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his (David’s) loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne” ([Acts 2:30](#)). Consider also the following text, “Of this man’s seed (David’s) hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” ([Acts 13:23](#)). Even though some of these things can be applied to Solomon, they primarily refer to Christ. The following phrases, however, in no wise refer to Solomon but to Christ only:

(1) “I will set up thy seed after thee”; Solomon was already born and sat upon the throne while David was still

alive;

(2) “I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever” ([2 Sam. 7:13](#)). Solomon died and his descendants ceased to be kings. Concerning Christ, however, the angel said, “And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever” ([Luke 1:33](#)). Since this text speaks of Christ, it is clearly confirmed that He was of David’s seed, and came forth out of his bowels as far as His flesh was concerned.

The same is also evident in the New Testament, so that there is no need to quote any texts. Nevertheless, consider those texts in which:

(1) Mary is called the mother of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#), and in which Christ is called the Son of man. Both nature and Scripture teach and confirm that no one can be a mother unless she has brought forth a man, and no one can be a son of man unless his existence originates in man.

(2) Add to this, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb” ([Luke 1:42](#)). Whatever fruit trees and animals bring forth, has proceeded from their substance. The children of humanity are the fruits of its womb, and thus proceed from its substance. Christ thus proceeded from the substance of Mary. This is also confirmed by those texts which make mention of Mary’s impregnation, as in [Luke 1:31](#). This is also stated concerning other women, such as in [Luke 1:36](#).

(3) Add to this the following texts: “Concerning His Son [Jesus Christ](#) our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” ([Rom. 1:3](#)); “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came” ([Rom. 9:5](#)); “... made of a woman” ([Gal. 4:4](#)); “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” ([Heb. 2:11](#)). Add to this the genealogies of [Matthew 1](#) and [Luke 3](#).

These texts ought to fully convince everyone in his own mind that Christ is very man out of man.

*Objection #1:* “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” ([Mat. 1:20](#)).

*Answer:* Since God is a Spirit, this does not refer to the origin of substance but to the original cause of this conception. Mary did not become pregnant spontaneously and as a consequence of her womanhood, but by the creative power of the Holy Spirit. He is nevertheless not a son of the Holy Spirit. Fatherhood and sonship are the result of generation, by which a person comes into existence from the substance of another, and after its own kind. In referring to the Holy Spirit, we cannot speak here of generation, but rather of a creative act in regard to the seed of Mary. For this reason He is said to be without a father as far as His human nature is concerned ([Heb. 7:3](#)).

*Objection #2:* In [Romans 8:3](#) we read, “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and in [Philippians 2:8](#), “And being found in fashion as a man.”

*Answer:* (1) The words “likeness” and “in fashion as” do not refer to external appearance, but to an internal reality, such as man being truly human. “And Adam ... begat a son in his own likeness, after his image” ([Gen. 5:3](#)). “In the likeness of sinful flesh” refers to the human nature of which all sinful men are partakers. Christ, however, possesses this without sin.

(2) If one wishes to consider “likeness” and “in fashion as” to be references to that which is human-like rather than that which is truly human, then this must refer to man in his *sinfulness*. Christ had neither the form nor the sinful nature of sinful men. Natural men, perceiving all men to be sinful, considered Him as such, as they did not truly know

Him. He, being truly human and being known as such, was without sin, however; and by virtue of a wrong conclusion that all men are sinful merely appeared to be sinful to other natural men ([Isa. 53:4](#)).

*Objection #3:* He is said to be “from heaven” (cf. [John 6:33](#); [Eph. 4:9](#); [1 Cor. 15:47](#)).

*Answer:* Christ has two natures. “To be from heaven” properly refers to His personhood, His divinity, as it likewise properly belongs to His human nature to be “from man.”

*Objection #4:* If Christ is very man of man, should He not of necessity have original sin?

*Answer:* (1) Those who deny original sin obviously cannot raise this objection.

(2) Original sin is passed on to descendants by way of generation which involves both the man and the woman. This, however, does not apply to Christ, who was neither conceived by the involvement of a man nor by the exercise of a human will, but rather by the creative power of the [Holy Spirit](#), having been formed from the blood and seed of Mary which in itself is not sinful.

Christ, being man out of man, was born out of the [Virgin Mary](#). She was a *virgin* when the [Lord Jesus](#) was formed within her and remained a virgin throughout her entire pregnancy, during which time Christ’s body developed in a normal human manner. She was a *virgin* when, after the normal period of time, she gave birth to Christ in a normal manner, and it is credible that she remained a *virgin* until the day of her death. The prophecy was as follows, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son” ([Isa. 7:14](#)), which was fulfilled in [Matthew 1](#), and in [Luke 1](#) and [2](#).

The Lord has concealed from us the month, day, and

hour of the birth of Jesus Christ, in order that there be no occasion for superstition. The approximate time of His birth, however, is given us as being:

(1) during the reign of Caesar Augustus, at his first taxation, which occurred when Cyrenius was governor of Syria ([Luke 2:1–2](#)).

(2) when Herod was king at Jerusalem ([Mat. 2:1](#)).

(3) during the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius.

When Pilate was governor of Judea and Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee, Jesus Christ was baptized, being about thirty years old ([Luke 3:1–23](#)). This having been researched in Roman historical documents, His birth appears to have occurred  approximately 1700 years ago.

We have thus observed that the Lord Jesus is very God, the Son of God, and that He is very man out of man. It need not be proven that He was a holy man and thus without sin, since He is known as such to all. The angel called Him “that holy thing” ([Luke 1:35](#)); Peter and John, that “holy child Jesus” ([Acts 4:30](#)); Paul, “holy, harmless, undefiled” ([Heb. 7:26](#)); and Peter, “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” ([1 Pet. 1:19](#)).

### *The Lord Jesus Christ: Very God and Very Man in One Person—the Hypostatic Union*

It now remains for us to show against *Socinians* and *Anabaptists* that He is *very God and very man in one Person*.

This is first of all confirmed by many texts which speak of the two natures together, making mention of them in reference to the same Person. “Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God

with power" ([Rom. 1:3–4](#)); "... of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" ([Rom. 9:5](#)); "God was manifest in the flesh" ([1 Tim. 3:16](#)).

Secondly, in the aforementioned, both divine and human characteristics and activities are attributed to the same Christ. Christ is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient; He created the world, and upholds and governs all things. Christ also had a body and a soul, was born in time, suffered, and died. [Jesus Christ](#) is thus God and man in one Person.

The human nature of Christ, consisting in the union of body and soul, did not exist independently, was not for some time on its own, but from its very first moment existed by virtue of the personhood of the Son of God. Thus, the human nature, not being an independent person, from the very beginning has existed by means of and within the divine Person of Christ. It is and remains personally united to His divine nature.

This union was established by way of *assumption*. The divine nature, being a Person, has assumed the human nature (having no independent existence) within the singularity of its personhood. This is according to Scripture: "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" ([Phil. 2:6–7](#)). This is also confirmed by [Hebrews 2:16](#), "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but he took on Him the seed of Abraham." "The seed of Abraham" does not refer here to the natural descendants of Abraham, but seed is mentioned here in the singular, as in [Galatians 3:16](#). "Took" is in the present tense,<sup>2</sup> because "the taking upon him the seed of

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Abraham,” that is, the human nature proceeding from Abraham, is a continuous action resulting in an endless union to all eternity.

The verb “to take” does not mean “to deliver,” for then the meaning would be as follows, “For verily He did not deliver the angels, but he delivered the seed of Abraham.”

(1) Nowhere in Scripture does this verb have that meaning, but it always means “to take,” “to accept,” or “to take hold of.” Even though deliverance could be the result of “to take hold of,” such is not the meaning conveyed by this word. Rather, its meaning is made known from the other words appended to it.

(2) In this text it cannot be understood as such, for Christ does not only deliver the seed of Abraham, but also all believers who lived prior to Abraham, as well as all believing Gentiles. All of these would then have to be contrasted with the angels rather than with the seed of Abraham only. This not being the case, however, it is evident that “to take” does not mean “to deliver” in this text.

(3) In this entire epistle devils are never referred to as angels, and it is nowhere suggested that the devils can also be delivered. Above, mention is made of good angels, however, who are neither delivered by Christ, nor have need of Him as such. Thus, the act of “taking” cannot refer to the deliverance of angels.

(4) The context reveals that the taking upon Him of Abraham’s seed is to have the human nature proceeding from Abraham’s seed, this being according to the promises, for in verse nine the apostle declares that Christ has been

<sup>2</sup> The Statenvertaling uses the present tense and reads as follows, “Waarlijk Hij neemt de engelen niet aan, maar Hij neemt het zaad Abrahams aan.”

made a little lower than the good angels in view of Him suffering death for the deliverance of man. Verse eleven demonstrates that for this purpose He had to be one with them—man out of man—and as the children, has partaken of flesh and blood (vs. 14). He continues His argument in verse sixteen by showing that He did not take upon Him the nature of angels, but according to prophecy, assumed the human nature out of the seed of Abraham.

The human nature having no independent existence and from its initial moment having existed by virtue of the existence of the Son of God, (to which it is and remains indissolubly and inseparably united), it is evident that there are two natures in Christ, but not two persons, that is, not a divine and a human person<sup>4</sup>. There is but one divine Person. Therefore Mary did not bring forth a mere nature nor a human person, but rather a human nature existing by virtue of the personhood of the Son of God. She thus brought forth a divine Person into the world. This is not to say that the Godhead was born of her, but rather the divine Person according to His humanity.

### *The Hypostatic Union: Without Change and Without Mixture*

This union, having been established by way of assumption, did not occur by the Godhead changing into man, for God is and remains immutable, invisible, and immortal (cf. Psa. 90:1; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:12). When John states, “And the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14), he gives expression to the union of these two natures in one Person, but by no means suggests that the Godhead has changed into man. “To be made” does not always suggest a change, which is

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confirmed in [Galatians 3:13](#), where we read, “... being made a curse,” which cannot mean that He was changed into a curse. In [Genesis 1:3](#) we read, “... and there was light.” This did not occur by something changing into something else, but it came into existence by way of creation. In [Genesis 2:7](#) we read, “... and man became a living soul,” which neither implies that the body changed into a soul, nor that the soul changed into a body, but rather that a union was established between these two parts. Such examples can be found in many other texts. Thus, to be made flesh is not to be understood as changing into flesh, but it rather refers to the assumption of the flesh, that is, of the human nature, and its personal union with it.

As the divine nature does not change into the human nature, likewise the human nature does not change into the divine nature, for whatever is finite cannot become infinite and eternal. Furthermore, the divine nature cannot be communicated to the creature.

This union also was not established by mixing these two natures, with a third type of person coming forth. Rather, this union was established *without change and without mixture*, each nature retaining its own attributes; each nature contributes its attributes to the Person. Thus, the same Christ has divine as well as human attributes by virtue of the union of these two natures in Him. However, the one nature does not have the attributes of the other nature.

The union of these two natures in one Person has three consequences—*communication of: 1) gifts and honor, 2) attributes, and 3) activity and office*.

First of all there is *a communication of gifts and honor*. By virtue of this union the human nature of Christ has acquired a value exceeding that of all creatures, including

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that of the holy angels, for it is the soul and body of the Son of God. This is true for His human nature only. By virtue of this union, this human nature is also the recipient of an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, wisdom, holiness, and other gifts. We read, “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” ([Isa. 11:2](#)); “Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” ([Psa. 45:7](#)); “... full of grace and truth” ([John 1:14](#)); “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” ([John 3:34](#)). All these gifts are not infinite, however, for that which is finite cannot comprehend infinity. Rather, the measure of these gifts far exceeds that afforded to all creatures; that is, Adam, the glorified saints in heaven, and all the angels. This does not mean that Christ according to His human nature had these gifts in that measure from His first beginning and prior to His birth, or immediately at His birth. Nor does it mean that He neither could nor did increase in the same, for “Jesus increased in wisdom” ([Luke 2:52](#)), and “Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” ([Heb. 5:8](#)).

Albeit that Christ in His human nature has received such excellent gifts in which He exceeds all creatures, *He must not therefore be worshipped as man or as Mediator*. It is true that Christ the Mediator, that is, Christ as God and man, must be worshipped, and is the object of worship. The basis for this worship, however, lies neither in His mediatorial office, His human nature, nor in the excellency of His gifts, but solely in His divine nature. His mediatorial office is indeed the motive whereby we are stirred up to worship the Mediator. However, this worship neither terminates in nor

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is directed toward His mediatorial office or His gifted human nature, for:

(1) We may only worship God ([Mat. 4:10](#)). As gifted and glorious as the human nature of Christ is, it is not God, and thus ought not be worshipped.

(2) It is an act of idolatry to worship that which by nature is not God ([Gal. 4:8](#)). Christ's human nature is by nature not God, and thus it would be idolatrous to worship it.

(3) All the gifts of His human nature and its glory have been bestowed and are a gift, as can be observed in the aforementioned texts and which also is self-evident. Gifts cannot be the basis for worship.

(4) Even His divine works such as creation, upholding, and government are no basis for worship, but are merely motives for it, since they are not God Himself. Thus, both His mediatorial office and His gifted human nature are not the basis for worship.

Secondly, there is *communication of attributes*. The union of the two natures in Christ occurred without there being *change and mixture*, so that each nature retained its own attributes. Each nature communicates these unique attributes to the Person, so that the Person, being God, is eternal, infinite, omniscient, and omnipotent. At the same time, however, the Person of Christ, due to His humanity, was born in the fullness of time, can only be at one location at one time, does not know all things, had human but sinless emotions, hungered, thirsted, suffered, and died. These various qualities are attributed to Him in Scripture *in a threefold manner*, which we will identify in a moment.

As the human nature did not communicate its attributes to the divine nature, *likewise the divine nature did not com-*

*municate any or any part of its attributes to the human nature.*

This we prove against the *Lutherans* by the following:

We first of all prove this from the word “attribute” itself, for whatever is imparted to someone is no longer unique but common. If it were true that the divine attributes have been imparted to the human nature, then they are no longer unique to the divine nature, which is as much as to say that God is no longer God.

Secondly, since all the attributes of God are the divine essence itself (which can only be understood by us puny human beings by way of attributes), then all these attributes of necessity would have to be imparted if one or some were to be imparted. Then the human nature would be God; the human nature would be eternal and would thus have existed before Christ was born of Mary, eternity being one of the attributes of God. Then Christ could not have been born as far as the flesh is concerned, since He already existed. He could not have been buried, for He would have been in the grave prior to this. He could not have arisen and exited the grave, for He would have done so prior to this, or He would have to remain in His grave after His resurrection, and whatever other absurdities could be suggested.

Thirdly, not only does Scripture state this nowhere, but it contradicts this expressly, for we read that Christ was not omnipresent according to His human nature:

(1) This is true in the state of His humiliation when He is said to leave one place and to go to another, or to be present in one place and not in the other. “And I am glad ... that I was not there ...” ([John 11:15](#)).

(2) He is also not omnipresent in His exaltation. “He is not here: for He is risen” ([Mat. 28:6](#)); “I leave the world” ([John 16:28](#)); “For if He were on earth, He should not

be a priest" ([Heb. 8:4](#)).

To the suggestion that His visible presence is being referred to here, I respond that this is not stated, but it must be understood in its absolute sense. It cannot be understood as such, for it is an inseparable attribute of the human body to be visible. One would then be able to reason likewise in reference to the absurdities which we will be considering further.

*Objection #1:* Since the human nature has been united to the divine nature, it also has divine attributes.

*Answer:* (1) Our body is also united to our soul. It then ought to have the attributes of the soul.

(2) By the same argument the divine nature would also have the attributes of the human nature.

(3) On this basis all attributes would have to be imparted, eternity inclusive.

(4) This union necessarily implies that the Person possesses the attributes of both natures, but one nature does not have the attributes of the other nature.

*Objection #2:* The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily ([Col. 2:9](#)), and therefore also the divine attributes.

*Answer:* (1) This argument must then hold true for all the attributes, eternity inclusive.

(2) This text refers to Christ's personhood and not to His human nature. You cannot logically proceed from His Person to His nature.

(3) "Bodily" means to say: evidently, truly, not by way of comparison, and not by way of examples and ceremonies—Christ being the body or substance of these shadows (vs. [17](#)).

*Objection #3:* If the attributes are not mutually

imparted, then the natures must be separate from each other.

*Answer:* (1) By this argument all human attributes would have to be imparted to the divine nature.

(2) The opposite is true for the union of body and soul.

(3) This union is not local but personal in nature.

*Objection #4:* It is written: “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things” ([Eph. 4:10](#)).

*Answer:* No mention is made here of all places being filled with His body, but rather of His church and all her true members being filled with His Spirit and His operations.

*Objection #5:* It is not by measure ([John 3:34](#)).

*Answer:* The reference here is not to infinity, but that it far excels that of others.

*Objection #6:* There is written, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” ([Mat. 28:18](#)).

*Answer:* The reference here is not to His human nature, but to His Person. Also, it does not say δύναμις (*dunamis*), that is, power, but ἔξουσία (*exousia*), that is, authority, power, domain.

*Objection #7:* God’s Word states: “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” ([Col. 2:3](#)).

*Answer:* (1) The reference is to His Person and not to the human nature.

(2) Christ can be viewed here as the object of faith, and thus believers may obtain all wisdom and knowledge looking upon Jesus, in whom all the mysteries of the gospel are revealed. It thus remains certain that the human nature did not receive the attributes of the divine nature.

Thirdly, there is *communication of works and official*

*administration*. Both natures having been united in one Person—they do not function independently—all activity is of the Person. Since Christ is but one Person, there is but one principle which is operative. Since there are two natures within this one Person, which in reference to His personhood are *indivisible and inseparable* and in reference to each other are united *without change and without mixture*, the Person of Christ works by means of these two natures. Since each nature functions according to its own properties, there is a twofold operation. As God, the Person of Christ functions according to His divine nature, and as man, according to His human nature. Thus, each nature contributes to the execution of the *one* work of redemption in all its parts.

*Christ is therefore Mediator according to both natures*; that is, not only according to His human nature but also according to His divine nature.

This is first of all evident from the fact that the divine nature constitutes the personhood of Christ, from which therefore the work of redemption originates. This work of redemption was not accomplished by His incarnation only, nor should it be viewed only in reference to His mediatorial office, placing Himself on the same level as His church, but it should also be considered how He, in His incarnation, made Himself of no reputation by concealing His Godhead, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient to His Father, even unto death (Phil. 2:7–8). This is a work of His Mediatorial office, and *actus sunt suppositorum*; these deeds are attributed to the Person. Christ is thus Mediator also according to His divine nature.

Secondly, as we have shown, the two natures and their particular workings are prerequisite for the office of Media-

tor. The divine nature had to support the human nature and resurrect it from the dead, render both His suffering and His fulfillment of the law valid and efficacious, and actually apply everything, delivering His own from the greatest evil and making them partakers of the highest good.

Thirdly, Scripture expressly relates the mediatorial office to the divine nature. "... to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" ([Acts 20:28](#)); "... they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" ([1 Cor. 2:8](#)); "... Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" ([Heb. 9:14](#)).

Due to the union of the two natures in one Person, there are various expressions which relate to the same Christ. First of all, this occurs when, in mentioning the Person, that which properly belongs to one of the two natures is attributed to Him. Such is true when it is said that *Christ is from eternity, and yet came in the fullness of time out of a woman; Christ is omniscient, and not omniscient; Christ is omnipresent and not omnipresent; and Christ had glory with His Father before the world began, and yet has died.* Secondly, this occurs when reference is made to the Person as far as one nature is concerned, while attributing to Him that which properly belongs to the other nature. *God has purchased His Church with His blood and the Lord of glory has been crucified.* Thirdly, one nature will be mentioned, while attributing to Him that which belongs to His Person and properly to both natures. "For there is ... one Mediator ... the man Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)).