

DEITY MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

DR. THOMAS IN HARMONY WITH HIMSELF AND WITH THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES

BY DR. THOMAS'S DAUGHTER.

It may perhaps be considered a work of supererogation to attempt to add anything to what has been said and written in demonstration of this subject. But no subject, however clear and plain, can be damaged by an increasing amount of testimony in its favour, and it may not be altogether uncalled for when the number of those who affirm the contrary may be increasing. In reference to the subject of "Deity manifested in the flesh," the source of so much perplexity of thought, as also to all other cardinal doctrines of Scripture, we shall find the Doctor in harmony with himself and with the Word; at least in the estimation of those who have profited by the simplicity and clearness of his mode of exposition. By referring to the *Herald of the Kingdom*, vol. V, we shall find there some thoughts from the Dr.'s pen, relative to the "pre-existence of Christ," written by him for the purpose of showing in what sense only a preexistence could be affirmed of him, and how certain passages of the New Testament can only be understood. We shall only quote from the article to represent the idea intended to be conveyed by the writer. His first quotations are the expressions of the Spirit through Solomon, speaking in the first person as a personality, "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, &c. Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . . Then I was by Him as one brought up by Him; I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."—(Prov. 8.) "Here is an existence," says the Dr., "previous to the existence of the earth and all that it contains. 'By me,' says Wisdom, 'Jehovah formed the earth.' In the words of David, 'By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them, by the Spirit of His mouth. For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.' From these premisses it is evident that 'wisdom,' the 'word,' and 'the spirit,' are but different terms expressive of the same thing. The apostle John, in speaking of this saith: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made which exists. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' The 'word,' 'wisdom,' 'spirit,' 'God,' are all one and the same; for He being the fountain and origin, is as the emanation from Himself. Now, this spirit-word, or spirit of wisdom, Peter styles 'the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets,' or in the words of Nehemiah who saith to Jehovah concerning Israel, 'Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them. Many years didst Thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them, by Thy prophets.' But why was the good Spirit of Jehovah in the prophets styled by Peter the Spirit of Christ? Because it was the same Spirit that dwelt in Moses and the prophets that afterwards dwelt in Jesus without measure, and so constituted him pre-eminently the Anointed One, or Christ. Now, of this anointing, it is said in the prophets concerning the man whose name is THE BRANCH—the 'Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might; the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of Jehovah.' This was one spirit, not many, and styled in

the New Testament 'the Eternal Spirit' through whom Jesus offered himself without fault to God.

'The Spirit of Jehovah,' says David, 'spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.' Let us hear, then, what the Spirit saith by David in the fortieth Psalm: 'Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required. Then I said 'Lo, I come; it is written of me in the volume of the book, Thy will, O my God, I delight to do; yea Thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Jehovah, Thou knowest.' Thus spake the Eternal Spirit of Wisdom, who was brought forth before the earth had being, who was from the beginning by Jehovah as one brought up with him. Did not Jehovah then sustain the relation of a father to the Spirit?"—*Herald of the Kingdom*, vol. V., page 110.

The main features of the extract just quoted will be seen to be, first identity of the *Logos*, or Spirit of Wisdom, with Deity; second, its harmonious subjection to the will of the Father, in all the works of creation and in all the divine arrangements concerning the salvation of His people; and the indwelling of the same in Jesus Anointed. This is in exact agreement with what is written on page 95 of *Eureka*, vol. I. concerning the same point. "Of all the *Elohim* one only is the original, independent power of the universe. Speaking of Himself, in His address to the ends of the earth, He says 'Look unto me, for I am AIL, and none else'—(Isaiah 46:22). And to Israel he saith 'Ye are my witnesses, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me AIL, or power, *has not been formed*, nor after He shall be'—(Isaiah 43:10): a testimony that identifies AIL with the *Logos* and *Theos* of John, which as ONE POWER, he saith, made all things, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Again, on page 166, the same doctrine is taught when speaking of the vision which Daniel saw concerning the Son of Man, who is brought before the Ancient of Days: "the Ancient of Days is the Lord the Spirit, the Quickening Spirit, the *Logos* in David's flesh, who is the head of this Son of Man." Again, vol. I. 95: "In view of these testimonies, we can understand the Annunciation in the Apocalypse concerning Him who is coming, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Some who profess to believe, while agreeing with the Dr. thus far, call in question his teaching concerning the body of Christ, the nature of the flesh in which he came, or the precise time when the Spirit or *Logos* became flesh. We would remark that the Dr. who is careful to preserve distinctions between times and seasons, is also careful not to indulge in speculation, or to assume a positive position upon matters which are not the subject of revelation. Referring again to the *Herald of the Kingdom*, we read: "The testimonies show that in a time appointed, the Eternal Spirit of Wisdom would connect itself with a body. Jehovah styles this body He promised to prepare for the Spirit of Wisdom, '*a precious stone*,' and said, 'I WILL ENGRAVE THE GRAVING THEREOF.'—(Zech. 3:9.) He had told Abraham and David that the body should be taken from their race and nature; but that when the days for its being fashioned should arrive, He would engrave it Himself, so that it should be to Him a Son; son of David according to its nature, son of

Jehovah as having formed it by His Spirit.” This is in harmony with the Scripture saying: He was “made of a woman, made under the law.”—(Gal. 4:4.)

The Dr. further says: “Now, if these things be duly apprehended, the prophetic testimony concerning the body to be prepared for the Spirit in the days appointed, will not be difficult of comprehension. The testimony has relation, first, to the body before its diversification in the grave; and, second, after the operation has been perfected. THESE DIVISIONS MUST NOT BE CONFOUNDED; for the things they treat of are as diverse as corruption and incorruptibility.” This is in harmony with an idea he presented in vol. VI. page 269, concerning these two periods or stages of development. “Christ made sin, though sinless, is the doctrine of God. Such was Jesus in the days of his flesh; when through weakness he was crucified for sin; but now no longer weak, he lives by the power of God. In power he rose from among the dead, and ascended into glory. The revival of his body was its begettal as Jehovah’s first-born from the dead. Of his resurrection it is written: ‘Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee.’ This was the second begettal by the Spirit. *At the first, he was begotten of Mary after her nature; at the second, of the grave, with a nature incorruptible, glorious and powerful; a spiritual body—or life-imparting spirit.*”

These passages clearly present to us the Dr.’s idea concerning the nature of Christ, and will be found perfectly harmonious with other portions of his writings. He further says on the same page: “As a last resort, the doctors of the apostacy fall back upon the saying of Gabriel in Luke 1:35, that the child to be born of Mary was a “holy thing,” and consequently of an immaculate nature. But they forget that all the firstborns of Israel were ‘holy things.’ Jesus was Jehovah’s firstborn by Mary, therefore, one of the firstborns of the nation; so that the law of the firstborn applied to him equally with the rest. Hence the holiness of Mary’s babe was *not of nature*, but of constitution by the law. Gabriel declared his legitimacy in styling it a ‘holy thing:’ a declaration ratified by Jehovah himself before the multitude, when He acknowledged Jesus as His Son, in whom He delighted.”—(Matt. 3:17.)

In *Eureka*, vol. I. page 408, the Dr. says:—“Now, this new creation, wonderful in its development and consummation, began with the formation of a babe in the womb of the handmaid of *Yahweh*, and ends with the cessation of every curse.” “When created *and anointed* this new creation was Eternal Power manifest in flesh; and when resurrected and glorified, that flesh was transformed into spirit or Deity; a substantial corporeal entity called by Paul a ‘quickenning spirit,’ and ‘the Lord the Spirit.’ And He is the head of the body, that among all He might become pre-eminent. The creation of the material world is attributed to Spirit of *Elohim*; the same Spirit afterwards incarnated Jesus, so that he, *when anointed*, was not only the created but the antecedent and creator of all things defined.” The same idea is expressed on page 312 of the same volume: “JESUS ANOINTED was the glory of *Yahweh*. This is proved by John’s testimony that the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us—(Israelites)—and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This glory of the Father, was seen in the evening of the Mosaic aion; he was seen in the wilderness as Isaiah had predicted; saying,

‘the voice of him that proclaimeth in the wilderness,’ ‘Prepare ye the way of *Yahweh*; make straight in the desert a highway for our *Elohim*, . . . and the glory of *Yahweh* shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together.’—(Isa. 40:3, 5.) This was only partially fulfilled in the evening of the Mosaic aion, as related in regard to John the baptizer. He was that voice; the spirit descending in the form of a dove was *Yahweh* or the *Logos*; and Jesus, the *Eloah* of Israel, who when anointed, became as the voice of John proclaimed, ‘our *Elohim*.’ These two *Elohim*, dwelt among the Jews as the only begotten of the Father, Son of Power and Son of Man, who hath declared the invisible Deity to men.”

The Dr. has not omitted to give all due weight to those passages relating to the birth of Jesus, although he did not consider it essential to pry into such a matter any further than it was given the angel to reveal. The testimonies which satisfied the natural inquiry of the mother of Jesus, were also sufficient for his faith to rest upon. A careful perusal of his remarks on page 101, *Eureka*, vol. I., bearing in mind what has already been quoted from other pages will be easily understood.

After referring to certain testimonies, he remarks:—“In these testimonies it was revealed that he should be both the Son of Man and the Son of Deity. How this could be otherwise than is related in the New Testament, would be impossible to devise. ‘Is there an *Eloah* without me?’ saith the Spirit, ‘Yea, there is no rock; I know of none.’—(Isa. 44:8.) The manifestation therefore, must be by the Spirit of Deity, or not at all; . . . and ‘when the fulness of the time was come, the Deity sent forth His Son made of woman,’ begotten not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, but of Deity; by Holy Spirit coming upon her, and power of the Highest overshadowing her;” therefore, also, that holy thing she bore was called the Son of God.—(Luke 1:35, 31.) Here we see the Dr. recognises in full the heavenly origin of Jesus, though his reasoning is not of such a character as to overthrow the balance of these testimonies which pertain to his perfect humanity, such as we recorded in Paul’s letter to the Hebrews: “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; . . . of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold, &c.” “Made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, for in that he himself hath suffered being himself tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”—(Heb. 2:14–18.) While giving to these testimonies their due weight and importance, recognizing the entire humanity of Jesus, as to his nature, the Dr. did not place him on a level with mankind; because notwithstanding all the power which the adversary brought to bear upon him, in order to cause him to fall, he proved invincible at every point. This showed a marked superiority over any other individual of the human race that ever lived. But this superiority was of *mental* and *moral attributes*; not a superior kind of flesh to that which the children were possessed of. (And this moral superiority was due to his paternity.—ED.)

In contemplating this vast subject, which the apostle Paul styles “a great mystery, Deity manifested in the flesh”—the Dr. was careful not to crowd all the testimonies relating to it into one period or space of time; seeing that manifestation was a process of

development, having certain stages or degrees of progression. He contemplated the Son of God from the earliest stage of existence “begotten by the Holy Spirit,” “made of a woman,” “born of the Virgin Mary” with a nature like her own. Increasing in wisdom and stature as he advanced in years; of quick understanding in the fear and the knowledge of Jehovah; as exhibited by him at the age of twelve years when reasoning with the doctors in the temple. Subsequently, when the *Logos* abode upon him in unmeasured fulness at the waters of baptism, he was the “Word made flesh.” His body was then the temple of the indwelling presence of the glory of *Yahweh*, which as the veil, concealed it from view, even as typified by Moses, when he covered his face with a veil, because the people could not look upon the glory which shone upon his countenance. The period of labour and suffering having passed, “the veil, that is to say his flesh,” was rent upon the cross, which divided the period of suffering from the period of glory, or a period of glorified bodily existence. The lamb, the burnt offering, the sin offering, the peace offering, had passed through the fire with acceptance to the Deity, and the Father again begat him to a new life with a spiritual body, consubstantial with Himself.