

**THE GODHEAD  
AND SONSHIP  
— A Reply**

BY FRANK WALLACE

## THE GODHEAD AND SONSHIP — A REPLY

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In the booklet "The Godhead and Sonship," there are two omissions. First: The author of the booklet remains anonymous. Second: There are no references to the writings to check the accuracy of the articles and quotations.

The booklet requires an answer and in this answer books will be referred to, in order that all who read the answer will be able to check the quotations for accuracy.

The article headed "Godhead, the Trinity" is taken from Volume 32 of Mr. J. N. Darby's Collected Writings, page 15, "A Few Words on the Trinity." The introduction to Mr. Darby's article is omitted in "Godhead, the Trinity." Here are the omitted words: "The application of numerals to divine or any moral being is absurd. We do not mean the same thing by unity in figure and in minds." A *footnote* (not found in the old edition) after absurd reads: "This refers to ideas opposing the Trinity as set out in Scripture." There are some changes in "Godhead, the Trinity" which differ from Mr. Darby's article. J. N. Darby wrote, "He was revealed to be One, etc." The booklet reads, "He was made known to be One." Not much difference but not what J.N.D. wrote. Again

J.N.D. wrote, "But when revealed to be One, He was not fully revealed." The booklet reads, "but then He was not fully revealed." There is a substantial difference here. Darby wrote, "When He was revealed as One," the booklet reads, "When He was made known as One," and adds in brackets, Deut. 6:4, which is not found in my edition of J. N. Darby's Collected Writings published by Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, Kingston-on-Thames. These differences are not pointed out to suggest any deliberate intent on the part of the writer, but mentioned as inaccuracies.

As to the article "Godhead, the Trinity," it has no bearing on the matter of the Lord's Eternal Sonship. Mr. Darby's article is refuting those who deny the truth of the Trinity. Darby is showing that the full revelation of God is in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The quotation that is underlined, "That is, He never was revealed as He is and always was" is related to what Darby wrote, "Without the Trinity, etc." In other words, when God was revealed in the Old Testament, He was not revealed as He is and always was. That Mr. Darby believed that the revelation of God in the New Testament was what He always was, can be seen in his Collected Writings, volume 6, page 114. "There are three names especially which constitute so many grounds and bases of relationship with Him. *He always was what is revealed in each one;* but He was not so in relationship with man, until

revealed for that purpose.” The remainder of the article gives the three names as Elohim, Almighty or Shaddai, and Father. Also in “Notes and Comments” by Mr. Darby, volume 2, page 234, he wrote, “He always was and is the Son with the Father — was and is always God.” The writer of the booklet has misunderstood Mr. Darby’s article on the Trinity. Mr. Darby’s quoted remarks clearly have a different meaning from what the booklet writer thinks. The object of the booklet is to suggest that the Son is a name in revelation and has no connection with Him before incarnation. Mr. Darby’s remarks do not support this reasoning.

The second article in the booklet begins with, “But I maintain no creed.” It is the beginning of a quotation from the article in volume 9 of Mr. Darby’s Collected Writings “Inspiration and Interpretation.” This article has no bearing on the Lord’s Eternal Sonship. No intelligent believer *bases* his belief on creeds. The Word of God is the only infallible guide for all truths. Creeds were formulated by men in an endeavour to guard truths that were being attacked, and written to express a form of belief. In this they were useful, but as they are the expressions of men they are neither infallible nor authoritative. The write of the booklet could have included Mr. Darby’s remarks prior to “But I maintain no creed.” Here are his words, “Now as to doctrine (what may seem strange), I like the Athanasian Creed the best of all, though it is far

too scholastic in form.” Mr. Darby with his acute mind and intellectual ability plus his great spiritual insight to the truth, preferred the Athanasian Creed above the other creeds. Mr. James Taylor, however, the propagator of the non-eternal Sonship theory, did not like the Athanasian Creed. (Letters of James Taylor, volume 1, page 325). No doubt this was because of the words in the creed, “the Father Eternal, the Son Eternal and the Holy Ghost Eternal.” Here is a point of difference between Mr. Darby and Mr. Taylor. These statements are not made to defend creeds, but to draw attention to the different views of two servants of the Lord.

The article “Sanctified and Sent” is an attempt to show that Mr. Darby believed that the sending of the Son by the Father was solely when the Son was in manhood. An examination of the letter of Mr. Darby (Letters of J.N.D., volume 3, page 142), clearly indicates that Mr. Darby believed in two features of ‘sending.’ First: from Heaven: “He sent that blessed Person with the whole scene before Him into the world”; second: “as Man — was from the Holy Spirit coming upon Him.” This is confirmed from J.N.D.’s “Notes and Comments” volume 2, page 395, “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” He did not send an idea merely, there was a living Person there Who said He was sent. *Nor was it merely when in the world that He was sent* for He says, “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; and

again I leave the world and go to the Father.” (John 16:28). Now let us read what Mr. Taylor wrote on the sending of the Son by the Father. “The only-begotten Son is given and sent — *these are not expressions that apply to Him as in the form of God.*” (Letters of James Taylor, volume 1, page 182; see also volume 2, page 140). But read another letter. “I never had the thought that the idea of the Lord, the Son, *being sent* did not precede incarnation. ‘The Father sent the Son’ is a full general thought *and I should not limit it to time*; but I do believe that the bearing of it includes the Lord’s formally entering on His service as anointed after His baptism, *That He came down from heaven as sent is surely true*, etc.” (Letters of James Taylor, volume 1, page 259). From these quotations from Mr. Darby and Mr. Taylor it is evident that when they wrote about the Son being sent, they had both thoughts in their minds. Sent from heaven, and sent from Jordan after the Son was sealed and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

The article “The Gospel of John” is from Mr. Darby’s Notes and Comments, volume 7. Particular emphasis is given to Mr. Darby’s remarks on chapter 1, verse 14. Mr. Darby’s footnote to this verse is not referred to in the article. The background of this article is found in Mr. James Taylor’s Letters, volume 1, pages 263, 266, 388, 389 and 393. If the quotations in these letters are read, it will be seen that Mr. Taylor laid great emphasis on Mr. Darby’s

remarks on John 1:14. In his remarks, Mr. Darby stresses the Sonship of the Lord in His manhood and quite rightly because the Gospel of John, although again and again stressing the Deity of the Son, emphatically presents the manhood of the Son also. Mr. Darby felt that his remarks might be misinterpreted and he included a footnote that clearly indicated his belief in the Eternal Sonship of Christ. This footnote was *never clearly* quoted by Mr. Taylor. A check of his letters will determine the truth of this statement. He alludes to it in volume 1, page 266, at the foot of the page and wrote that the name Son was used by Mr. Darby anticipatively. "Here is the end of Mr. Darby's note with its important references." The confusion is in not seeing *He is Son in creation* as well as in redemption, and the order of both and that He redeemed *as Son* what He created *as Son*. Nothing could be plainer as to Mr. Darby's mind. Mr. Darby's footnote completely expresses His belief in the Eternal Sonship of Christ.

Mr. Taylor seemed to have had the impression that Mr. Darby's Notes and Comments, volume 7, represented his later ministry and his mature thoughts on the Lord's Sonship. He wrote in his letters, volume 1, page 389, in relation to Mr. Darby, "mature thoughts" and "clearer light," and on page 393 of the same volume, "Thus a servant's later ministry may in detail vary from what he presented earlier. This can be seen in Mr. Darby's

writings. That he held and urged the Eternal Sonship of Christ as an accepted truth is true, but that he was satisfied with it in his *later years* is more than questionable. Notes and Comments, volume 7, page 7, affords undoubted proof of this." But Mr. Taylor *was wrong in this assumption*. Mr. Darby was only twenty seven years of age when he wrote his notes on John's Gospel as they are found in his Notes and Comments. I am quoting from an old edition of Notes and Comments, volume 7, published by James Carter, Paternoster Row, E.C. On page 398, after some beautiful remarks by Mr. Darby, is the date, Lord's Day, April 8th, 1827. The notes were written before and after April 1827. Did he change his mind on this holy and profound subject? No. In his subsequent writings he mentions the Lord as the Eternal Son over sixty times, and in 1870, at seventy years of age, he wrote, " 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,' but it cannot be separated from divine and eternal Sonship. As man He becomes and enters into -- is in so far as He is a man in -- the relationship with the Father as Divine and Eternal Son." (Letters of J.N.D., volume 2, page 85.) So much for clearer light and mature thoughts.

It is a new suggestion that Mr. Darby's writings support the teaching of Mr. Taylor and others, relating to the Lord's Sonship. Mr. Taylor continually claimed that he received his impressions

from Mr. F. E. Raven, when Mr. Raven visited America. This can be verified from Mr. Taylor's Letters, volume 1, pages 189, 260, 263, 342 and 390, also volume 2, pages 141 and 181. To confirm that Mr. Raven believed what Mr. Taylor eventually taught, read the letters of F. E. Raven, New Series, pages 146-148. In the light of these facts, it is dishonest to connect Mr. Darby's name with teachings he opposed in his lifetime of devoted service to the Lord.

The writer of this reply is convinced that nothing helpful will be produced by writing pamphlets on such profound and glorious subjects. Where there is a desire for fellowship, and there are conflicting views on *major* truths, surely it is better to meet together humbly for prayer and consideration of the Scriptures. Argumentation, dogmatism, anger and strife are no honour to the Lord. Prayer, patience and love for the truth will show believers the way to a better understanding of each other and to arrive at what is pleasing to the Lord.

The writer has endeavoured to be accurate in his quotations from the writings of Mr. Darby and Mr. Taylor. If he has omitted anything that some brethren deem important, it is not with any evil intent. Scoring points off each other is to be deprecated as we seek for truth and greater unity among the saints of God.

*Further copies of this booklet can be obtained,  
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