

authorizing John to announce Him to the world as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Perhaps attention should be called to the fact here that John also, in the course of his preaching, announced that Jesus Himself would be the Administrator both of Holy Spirit baptism and of the baptism of fire. Matt. 3:8-12: "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." Cf. the words of Jesus Himself: "I tell you . . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). The Gospel Dispensation is the Dispensation of Divine judgment. As Paul said to the philosophers on the Hill of Ares: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Holy Spirit baptism and the baptism of fire are subjects which will be treated fully in a subsequent section.

John's voice was indeed "a voice crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23). But it was a Voice that has been heard from that day to this, a Voice that will continue to be heard as long as time lasts. It comes ringing down through the centuries to us, crying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance." It was a Voice supplied and vitalized by the Spirit of God.

3. The Spirit and the Begetting of Jesus

Among other things, the Spirit foretold through holy men of old (1) that the Messiah-Redeemer of mankind should be the Seed of a woman, that is, according to the flesh (Gen.

3:14-15; cf. Gal. 4:4—Jesus is the only Person who ever appeared in history of whom it was testified that He was the Seed of a woman *exclusively*, in so far as His fleshly descent was concerned); (2) that He was to be the Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3, 22:18, 26:1-4, 28:10-14; Num. 24:17; Luke 3:34; Gal. 3:16; Heb. 2:16); (3) that He was to be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10, Mic. 5:2, Heb. 7:14, Rev. 5:5); (4) that He was to be of the royal lineage of David (2 Sam. 7:12-17, 23:1-5; Psa. 89:3-4, 34-37; Psa. 132:10-17; Isa. 9:7, 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; Amos 9:11; Matt. 9:27, 21:9, 22:41-42; John 7:40-42; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5, 22:16). (Matthew, 1:1-16, evidently gives the *legal* genealogy, from Abraham, through David and Solomon, and finally through Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus. "Jacob," he says, "begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom [*i.e.*, of Mary] was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (v. 16). Note that Matthew here, although he states that Joseph was the husband of Mary, clearly intimates that he was *not* the father of Jesus. Luke, 3:23-38, on the other hand, gives the *real* genealogy, tracing it through Joseph, "the son" (actually, son-in-law: the same word signified both relationships in Hebrew) of Heli, back through Nathan (instead of Solomon), David, Jesse, Obed, Boaz, and hence all the way back to Adam. Matthew was writing especially for the Jews, and therefore dealt chiefly with the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; Luke, who was himself a Gentile, wrote for the whole Gentile world, presenting Jesus as the Son of Man and Head of the New Creation. Luke says: "And Jesus Himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli," etc. (3:23). Obviously, the parenthetical statement here, "as was supposed," indicates that the popular supposition was untrue.)

[It was also specifically foretold by the Spirit through the ancient prophets that the Messiah-Redeemer should be born of a Virgin in Bethlehem of Judea.] [Mic. 5:2]: But thou Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting. [Isa. 7:14]: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [cf. Matt. 1:22-23, 2:4-6]. [Jer. 31:22]: How long wilt thou go hither and thither, O thou backsliding daughter? for Jehovah hath created a new thing in the earth: A woman shall encompass a man. [Concerning this much debated passage, Fausset writes: "The Christian Fathers almost

unanimously interpreted it of the Virgin Mary encompassing Christ in her womb. This view is favored (1) by the connection: it gives a reason why the exiles should desire a return to their country, viz., because Christ was conceived there. (2) The word 'created' implies a Divine power put forth in the creation of a body in the Virgin's womb by the Holy Ghost for the second Adam, such as was exerted in creating the first Adam. (3) The phrase, 'a new thing,' something unprecedented: a man whose like had never existed before, at once God and man; a mother out of the ordinary course of nature, at once mother and virgin; an extraordinary mode of generation; one conceived by the Holy Ghost without man."¹] [Cf. the words of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, according to Isa. 49:6, 6]: And now saith Jehovah *that formed me from the womb to be his servant*, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him. . . . yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Now, in conformity with Old Testament predictions, the New Testament Scriptures teach explicitly that God the Father, again through the agency of the Spirit, begat His Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

[Hear the testimony of Matthew]: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit*. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. . . . And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and *knew her not till she had brought forth a son*; and he called his name JESUS [Matt. 1:18-25]. [This testimony is quite positive and plain. We must either accept it or reject it as it stands: there is no middle ground. If it is not trustworthy, then the entire New Testament is untrustworthy. Luke is even more explicit; according to his narrative, when the Annunciating Angel appeared to Mary, prior to the conception, and told her that she should conceive and bear a son, she replied]: *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* [The Angel (Gabriel) replied]: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God*. [Note well, too, the Angel's concluding affirmation] *For no word from God shall be void of power* [Luke 1:26-37]. [It must be remembered, too, that Doctor Luke could easily have gotten his information from Mary herself, in her later years, and was in a position to view this unusual case in its professional aspect. Hear also the testimony of Paul, Gal. 4:4]: But when the fulness of the time came,

1. *Critical and Explanatory Commentary, in loco.*

God sent forth his Son, *born of a woman*, born under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. [Again, 1 Tim. 3:16]: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. [What was this Mystery of Godliness? A Person, the Apostle goes on to say]: *He who was manifested in the flesh*, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. [Hear, finally, the testimony of John]: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us* (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth [John 1:1-4, 14].

These Scriptures surely teach that the Holy Spirit was the Agent of the Godhead in the begetting of Jesus; that is to say, that the Spirit Himself created the body—or human nature—of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin. Said the angel to Joseph regarding his betrothed: “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20). Note also the *manner* of this Divine begetting, as described in the words of the Angel Gabriel to Mary: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Thus we see the Spirit of God brooding over the Virgin even as He brooded over the primordial void at the beginning; and the result was the same in both instances, —a creation, a new thing in the earth, a vitalizing, and a cherishing of incipient life preparatory to its outburst. Note also the *means* of this Divine begetting: “For no word from God shall be void of power.” May it not be that Adam and Eve were endowed, while in their primitive state of innocence, with what might be called the power of spiritual reproduction; that is, the power to reproduce their kind through the medium of thought? Perhaps it was their discovery of their latent powers of physical reproduction which occasioned their fall from grace, as indeed many Biblical scholars have believed. If so, we, their descendants, suffer the consequences of their defection in that we, too, have lost the power to reproduce the race through the power of right thought; that power is gone forever, as far as mankind is concerned. Yet it was this very power of Divine Thought, undoubtedly, which the Spirit used in the begetting of Jesus; in other words, He planted the Word in the Virgin’s womb, and it budded forth into the

embryo (again, the Thought was made a thing, the Word was made flesh, etc.), "the holy thing" which was to be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). This means that the human nature of Jesus was a direct creation. This fact, however, did not make Him any the less *human*; indeed it would seem that this immediacy of the Spirit would have, rather, *intensified* His human-ness. No mere man, for instance, could suffer as He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane ("his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground," Luke 22:44) and continue to live.

Hear again the testimony of God's Suffering Servant: "*And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant,*" (Isa. 49:5). And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, comparing the inefficacy of animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant to take away the guilt of sins (10:1-4) with the complete adequacy of the Atonement provided by Christ for that purpose in the offering up of His body, says, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world [*i.e.*, Christ on coming into the world as God's chosen Minister to redeem it], he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not [cf. Psa. 40:6], *But a body didst thou prepare for me*" (Heb. 10:5). Commenting on this passage, which has been made a subject of considerable controversy especially by those who would like to discredit the Virgin Birth, Milligan writes as follows:

How is the Greek rendering of our text, '*a body hast thou prepared me,*' to be reconciled with the Hebrew, '*ears hast thou digged out for me*'? It will not do to say with some that our author follows the Septuagint Version, without regard to the exact meaning of the passage. He never does this. When the Septuagint expresses correctly the meaning of the original, he then commonly quotes from it; otherwise, he either so modifies the rendering as to make it correct, or he gives us a new translation of the Hebrew. Even in the few lines which are here cited, there are several slight departures from the Septuagint; but in the clause which we have now under consideration, he follows the Septuagint exactly; no doubt because it expresses exactly the mind of the Spirit. But how is this? To the careless and superficial reader, there may at first seem to be no connection between digging out, or thoroughly opening the ears of any one, and providing a body for him. But the thoughtful reader will at once see that, in the case of Christ, the two expressions are nearly equivalent, and that the latter differs from the former chiefly in this: that it is rather more specific and expressive. To dig out the ears of a person means simply to make him a willing and obedient servant (Exo. 21:6). But in order to so qualify Christ as to make him a fit servant for the redemption of mankind, a body was absolutely necessary. Without this, here could have been no adequate sacrifice for sin, and

without an adequate sacrifice, there could have been no suitable atonement, and without an atonement the claims of Divine Justice could not have been satisfied, and without this, the will of God could never have been accomplished in the redemption of mankind. The Greek, therefore, though not an exact translation of the Hebrew, is nevertheless in perfect harmony with it, plainly indicating that both come from the same fountain of Divine inspiration. The only question of doubt, then, is simply this: Whence did the translators of the Septuagint obtain the specific idea which they have here so happily expressed? Or in other words, How came they to put such a construction on the original Hebrew? To me it seems most probable that they simply followed the current interpretation of the passage, as it had been explained by the ancient prophets. See 1 Cor. 14:1-4, and 1 Pet. 1:10-12.¹

In this remarkable saying of David, as quoted by the author of Hebrews, we have clearly set forth the utter insufficiency of the old legal (animal) sacrifices to accomplish the will of God, and in striking contrast, Christ's purpose to do this by the sacrifice of Himself. For the Supreme Sacrifice, God Himself, by the agency of the Spirit, prepared for Him a body,—a body as truly without blemish and without spot, that is to say, as *sinless*, when it was offered on the Cross as when it was conceived in the Virgin's womb. Thus the passage will be seen to be in exact harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole. Having been specially prepared by Divine begetting as a *perfect human body* (though none the less human for that), it was a sufficient Atonement for the sins of the world. Heb. 10:10—"By which will [God's] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Cf. 2 Pet. 2:24). Moreover, having been a body specially prepared for the purpose of Atonement, and utterly sinless when offered on the Cross, it is only reasonable that God the Father should have seen to it that it did not suffer decomposition in the grave. Cf. Ps. 16:8-10: "I have set Jehovah always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: *My flesh also shall dwell in safety.* For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; *Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.*" Hence explained Peter on the Day of Pentecost, after quoting this prophecy of David: "Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day." That is, we know that David, in this remarkable utterance, could

1. R. Milligan, *The New Testament Commentary: Hebrews*, 269-270.

not have been referring to himself, because we know even to this day where he lies buried; therefore he must have been speaking prophetically. "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he ould set one upon his throne [cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-13, Psa. 110:1]; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:25-32). The Incarnation Virgin Birth, Atonement, and Resurrection of Christ are all inseparably linked together in the Divine Plan for human redemption; and what God hath joined together, let no theologian put asunder!

The miracle of the Holy Conception [Writes H. B. Swete] is not altogether without parallel in the history of revelation. Physical effects are not infrequently ascribed by the writers of the Old Testament to the agency of the Spirit, The Spirit of God as represented as the cosmic force which operated upon the primeval chaos; and as the vital energy which maintains the physical life in man. Remarkable displays of bodily strength are ascribed to the action upon men of the Spirit of Jahveh.¹ [Again]: God, working by His Spirit, is the Father of the humanity of Jesus, in the sense that its origination from the substance of the Virgin Mother was a Divine act. The result of this Divine intervention is to be seen in the human life of our Lord; in His sinlessness, His entire consecration, His sense of the Fatherhood of God, from the dawn of consciousness to His last breath. The entail of sin was broken at last, and one born of a woman was, even as man, holy and a son of God.²

Anyone who will make the necessary effort to familiarize himself with the Gospel records will surely be impressed by the fact that Jesus is never represented as having recognized any human being as His father. Obviously, He never did so, or some mention would have been made of the fact. In every instance, however, without a single exception, from the time He said, at the age of twelve, with reference to His discourse in the Temple with the learned doctors of the Law, "Knew ye not that I must be in the things [house, courts, business?] of my Father?" (Luke 2.49), to His last saying from the Cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit" (Luke 23:46), whenever He mentioned His Father it was with reference to the Heavenly Father and to Him only. More than this, He is never represented in the Gospel records as having accorded to Mary

1. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, 26.

2. *Ibid.*, 29.

any special recognition of human motherhood; always during His public ministry He is portrayed as treating her respectfully, to be sure, but with a certain natural condescension: after all, she was but the passive instrumentality in His begetting (cf. John 2:4; 19:26-27). Cf. His own positive affirmation, Matt. 12:48-50: "But he answered and said . . . Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." As a matter of fact, the only relationships which Jesus recognized were those within the realm of the Spirit.

It has ever been a mystery to me that men should have any difficulty accepting the fact of the Divine begetting of Jesus. To be sure, it was an event lying outside the ordinary course of Nature. For that matter, so was the birth of Isaac in olden times as the "child of promise," long after his motehr Sarah had passed the natural age of child-bearing (Gen. 17:15-19). Isaac, according to Paul, was "born after the Spirit," that is, as a result of a special operation of Divine power (Gal. 4:29). So too was the birth of John the Baptizer, when his Mother Elisabeth, who had been barren all her life, was "well stricken in years" (Luke 1:7), out of the ordinary course of Nature. "One vast difference," writes Swete, "distinguishes the Conception of our Lord from other miraculous conceptions. It not only implied moral and spiritual power in the mother, but it gave an unexampled character to the child. The Holy Spirit sanctified the flesh on which it wrought. Of the Child of Mary while yet unborn, it is said that He shall be known as *holy*, even as *son of God*. His unique conception, without human paternity, means that He is to hold this unique position in human history."¹ But, after all, is not ordinary natural conception a profound mystery? What indeed is the significance of natural conception,—the conception that takes place in the ordinary course of Nature? What actually takes place, essentially, in the fertilization of the female ovum by the male spermatozoon? Obviously, the union of *two human natures*, those of the father and mother; these are fused to form the new human being, the new person. The Conception of Jesus differed from natural conception, then, in the fact that it was

1. H. B. Swete, *op cit.*, pp. 27-28.

not two human natures, but the Divine and the human natures, that became fused in that event (in some manner inscrutable to us); wherefore the holy Child that was begotten was called "the Son of the Most High," "the Son of God" (Luke 1:32, 35). Cf. Matthew 1:22, 23—here the inspired writer says: "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah], saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel." To this the writer of the Gospel himself adds: "which is, being interpreted [translated], *God with us.*" By virtue of His Divine begetting, Jesus was not just a human person, but the Divine-human Person. After all, I repeat, ordinary natural conception is almost an equally inscrutable mystery. Geneticists may work out the laws of heredity scrupulously and precisely, but all the information they accumulate on this subject still fails to explain how the two parental natures become united and reproduced in the child, or how physical, temperamental and even mental characteristics are transmitted through such sub-microscopic blobs as genes and chromosomes. Until we can penetrate, at least to some extent, the mystery of natural begetting, who are we to set limits to the power of the Spirit of God? And if it should be argued that the Miraculous Conception of Jesus must be rejected on the ground of its having occurred only once in all human history, I reply that it was necessary for the Word to become flesh, to set a perfect Example of holiness for us, to die for our sins, and to be raised up from the dead, *only once in human history*, to accomplish the purposes of God. Heb. 9:26—"Now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The Incarnation by Divine begetting occurred only once simply because there is only one Jesus Christ, one Only Begotten Son of the living God, one Savior and Redemer of men. What, then, I repeat, is so incredible in the story of the Miraculous Conception and Virgin Birth of our Lord?

Moreover, it is a grievous error for anyone to think that he can scripturally confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (the Christian creedal formula) and at the same time repudiate the Miraculous Conception of Jesus. Herein lies the issue between New Testament Christianity on the one hand, and on the other the position of Jew, Unitarian and

so-called Modernist or Humanist, with respect to the Person of Jesus. Nor is there any middle ground here. As the editor of a prominent Christian Journal has put it so clearly:

Words have meaning, and any Christian has a right to demand of any one who would be his public spiritual leader a clear definition of terms, particularly in regard to this basic statement of the Christian faith. One has a right to know if by his statement of the good confession another gives to the words the same meaning that Peter gave them, the same connection that the Lord Jesus Himself had in mind as He accepted them, the same meaning that angels and demons and men gave to their confessions of the Savior recorded in the New Testament, the same meaning that the heavenly Father had in mind as twice He confessed, 'This is my beloved Son.' It was not the birth of one that is the Son of God in the same sense that all men are sons of God that was hailed by the angels on the Judean hillside as they announced: 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord' (Luke 3:10, 11). It was not an ordinary man, from whom other men differ only in degree, but not in kind, to whom the demons addressed their unavailing good confession: 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not' (Luke 8:28). It was one who was more than the pinnacle of human moral achievement who commanded the winds and waves to be still, who fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, who healed the sick and raised the dead, and who Himself arose from the dead. This man, Jesus of Nazareth, was God incarnate, the Word made flesh, was eternally pre-existent with the Father, was the one in whom all things consist, His method of entrance into the world was by means of a body specially created for Him (Hebrews 10:5), and through His birth by a virgin. This was the faith of the early church, sealed by the blood of the martyrs. This is the truth about Jesus, vindicated at the hand of God the Father, by His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:1-4). This is the faith of Christians today whose moral integrity will not allow them to trifle with sacred things. The good confession is not a cloak for infidelity.¹

As a matter of fact, the Miraculous Conception, Virgin Birth, Atonement, Resurrection, and the Christian Confession of Faith, *all stand or fall together*. I repeat: *There is no middle ground here, as regards the Person of Christ*. Jesus Himself stated too clearly for any misconceptions on man's part the issue between Himself and the secular world, between Christianity and all other cults and religions (so called), in just two questions which He proposed Himself: *What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?* (Matt. 22:42). One's answer to the second of these questions depends entirely on one's answer to the first. If He was just the son of Joseph and Mary, by

1. Burriss Butler, *The Christian Standard*, editorial page, issue December 25, 1948.

natural begetting and birth, then he was simply *man*, and no more than man, and his teaching becomes simply another guess at the riddle of the universe and of the life of man in it. But if He was the son of Mary by Divine begetting, by the "overshadowing" of the Holy Spirit, then He was, and is, the **God-Man**, and as such His death becomes the Atonement (not just a martyrdom) and consequently death had no dominion over Him (Psa. 16:10, Acts 2:27), and His final conquest of death itself authenticates His mission as the Christ, God's Only Begotten, and the Savior of mankind.

Again, the Holy Spirit not only acted as the Agent of the Godhead in the begetting of Jesus, but He also moved contemporary personages to utterances of praise and prophecy which were intended to be demonstrative,—evidences of the fact that this advent of the Messiah, this entrance of the Word into human flesh, was an event of sublime import to all mankind.

[Thus Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer, on the occasion of Mary's visit at her home]: was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb [Luke 1:41-42]. [And Mary herself was moved to reply in the sublime strains of the Magnificat]: My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. . . . For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; And holy is his name [Luke 1:46-55]. [Zacharias, John's father, on the occasion of his own child's circumcision in the Temple] was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people, And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, In the house of his servant David [Luke 1:67-79]. [Again, when the infant Jesus was brought to the Temple to be circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law] there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: *and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel [Luke 2:25-32]. [Also] there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour [i.e.,*

of the Child Jesus' circumcision] she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem [Luke 2:36-38]. [And the Prince of the Angelic Host himself, on the night of the Nativity, announced to the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night on the storied Judean hills]: Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord [Luke 2:10-11]. [Thus did the Holy Spirit join with the angels of God in attesting the birth of Jesus and in making known to the inner circle His identity as the Messiah-Redeemer. Truly, His Divine begetting made Him *'a new thing in the earth,'*]

4. The Spirit and the Anointing of Jesus

Not only did God the Father, by the agency of the Spirit, beget the Messiah in the womb of the Virgin, but God the Father also anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and directly from Heaven introduced Him to the world as His beloved Son. This twofold event of anointing and avouching took place at the Jordan River, immediately following the baptism of Jesus.

[Matt. 3:16, 17]: And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [Mark 1:9-11]: And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. [Luke 3:21, 22]: Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. [John 1:32-34]: And John [the Baptizer] bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. [Cf. Psa. 45:7]: Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. [In Heb. 1:9, we are told that this prophetic statement had reference to the Son of God]: but of the Son he saith, . . . Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, etc. [Cf. the testimony of the Apostle Peter, Acts 10:38]: even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him. [Cf. the prayer of the believers in Jerusalem, Acts 4:25-