

**George Williams:**

“The Evangelical Rationalists, with their sober philological adhesion to the biblical texts, were never tumultuous iconoclasts like many puritans in Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland; but in attacking the icons of the Trinity theologically they intended to make clear their devotion to the one eternal God of Israel for aye the same.”<sup>1</sup>

**Claude of Savoy:**

“The Lord thy God is one.” Whence then are there two others? particularly since it is written [Rom. 11:34]: “Who hath been his counselor?” That man alone, whom Mary conceived and brought forth, is called Jesus, which is proved [by Luke 1:31-32]: “Behold thou wilt conceive and bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; and he will be called great and the Son of the Most High.” Who therefore is so holy, so great, who is called the Son of God, but he who was conceived in the womb of the Virgin and born?

Therefore a Christian should acknowledge none other to be the Son of God than him whom Scripture so declares. Behold, the same man, the first born of Mary, is called the Savior and not some divinity of Christ. He is declared to have saved us by his blood, not by his divinity. For this reason he himself says of himself [John 6:54]: “who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” He does not say. “who eats my deity.” Therefore I am not held to eat the deity of Christ but rather his flesh and to drink his blood.

They blaspheme therefore who say of the Virgin that she is the Mother of God. For she did not bear God but Christ. If heaven and earth cannot contain God, how much the less the womb of a woman. In any case, if Jesus were thus divided into God and Man, the Virgin would not be the Mother of Christ, but only of a part of him.

Observe also the expression “this day” [I have begotten thee: Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5, 5:5], which indicates a definite time. He was not, therefore, begotten eternally of the Father, as they [the orthodox] falsely imagine. But when came the fullness of time he sent his Son made of woman. Therefore he is precisely called the Son of God, who is made of woman.

The Father gives testimony concerning him [cf. Matt. 3:17]: “This is my Son with whom I am well pleased.” Concerning whom is this said, unless it be about him who had been baptized? For surely the divinity of Christ is not said to have been baptized, but only the man was shown forth. Again [John 1:29]: “Behold the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world.” In that he is said to be a Lamb, nothing of deity is included, but exactly what is appropriate for sacrifice. It is also sufficiently shown, by the declaration [Heb. 2:16]: “he took not on him (*assumpsit*) the nature of angels, but he took on the seed of Abraham” that the Father, wishing to reconcile the world to himself, willed to do this by a creature and by blood, and not by any divinity. But the Father was in him through the plenitude of the Spirit reconciling himself to the world. It is not said that he assumed some divinity of the Son, which had existed from eternity, but only the seed of Abraham.

I confess, however, that Jesus Christ is God in that manner in which he himself said that he was. If he [in John 10:35] called those gods, to whom the Word of God came, how much more is he God, whom the Father sanctified, who received the Holy Spirit above his fellows [Heb. 1:9], so that all might receive it through him from the Father.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and that he alone was from eternity; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a Virgin, and at a given time, but therefore precisely not from eternity. Therefore I believe also in the Spirit, but not in God the

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<sup>1</sup> George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Kirksville, MO: 2000 Truman University Press), pp. 463-4.

Holy Spirit. In short, I do not believe that three persons are one God, but I know that they are three men (*homines*). Three persons are three men, and not one God. <sup>2</sup>

**George Williams:**

“...Schwenckfeld took up Claude’s Unitarian inference from 4 Ezra (2 Esdras) 6:6 ‘Thus did I consider all these things, and they were all made through me alone and through none other: by me also they shall be ended, and by none other,’ for from this text Claude had inferred that the one, only God of Israel had Christ in his mind or in his will, and thus that the word or work or will was indeed ‘with God from the beginning’ (John 1:1), but only as intention, to be implemented at the beginning of the life of Jesus or perhaps at the beginning of his ministry after his baptism.”<sup>3</sup>

**Michael Servetus:**

“As concerning Christ it is said, ‘On their hands they will bear thee up, lest thou strike thy foot against a stone,’ so the Pope for this reason has himself carried by others. He does not touch the ground with his feet, lest his holiness be polluted—to be carried on the shoulders of men and thus to make himself to be adorned on earth as God, which no one so impious has dared to be from the foundations of the world. With these very eyes we have seen him borne in pomp on the necks of princes making with his hand the sign of the cross and adored in the open streets by all the people on bended knee; so that those who were able to kiss his feet or slippers counted themselves more fortunate than the rest, and declared that they had obtained many indulgences, and that on his account the infernal pains would be remitted for many years. O vilest of all beasts, most brazen of harlots!”<sup>4</sup>

**George Williams:**

Servetus said Christ was “the natural Son of God, begotten, not eternally, but in a mysterious way through divine insemination of the Virgin. The Spirit was here thought of as the seed of God rather than as a distinct Person.”<sup>5</sup>

**Michael Servetus:**

“When I began, such was the blindness of the world that I was sought up and down to be snatched to my death. Terrified on this account and fleeing into exile, for many years I lurked among strangers in sore grief of mind. Knowing that I was young, powerless and without polish of style, I almost gave up the whole cause, for I was not yet sufficiently trained...O most clement Jesus, I invoke thee again as divine witness that on this account I delayed and also because of the imminent persecution, so that with Jonah I longed rather to flee to the sea or to one of the New Isles.”<sup>6</sup>

**George Williams:**

“He enjoyed a tranquil and respected life, engaging in covert theological speculation and writing, but outwardly conforming to the Roman Church. He would later justify his Nicodemism by appealing to the willingness of Paul himself to conform to outward Jewish practices in the Temple when in Jerusalem (Acts 21:26).”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Williams, 470-2.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, 474

<sup>4</sup> Williams, 55-6.

<sup>5</sup> Williams, 401.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, 403.

<sup>7</sup> Williams, 926.