

THE DIVINE AND ETERNAL SONSHIP**OF****THE LORD JESUS CHRIST****ASSERTED AND DEFENDED.****A****SERMON ,****BY CHARLES GORDELIER,**

“That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent him.”—Joh. 5: 23.

Having read the chapter whence the text is taken, you scarcely need to be reminded of its connection; but it will be proper to observe that these words are the words of him who spake as never man spake; they are the words of the incarnate God, words enjoining a most solemn duty upon all who name the name of Christ. And when we remember the object for which this gospel was written, (see Joh. 20: 31,) we must acknowledge our text possesses a most significant importance. These words are recorded to the intent “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

You will perceive from the 18th verse, that the Jews, in their zeal to defend the doctrine of the Divine Unity, contended against Jesus for asserting his divine Sonship, his co-essentiality and his co-equality with his Father, and for which they conspired his death. It was, indeed, a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Misled and puzzled with the traditions of the elders, they understood not the Scriptures which pointed out Jesus of Nazareth to be “he which should have redeemed Israel.” Not searching the Scriptures which testified of him, they missed the mark, and consequently failed to see in his Person, his doctrine, and in the works which he did, Jehovah incarnate. Sufficient testimony had been adduced to the natural senses of these stubborn Jews, that Jesus was the Christ of God; but they refused the evidence. These builders rejected this “stone” for their foundation; they fell foul upon it; “they

were snared, taken, and broken,” and to this day the vail remains upon their hearts.

Corresponding with the blindness and opposition of the Jews, there have been, throughout all ages of the Christian church, men who have wholly or partially rejected and opposed the doctrine of the True and Essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, more or less, the church of God has been deceived and injured by this old leaven of the Pharisees; hence it has always been needful to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Arians, semi-Arians, Sabellians, Socinians, and others, who, either from a selfish love of advancing their own notions, too proud to stoop to the simple teachings of Scripture, or purposely lying in wait to deceive with cunning craftiness, have insidiously incorporated heresy with the truth. In some instances, the mischief has worked silently and unperceived for a time. In others, it has quickly shown itself rampant and destructive to all vitality in religion, not shrinking openly to blaspheme the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now, there are times and seasons when the foundation truths of our faith should be more explicitly stated and positively asserted than in ordinary. The present occasion, our first anniversary of the re-opening of this place, appears to me a fitting opportunity; and, as the subject is of the utmost importance, let me bespeak your patient and candid attention; and I pray that he whose office it is to testify of Jesus may not only open our understandings to understand the truth as it is in Jesus, but that we may each have a sweet, experimental proof of his love and goodness, and that he may complete his work of faith with power. Our subject is the most exalted we can conceive of; and if we have been led by the Spirit to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, we shall not fail to have the most exalted views of the Person of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour.

As to the plain meaning of the words before us, it appears to me thus: The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be regarded, esteemed, loved, revered, praised as co-essential and co-equal with the Father; the same attributes that are ascribed to God the Father, such as his self-existence, eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and also his wisdom, truth, love, and goodness, are also to be ascribed to the Son of God. The man who hath low views of the deity, eternity, and self-existence of Jesus Christ, hath low views of God the Father; for Jesus Christ and the Father are essentially ONE; and whatever is affirmed of the Father is also affirmed of the Son. But, further, as there is no God but Jehovah, subsisting in the personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so he who withholds proper homage and worship from one, withholds it from all. He who would refuse to honor the Father, could not be said to honor God; and, in like manner, he who

honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father. Let me ask, Has not the Father declared that the Son shall be honored? He who refuses to do it, disobeys the Father, for they are equal. He who denies the one, denies also the other. The same views and feelings which lead us to honor the Father, will also lead us to honor the Son; for the evidence of the self-existence of the Son, his deity, and his eternity, is the same as that of the Father. It is, therefore, to my mind, an absurdity to talk of honoring attributes in the Father, and not in the Son; and I cannot but regard this vindication of our Lord, of his personal honor and deity, as being worthy of the gravest consideration.

I shall now attempt to consider the text in its various aspects, and shall then endeavor to draw such inferences as I think the subject will legitimately warrant.

We cannot, of course, consider the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ without the particular relation which it bears to the doctrine of the Trinity in the Unity of the Divine Essence; and here let it be understood, I shall not attempt to explain or establish any point upon the principles of human analogy. I look upon the system of analogical reasoning on this subject as the fruitful source of all those wide-spread and pestilential errors which have troubled the church of God. I may, perhaps, occasionally refer to some of the analogies employed; but, so far as my own argument is concerned, I shall endeavor to keep close to the word of God, receiving it in its plain and unadulterated sense.

The proposition now before us is, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be honored even as the Father, because,

1. That he is of the same indivisible nature and essence of subsistence with, the Most High, the self-existent and ever-living God, God the Father.

Our Lord is expressly spoken of and called the Son of God, and the only begotten Son of God, and even God's own proper Son, the Son of the living God, all of which import his being of the same nature with his Father. Now, those who reason from analogy know very well that in all created life the offspring is of the same nature as the parent ; but human analogy fails to explain the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, for the Lord Jesus Christ is called the only-begotten Son of God, which necessarily implies more than a son by creation or adoption. Certainly, it cannot refer to his extraordinary conception as man, because it is spoken, not of the flesh or human nature, but of the Word that was made flesh. To say that the only-begotten Son of God is meant of the extraordinary conception or birth of Christ as man, is to say that Christ is not the Son of God the Father at all, but of the Holy Ghost, for that was his work; and, consequently, Christ is not the Son of God at all with them who deny the Holy Ghost to be God; and this is a plain contradiction of the words themselves, which expressly declare that Christ is the only-begotten Son of

God. The word only begotten properly respects the nature or essence, and not at all the peculiar manner of the miraculous conception. It evidently signifies one alone begotten of that nature; such a Son as God has never another. Hence it is (Ro. 8: 32) that Christ is called God's own proper Son, which he could not possibly be if he were not of the same nature or substance with God the Father; for it is plain, he that is of another substance is no proper son, no own son at all; but God the Father being Christ's own proper Father, and Christ his own proper Son, this necessarily imports that Christ is God's Son, and God Christ's Father, in the most proper acceptation of the words. And if it were not so, God the Father would not be a proper Father, nor a Father from eternity; to assert which, says an old divine, would lead to atheism, for unto us believers there is but one God the Father. (1st Cor. 8: 6.) Take away God the Father, and you take away the One God. But further, Christ is such a Son of God as to have all the perfections of God the Father in him, essentially considered as God. Christ is an eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Son. He is such a Son of God as is himself "the only wise God;" and therefore we must, indeed, we cannot but, conclude that he is such a Son as is co-essential and co-eternal with his Father.

Oh! says one, you are a believer in a "begotten God!" No, my friend, I am not, nor are any who hold the doctrine I am setting forth; but I am fully aware of the mischievous intent of those who make this charge. Not only is it unfair that such an inference should be drawn from the views thus taken of Christ's Person, but, generally speaking, those who so assiduously and so industriously circulate this foul slander know full well we hold no such belief. It has been contradicted times out of number ; and if truth could but perform its office, we should be told that being foiled in establishing their own pernicious fancies and having their designs unmasked, they have re-course to scurrilous falsehoods and abusive language to serve their own private ends and party spirit.

But we will go on to observe:

2. Christ the Son is of the same indivisible nature with his Father, because the same attributes of God the Father, considered as the only true God, are ascribed to him.

Jehovah, by the prophet Isa. 44: 6,) describes himself thus: "I am the first and I am the last." After the same manner Christ also describes himself to his servant John: "I am the first and the last." (Re 1: 17.) So that the Lord Jesus Christ the Son, essentially considered, is absolutely the first Being as well as God the Father. There is none other before him or after him. He is an eternal, independent, self-existent Being, the only Potentate and sovereign Lord of the Universe, having life in himself, and "upholding all things by the word of his

power.” This description belongs to Christ, necessarily and evidently, as he is the first and the last. He who is the first must needs be eternal, because he hath no beginning, but hath always been, eternally and essentially. Christ is the first Being, not the first creature, as the semi-Arians assert. He is an independent Being. He is God of himself; that is, he owes his being to no other, for if he did, he could not be the first; because, if his being were from another, the other must be before him, else the effect would be before the cause. Christ, as the first Being, must needs have life in himself; because there was no other to give him life. He is life, essentially, necessarily, independently, and eternally. Thus, it is that Christ is said to have life in the same manner that God the Father has it—as the Father hath life in himself. (Joh. 5: 26.) So that however perfect, however glorious the Father’s life is so every way perfect and glorious is the life of the Son; it being essentially the very same life, because it is the life in and of himself, and no being but One can so have life; for the second and every other being has life from the first. Therefore Christ, having life in himself, is the first and the last, the only independent Being. He is thus distinguished from all creatures; for they derive their life from him, and thus is he proved to be the one true God with the Father.

3. Christ the Son is of the same nature with the Father, because he has the same glorious names, titles, and attributes expressly ascribed to him that are ascribed to God the Father.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only expressly, but properly and absolutely, called God. He is called God, without limitation of restriction, Joh. 1: 1. “The Word was God,” or, as Wycliffe has it, “God was the Word.” Ac. 20: 28: “Feed, the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” 1st Timothy 3: 16: “God was manifest in the flesh;” and in Heb. 1: 8: “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” These passages plainly indicate that Christ is God, not only in name, but in being essentially so. He is expressly called “the mighty God;” (Isa. 9: 6;) “God blessed over all. Amen;” (Ro. 9: 5;) “the great God;” (Tit. 2: 13;) “the true God.” (1st Joh. 5: 20.) So that these expressions which are here applied to Christ are the same as those which declare the Father to be God.

But again: Christ is most properly called God, because the essential name of God—Jehovah—is expressly given to him in many places of holy writ, as in Isa. 40: 3; Jer. 23: 6; Ge. 19: 24; Zechariah. 10: 12. Therefore, Christ is the very same God with the only true and most high God; for Jehovah is but one essence, or one God. God’s name alone is Jehovah; (Ps. 83: 18;) Christ’s name is Jehovah; therefore he is God. Jehovah is that very name, the glory of which God will not give to another. (Isa. 42: 8.) But Christ has the glory of that name,

therefore he is not another being, but is, essentially considered, the very same God that the Father is. Christ has all the essential properties that God the Father has. What is proper to God the Father is proper to God the Son. Is God the Father everlasting? so is Christ. The true God knows all 'things; so, does Christ. (Joh. 21: 17.) God is infinite, everywhere present; so is Christ. (Mt. 18: 20.) He is the Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come; immutable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And where texts speak of Christ having an inferior or subordinate condition, these will be found to have reference to his human nature only, of him considered in the office or capacity of Mediator.

4. Jesus Christ the Son of God is of the same indivisible nature or essence with the Father, because it is expressly declared in God's word that they are One.

Our Lord Jesus himself says so: "I and my Father are One that is, one being, one substance, essence, or nature. In this sense the Jews understood him, and they believed that thereby he made himself such a Son of God as was of the very same nature with God; and therefore, it was that they deemed it blasphemy, and declared that he was worthy of death. Now, if they had misunderstood the sense which Jesus intended to convey, surely, he would have corrected their mistake, and he would have told them plainly that he did not mean to make himself equal with God. But Jesus does not say they mistook his meaning, but goes on to vindicate and defend what he had said in the very sense the Jews had taken it, namely, that he was one with the Father in nature or being, "because he did the works of his Father." He told them emphatically that "whatsoever things the Father did, these also he did likewise." (Verse 19.) Now this could not be said of any nor of all the creatures which God has made; therefore we find he exhorts them, from the plain and full argument of his doing the same works the Father did, that they would know and believe that "the Father is in him, and he in the Father that is, essentially, there being a mutual in-existence and co-existence in and with one another, else it would not prove his assertion, namely, that he did the same works the Father did. Further, that Christ the Son is of the very same nature with God the Father, is also proved from Joh. 8: 19, where it is said, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also. Hence, I conclude, it necessarily follows that they are one. How can it be otherwise, if he who knows the one should certainly know the other also? for in no two other persons, that is, a father and his son, can it ever be said, that if we know the one, we necessarily know the other. Certainly not; for every man has the whole nature of man distinct in himself and dividedly from another man. Therefore, if by knowing God the Son we know God the Father, it is because they are one and the very same undivided nature. Now this truth appears to

me most evidently proved from 1st John. 5: 7; “And these Three are One.” You see they are expressly said to be one, and, therefore, “they are one”—one in being, nature, essence, substance. The Three here spoken of are not one Person, for they are three Persons. There cannot be any other view of Father and Son but as of two Persons. They are not barely in agreement or consent, as three partners in a business firm, for then it might be said, as in the 8th verse, “and these three agree in one but it is not said so, but that “they are one.” There is a plain distinction. The three that bare witness or record in heaven are said “to be One,” that is, one and the very same God ; for the record' that is borne by the three in heaven, is in verse 9 called the witness of God; not witnesses in the plural, but in the singular. The same evidence we have in the command for believers' baptism, to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I hope I have made myself explicit on this important point. I have tried to do so. To understand divine truth in a divine light, we must give up all human analogies and carnal notions of it.

5. That Jesus Christ is the same God with God the Father, essentially considered, because he doeth the same most mighty works, and after the same manner that God the Father doeth them.

These works to which I refer are such as are truly divine, God-like; such as no being but a being of infinite wisdom, power, perfection, and goodness, can possibly do, and such as are expressly and properly in the word of God attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, as they are to God the Father.

The works of creation and preservation are ascribed to Jesus Christ. He is the great Creator of all things. “All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (Joh. 1: 3.) “All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Heb. 1: 10.) And it is also said: “He upholds all things by the word of his power.” (Heb. 1: 13.) So that it is certain that Christ hath not only done these bright and mighty works which none, but God can do, but he did them in a Godlike manner as God the Father did them, as immediately, as easily, as irresistibly, and as independently. Look at the miracles which he wrought in his incarnate state. One word from his mouth, one touch of his hand, sometimes without either; whatever Jesus willed, his almighty power performed, for he is God alone.

To suppose that Christ was only an instrument in the work of creation is most absurd. It is a contradiction of God's word, and it is blasphemous. Are we not expressly told that God alone made the heavens and earth? Therefore, he had no instrument. “He spake and it was done.” (Ps. 33: 6, 9.) “All things were made by him” and for him, for his honor, use, and service. He is the last

end of all things, but not so are instruments. I wonder sometimes that men who deny the Son, do not say that God the Father is only an instrument in creation; for all things are said to be by him. (Heb. 11: 36.) Those who receive God's word as there revealed, can easily believe that all things were made by Christ, and for him; and that "whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise." His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

6. That Jesus Christ is essentially and eternally the same with God the Father, because his personality is identified as the same throughout the history and work of redemption.

In the epistle to the (Eph. 1: 4) the apostle speaks of the Church of God being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Now, I cannot believe that God chose his people in a Christ that did not pre-exist—a mere name. A nominal Christ is surely not the Christ of God, though he appears to be so according to many professors. The good pleasure of the Father's will which he purposed in himself was not prospective in regard to the Person of his Son. No, surely, for his eternal purpose he purposed in Christ, (Eph. 3: 11,) a proof of Christ's existence before his incarnation; and in verse 12, we read: "He trusted in Christ." Was this a Christ only in purpose, or a Christ then in being, think you? Evidently the Person of Christ is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, or the Father could not have chosen his people in him. He was the Son of God before he became the Christ, the anointed of God the Father. The personality of his Sonship is the basis of his mediatorship, and hence he is the author of eternal redemption.

Passing by several notable passages, we will just observe on Zec. 2: 10. The Lord speaking by the prophet of the fulfillment of Eph. 1: 10, (God's eternal purpose.) saith: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." Here, you perceive, it is God who speaks. And to what period does he refer? Certainly, to no other than the incarnation of himself; the going forth of Jehovah in personal acts for the gathering together of his people and for their redemption.

Turning now to Luke 2: 11, when the birth of the Saviour was announced to the shepherds by the angel, he said: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," not a Lord, but the Lord, the Lord of glory. (1st Cor. 2: 8.) Here is the character, the Person, and his one name declared to be he who is, and was, and is to come; the personality of Jesus as the self-existent God being too plain to be denied on the principles of language. Here, then, is the identity of the same person as foretold and expected; they did not refer to what he was to be, but to what he is, both in

Person and character, the infinite I AM—he, “the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Re. 1: 8.)

Now refer to Mt. 28: 6. Again we have angels’ testimony to the identity of Jesus the Lord: they speak not of his body merely, but of his Person entire, they do not deem him as a dead man placed in the grave, but they speak of him as what he is, i.e. what he ever was—the Lord: “Come, see the place where the Lord lay”—his Person—his own act and deed in lying in the grave. Ah! my friends, there is more divinity in that angelic sentence, than has ever been uttered by mortal man; for in it I see the God-man, during the period of death, still the willing substitute of his church, entering the portals of the grave to pay the last mite of their penalty to a broken law.

Then, again, in Ac. 2: 36, and 1st Cor. 2: 8, we have the testimony of two apostles, who speak of him who was crucified as “the Lord of glory;” “both Lord and Christ;” and observe, too, in Eph. 4: 8 - 10, his ascension to heaven is spoken of as being the same as mentioned in Psalm 68: 18, and his descension is spoken of in the same manner; both of his own will, which no creature could do, or could be—both die and lie in the grave of his own self. Jesus must have been the Lord of life and glory to have overcome death; and his triumphant entrance into heaven is celebrated in Ps. 24: 7-10: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.” So that throughout the Scriptures, from the period of God the Father choosing his people in Christ, to the time of his incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, all combine to fix the identity of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ the same with God the Father, essentially considered, the same God as the Father. In the contemplation of these great truths, we unite with the apostle in exclaiming : “Great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1st Timothy. 3: 16.)

I pass on to notice also, under this head, that the great and glorious work of redemption and complete salvation, which is said to be God’s work, is likewise said to be the work of Christ. There is no other salvation for men but that of Christ: “There is none other name under heaven given among men.” (Ac. 4: 12.) Beside him there is no Saviour—he is God. (Isa. 63: 11.) And when he would pour in the consolations of his grace to the troubled and overwhelmed heart, he bases the promise upon his immutableness, and declares of himself: “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel,”—the

true spiritual Israel. It is God who hath chosen his people to grace and glory, so has Jesus. None can forgive sins but God only. Christ does forgive sins; therefore, he is the only true God. It is God alone who quickens sinners when dead in sin; Christ is that great God who quickeneth whomsoever he will. Believers are called the sons of God by virtue of God the Father's love; Christ has the same power. (Joh. 1: 12.) He gives to his people eternal life, and he wills of himself their eternal glorification with him and the Father. (Joh. 17: 24.)

7. That Christ the Son is the same in Essence with God the Father, because the very same things which are positively spoken of the Most High God in the Old Testament are attributed to Christ in the New Testament.

There can be no difficulty to the spiritually taught disciple of Christ in ascertaining that he who is called Jehovah in the Old Testament is the same as he who in the New Testament is called Jesus, the Christ. If in the Old Testament we find expressly ascribed such and such things to the great Jehovah, the only true God, and the New Testament declares these very things of Christ, it must needs follow that Jesus is the only true God. Let us just mention a few instances out of many where they occur. He who proclaimed the law on Mount Sinai was Jehovah, the Most High God. Now, it is certain that Christ was he who did so. (Ac. 7: 37,38.) The psalmist tells us that he whom the Israelites tempted and provoked was the Most High God. (Ps. 78: 50.) The apostle Paul tells us expressly that it was Christ they tempted. (1st Cor. 10: 9.) Therefore, Christ is the Most High God. Again, Ps. 10: 2 holds out the great God in his eternity and unchangeableness, and as the Creator of all things; and the same attributes are ascribed to Christ in Heb. 1: 10-12. Isaiah tells us that "the Lord of Hosts, besides whom there is no God, is the first and the last; (Isa. 44: 6;) and John the divine tells us expressly that Jesus "is the first and the last;" therefore he is the Lord of Hosts, besides whom there is no God. "He who ascended up on high and led captivity captive," the psalmist calls God and Lord. And the apostle Paul assures us that he who ascended is he who descended into the lower parts of the earth, and he who descended is the same who ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, (Eph. 4: 7 To 9,) which is certainly meant of Christ Jesus. And again, searching the heart, trying the reins, &c., are prerogatives which the great Jehovah ascribes to himself by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah; (Jer. 17: 10;) and this is what Jesus as the Son of God precisely declares of himself: "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Re. 2: 23.) This argument must needs be good with all those who take Gods word as they find it, and his interpretation of it. What is spoken in the Old Testament

of the only true God, —God himself interprets of Christ in the New. That in Isa. 40: 3-5, is spoken of the great Jehovah, the Lord our God; and whosoever denies it to be spoken of Christ, contradicts all the four evangelists, for they apply it to him. Surely none can deny the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only living and true God, if they believe God's own explication of the word. If our hearts are humble, we shall receive it and believe it. We cannot be deceived in so doing.

8. I come now to consider the last part of my argument, and which has a close proximity to the doctrine of my text: That Jesus Christ is the same in nature with God the Father, because the same worship must be paid to them both.

Not only worship, but the very same divine worship in all the parts and degrees of it must be given to the Son as to the Father. This is clear, I think, from the very words of my text. Whatever divine and excellent worship the most holy men do or can pay to God the Father, that worship in all its height and excellency must be given unto the Son, or else we directly deny the doctrine of our text. Here is no distinction of religious worship, nor any inequality or inferiority in the worship that is given to the Son and God the Father; but quite the contrary; we are to worship them both alike. The Son we must worship, even as we worship the Father; and unless we thus honour the Son, we honour not the Father. Their honor is inseparable. Divine worship is that honour and service we give to God, as to a Being of infinite perfection, as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and the fountain of all our happiness, Jesus Christ is a Being of infinite excellences; he is our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and the fountain of all divine fulness and happiness; therefore he must be worshipped. He must have paid unto him all the internal and external acts of worship. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ is God, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, even as they worship the Father; and like as the Father seeketh such to worship him, so does our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is he says: "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

Again. We must believe in Christ, the same as we believe in God. This our Lord says himself: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And this is also the Father's will, that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." (1st Joh. 3: 23.) Have we hope in God? Jesus Christ is expressly said to be our hope; that is, he in whose death and righteousness alone we hope for salvation. We have not our hope in Christ merely for the things of this life, for then we were of all men the most miserable; but we hope in Christ for the things of that glorious life—the hope that is full of immortality. Therefore

Christ is God; for to hope in any creature, would be to bring a curse upon us and not a blessing.

Further, we must love Christ supremely, in all sincerity, and above all, with our highest love and affection; and it is certain we can love but one being so. Therefore, this is to be regarded as undoubted evidence that we believe Jesus Christ to be the only one true God. Besides, the external part of divine worship must be given to Christ. As we must “offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay our vows unto the Most High,” (Ps. 1: 14,) so we must give honor, glory, dominion, praise, and blessing to Christ; (Re. 5: 12;) therefore he is the Most High God. And not only must we praise Jesus Christ as God, but we must also pray unto him as the only true God, and him only. Now, it is most clear that we must pray to him. We find the apostle Paul often prayed to him; Stephen died praying to him; and in 1st Cor. 1: 2, we find it to be a mark of a true believer, and that such persons are reckoned among the saints of God “who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,” and how many of the people of God can use the language of dear Mr. Hart:

“That Christ is God I can avouch,
And for his people cares;
For I have prayed to him as such,
And he has heard my prayers.”

Now, if Jesus Christ be only a creature, that is, a being substantially distinct from, or made by, the only true God, then we must either worship him who is not God, which is idolatry, or we must cease praying unto him, and we ought never more to use the benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” We must never more pray to him for mercy, for salvation, if he be not the Most High God We must never more pray: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good work.” “We must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve.” We cannot deny divine worship to Christ, for he is God alone, and God only must be worshipped; therefore, Christ is the one and the very same God as the Father. Amen.

My dear hearers, I shall now relieve your attention from this part of the argument. Much more, indeed, might be adduced from God’s most holy book that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father; but sufficient, perhaps, has been stated for a public discourse of this kind. I will, therefore, proceed to notice some practical inferences, which I think are fairly deducible from the several points laid down.

1st. You may plainly perceive that I regard the Son-ship of the Lord Jesus Christ as being founded on his Deity, and not on his humanity. This I hold to

be the mind of the Spirit. This view of this most vital question, I am well aware, is objected to, and opposed by a large portion of our brethren in the ministry, who are received into the churches as men of truth, piety, learning, and principle; but we have nothing to do with men's opinions or characters where truth is at stake. The truth of God must be dearer to us than all besides. The faith of God's elect must be earnestly contended for. I am well aware, too, there is great mystery, much difficulty, singular Complexity, in the controversy upon the subject. Most truly it is said, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh;" and sure I am, with controversy, the mystery is still greater. For what is the fruit, in many instances, of the numerous controversies on the Sonship of Christ? Division of the brethren, and, in some cases, personal hate. It has produced such bitter strife and confusion, gross misunderstandings, and willful perversions of each other's meanings, as remind us strongly of the Ammonites and Moabites, who, after they had blunderingly slain their Edomite ally, turned to, and "every one helped to destroy another." (2nd Chron. 20: 23.) Nevertheless, the controversy has its uses. It discovers those who are on the Lord's side, and it brings into closer sympathy those who hold the unity of the faith in the bond of peace. Now, sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be in no danger of such evils, if they but carefully attend to the following things: 1. To receive the truth as it is in Jesus, in the love of it; and 2. To rest upon it as the only rock on which they are to stand. This I am sure they will do if they have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and are under the teachings of the Holy Spirit. "Every word of God is pure;" "They are all plain to him that understandeth." They must totally reject the methods men invent by attempting to explain divine truth upon human principles. For more than sixteen hundred years, men of this stamp have been blindly feeling after some analogy, which has no existence but in their own brain! By this, they seek to illustrate the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and thus they have forsaken the safe guidance of revelation. Now, if we will but attend to the word of God, and take it in its plain and obvious sense, apart from all human prejudices, we shall perceive that, in regard to the Person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, all human analogy fails.

In the first place, to use the words of an excellent author, Dr. Leonard Woods: "The relation of Christ to God the Father has no real and strict analogy. It is, in various respects, unlike the relation of any created being to God. The relation of a created being to God commences in time; but Christ was with God in the beginning, never without him. The relation of a creature originates in the derivation of his being from God. But the relation which Christ, considered as "The Word," bears to the Father, rests primarily upon

his participation of the same divine nature. So that it is the relation of one who is essentially equal, and in every respect to nature, identical. Whereas, the relation of every created being to God is the relation of one essentially and infinitely inferior. The relation of Christ to the Father has no strict analogy to the relation which any created being bears to another. The relations among created beings are indeed made use of to set forth the relation of Christ to the Father; as, for example, the relations of a son and a servant. But Christ does not strictly stand in the relation of a human son to his father, or of a human servant to his master; although these relations make known some of the properties or effects of Christ's relation to the Father. The Bible makes an essential difference between the peculiar relation of a son and that of a servant; and represents the one as exclusive of the other. If, then, Christ were a servant, in this appropriate sense, it would be incompatible with his being a Son; or if he were a Son, it would be incompatible with his being a servant. But he is spoken of as both a servant and a son; which is sufficient to show that he is neither the one nor the other, in the strict and literal sense. In other words, there is no literal and strict analogy between the relation of Christ to his Father and that of a human son to his Father, or of a servant to his master. Though some of the effects and circumstances of the relation may be similar, the nature and the ground of it are materially different."

I need make no apology for this quotation; it not only expresses my view in better words than I could put it, but it shows clearly that human analogy cannot explain God's truth, and I think it strengthens my argument. I would only make another remark, in the second place, and that is, the constitution of the Person of the Redeemer is a departure from all analogy. From one class of texts we learn, that he was a true and proper man. The phrase "Son of man" is frequently used in the gospels, but mostly by himself. Other texts exhibit him as possessing all the properties of Deity. Here analogy entirely fails. In no other instance were natures and attributes, so widely different, ever united in one Person. He whose name is Wonderful is wonderful in his Person. With reference to one part of his character he is God, by whom all things were created. With reference to another part of his character, he the same Person, is called a child, a man. And when he was called "the Son of God," he not only admitted it, but approved the faith of those who thus called him, and pronounced them blessed, for their belief was the result of divine communication. (Mt. 16: 17.) Yes, the God-man Mediator, Jesus Christ, is truly wonderful in himself; for whatever he is in himself, he is all that to him who is united to him by a true and living faith. He has life in himself; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and yet he died and was buried. He is God over all, blessed for evermore; and yet he was a man of sorrows, and

acquainted with grief. Now these representations of Christ that the Scriptures make, are a proof that there is no analogy, as to the constitution of his Person, between him and any other being.

I have detained you, perhaps, too long on this topic ; but these remarks, I hope, will show, that men, who regulate their opinions respecting Christ by analogy, fall into one or another of the false notions so commonly entertained; and I think it will be seen what reason we have to be on our guard against this fruitful source of error. Every attempt men make to bring the work and character of Christ to bear a strict analogy to the character and work of any other being, is stamped with weakness, and will lead, us away from the truth and the simplicity which is in Christ.

But, again, see how the folly of human analogy is ridiculed in the Scriptures of truth. Hear what the Lord himself saith by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: “To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?” (Isa. 40: 18.) And: “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee.” (Ps. 50: 21.) Now, my friends, I ask you, is not the doctrine of my text, well sustained by the divine forbidding of all human analogy? It demands “that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” O ye who fancy yourselves so wise, so clever in the argument that a Father is anterior and superior to a Son, blush for shame! No more impugn and corrupt the doctrine of Christ by human traditions. Think me not too severe when I say, consider this, ye that yet forget the unity of God, “lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, when his wrath is kindled but a little;” “for ye have not spoken of him the thing that is right.” “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father.”

2nd. You will perceive, also, from the view I have presented, that it is opposed to those who hold the notion of the Person of Christ as the Son of God only in his complex existence as Immanuel, God in our nature; in other words, that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God till he became the Son of man.

I regard this notion as mere human fancy, un-sustained by the authority of God’s word. Doubtless there are many sincere believers in Jesus, who think it is the truth; but it appears to me, they take too low a ground. Their rock is not our rock; and holding, as I do, the absolute essentiality and eternity of Christ with God—God in Christ, Christ in God—I could not receive it. My text forbids it. How can I honor the Son even as I honor the Father, if I limit the existence of his Person as to time— Before the fulness of time—“ the period when the Son of God became incarnate ”—he must have existed ; for it is said, “God sent forth his Son.” How could it be said he was sent, if he did not already pre-exist? His being made of a woman under the law was but the

condition in which he was to come; a condition that was necessary in which Redemption was to be affected. The sending does not imply inferiority, any more than the sending of the Holy Spirit; but simply means the manifestation of the purpose for which he came, i.e., “to destroy the works of the devil.” And therefore, it is that I consider unless I believe and avow both the eternity and the immutability of Christ’s Sonship, I cannot honor the Son even as I honor the Father.

3rd. If all men are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father, then I conceive, that they who hold the notion of the pre-existence of Christ’s human soul cannot honour the Son even as the Father is to be honoured; because they consider the Son only as a creature of the Father, though they ascribe to him, a pre-existent state before all other creatures.

The pre-existence of Christ’s human soul is a notion which I nowhere find in the Scriptures expressed or implied. ’Tis true, many who hold the view of Christ being “ the first of all creatures,” say many excellent things of his Person, character, and work, as do those of whom I have just been speaking; but, “ to the law and to the testimony.” “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Harsh words, ’tis true, as applied to persons who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth; but inasmuch as the notion they hold is opposed to the self-existence of Jesus the I AM, it must be rejected as spurious and heresy. Well does Mr. Hart say:

“Notion’s the harlot’s test,
By which the truth’s reviled;
The child of fancy, finely dressed,
But not the living child.”

I beg pardon for calling their idea of the human preexistence a mere doll, but really, I believe it is nothing more. * [Since the first edition of this sermon was printed, I have had the pleasure of meeting with some remarks on Pre-existerianism in a sermon by Mr. Philpot, on Pr. 8: 20, 21, No. 364 Penny Pulpit, 6th edition, which I take the liberty of inserting here, as not only confirming my own view, but as concisely setting forth in a strong light the perniciousness of that human notion. The dream of the Pre-existerians is utterly and directly contrary to the truth of God; and those that are wrapped up in this delusion found much of their argument on this 8th chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. I call it a delusion, and a dangerous delusion, too, because it strikes at the very root of the atonement. For if Christ’s human soul existed before the foundation of the world, then that human soul of Christ was never under the law.” But if that soul existed before the law was given, there could be no subsequent ex post facto operation of the law upon that soul; and if it was never under the law, then Christ never could have wrought out the

righteous demanded by the law; and therefore it strikes a deadly blow at Christ's righteousness and Christ's atonement.]

But lest I should make any one sad whom the Lord would not have made sad, by leading them to suppose that, because they are either under such teachings, or suppose they hold such views, and yet have felt sure in their own minds they have the witness of the Spirit that they are born of God—are united to Christ by a true and living faith, and that he is all their salvation, and all their desire—I would just say to such, far be it from me to bring a cloud between you and the Sun of your soul, by representing that all who differ from me are not partakers of saving grace. I have met with many who professed the dogma which I am condemning, who did not really believe it; arising, as I discovered, from a misconception of the peculiar idea involved. For years I verily thought I was a believer in the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, but was surprised to hear myself contradicted and told I was no Pre-existerian; and on looking more into the matter, I found it was the pre-existence of Christ's Person, founded on his self-existence I believed in, not of his human soul. I had mistaken the one for the other. This, I believe, is the case with many of the Lord's dear people, and even with some of his own sent servants in the ministry of the gospel.

Still, there is one word of caution I should like to give. Beware of men. We have had, and still have, writers and preachers who lead souls astray, and cause much confusion in the church of God by their snaky way of preaching the Person of Christ. One time they profess to teach Christ's eternal Sonship, and anon, they go off and preach either modern pre-existerianism, or some other notion imitating Christ was not the Son of God till he became man. They delight in self-made paradoxes, a little truth here, and a little truth there, and saying many pretty things about Christ; but all the while the poison of Arianism, or some other ism, is under their tongues. Their complex statements perplex, puzzle, and bewilder the minds of many, and, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect, and cheat them out of the truth. There can be no objection to men honestly changing their views, if they think proper; but it is discreditable if men, doing so, continue to publish and sell their contradictory writings at the same time. They may have their pocket reasons for so doing, they may obtain a position in certain cliques and circles, but such chameleon methods of teaching cannot promote the spiritual interests of the Church of God. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent him.

4th. That the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, being founded on his Deity, and not on his humanity, therefore this is the only true and proper basis upon which, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can be honoured as the Father.

The apostle, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, (1st Cor. 8: 6,) says: “But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” What a declaration is here of the unity of God and of Jesus Christ. The eternal, self-existent I AM, who is, and was, and is to come, the only Creator, Preserver, and Lord of all. This glorious and divine Being, so infi-nite in his perfections, pervading the whole universe of creation, visible and invisible, is revealed in the inspired writings as an incomprehensible and divine Spirit, and that they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. In that same blessed book, it is revealed that this divine and glorious Being is displayed and made known to us in the distinct Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet indivisible in the unity of the divine nature or substance. The Person of God the Father is God, in the relation of a Father, sending and bringing forth his own infinitely perfect and most glorious image. The Person of God the Son is the same God, in the relation of a Son, proceeding from the Father. The Person of God the Holy Ghost is the same God, in the relation of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son in eternity. This great mystery, of three Persons in One God, is plainly declared in the sacred word. Each of them is Jehovah the Most High God. All the three Persons, thus displayed, give us, as I receive it, a complete idea of the only true God. The only true God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is revealed to us in the great scheme of Redemption by the personal acts or goings forth of Jehovah. First, we have God the Father sending forth his Son in the nature of man; then we have the Son manifesting the name of the Father; and the Son is revealed by the Holy Spirit. All this is accomplished in the mind and heart of each believer in Jesus, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, under his effectual teaching. Sometimes we perceive the same offices ascribed to other Persons in the sacred Trinity; by this, we mark more particularly the divine unity and essentiality of the Godhead. We believe in Christ; our sins are pardoned by Christ, and on account of Christ; we are saved by Christ; we pray to God through Christ; we praise God in Christ; we love, honor, and serve God in Christ; we know God only through Christ; we know God only in Christ; we are drawn to God by Christ, for none can come to the Father but by him: “ He is the way, the truth, and the life.” Thus, it is by our own experience of coming to God—loving him, knowing him, serving him—through Christ, that we attribute all the divine perfections of the Godhead to Christ, even as unto the Father. For he is God alone; besides him there is no God. We worship God in Christ. We ascribe all the glory of our salvation to him, as unto the Father. Thus, it is we honor the Son even as we honor the Father, the one God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen, and amen.

Before I close this discourse, I must tax your patience for two or three more minutes; for there are one or two remarks I wish to make.

The first is to the man who professes to believe that Jesus Christ is not co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father.

My friend, I will give you credit for desiring to know Christ, to serve him, and to promote the knowledge of his name and will in all sincerity, and in truth; but though you may do so, yet if you are not well-grounded in the fundamental truth of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will certainly fail to accomplish that which you are seeking. A right position, remember, if wrongly taken, will produce a wrong result. Your analogical reasoning is no substitute for the Spirit of Truth. "Who teacheth like him?" Your vain imagination has produced a creature Jesus, in opposition to the "Christ of God." If Jesus himself asserts his self-existence prior to his incarnation, during his incarnation, and since his incarnation, —as he does in Ex. 3: 14, Joh. 8: 58, and Re. 1: 8—how shall mortal flesh dare to contradict and pervert the words of the infinite I AM, and add words to the inspired record that derogate the Person of the Son of the living God, misleading and deceiving the saints of the Most High, by offering honor to a creature whom they ignorantly worship. Your whole scheme is of human invention, and must come to pieces under the hammer of God's truth. Consider what I say, and may the Lord lead you into the truth as it is in Jesus.

"What think ye of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him."

My second remark is to the sincere and humble believer in Jesus, who, without entering into questions which he thinks only minister to strife and not to edification, has committed the keeping of his soul to Jesus, as unto a faithful Creator.

Dearly beloved, what a solid basis you have in the doctrine of the Essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, for your salvation. This is the rock on which Christ builds his church; here, then, rest all your hope, your faith, your love. The powers of hell may attempt to shake you, but their rage is in vain ; they shall not prevail. You may, perhaps, sometimes fear and quake in yourself, but not in Christ; for you are safe and eternally secure in him. He is the Rock, his work is perfect, and you may say:

"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

And, my brother or sister, feeling your standing so secure on such a Rock as this, what solemn weight attaches to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as

expressed in our text. You are called to honour the Son even as the Father; you are called the children of the Lord God Almighty; then walk as the children of the light, sons of God, holy and without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. For as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so are we to walk in him.

“No big words of ready talkers,
No dry doctrine will suffice:
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus’ eyes.”

My last remark is to the poor seeking soul, desiring to find Christ, believing him to be the only refuge where he can hide his guilty head from the storm of divine wrath that seems about to pour down upon him.

Poor soul! you have been driven out of all your hiding places, by the terrors of a broken law working wrath in your conscience. You are come seeking life and salvation by the death of Jesus Christ. You shall have it! Do you believe in God? Believe also in Christ. He who comes to God must believe that he, yes, Jesus Christ, is God alone. He alone can save you; his own arm brought salvation. Salvation is of God, not of a creature. Trust in him as God, the Son of God, not as the Son of man, or you will fare no better than the poor Syro-Phoenician woman; for so long as she called upon Jesus as the Son of David, all was dark, there seemed to be no hope for her, he answered her not a word ; but when she came to him as the Lord alone, and dropped every plea of her own, saying, “ Lord help me,” that moment she took hold of God’s strength, she touched his divinity, and obtained all she sought.

Are you indeed coming to Jesus? What is it that leads you to fix on him? “O,” say you, “I feel I am such a sinner, that only such a God as Christ is can save me!” You are right; and he will save you. The Spirit has already opened your eyes. It is he who hath planted faith in your heart; he is leading you to Christ. You have been drawn by the love of the Father, and soon you shall find,

“If you are returning to Jesus, your Friend,
Your sighing and mourning in singing shall end.”

Brethren, “These things have I spoken, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true ; and we are in him, that is, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” (1st John. 5: 13, 20, 21.)

And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons in one triune Jehovah, be ascribed equal and undivided honour,

praise, glory, and adoration from this time forth and evermore. Amen and amen.

ADDENDA

I have no wish to revive controversy, but I think it desirable to make a few additional remarks upon the important question of the Eternal Sonship. It is well known that there are many good and gracious persons who regard the eternity of Christ's Sonship only as it respects the covenant of grace; they look upon the scheme of man's redemption originating in the mind of God before time, as an episode or parenthesis, in his eternal existence; that the personalities of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, are assumed names, and originated, for distinction sake, with that transaction only. That this notion has been put forth by some excellent men whose writings are deservedly held in estimation, I am well aware; but I feel persuaded it is contrary to the mind of the Spirit, and to the doctrine of the true and proper Sonship of Jesus Christ; and I cannot but think that while, superficially considered, it appears defective and to come short of the truth as it is in Jesus,—essentially considered, it is radically erroneous and subversive of the truth; and that the tendency of such a theory has not been sufficiently observed. To my view it inevitably leads to Sabellianism, if not to Unitarianism; yet anything approaching either of those schemes, I am sure, is utterly repudiated by the persons to whom I refer. I cannot for one moment admit that God's mercy, in respect of the fall, was the occasion or the origin of the names of the personalities in the Godhead. The covenant of grace was truly a revelation of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons. It was a lifting up of the curtain of God's love upon the stage of time, a display of his mighty acts, whose goings forth, in the salvation of his people, have been from everlasting; a display to the church of the nature, glories, and eternity of the Three-One God. Surely the Scriptures do not countenance the opinion that the ever-blessed Trinity assumed to themselves names for acting out the several offices which each personality undertook in the work of redemption, as the consequence, or result, of that gracious compact? We read of God sending forth his Son, and of the Son manifesting the name of the Father, but in both instances the pre-existence of each personality in the relationship of Father and Son is implied. To suppose that a relationship did not exist until it was declared (as in Ps. 2: 7) or manifested (as in Joh. 17: 6) is without foundation. * The declaration and manifestation of the divine relationship arise from the fact that there was a Son—there was a Father—or how could there be a declaration of such a relationship? A declaration of names only is something so unreal, so visionary, as to be unworthy of the character of God, and altogether un-worthy of belief. Now, it is granted by our objectors, that the personalities are eternal; but we assert that the relation-

ship of the Father and the Son is their distinct and peculiar proper personality, and that that relationship is eternal. How could the covenant of grace be formed by the eternal Three in the relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed, unless those relationships had a reality, and had pre-existed in the personalities by which they are designated. The question has been asked, Supposing there had been no fall of man, no covenant of grace, no redemption to effect, would there have been no Son of God, no God the Father, no God the Holy Ghost? and the answer has been emphatically, No. Now, this appears to me to involve a most grave and serious error, leading direct to Unitarianism; for if the personality of the Father be a name only, or coeval only with the covenant of grace, then there was a period in eternity, that is, antecedent to the covenant, when the Father was not the Father; if the personality of the Son be a name only, or coeval only with the covenant of grace, then there must have been a period in eternity when the Son was not the Son, — that is, when the son was not in being, for his Sonship, according to this hypothesis, must have had a beginning; and if the Sonship was constituted only in the covenant transaction, then the Sonship is simply official,—a name only, and no personality at all; for there can be no basis for the Sonship without the personality. If there be a personality at all, it must be a reality, not a name, or else the Son of God is degraded below the brute creation; for we read, Ge. 2: 19, 20, that “Adam gave names to all the cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.” That is, the creatures were in nature what they were designated. We also read that “God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.” Because it was so, the light in itself is day, and the darkness in itself is night. Thus when God said, Ps. 2: 7, “Thou art my Son,” the meaning is, I am thy Father. Are we to be told that the Sonship is only a name, and not a relationship? How contrary to all the principles of common sense! God calls Jesus his Son because he is his Son, a Son of the same nature as himself, the Son of himself, his own proper Son; not a mere name, for the name of a son is no son at all. Take away the Sonship, the personality is taken away, for it has its name from, its nature, and, as just stated, that nature is eternal, and therefore the Sonship is eternal. So, on the same premiss which is taken as to the Sonship, the personality of God the Father is brought down to be a mere office or name; the divine Fatherhood to the Church of Christ is nothing but a name, instead of a relationship; the covenant union between Christ and his Church with his Father a mere fiction, and the believer’s experience of these heavenly truths the veriest delusion. The same line of argument may be pursued as to the personality of the Holy Spirit; so that we arrive at the conclusion that the personalities of Jehovah are nothing more than mere

names, or at most manifestations, or different kinds of operations; thus throwing us back upon the old errors of Sabellianism, till at last, step by step, we are precipitated into the gulf of Unitarianism, one God—no Trinity of Persons. I therefore cannot but regard all views which give data to the Sonship of Christ as essentially erroneous, detracting from the personal glory of the Son of God, and as undermining the very basis of our common Christianity, the doctrine of our Lord's eternal generation; for on that fact is grounded the glories of his mediatorial work and character, as set forth in the Scriptures of Truth. Let this plain question be put—Is the Sonship of Christ the foundation of the covenant of grace ! or, is the covenant of grace the foundation of his Sonship? If the latter, on what principle ? Certainly it does not exalt the person of the Son of God; it spoils him of his crown; and the bearing to which this view inevitably leads, is to reduce him to the level of mere creature ship. As elsewhere stated, (see Sermon 16 page. 40,) I regard the mediatorial work of Christ as founded on his personality, being the Son of God eternally pre-existent with His Father, antecedent to any of the covenant designs of Jehovah to save man.

I have not space here to carry out the argument as this great question well deserves, but close my remarks by simply declaring my unhesitating belief that Christ Jesus is, and ever was, the Son of God, in his own distinct personality, from all eternity. That had man never fallen, had no Church been chosen in Christ, or even this world had not been formed, the eternal God in the personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would have still-existed in essence, nature, and relationship, in co-equal and co-eternal union, power, and glory.

QUOTATIONS REFERRED TO AT PAGE 25.

*Dr. J. A. Alexander, of Princeton, America, on Ps. 2: 7, says:

“The essential meaning of the phrase, I have begotten thee, is simply this, I am thy Father, and this day is not to be understood as limiting the mutual relationship, though it might refer to a certain point of time for the formal recognition of it.

The declaration of our Lord's Sonship at his baptism, was but the recognition of that relation which had existed anterior to the period of his incarnation.”

Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, on Romans 1: 3, 4, says:

“Christ is called the Son of God because he is consubstantial with the Father, and therefore equal to him in power and glory. The term expresses the relation of the second to the first person in the Trinity, as it exists from

eternity. It is, therefore, as applied to Christ, not a term of office, nor expressive of any relation assumed in time. He was and is the Eternal Son.”

Dr. Gouge on Heb. 1: 5, Section 62, says:

“This manifestation of Christ’s divine generation in set and certain times, by visible and conspicuous evidences, doth no whit cross or impeach the eternity and incomprehensibleness thereof. For to declare and manifest a thing to be, pre- supposeth that it was before it was manifested; neither doth it necessarily imply any beginning of that before; no more than those phrases in Ps. 90: 2, Pr. 8: 25.

“ The full meaning, therefore, of the apostle in alleging this testimony, ‘ Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,’ may, for perspicuity’s sake, be thus paraphrased, as if God the Father had said thus to God the Son : Thou, and thou alone, art my true proper Son, not by grace or adoption, but by nature and eternal generation ; and now I do in this last age of the world declare thee so to be by thine incarnation, doctrine, works, resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, whereby it manifestly appeareth that thou infinitely dost surpass all the angels in heaven.”

The late Dr. Samuel Hopkins, of America, Volume 1., page 308, says:

“They, therefore, who do not believe the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, because it is mysterious and incomprehensible,— and to some it appears to be full of contradiction,—will, if they be consistent with themselves, for the same reason reject the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in one God.”

The above quotations may serve to show that my views are not unsupported by men of truth, learning, and celebrity; to which may be added from among others the names of Drs. Owen, Goodwin, and Jacomb. The work of the latter on the 8th chapter of Romans, especially, contains an elaborate argument against the opposers of the eternal Sonship, and confutes their errors in a most masterly and scriptural manner.

October, 18 66. C. G.