

*The Person of Immanuel; or Christ Very
God, and Very Man, in One Person.*

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT LEICESTER, DECEMBER 13, 1801.

Taken in Short-hand.

HEBREWS II. 17.

WHEREFORE, IN ALL THINGS IT BEHOVED HIM TO
BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN.

THE glorious and ever-blessed Personage that now claims our attention, from the words of my text, is the precious Redeemer, and Saviour of sinners; to whom we have fled for refuge, in whom we are taught to believe, on whom we build our hope, and in whom we are loved, chosen, and accepted of the Eternal Father!—That precious Christ, who hath everlastingly satisfied divine justice, and magnified the holy law—who is our resurrection and life, and the bread which came down from heaven, of which, whosoever eateth shall never die!—The way, the truth, and the life; for no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, Jesus Christ; who through his death, has gained a gloriously complete, and everlasting con

quest, over all our mighty, and malicious foes; even over the last enemy. death; whose terrible sting he hath extracted, for his dear people, and made that gloomy vale, a most easy and delightful passage!

Our adorable Redeemer, is our all in all; the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever! May we find him such to our souls, while we take under consideration the admirable Person, and the unsearchable glories and excellencies of this celestial Visitant! And O may a soul-animating view of him, by the eye of faith, constrain us, spiritually to adopt the language of the church, (Solomon's Song v. 10—16.) "He is the chiefest among ten thousand—yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend!"

I have selected this text, in order to prove, as the Lord shall give me ability, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God—that he whom my soul loveth is the great and eternal God; and yet truly and properly man. *God and man in union*; by virtue of which wonderful, and mysterious *union*, the two natures constitute one glorious Person, *IMMANUEL, God—with—us!*

It is, therefore, my design, principally to treat of the adorable and wonderful Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, looking to the Lord for divine assistance, I take upon me to prove,

- I. That he is the very and eternal God.
- II. That he is very man.
- III. The union of the two natures, constituting but one person.

It may not be improper to give a few words of advice, before I enter upon the momentous subject. A subject inexpressibly momentous! for if we err in this, we err in every thing; if we are right here—if we have a true spiritual knowledge of this—we are right in every thing: having a steady, immoveable foundation for our hope; the rock Christ, the God of our salvation!

It has been my prayer, repeatedly, ever since this subject has so particularly demanded my attention, that I may speak nothing but what is perfectly consistent with the pure word of God. And are there any here that dare fly in the face of God, by contradicting his word? No; I trust I have, upon this occasion, the pleasure of speaking to those, who are divinely taught to renounce all carnal reason so far as it opposes the mysteries of the gospel; for though gospel mysteries are, upon no consideration, *inconsistent* with human reason, they soar so immeasurably high, and shine so transcendantly bright, that *blind*, limited reason cannot comprehend them! They are a great and unfathomable deep, where all human thoughts, of the greatest magnitude, are lost in wonder and

astonishment; and, because, dazzled with their divine brightness, *Deists* have had the consummate audacity to affirm, that it is not of divine authenticity! That, instead of *divine light*, it is the darkness of superstition, priestcraft, and delusion!—Thus, by preferring *carnal reason* to the Scriptures, they evidently call “*darkness light, and light darkness!*”

But we, my brethren, through the free, distinguishing grace of Christ, are better taught.—Nevertheless, you know as well as I do, what sinful creatures we are! How prone to err!—Indeed, I am convinced from my own feelings, that we are liable, implicitly, to imbibe the sentiments of men who stand high in our esteem, without ever inquiring into their nature and consequence. But, my brethren, shall we follow man any further than he follows Christ? God forbid! “Be ye followers of me,” saith the great apostle, “even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians xi. 1.) Believe no man, any farther than he speaks according to the Scriptures of truth. Though his sentiments may meet your ideas, examine, are your ideas founded upon, *thus saith the Lord*. I hope it will be your conduct, while this most precious subject claims your attention. O for an eye singly fixed upon Christ, that our whole bodies may be full of light! Looking unto Jesus for wisdom and direction, I shall endeavour, as I have proposed, to prove,

I. That Jesus Christ is the very and eternal God.

This being admitted, you cannot expect me to give any adequate definition of his divine essence: for who can discover *what God is*? Had I the sagacity and penetration of Gabriel, the archangel, I could not define God. Who can comprehend the eternity, immensity, and infinity of Deity? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Can *finite* creatures comprehend the infinite Creator? Impossible!

“ Reason may grasp the massy hills,
And stretch from pole to pole,
But half *his* name our spirit fills,
And overloads our soul.”

But, though the eternal God is altogether unsearchable, it is with all possible confidence, that I now come forward to proclaim Jesus Christ, that very, true, eternal, and unsearchable God!

Were I not sure that Christ is God, I dare not trust my naked soul in his hands, for salvation. If he is not the omnipotent, he cannot save sinners from Divine wrath, and everlasting ruin. If he is not very God, as well as very man, I do not hesitate to affirm, that there is no more efficacy in his blood, than in the blood of *bulls* or of *goats*!

To proceed then, I observe,

1. That there is but one true and eternal God. "For though there be, that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) to us there is but one God" (1 Corinthians viii. 5.) whom we can address now in the language of Isaiah (xxvi. 13.) "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." We have gone a whoring after other gods, but now, by the quickening influence of the Spirit of God, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, are made nigh to the only true God—and are taught to believe in him, love him, and enjoy sweet communion with him; to obey him with an heart-felt delight, and, with unfeigned ardour of soul, to ascribe unto him, all worship, praise, and adoration.

2. Though there is but one true and unsearchable God, the Scripture fully testifies, that there are three distinct *persons* in the Godhead. Not three distinct *essences*: but three distinct *persons*, in one eternal and indivisible essence. (1 John v. 7.) "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

That they are distinct persons is evident:

First, from their distinct names. In adminis-

tering the ordinance of baptism, Jesus commands his ministers to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, from their distinct manifestations. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." (Galatians iv. 4.) Here is, the *Father sending*, the *Son sent*, and we read (John xv. 26.) that the Comforter *proceedeth* from the *Father* and testifies of Christ.

Thirdly. Their different and distinct operations prove them to be distinct persons. The infallible word of God speaks of the Father *electing*, the Son *redeeming*, and the Spirit *regenerating*, and *sanctifying*, his people, (1 Peter i. 2.)

Thus, there are evidently three distinct persons in the Godhead, yet but one essence. I do not pretend to say *how* it is, for the mystery is incomprehensible. I repeat it from that deep conviction I feel, both of the importance and sublimity of the subject, that though it is an undeniable (because a scriptural) fact, that there are three distinct, and equal persons, in one undivided essence, it is impossible to comprehend, or describe *how* it is. Nevertheless though undescribable, and incomprehensible, it is a glorious truth, clearly stated, and defended, by the inspired penmen, in the precious Bible. And shall we presume to deny scriptural testimony, because the sublime mystery lies beyond the reach of our shallow com-

prehension? No, let us rather take the mysteries of the Gospel, as a striking proof, that the Bible is of *heavenly* origin, of Divine authority! For as an *earthly* minded man cannot comprehend heavenly things, which are, evidently, the professed contents of the glorious Bible, it follows, unavoidably, that a man, unrenewed in the spirit of his mind, cannot receive, and believe it, as the Word of God. The Lord himself must teach the divinity of the Bible!

3. These Three are One. *First*, in nature and essence; the Son being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, (Hebrews i. 3.) who, though in amazing love, and condescension, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to deliver us from the ruins of sin; yet, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. And as the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, reveals and testifies of Christ, and re-creates the soul of a sinner in the very *image* of God, (Ephesians ii. 10. and iv. 24.) he must, undeniably, be of *one* and the same essence with the Father, and the Son. *Secondly*, they are one in will and power; "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth whom he will, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and again, "It is the

Spirit that quickeneth." Here, they are evidently one, and the same, in *will* and *power*, in quickening a dead sinner, who is dead in trespasses and sins. *Thirdly, one* in receiving homage, and worship from his people. (John v. 23.) "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." *Fourthly, one* in blessing his people; which we learn from the benediction pronounced by the apostle Paul upon the church at Corinth: and which is everlastingly the blessing of all the dear Israel of God. (2 Corinthians xiii. 14.) "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Where the grace of Christ is, there is the love of the Father; and where these are, there is the communion of the Holy Ghost. This most necessary, desirable, and incalculable blessing of the Triune God, was, in the everlasting covenant, prepared for, and shall, in due time, be discovered to, and conferred upon, all those *ransomed* by the blood of the Lamb, as their everlasting portion!

I shall now attend particularly to the divinity of Christ; and the Scriptures positively assure us, that he was truly and properly God, from everlasting. (John i. 1.) In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.—All things were made by him—And *Jeremiah* saith, "The portion of Jacob is the *jör-*

mer of all things—the Lord of Hosts is his name.” (Jeremiah x. 16.) And who is the portion of Jacob, but a precious Christ? Therefore, if scriptural language is allowed to have any real meaning, Christ must, beyond all possible hesitation, be the eternal God. Not pre-existing in *human form*, or *shape*, as some have asserted. His being *one* in *nature* and *essence* with the *Father*, positively contradicts it, and powerfully evinces the fallacy of such an idea. An idea, altogether derogatory to the glory and dignity of Christ, as the true God. What! the great Eternal, the Creator of all things, existed in the *form* of *man* from everlasting! Shall we presume to describe the *form*, or *shape* of him, by whom all things were created, and who fills boundless space with his person and presence? Was boundless space filled with the *form* of a man! Mortals forbear to entertain such sentiments of the great UNSEARCHABLE! “All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye LIKEN God? or what LIKENESS will ye compare unto him.” (Isaiah xl. 17, 18.)

I have already proved, by scriptural evidence, that Christ is of *one essence* with the *Father*; and I repeat it, with a feeling concern, and zeal, for the glory of Christ, the Lord of Hosts, that it is awfully derogatory to his glory and dignity, as the eternal God, to say, that he pre-existed in *human form*!

But farther, in proof of his Deity, let us enquire what the blessed Jesus saith of himself; for surely his own language, is, upon all occasions, with us, truly decisive: I am persuaded better things of you, my Brethren, than once to suppose, that I am now preaching to an assembly of professed *Deists* and *Sceptics*! Though Christ was, in the days of his humiliation, and is at the present day, blasphemously accused with imposture and deception; with us it is beyond a doubt, that he was the true Messiah, and spake the words of truth. And now attend to his own language, and you will hear him claiming equality with the Father. (John x. 30.) I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE. The Jews very rightly understood by this assertion, that, though he was very man, yet he *made himself God*; for which they were about to stone him. Observe, here, that he speaks particularly of his Divine nature; which, being in union with his humanity, as GOD and MAN in one person, he claims our worship and adoration. Some have asserted that his divinity is nothing more than a *Divine soul*, that he had not a human soul distinct from his divinity, but that his soul is his divinity, and his body his humanity. Nothing can be more antisciptural than this notion of the person of Christ. It robs my dear *Immanuel* of his essential glory, as the true God, over all, blessed for ever! His divinity must be far superior to a *Divine soul*! What! the *Divine* essence a Soul! infinite Deity, nothing more than a soul!

A *divine soul*, that pre-existed? Sure I am, that he is infinitely greater, or he cannot be the eternal God who fills boundless space! For God is not *ψυχη a soul!* (Matthew xxvi. 38.) but (John iv 24.) Πνευμα ο Θεος—*God is a Spirit!* An infinitely perfect Spirit, possessed of unsearchable perfections: eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, all-wise, and almighty. If Christ's divinity is no more than a *Divine soul*, it must be something inferior to, and *derived* from Deity. But Jesus is the mighty God himself: (Colossians ii. 9.) "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Not a *Divine soul derived* from God—away with the word *derivation* in this connection—his divinity is not *derived* from, but *is* the eternal God himself; and his soul, mentioned in Matthew xxvi. 38. with his *human body*, constituted him properly man—*made in all things like unto his brethren*—of which I shall speak more fully, under that proposed head of discourse.

To go on, then, in defence of his divinity, it is further proveable from the sweet harmony between the *Old and New Testament* writers, upon the subject. *Isaiah*, prophetically exulting in the birth of Christ, saith, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, (or the Father of Eternity,) the Prince of Peace." (Isaiah ix. 6.) And *Jude*,

with all his immortal powers expanded with love to the Holy Jesus, unites with the enraptured prophet, in celebrating the praises of the dear Immanuel, and thus expresses his love and adoration. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever." (Jude ii. 5.) The divinity of Christ was the joy and strength of *David's* heart, in whom he thus triumphs: For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?—The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock: and let the God of my salvation be exalted." (Psalm xviii. 31—46.) And the only true God, who was David's rock, and the God of his salvation, I can prove, from *New Testament* language, to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ: for he saith of himself, "On this *Rock* I will build my church." And Paul saith, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The *Psalmist* calls this *Rock*, the God of his salvation: And who is the God of salvation but the Lord Jesus Christ? The apostles were bold to say, "Neither is their salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) This is so indubitably clear, that surely nothing more need to be added, to prove the ETERNAL DIVINITY of the Saviour of sinners: Nevertheless, if possible, more completely to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, and to triumph yet more gloriously, with all confidence in the Redeemer, as the ETERNAL GOD; it is the joy and

boast of my soul, that I can prove, from plain scriptural assertions, that he possesses all the *attributes* of Deity! He is declared to be the Son of God with power. (Romans i. 4.) What power? All power, *omnipotent* power: (Matthew xxviii. 18.) “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *all power* is given unto me in *heaven and in earth.*” O unsearchable mystery! While in the manger, a new born infant; the myriads of the flaming seraphim above, with all worlds, and all creatures in all worlds, were then upheld by his invisible and unlimited power! Well might he challenge the Jews: saying, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days;” this he spake as the *omnipotent* God, of the temple of his body: for we know his body was raised from the dead, by the power of God—it is by the apostle, in Ephesians i. 17—20, attributed to the power of the *Father*, because Christ is *one in essence* with the Father. He is also declared to be *omniscient*. (John ii. 24, 25.) “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” And who can know all men, and what is within them, but God? He claims it as his prerogative alone.—“I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.” (Jeremiah xvii. 10.)

I come now to prove that the Eternal Son of God became the Son of Man. In infinite condescension he took upon him our nature, sin