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Christ, the Son of God before he was made Flesh.

Weymouth, Massachusetts

A SERMON,

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS

PREACHED AT CUMMINGTON, OCTOBER 5, 1819.

AT A SESSION

OF THE

MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION.

BY SAMUEL WHITMAN.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S PRESS, GOSHEN, MS.

1819.

ADAM E. HAMILTON, PRINTER.

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SERMON.

MATTHEW xxii. 41, 42.

WHILE THE PHARISEES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, JESUS ASKED THEM SAYING, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE? THEY SAY UNTO HIM, THE SON OF DAVID

NOT believing the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state, the Sadducees had raised objections against it, which they flattered themselves that Jesus Christ was unable to answer: but as soon as he had put them to silence, the Pharisees were gathered together. One of them, therefore, who was a lawyer, supposing, no doubt, that he could confound even Jesus Christ, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus gave an answer so perfectly in point, as put an end to their inquiries: And embracing the opportunity while the Pharisees were together, our Lord, in his turn proposed to them these questions: What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? He did not say to them, what think ye of me? whose son am I? But, what think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They pass over the first question: And in reply to the second, whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. The answer, though in a sense true, appeared in the view of Christ, to be very deficient. For "How then," says he, "doth David in spirit call him Lord saying, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man

was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions."

The Pharisees, even the most learned among them, had no just thoughts concerning Christ, or concerning whose son he was; and therefore, who his Father was. If Christ was a son, then who was his Father? Jesus did not ask these questions for his own information, for he knew what was in man; he knew the thoughts of all men; he therefore knew the hypocrisy and the heresy of the scribes and Pharisees. These men, even the best among them, had not only no saving faith towards Jesus Christ, but they had no correct speculative thoughts concerning him.

Paul was a Pharisee; and therefore, before his conversion, his thoughts of Christ were vain thoughts: Yea, he thought he did right in persecuting the blessed Jesus. Although our doctrinal knowledge of Christ may be correct, while we have no saving knowledge of him; yet, it is of great importance that our speculative thoughts concerning him be according to truth, and in harmony with what is revealed of him in the holy scriptures. The light of nature communicates no light to the human mind concerning Christ, or whose son he is. The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made: but these created things cast no light upon the human understanding concerning Christ, or his sonship. We must walk in the light of Divine revelation, or our path will always be hedged up with gross darkness, even darkness that may be felt, concerning Jesus Christ.

You, my hearers, have always had the Bible in your hands: and in view of the light which it communicates, I ask you, what think ye of Christ? whose son is he? But as an answer is not expected from you in the present situation of things; it belongs to me to show, what, according to Scripture, we ought

to think of Christ; and to give an opinion concerning the question, whose son is he?

First, then, what ought our opinion to be concerning Christ? When Jesus put this question to the Pharisees they made no reply: it is important, however, that every man who lives under the light of the Gospel be able to give a just and accurate answer to this question. Jesus being Judge, this question was of singular importance; otherwise, why was it singled out from thousands that might have been asked? He did not ask them what they thought of God;—what they thought of the Scriptures;—what they thought of the Sadducees who denied the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state;—what rendered a man righteous in the sight of God;—what composed the wedding garment:—what would be the situation of the wicked in the day of judgment:—But he asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ?

The question is now brought forward for our serious consideration. And what ought our thoughts to be concerning Christ? This the Scriptures plainly teach.

1. It is evident from Scripture that Christ was a Divine person. In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead. Godhead means Divinity. He was just like God in his essence: being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his substance. He therefore thought it no robbery to be equal with God. In the first chapter of John his Divinity is abundantly proclaimed. "The Word was with God and the Word was God." The Word here evidently means Christ: for it is said in the 14th verse; "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Who can this Word be if not Christ? Was it not Christ that was made flesh and dwelt among us? It was Christ, then, who was with God, and who was God. The same was in the beginning with God. In the beginning here, no doubt, means in eternity. And he, who was with God in eternity, being therefore, uncreated, must be God; that is, must be pure

divinity, the image of the invisible God ;—the first born of every creature : that is, born before creation rose into being ;—before God said, Let there be light ;—before the morning stars sang together, or the sons of God shouted for joy. This Word is the person, no doubt, whom God addressed, when he said, "Let *us* make man in our image after our likeness." Hence it may be said that, "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Without him &c.—this explains *the sense*, in which it was said, that he made the world, and that he made all things. It does not mean that the Word made all things exclusive of him with whom the Word was in the beginning. This Word is one of the Trinity of whom mention is made by John as bearing record in heaven concerning Christ ; and these three are one. All are agreed that there can be no more than one Supreme Being, but in this one there is comprehended the Word and the Holy Spirit. God created all things ; but without Christ or the Word nothing was made which was made. If it were true then, as some suppose, that God could create a creature great enough to create another creature, yet Christ could not be that creature ; for "without him was not any thing made that was made:"—But, if he were a mere creature, then something would be made without him, unless he created himself, which is impossible. Christ, therefore, is not a creature. The Deity, the Divinity of Christ, therefore, is evident to a demonstration.

2. What think ye concerning the humanity of Christ ? That Christ was human as well as Divine is very obvious from the general tenor of the word of God. He had a human body, and a rational soul. When he was present with the Pharisees, and addressed to them the question, What think ye of Christ ? he appeared as a man ; and the Pharisees had no belief concerning him, as being any thing more than a man. The Pharisees, therefore, were of a sentiment which is *now* called Socinianism.

There are men in our day who believe not in the two natures of Jesus Christ. They believe not that Christ possessed two natures, Divine and human united in one person. The mode of this union, perhaps no man can comprehend; yet that it is a revealed truth is evident from the declaration of Christ concerning himself:—See Revelation xxii. 16. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. In regard to his Divinity he was the root of David, and the bright and morning star: in regard to his humanity he was the offspring of David.

Christ in the days of his flesh was much in prayer. But my belief is, that it was not a nature which prayed, one nature separated from the other; but it was the Person of Christ, though composed of two natures, who offered up prayer to his Father. We may not suppose however that Jesus ever uttered a prayer till the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: Then he "offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

3. What think ye of Christ in respect of his offices as Prophet, Priest and King? "The Lord thy God," says Moses to the people of Israel, "will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." In allusion to this prediction, when Philip found Nathaniel he said unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph. Nathaniel said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Christ was a Prophet in that he foretold future events, especially concerning his own death and resurrection. His instructions as a Prophet were of the last importance: especially what he said to Nicodemus as to the new birth or being born from above, ought never to be forgotten, but to lie with the greatest weight upon every mind. This

doctrine had never been taught by the scribes and Pharisees; it was no part of their religion; and wherever it was propagated, it subverted the whole system of their instructions. They believed not in the doctrine of total depravity, and therefore had no faith in the doctrine of regeneration. But the teaching of Jesus the true Prophet from heaven was, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

The Anointed of God was not only a Prophet, but a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." He must be a Priest in order to accomplish his part of the covenant of redemption between him and his Father in eternity. He must not only be a Priest, but he must be clothed in human nature in order to finish the work of redemption by making an atonement. Had he always remained in heaven, he could never have made reconciliation for the sins of the people. This was a work which made it necessary that he shonld leave the bosom of his Father, assume human nature, and suffer, and die upon the cross. Hence, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

Christ was not only a Prophet and a Priest, but he was and is the King of king's and Lord of lords. Christ is the head of the body, the church; and as King on God's holy hill of Zion, he will govern all things for the good of the church. In the day of judgment he will appear as a King, dividing the righteous from the wicked, and setting the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.—Unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

4. What ought we to think of Christ as a Mediator? Christ is spoken of in a number of places in

the Scriptures as a Mediator. Paul says, in his Epistle to Timothy ; There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Hence the man Christ Jesus is the Mediator between God and men. He must be both Divine and human in order to be a qualified Mediator between God and men. He who was with God in eternity must become man, must take on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, in order to be a suitable Mediator between God and men. That Christ might be in a situation to bruise the serpent's head, he must be clothed with human nature ; he must become the Seed of the woman ;—he must be made of a woman, and made under the law, or he could not redeem those that were under the curse of the law. The Mediator must be in a situation to bleed ; for without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin. Hence, this one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ranson for all. This leads us to inquire,

4. What we ought to think of Christ concerning his making an atonement for sin. Christ has made reconciliation, that is, an atonement, for the sins of the people. This atonement was made in the days of his flesh, by being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He died upon the cross ; there he shed his precious blood for the redemption of man. The blood of Christ is infinitely precious ; the worth of the blood of Christ has no bounds, it is unlimited, being infinite. It was the man Christ Jesus, the Mediator, who bled and died upon the cross. But the man Christ Jesus possessed infinite Divinity ; in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The atonement of Christ, therefore, may with propriety, be said to be infinite. Christ being God as well as man, was able by his death, to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. This bleeding, dying, almighty Saviour is often in the Scriptures denominated God. See Paul's address to the elders of the church at Ephesus : " Take heed

unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." God in this place means Christ; for it was the Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who shed his blood for the redemption of man. And Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, says; "God was manifest in the flesh"—God here means the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us.—"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." Now, who could this be but Jesus Christ?

Christ came down from heaven a pure Spirit, pure Divinity; and in this world God prepared a body for him, agreeable to his own words: "A body hast thou prepared me." In this body his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death: in this body while on the cross he gave up the Ghost. In this body he rose triumphantly from the grave on the third day. And, in about forty days, with this body he ascended to God, as he said to his disciples; "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God:—And the disciples beheld while he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Christ is now on the right hand of power as our Intercessor and Advocate with the Father. He is gone to heaven, but he will come again with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and raise all the dead, and call them before his judgment seat; "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

We have not time to say any thing more concerning the first question:—we come then to the second, which is this:—

Secondly. Whose son is he? that is, whose son is Christ? Christ is a Son, and therefore must have a Father. If Christ were not a Son, Jesus never would

have said to the Pharisees; "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? The Pharisees say unto him, The son of David." This answer, though partially correct, was, nevertheless, extremely imperfect. Christ was according to the flesh the son of David. But infinite ages before he was the son of David, *he was the Son of God:* In eternity his glory was veiled: but when he was made flesh, his glory was seen, as the glory "of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Nothing is more evident from the word of God than that Christ is the Son of God: see John iii. 16—18. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son—God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world—he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." When Jesus said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter replied; "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." And if Christ were the Son of God, then God was his Father. Christ calls God his Father. He said to God: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, "he lifted up his eyes and said Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." And to animate his disciples, he said at another time: "In my Father's house are many mansions."—He said also to Thomas, and to others: "If ye had known me ye would have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." And, speaking of the safe condition of his disciples on account of their being in his hand, he adds: "And no man is able to pluck them

out of my Father's hand. They were equally safe whether in his hand or his Father's. For, "I and my Father" saith he "are one." The exertion of power, whether it be by the Father or the Son, is almighty power, and under the direction of infinite goodness. When Christ says, he can do nothing of himself; the meaning is, he can do nothing contrary to the mind and will of his Father. If he could, they two would not be one. They are one in Divinity essence and design:—Not one and the same identical person; for such a supposition would be inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinity.

Christ calls God his Father in too many places for me to be able at this time to enumerate; neither is it necessary; enough has been brought into view to make it evident that God is the Father of Christ; and, therefore, we see whose Son he is.

The Father and the Son are also, spoken of in the word of God, as being distinct the one from the other. The Father is not the Son; and the Son is not the Father. To this purpose is John's benediction on the elect lady and her children:—"Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

Christ never said that he was God the Father; but always declared himself to be the Son of the Father;—and that he was sent from the bosom of the Father. And, as the Son of God in eternity, became the Seed of the woman in time, that he might shed his blood for the redemptiom of a ruined world;—Christ being the Son of God, he must be God, that is, of the same nature and essence with the Father.†

† "There can," says Taylor, "be no real distinction between the Father and the Son; unless they so differ from each other, that what is peculiar to the Father, is wanting in the Son; and what is peculiar to the Son, is wanting in the Father. Now that property, which belongs exclusively to the Father, or the Son, must be numbered among the perfections of God; for in the Divine nature no imperfection can exist. It follows then, that some perfection is lacking both in the Father and in the

And this the Jews considered as being the meaning of Christ, when he said, that he was the Son of God. Knowing that Mary was the mother of Jesus, he was not regarded by the Jews as being any thing more than a man. They, therefore, considered him guilty of blasphemy, for saying that God was his Father,

Son, so that neither is endowed with infinite perfection, which is essential to the Divine nature. It must be conceded, then, that the essence of the Father and the Son is not one and the same."

Since this Sermon was written, Professor Stuart's Letters have fallen into my hands, from which the above was taken, as quoted by him, from The English Theological Magazine V. I. No. 4 p. 111. 1770. This author, I believe is considered as one of the most learned among the Unitarians. It is possible, however, that his reasoning may, in some instances, be inconclusive ; there may be a falacy in some of his arguments. A few remarks, in reply to the foregoing statements, it is thought, therefore, may not be amiss. If reckoned of no weight in answering a unitarian objection, they may yet reflect light on a page in the Sermon.

It is said, " There can be no real distinction between the Father and the Son, unless they so differ from each other, that what is peculiar to the Father is wanting in the Son ; and what is peculiar to the Son is wanting in the Father," &c.—Now, it is granted " that what is peculiar to the Father is wanting in the Son," &c. It does not, however, hence follow that there is any imperfection in the Father or the Son. Even, if the objector's supposition were correct, the consequence would not follow. It does not follow that because three are less than four, that therefore, four and five are more than nine. It is evident that to be the only begotten of the Father, is peculiar to the Son, and that this peculiarity is wanting in the Father: still, it by no means follows that there is any imperfection in the Father or the Son. For God to be the Father of the Word in eternity, implies no imperfection in the Divinity of the Father or the Word.

It was peculiar to the Son, to take upon him the seed of Abraham, and to be the offspring as well as the root of David. It was also peculiar to the Son, to be sent into the world for man's redemption ; and alike peculiar to the Father in sending him. The Father so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, &c. And the Son so loved the world as to come and die that sinners might live. Hence peculiarities do not imply imperfection. Although the Father begat the Son, and the Son is the only begotten of the Father ; yet, from this, it is a plain case, that no imperfection can be inferred.—The objector

making himself God. To this declaration of himself their reply is this: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man makest thyself God."—"Say ye of him" says Christ, "whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, *I am the Son* of God?" The Jews knew that if Christ was the Son of God, he must be a Divine person, of the same substance, nature and essence with the Father. Hence, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So then, the only Redeemer of sinners "is the Lord Jesus Christ; who, being the eternal Son of God became man; and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. In "reasoning out of the Scriptures," we not only discern the eternity and Divinity of the Son of God; but we perceive also that the doctrine of the Trinity is found in this sacred record. Of these truths no instruction is imparted by the light of na-

concludes his argument, by saying; "It must be conceded, then, that the essence of the Father and the Son is not one and the same." I see not how it follows that because there is something peculiar to the Father and Son that, therefore, their essence is not one and the same.

If Christ is not the eternal Son of God; or in other words, if God had no Son, only by anticipation, till the child Jesus was born of the virgin Mary; then, I grant that the essence of the Father and the Son is not one and the same. But if the Son of God is an eternal Son, then his nature, essence and Divinity must necessarily be one and the same with the Father. The Logos, translated the Word, who was with God, and was God, and is the only begotten of the Father, is a peculiarity without imperfection; and, consequently the essence of the Father and the Son, notwithstanding any peculiarities, may be one and the same. No Divinity can belong to the Son of God, unless his essence be one and the same with the Father; and his essence cannot be one and the same with the Father, unless he be the only begotten of the Father in eternity; for Divine essence cannot have a beginning; what begins to exist cannot be of the same nature and essence with the Godhead.

ture; but they are clearly unfolded in the word of God. The Scriptures teach that, "There are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Nothing is taught in the New Testament more abundantly than the things concerning the Son of God and the Father who sent him, and the Holy Spirit by whose influence sinners are led to the saving knowledge of the Son of God, and faith in his name. The concluding words of Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians clearly expresses the doctrine of the Trinity :—" The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." " The Apostle John wrote his Gospel with a principal view to maintain the Divinity and equality of each Person in the Trinity." Christ said many things concerning the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. " He commanded his apostles and their successors in the ministry, to baptize visible believers in the name of this sacred Trinity. He promised to send the Holy Ghost to comfort his disciples, and to convince and convert sinners."

2. If what we have heard be correct, we are led to doubt the truth of the doctrine of pre-existence. It is, however the opinion of some sincere Christians, and even learned men, men who have studied the Scriptures diligently, that the human soul of Christ pre-existed. They suppose that the human soul of Christ existed before the foundations of the world were laid; before God said, Let there be light: and there was light. They suppose the soul to have been created and fitted to occupy the body which was conceived in the womb and born of the virgin Mary. But whether his soul existed prior to the birth of the body, in any other sense or manner than the souls of men pre-exist, is a question. This sentiment, however, does not shake the foundation, unless it be connected with the sentiment that there is no other Divinity belonging to the Son of God, than what is embraced by this pre-existent human soul.

3. It is evident from what we have heard, that Christ is, and always was, the Son of God: it is also as evident that Christ the Son of God is not a creature. God calls Christ his Son, his beloved Son, his own Son, his only Son, his only begotten Son. Still, it is evident from scripture that Christ the Son of God is not a creature: for "without him was not any thing made that was made." He, surely, cannot be made, who himself made all things. We arrive, then, at this inference, which is as evident as a mathematical demonstration: The inference is this: *There is an essential difference between being begotten and being created;* yea, when applied to Christ the only begotten of the Father, there is an *infinite difference.* Eternal creation, or creation in eternity involves a contradiction; but the Word, who is the Son of God, existed in the beginning. "In the beginng was the Word," &c.; that is, the existence of the Son is coeval with the existence of God the Father. But the scriptures represent the Word as the only begotten of the Father. The Word, therefore, who is the Son of God, was begotten in eternity. Consequently, begetting does not mean the same as creating: being begotten, therefore, when applied to Christ, the Son of God, is no part of creation. If the Son of God is not a creature he must be pure Divinity, God over all blessed for ever. His being just like the Father does not imply creation or derivation. What is now observed accords with the sentiment of Calvin; as is evident from his letter to Gryneus:——

"When we heard ourselves impeached by Caroli of the heresy of Arius, and then of that of Sabellius, it did not much disturb us, as our ears had become seasoned to such calumnies, and we entertained the confident expectation, that it would presently vanish into smoke. By openly denying the charges, we did all that was immediately in our power. This was abundantly sufficient to satisfy all persons of religion and integrity. Our Catechism was written a little before this time, and published in French. In this

we testified that—THE FATHER, SON *and* SPIRIT *were embraced in the* ONE ESSENCE *of* GOD; and we so distinguished one from the other, as to leave no room for perverse suspicions. We taught for instance, that CHRIST was the true and natural SON *of* GOD, who had possessed one DIVINITY *with the* FATHER *from eternity;* that in the appoined time, HE *had taken our flesh for our redemption.*"

4. If things have been stated according to the Scriptures, then it is evident that the doctrine of eternal generation is in perfect harmony with the word of God.—The learned Dr. Cave considers Melchisedec as a type of Christ. And by the type, he gives us his idea of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "He was," says he, "referring to Hebrews vii. 3. without genealogy, without having any pedigree extant upon record: whence the ancient Syriack version truly expresses the sense of the whole passage thus; whose neither father nor mother are written among the generations, that is, the genealogies of the ancient patriarchs. And in this he eminently typified Christ, of whom this is really true: he is without father in respect of his human nature, begotten only of a pure virgin; without mother in respect of his Divinity, being begotten of his Father, before all worlds, by an eternal and ineffable generation."

Hence, to beget does not mean the same as to make. In respect of his humanity, Christ was made of a woman; in regard to his Divine nature, it was not made, but begotten of the Father. Abraham begat Isaac, but Abraham did not make Isaac. He who made all things is God. Man was made conjointly by the Father and the only begotten of the Father. Accordingly God said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." Because begetting among the creatures of God implies production or derivavation; some have been led to suppose that the same thing is implied in respect of the only begotten of God the Father. Though these men deal in mystery as much as other men; yet, this is too great a

mystery for them to believe, that begotten is not the same as derivation. But however great the mystery, whatever is proved from Scripture must be true. There is no inconsistency between truth and mystery. We must believe the truth, whether we can comprehend it or not. The mode of Divine existence is a mystery, whether it respect the eternal power and Godhead of the Father, or the eternal power and Godhead of the only begotten of the Father. He who made all things was begotten, not created. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist"

5. It appears from the subject, that there is no medium between renouncing eternal generation and Unitarianism. That is, to be consistent, if we give up the doctrine of eternal generation, we must, necessarily, be Unitarians. There are some, however, that hold strongly to the Divinity of Christ, who, as strongly, renounce the doctrine of eternal generation. They believe in the Divinity of the Son; but they do not believe that the Son, "with respect to his Divine nature, was begotten of the Father." There are some, therefore, who believe in the doctrine of the Trinity and Divinity of Christ, whose views of the Son of God accord with Arianism, or the doctrine of Arius, who denied that the Son of God was of the same substance with the Father. A wrong interpretation of Scripture leads men into errors, some times into gross and dangerous errors. And, therefore, we are in danger of adopting sentiments which coalesce with heresy, when in truth we neither mean so nor think so: we have great need therefore of caution, and of fervency in prayer for the true knowledge of the word of God. But,

6. If what we have heard be true, it follows that Christ as to his Divine nature is the only begotten of

the Father. Some suppose that Christ is not the only begotten of the Father, except as it respects his human nature. They suppose the relation of Father and Son was formed in time; that, in eternity, no such relation subsisted. This relation, they suppose, had its beginning when "God miraculously occasioned the conception of the humanity of Christ." So that according to them, God had no Son till Mary brought forth her first born, otherwise than by anticipation. It is true that the angel said to Mary; "Therefore, also, that holy thing, that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Christ, however, was a Son in the bosom of his Father in the beginning; and in respect of his human nature, he was made of a woman: but by means of his union with the Seed of the woman, he does not lose his name as the real Son of God. Although Christ was the Son of God in heaven, yet he retained his name, when he left the bosom of his Father, and became flesh, and dwelt among us. Christ, therefore, is often called the Son of God, and, as often, the Son of man. When either phrase is used, it is always understood to mean the same person. Christ is the only Saviour; but it was the Son of man who came to seek and to save that which was lost. It is thought, however, by some, that Christ was not the Son of God until he became the Son of man by being born of a woman. "He was God's Son," says a late author, "because God begat his humanity." Conceiving that Christ as a *Divine* person was not begotten, it is taken for granted that begotten implies creation or derivation. But it has been proved that Christ, as a Divine person, is the only begotten of the Father, and yet that he is not a creature, is not derived.

When Christ, in the days of his flesh, said that he was the Son of God, did he mean nothing more than that God begat his humanity? This I think cannot be. Did the Jews understand him to mean nothing more? if so why did they stone him as a blasphe-

mer? What of blasphemy could there be in his saying that God begat his humanity? They might as well have stoned him had he said, that—"God is the Father of the rain, and hath begotten the drops of the dew."

It is true that the humanity of the Son of God was caused in a different manner from the common course of nature. But we do not learn from the Bible that God is the Father of nothing more than merely the humanity of Christ. Neither do we learn that *even* the human nature of the Son was the only begotten of the *first* person in the Godhead. It is written Luke i. 35. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Hence we see that it was not the first person of the Godhead, but the third, "who miraculously occasioned the conception of the humanity of Christ."

Is the humanity of Christ the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person? When God said to his Son; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;"—did he address his humanity only? When he said: "Let all the angels of God worship him;" did he mean that they should worship his humanity? For say our opponents, The humanity of Christ only constitutes him the Son of God. They say that God has no other only begotten Son, than that holy thing which was born of Mary. They do not allow that the Word, who was in the beginning with God, was the Son of God. They do not allow that God had a Son till the "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

7. The subject leads us to see that the Son is not the Father, but "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." When the Prophet Isaiah calls the Son the everlasting Father, he cannot mean that the Son is the Father of the Son, or that Christ is the Father of Christ. Christ is the Father

of the church, and, the Father of mercies. But if Christ the Son were the Father, then he could not be the second, but must be the first person in the Godhead. Therefore it was not the Father, but the only begotten of the Father, who was sent into world for the redemption of fallen man. So, it was the Son who cried upon the cross : "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"—and expired, saying : "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.—Now when the centurion and others saw what was done; they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Some suppose that Christ was the Father in the beginning, but that when he was united to that holy thing which was born of Mary, he became the Son of the Father, and is thenceforth called the Son of God. Hence, their interpretation of Scripture is this : He, who has seen the Son, has seen the Father, because, in their view, Christ is the Father. The same as if it were said : He, who has seen George Washington, has seen general Washington. But when Christ said ; I and my Father are one ; this could not be his meaning. It has been already shown that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons : Christ therefore said of the Jews : "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." He said also : "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." They are, however, so mysteriously united in nature and essence as to be but one. Each one of these two possesses all the perfections of each. Each possesses infinite natural and moral perfections. That things are so is evident from the declaration of the Son : "The Father is in me and I in him." Is the Father, then, omnipotent ? so is the Son. Is the Father able to raise the dead ? so is the Son. Hence he said : "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.—The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth."—Does the Father know what is in man?

so does the Son. Is the Father able to forgive sins? so is the Son.—"God is love." So is the Son. The benevolence of the Father and the Son in the redemption of man is equal.—But let it be remembered, that he who sends, and he who was sent, are not one and the same identical person.

Hence it is evident that the personality of the Father and the Son ought not to be identified. The Son is the Mediator; so is not the Father. The Father is God, between whom and men the Son is the Mediator. The Father is not our Advocate and Intercessor; but the Son is our Advocate and Intercessor with the Father. It was not God the Father, but the Lamb of God, who died and rose again, and now sitteth on the right hand of power, and will come again, at the last day, to judge the world. Hence, the Father and the Son are distinctly two; but in design, nature and essence, ONE. The Father existed in eternity; so did the Son.†

† Here an objection arises, which is stated and answered by Rev. Andrew Fuller as follows:——

"Sonship, it is said, implies *posteriority*, or that Christ, as a Son, could not have existed till after the Father. To attribute no other divinity to him, therefore, than what is denoted by sonship, is attributing none to him; as nothing can be divine which is not eternal. But if this reasoning be just, it will prove that the divine purposes are not eternal, or that there was once a point in duration in which God was without thought, purpose, or design. For it is as true, and may as well be said, that God must exist before he could purpose, as that the Father must exist before he had a Son: but if God must exist before he could purpose, there must have been a point in duration in which he existed without purpose, thought, or design; that is, in which he was not God! The truth is, the whole of this apparent difficulty arises from the want of distinguishing between the order of nature and the order of time. In the order of nature, God must have existed before he could purpose; but in the order of time, or duration, he never existed without his purpose: for a God without thought or purpose, were no God. And thus in the order of nature, the Father must have existed before the Son; but in that of duration, he never existed without the Son. The Father and the Son therefore are properly eternal."

8. No distinction ought to be made between Christ and the Son of God. Christ is identically the same person with him, who is the Son of God. God sent his only begotten Son into the world, for the salvation of man; and, this Son is Christ, the Lord's Anointed. Jesus told the woman of Samaria, that he was the Messias, "which is called Christ." And in answer to the declaration of Jesus to Nathanael, that he saw him under the fig tree, Nathanael replied, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel." Now, it is evident by comparing these passages of scripture, that Christ is the same identical person with the Son of God. This also is evident from the preaching of Paul: for as soon as he was converted and commenced a preacher, the first thing which we hear concerning him, is, "that he was preaching Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God," and proving that this is very Christ; so that the Jews were confounded by the demonstration and power of the apostle's testimony in defence of the truth, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, who, according to the flesh, was made of the seed of David.

9. We see what is necessary on our part, in order to salvation. We cannot be saved unless we have true faith in the Son of God. The Pharisees did not believe in Christ as the Son of God; neither did they love him in any character. But, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed."

The Jews would not believe in the Son of God as having an existence before Abraham. But in order to salvation, instead of imitating the Jews, we must believe on the Son in his true character, as stated in the word of God. And he, who believeth in the Son in this character, "hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Our faith must not only be orthodox concerning the Son of God, but we must have that faith which worketh by love, and implies a pure heart, or we

cannot be saved by him. We must not only hear the sayings of Christ, but we must do them, or we have no title to eternal life. Salvation is far from the wicked:—But no one will miss of salvation, who conforms his life to the teaching of Christ, and is meet for the blessings pronounced when he said:—"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.—For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven."

"Jesus did many signs which are not written:—But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." AMEN.

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