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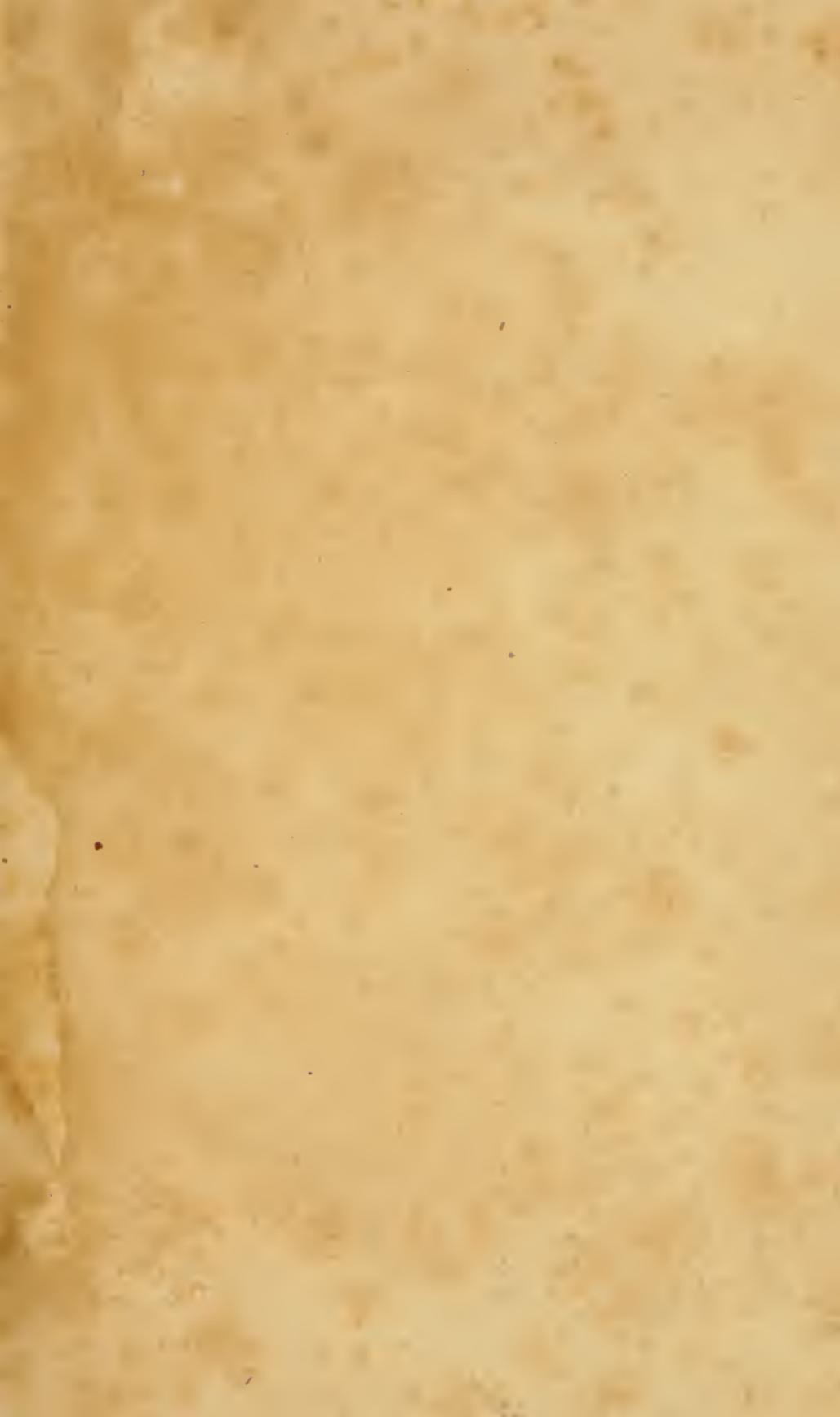
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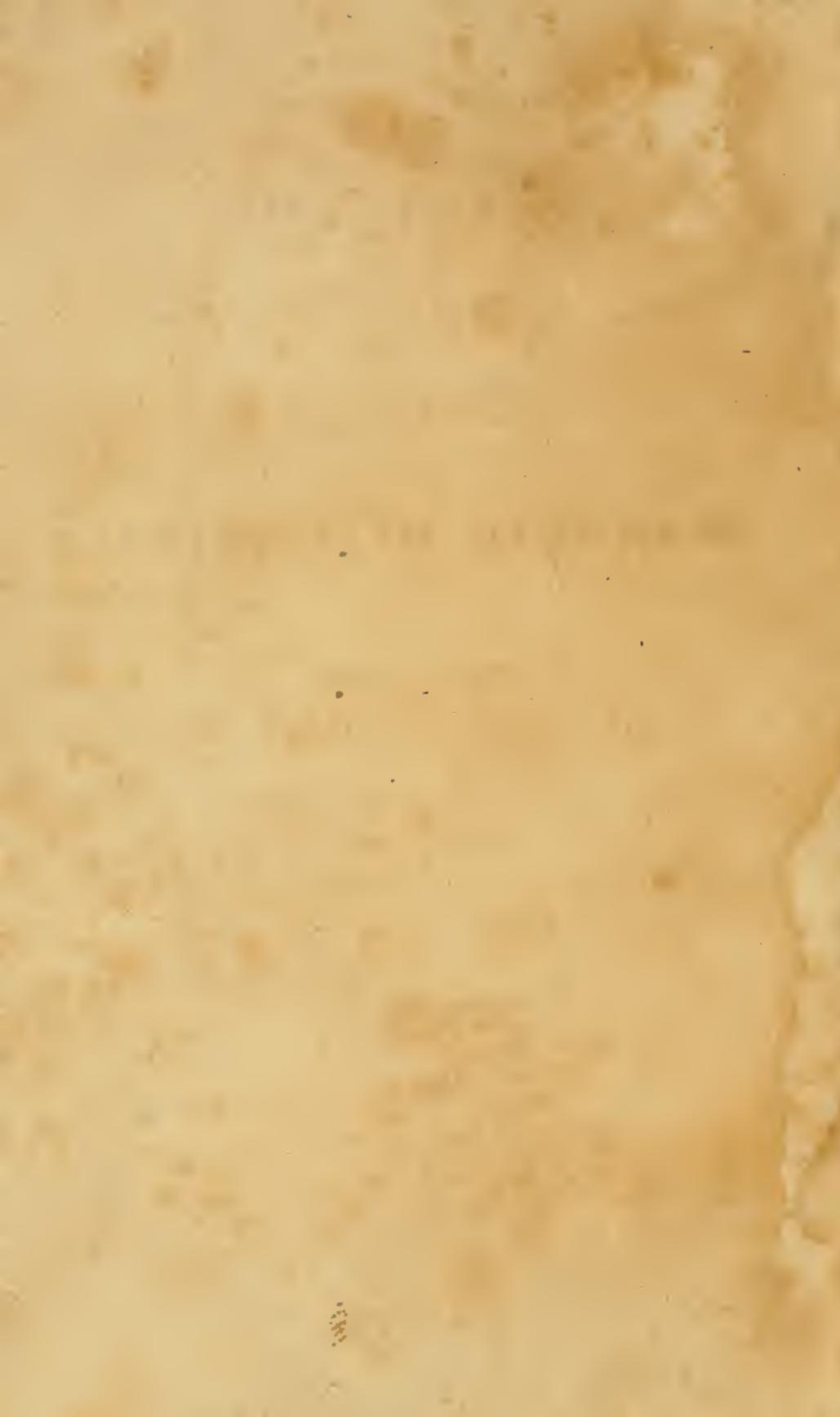
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A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

ETERNAL

Sonship of Christ.

BY JAMES KIDD, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES IN MARISCHAL-COLLEGE
AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN, &c. &c.

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TO

THE REVEREND ASHBEL GREEN, D.D. LL.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW-JERSEY, &c.

AND

THE REVEREND GEORGE C. POTTS,

MINISTER OF THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN

PHILADELPHIA,

THE FOLLOWING DISSERTATION

IS, WITH MUCH RESPECT,

ESTEEM, AND GRATITUDE,

INSCRIBED, BY

THE AUTHOR.



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P R E F A C E.



THE doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ has been received by the Orthodox Church in all ages.—Of late years, however, its truth has been questioned; and the subject has, in consequence, become a topic of controversy amongst different classes of Christians of no inconsiderable standing in the religious world.—Induced by this discussion to examine the question with particular care,—the Author presents to the public the result of his inquiries. His object has not been to meet all the cavils of controvertists, but, as far as possible, to ascertain the exact tenor of Scripture. He trusts his research has been conducted with impartiality and candour. It has been undertaken without the most distant feeling of prejudice against the opposers of the doctrine which he has

vindicated ; several of whom he ranks among his correspondents, and most esteemed personal friends.

Though the following Dissertation forms, by itself, a distinct work,—the Author presumes to think that it may be read with additional advantage after his “ *Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity.*”

DISSERTATION

ON THE

Eternal Sonship of Christ.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

MAN, in every age, has directed his attention to that superior power by which the energies of creation are wielded. From the contemplation of himself, and the beings with whom he mingles, he has been directed, either through the medium of sense or reflection, to survey that which is mightier than himself or his fellows. An impulse, undefined, inherent in his nature, has led him to conclude, that all power does not stop within those limits by which he feels himself circumscribed; and his excursive faculties have carried him in quest of the last link

in the chain of the universe. A something, within, tells him, that the displays of intelligence, or the emotions of affection, are allied to objects greater than the sensible beings whom he beholds. This conviction has induced him to undertake and prolong the search for that superintending principle, by which, in consequence of its greater power, he concludes that his happiness or sufferings are affected. He has ransacked the earth, he has held converse with the stars, he has invoked creation around him, he has sought to enter the recesses, dark, fleeting, and illusive, beyond him, to obtain the knowledge and propitiate the favour of this pervading might. The opinions which man has formed, and the conclusions which he has drawn on this subject, depend on the means afforded him to develop the intricacy, and on the state of the powers of his mind which are employed in the evolution of these means, to acquire the wished-for result. But the actual condition of man has proved an insuperable barrier in the pursuit. It is the repelling influence which has resisted his progress and defeated his attempt. Corrupt in his nature, and depraved in his desires, he has desired to find this superior being

“like unto himself,” that his wishes might be gratified, without fear. Limited in his knowledge, his ken has been unable to exercise the means in his power. Degraded in his conceptions, he has, in general, figured out one whose greatness consists in uncontrolled vice, and whose power is exhibited in the fulfilment of unhallowed passions. Confined by his senses, his research has been fettered within the circle of sense. Though the pursuit, in itself, is the greatest wisdom, his method of conducting it exhibits one continued career of folly, ending in the most deplorable consequences. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Thus “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people;” thus the world was overwhelmed with the gods, the images, and altars, and temples, and oracles, the lust and murders, and unutterable crimes of Polytheism. The research, calculated in its own nature to lead to the happiest results, from the mode of conducting it, devastated mankind with a crowd of woes; and the wrecks of that soul, which man himself had over-

thrown, were devoted to "the creature, more than the Creator." Yet, in the midst of this desolation, some minds arose to shed streaks of light "athwart the gloom profound." A congeries of those who elevated themselves from the surrounding ruin have left record that they did not wholly subscribe to the demoralizing creed, and, by their precepts, have endeavoured to inculcate, if not pure—purer sentiments and practice, than then swayed mankind. Yet the wisest of these philosophers were able to advance but a few steps in that path where the rest of men had gone so lamentably astray. Their greatest efforts were only valuable, in comparison with the existing ignorance; they were unsatisfied with their own attempts; and Socrates, the greatest of these sages, has left on record the inefficacy of their attainments, unless He whom they sought should seek man, and proclaim to him the nature and will of that Being "whose goings forth" he could not scan. That Being has sought man, and has revealed himself to him; the proclamation of "glad tidings" has been made; the messenger, foretold by prophets and hymned by poets, has come, and, in his coming, has brought "healing in his wings" to

the disordered soul. In the inspired scriptures, man is told what he is, and what the great First Cause is; what the Deity has required of him, and what the Deity will perform in his behalf. This volume unfolds, as far as it is necessary for the moral being to know, and as far as his faculties can comprehend, the doctrine, the nature, and qualities of that God, "with whom we have to do." On the importance of a right knowledge of the Deity we do not now expatiate: that knowledge is the foundation of all our hopes, in time and eternity. The consequences of ignorance of his nature are visible in what the heathen world was, and is; "as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." The command of God, most frequently urged, is, to *know himself*—to know that "he is the Lord." When he smiles upon his people, well pleased; when his "compassions" for their ignorance "flow, and fail not;" when he "sets his eyes upon them for good"—his promise, indicative of his purpose of love, is, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord." When the prophet sees the days of the Messiah, revealing the nature and will of God, he describes the

Spirit of the Lord as resting upon him—"the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." This spirit is said to "make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord." All knowledge is said to be absorbed in this knowledge—"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." The voice of nature, evident in the efforts of man, without revelation, through the ages of Paganism; the voice of heaven, in the revelation which it has made; the voice of that Spirit which first "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life," when he "became a living soul," is, to that soul—KNOW ME. Accordingly, the Christian churches have, in all periods, treated this doctrine as the most important of their belief, because it involves within itself all other articles of faith and practice. The summary which they have found, when searching the scriptures, is, that God, in his essence, is one and indivisible; and that, in that essence, there are three Persons, in related states, viz. the Eternal Father, the Eternal Son, and the Eternal Holy Ghost.

Centuries have passed over Christendom; it has had its dark and its enlightened eras,

its corrupt and reformed churches, its philosophical and theological advocates—and this belief, collateral with that of a Trinity, has been firm as the belief of Divinity itself. But, in recent years, a new opinion has been boldly announced, and ingeniously maintained, that, while the scriptures reveal the existence of three persons in the Godhead, they have not revealed their existence, as regards two of these Persons, in the related states of Eternal Father and Eternal Son. Philosophy, philology, criticism, and authorities, have been employed in this speculation.

The object of the following observations is to maintain, that the doctrine of the related state of Eternal Son, or the Eternal Sonship of the second Person of the Trinity, is revealed in “the scripture of truth.”

In this investigation, the inspired volume is the uniform standard to which the writer wishes to adhere—comparing scripture with scripture, and deducing legitimate inferences from the obvious import of its contents. Such an investigation, conducted with the humility and reverence which the subject requires, is calculated, by the process, and by the conclusion attained, to enlarge our views of God, as he has revealed his nature—to

expand the capacity in the contemplation of the grandeur of Him who fills heaven and earth with his glory—to illustrate the self-existent aspect of the being of God, and his redeeming aspect in the restoration of man—and to explore the everlasting purpose of the glorious Three, who, in their eternally related states, said, in consultation, “Let us make man;” and who, in the development of that purpose, have created man anew. It is an investigation calculated to elevate the immortal spirit to communion with Him, who, in immense love and intelligence, “inhabiting the depths of eternity,” has infused love and intelligence into the angelic armies of heaven—into the “just men made perfect”—and, in a state of progressive improvement, into those inhabitants of earth whom he has chosen. The examination conduces, when properly conducted, to a charitable and beneficent frame of mind. It is not respecting the fact, whether Jesus Christ be a Divine Person, equal with the Father, but whether he exist, as that Divine Person, in the related state of *Eternal Son*. There is no scope, arising from the subject itself, for the display of angry passions or polemical weapons. The position, sought to be esta-

blished, is not, whether our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be God, but whether, as God, his title and mode of existence be *the Son of God*. Regarding, therefore, pure uncreated essence, employed in the research of that God who is love, the survey ought not to produce discordant feelings; but ought, in the spirit of him, whom we seek to discover in his own revelation, to reflect that love, the eternally related state of which, in the persons of the Godhead, it is our essay to explore. The question ought not to engender one unharmonious emotion. It does not, in its more immediate aspect, refer to man or his condition; it does not teach what *he* is, but what *God* is. Yet, in its consequences, man's best interests are involved, and, when the decision is properly deduced from the word of God, his interest, in the result, is intense. We are placed, by the issue of this question, on a position which connects us with past and future ages. We are either to hail the belief of the churches in this doctrine, conveyed through eighteen centuries, as a part of the "faith once delivered," by Christ, "to the saints," or, as the fallacious decision of those, who, either from ignorance or deceit, acquiesced in "a cunningly devised

fable." We are especially interested in the effects which will be produced on posterity, to whom, by our belief or disbelief in this doctrine, according to the word of God, we are either to transmit a troubled and tainted stream of error, or a flow of pure and unadulterated truth. But, the position attempted to be proved, does not depend on the venerable sanction of antiquity, or on the dictates of Fathers, Reformers, Councils, or Synods; we rely on revelation alone, as far as understood by us, in the word of truth.—We do not condemn vigorous research and philosophical inquiry into any system which has been established; but, if no other proof of its truth be found, except its antiquity, and the illustrious names associated with it, —let it fall. We do not condemn any opinion because it is new. We do not oppose those who deny the Eternal Sonship of Christ, because their tenets are comparatively novel; but, because we apprehend these tenets are contrary to the Scriptures. Neither the shade of antiquity, nor the glare of novelty, can interrupt the steady light which unalterable truth casts on its principles.

An objection may be made, by some, to

this undertaking, that the subject is too abstruse,—too intricate to be unravelled,—and that it is soaring too far into “the deep things of God.” The objection conceals itself in a *petitio principii*, a *begging of the question*. The very point at issue is, that God has made a clear and specific revelation that Christ is the Eternal Son of God, and that, though in one sense, all the ways of God are mysterious,—though “clouds and darkness are round about him,” yet, the doctrine, and objects announced in his word, as the objects of belief, must be approachable by the intellect. In other words, the Bible was promulgated to be understood. The opponents of the doctrine contended for, as well as its adherents, are agreed in one point, viz. that the subject may be understood by a correct knowledge of the Bible. To it they both appeal for the confirmation or rejection of their respective tenets. We shall now make this appeal, and commence the investigation of the subject.

This Dissertation, on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, will naturally be divided into three series of positions.

I. The principles connected with the subject, in which the supporters and opponents of the doctrine agree.

II. The principles in which they may or may not agree.

III. The principles which are maintained by the supporters, and denied by the opponents, of the doctrine.

May truth, not victory, be our aim!—May Christian love and knowledge, not party zeal and prejudice, be our guidance! May glory to God be the result!

CHAPTER II.

The principles connected with the subject, in which the supporters and opponents of the doctrine agree.

THESE parties both agree in the doctrine of *the Unity of the Divine Essence, and the subsistence of Three Persons in that Essence.*

It is proper to remark, at this stage of our observations, that we assume as granted, the existence of the Trinity in Unity. This controversy does not embrace the subject of the Trinity, or involve the discussion of the Divinity of Christ.—The reader will readily perceive the exact point at issue. It is this: The existence of three persons in the Godhead is mutually admitted. The perfect Divinity of Christ, as well as his perfect humanity, or that he is “God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever,” is mutually admitted. The question is, whether this person, who is perfect God, is, as a Divine person, the Eternal Son of God. There is no dispute between us and those

who deny the Eternal Sonship, respecting his nature, and his perfections inherent in that nature; but the object of controversy is respecting the mode of relation which exists between this person and the other two persons of the Godhead. In one word, we do not contend against Unitarians, Socinians, and Arians, but against those, who, fully acknowledging the Deity of Christ, deny his Eternal Sonship. As, therefore, the principles which we have now mentioned are the subjects of mutual agreement, there can be no room for controversial remarks on these topics.

Chequered as the history of the church of Christ has been, and though its aspect has presented every varied appearance of faithful adherence or determined hostility to the truth, yet, as a collective body, it has preserved entire this grand article of its belief—the existence of the Godhead in Trinity. The early introduction of an insidious philosophy amongst many of its votaries, aided by all the deceitful efforts of the great and opulent, did not undermine the reliance on this doctrine. The arm of power could not crush it; the power of an Emperor could not remove it; the fire of persecution could not extirpate, nor the smile of treacherous accommodation

allure its adherents. Though every other Christian principle has, at one period or other, been apparently lost in the tide of error, or buried in the darkness of bigotry, and of a philosophy, falsely so called,—this principle has withstood the flood, and appeared through the gloom. When the Christian church, by the efforts of malignity, was disunited into warring parties, this doctrine could not be dissevered from those, whose mutual opposition was displayed in every other point, except in the retention of this doctrine.

The three grand divisions of Christendom, viz. the Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant churches, whatever virulence they may have exhibited to each other, in other matters, have maintained, in its integrity, their adherence to the Triune principle.—Though the crescent has triumphed over the cross, in the loveliest domains of the Greek church,—though that church has debased the purity of the faith, and the fiends of superstition, of ignorance, and vice, have been let loose through its territories,—though Christian benevolence must sigh over its Caloyers and Papas in prostration before the *Panagia*,—though desolation has marked its reign over

the seat of the seven churches, and their "candlestick has been removed out of its place;"—still, we trust, there will, even there, be found some, who have "held fast" what they "first received and heard." Through an overruling Providence, they have still retained the doctrine of the Holy Three, and the atonement of the Son of God. Even now,* the Christian heart beats in unison with these descendants of the great and good. The long-lowered banner of the Cross, unfurled from its dust and humiliation, floats over the Parthenon, on the Acropolis of Athens. While the symbol, reared by Constantine, leads to the battle for religion and liberty, against the tyrant Moslem; and the hopes and wishes of every free-born spirit are congenial with those of the struggling Greeks—the hopes and wishes of the believer's spirit, for the restoration of purity of faith, and for freedom to the enslaved soul, are excited by the remembrance that those, combating for earthly liberty from that hill where Paul preached, retain the faith of that Godhead which he declared. Though the annals of the Roman Catholic church are

* September, 1821.

stained with blood, and its details exhibit a frightful catalogue of errors and crimes, yet the truth of this fundamental doctrine has been inviolably maintained, and has survived the general wreck which men were permitted to make of the rest of the Christian edifice. It is one of the peculiar glories of the different churches of Protestantism, that, in all the Creeds which they have drawn up, the doctrine of the Trinity has been the prominent article. This has been their comfort in the hour of adversity, and the test of their fellowship in the time of prosperity. They have retained it in the fertile regions and thronged cities of Europe; they have carried it to the swamps and deserts of America.—Admiring their resolute adherence to this doctrine, we, however, deprecate every species of persecution, or civil impediment, to which those of opposite sentiments have been exposed, and rejoice that just notions of liberality have, in the present day, removed the obstacles which ought never to interrupt the civil rights of those who differ from the rest of the community in opinions purely religious. The churches, which have been connected by interest or contiguity, have not only upheld this principle, but those, who have been for ages separated from,

and unconnected with, the rest of Christendom, and whose very existence was unknown by the nations of Europe, have kept this article of faith. The Christian religion, professed in Abyssinia, and in the churches recently discovered in India, has, in the insulated situation of these churches, and in their long seclusion from all other believing nations, maintained the faith of the Trinity derived from the apostles. The homage of earthly potentates is simultaneously rendered by European States, whose treaties of concord and amity are concluded in the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. The two greatest enemies of Christianity, the Jews and Moslems, have united in the rejection of this doctrine; and the Christian world, in the expression of its faith, in a national or church capacity, has united to maintain this doctrine.

The second principle, in which both parties agree, is, that the Supreme Being, in his *procedure with created intelligences*, and in his *exhibitions to them*, declares that he exists in states of personality, whether these are denominated Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or are known by other collateral designations. We and our opponents agree, that God, in his dealings with man, has announced that

the persons, in his essence, act in a related capacity in man's redemption, being termed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The opponents of the Eternal Sonship advance, that the person who more immediately accomplished our redemption, became Son when he assumed our nature, and appeared on earth; while its advocates affirm that this assumption did not constitute his Sonship, which is essential to the Divine nature, and consequently eternal. We wish, particularly, to impress on our readers, the difference between the principle in which both agree, viz. the existence of the acknowledged related states in the Godhead, *as regards man*; and the principle, which we are subsequently to attempt to explain, viz. the existence of these related states, *as regards the Godhead itself*. The one is constituted by the aspect of the Divinity to man; the other is constituted by the aspect which the Divinity has to itself. For example: when that person, who accomplished our redemption, is termed the Priest of the church, his Priesthood arises from the aspect which he bears to man; his Priesthood, and the existence of man, are necessarily and mutually co-relative, as he could not be Priest of the church without the

existence of man. But, when we examine his designation of immutable God, this has reference to the Divinity totally independent of creation, as the quality of immutability, and his own being, are essentially coeval. When the supporters and opponents of the Eternal Sonship agree concerning the personality of the Godhead, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the latter refer to the procedure of these three toward creation. When the former announce their view of the doctrine, they refer to the existence of Deity, independent of creation, and maintain that this doctrine, i. e. the Eternal Sonship, is neither affected nor changed by creation.

CHAPTER III.

The principles in which the supporters and opponents of the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship may or may not agree.

THE doctrine connected with the subject, in which both classes may or may not agree, is that the three persons existing in the Godhead, exist in relation or in related states to each other; and that these related states are essential in the Godhead, and eternal as the Godhead itself. We have already remarked, that this Essay is not an attempt to prove, from Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, and, consequently, belief in the existence of the three persons of the Godhead is assumed as admitted. All who believe the doctrine contended for, as a necessary accompaniment, believe the related states of the divine persons, whilst the opponents do not necessarily deny this. Both opinions are adopted by different oppugners of the Eternal Sonship; and most of them do affirm that the persons of the Godhead exist in related

states. In this part, then, of our examination, we have to expose the fallacy of those who, denying Christ's Eternal Sonship, deny also the essentially related states of the Divine persons. As a more correct form of expression, we shall, for the most part, adopt the term *related state*, instead of relation, or relationship, when speaking of the connexion subsisting between Divine persons.

As it is admitted that there are three persons in the Godhead, these three must exist, either independently of each other, or in related states. If they exist independently of each other, they are then, each, an independent person; and, if each be an independent person, he may act independently and separately from the rest; consequently, there are three independent and separate Deities existing in the Divine essence. This goes to affirm that there are three Gods, and introduces Polytheism. The persons in the Godhead do not, therefore, exist independently, but in related states. We may farther remark, that if the three persons exist, independently of each other, each, as a Divine person, must possess all the qualities of Deity inhering in himself; consequently, each, independently of the others, possesses self-ex-

istence, eternity, immensity, and immutability. There thus would be three self-existences, eternities, immensities, and immutabilities;—but the conclusions are so absurd and impossible, that it is needless to continue.

We may observe, in addition, that the Divine essence, being simple, indivisible, and absolute, cannot be multiplied. Whatever persons subsist in that essence, they must be natural and necessary to it; for nothing can *begin* or *end* in that essence. Its nature and perfections are immutable; therefore, whatever number of persons exists in that essence, the persons must subsist naturally and necessarily, and must each possess that essence, which is indivisible. In consequence of the indivisibility of the Divine essence, related states must be naturally and necessarily constituted between the Divine persons existing in that essence; because each possesses the very essence and perfections which are indivisible. Seeing there are related states of personality essentially existing in the Divine essence, we have to ascertain whether God has communicated to man the actual mode of these states. The difference will readily be perceived, between the simple

announcement of the fact, that there are related states, and the declaration of what these states are. As the Deity has proclaimed to man the essential existence of persons in the Godhead, and, as we have shown, that these persons must exist in related states, and not in independence, we shall now endeavour to prove that he must also have communicated to man the mode of these related states, viz. their respective designations, and the constituted related states indicated by these designations. God is the supreme Governor of moral intelligences; and, in his capacity of Governor, confers benefits, and claims duty from his moral subjects. In order to enable them to ascertain and perform their duty, he has revealed that HE IS; but, that their duty should be performed aright, he has declared the qualities inhering in his nature; he has revealed his self-existence, eternity, immensity, and immutability,—his omniscience and omnipotence, and his moral attributes. The simple revelation of his supremacy and government could not be a perfect revelation, because it is not sufficient, unless accompanied with the announcement of the Divine qualities, to convey adequate knowledge of the Being who required the homage of the

subjects; otherwise, the homage must have been tendered to an "Unknown God." But God could not give an imperfect revelation of himself. He has, therefore, not only proclaimed that "he is," but that, amongst his other perfections and characters, he is "a rewarder of all those who diligently seek him." Man could not have rendered proper service, unless this declaration had been made. God, in his word, demands service from his creatures, and the same word proclaims his nature, that his reasonable creatures may know what kind of service is required. God demands the love of his subjects; but love is excited and continued by the contemplation of the qualities of the objects which it admires;—to excite and continue love in his subjects, God has announced his qualities. He exacts obedience, and obedience cannot be paid to a Being, unless the attributes of that Being are announced. God, in fine, has revealed his existence and attributes,—therefore, the revelation was necessary. But God not only claims worship in the character of moral Governor, but especially demands worship in his character as existing in related states; John v. 23: "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Fa-

ther. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." Hebrews i. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." These passages are not, at present, quoted to shew what these related states are, but that God has demanded worship in these states. Created intelligences, then, throughout his universe, are commanded to pay their homage to the Godhead, in its existence in related states. But how can that homage be presented, unless the mode of these states be revealed? "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" To believe in God, as regards his related state, to call upon him in that capacity in which honour is required by all the persons in the Godhead, and to be saved by him as the God of Salvation, require the previous knowledge of his mind, and of what his related states of persons are. This revelation, then, must be given in the inspired Volume. The homage, which God demands, must be ascribed

to him in his eternal, uncreated existence, as well as in his creating and redeeming aspect to man, which latter is contingent, and not necessarily essential. The apostle exclaims, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Man must therefore present "honour and glory to God," in his "eternally, immortally," related states of persons. Had not the mode of these eternally related states been revealed, such "honour and glory" could not have been paid, neither could God have exclaimed, when his creatures failed to render this service: "If I be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear?" The revelation of the mode of the eternally related states must, therefore, be given in the word of God.

There are only, in the Scriptures, two sets of designations employed to describe the Divine persons, which can be conceived to be applicable to his essentially related states. *These are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.* We do not select these terms, at present, from any particular passage, but

from the different places, at large, where the persons of the Godhead are mentioned.

We are now arrived at the Third division of the subject, viz.

THOSE PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE MAINTAINED BY THE SUPPORTERS, AND DENIED BY THE OPPOSERS OF THE DOCTRINE.

CHAPTER IV.

Meaning of the term ὁ λογος, The Word.

HAVING discussed all the preliminary matter, we come now to the pith of the controversy. In consequence of an alleged contradiction in the term *Son*, and of other objections, subsequently to be mentioned, those who oppose the fact of a revelation having been made of the Eternal Sonship, and yet maintain that there are related states in the Deity, affirm that the only related state essentially existing in the Godhead, which is revealed of the second person, is that of *The Word*, while the term *Son* designates the contingent relation in which that person stood when he assumed humanity. We shall endeavour to prove that *The Word* is not the designation applied by Scripture to the second person, in his essentially related state in the Godhead; and, then, endeavour to illustrate the manner in which that term is predicated of the second person of the Godhead.

Those who object to the expression *Eternal Son*, on account of its presumed contradiction, and adopt the expression *Eternal Word*, as free from contradiction, forget that the latter conveys no conceivable declaration of the related states of the ever-glorious Person on whom it is conferred.—The very choice of the latter phrase, by the opponents of the *Eternal Sonship*, betrays a perversion of fair reasoning and just conclusion. In order to remedy a presumed difficulty, arising from the application of the epithet *Eternal* to the term *Son*, and to avoid alleged contradiction in their account of the related states in the Divine persons, they involve themselves in the greater and insuperable difficulty of choosing a term, which cannot, by any implication, mean, and which never was intended to designate, any related state subsisting between persons.

The Scriptures are written in Languages wherein the ideas of mankind are clothed in corresponding words. Amongst other designations of the second person of the Godhead is that of 'ο λογος, *The Word*, derived from λεγω, *I speak*. When applied to any person, there must be some connexion between the idea involved in it and that person. This

must readily be admitted. But the question is, does it apply to the relation subsisting between two persons? Does it indicate their related state? Can it be applied to one of these persons; and can it predicate his related state to the other? Until those who reject the phrase Eternal Son and adopt that of Eternal Word, prove these positions, (and on them the *onus probandi*—the weight of proving, rests,) the assumption of this term, in the signification which they adopt, is a violation of all just principles of language, and of all correct and determinate forms of expression. The presumed inferiority, which is expressed in the term Son, is also found, to the same extent, in that of Word:—for speech or word, according to our ideas, is uniformly posterior to the actual existence of the person who employs it. But the grand objection to the use of the expression The Word, indicative of the related state of the second person in the Godhead, is found in this circumstance, that it indicates no participation or affiliation of nature. It is only a quality inhering in the nature, and not the nature itself. The universal consent of mankind and the agreement of all nations coalesce in this definition of the term.—

Predicated of any person, it may exhibit the character of that person, in that particular aspect to which the quality refers, but it can never denote a related state existing between him and another. There is internal proof, that the inspired Volume no where indicates, that the term, The Word, expresses a related state. It is not joined with any other designation expressive of a relation. We need not enter into the long discussion concerning the genuineness of 1 John v. 7. We have only to refer to the controversy, between Professor Porson and Arch-deacon Travis, which is now almost universally allowed to have proved that the verse in question is an interpolation. This verse, then, being expunged, there only remain John i. 1.—14. and Rev. xix. 13. where the term more immediately denotes a person. In none of these passages does its use refer to another person existing in relation with the person who is denominated The Word. On the contrary, when, in the first of these texts, the ineffable glory of this person is described, the sacred writer, to delineate its effulgency, refers to another character which The Word possessed—a character more expressive of his excellent glory, and denoting his related state, which The Word

did not. The writer says, "*And we beheld his glory,*" viz. the glory of The Word; he then wishes to convey a notion of that glory, to effect which, he suddenly breaks off to another description, involving other ideas, viz. those of a related state; "*this glory,*" he says, was "*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*" John, then, (verses 15—18.) bears witness of this person who was The Word, who had glory as "The Word," and "as of the only Begotten of the Father." He expressly declares that he is "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." The tenor of these verses is impressively forcible. John endeavours to portray the eternal existence of The Word, and his external procedure in creation. He endeavours to describe the glory of The Word, but failing to exhibit it clearly, in that character, to the intellects of men, he directly refers to the state in which The Word was, for a display of his glory, viz. his related state "as the only begotten of the Father." In the subsequent part of his work, the Evangelist ceases to mention this person under his denomination of The Word, and continues to designate him by other expressions, generally indicative of his related state. In the xix.

chap. of the Apocalypse, v. 13. the triumphant rider is usually understood to be the Messiah as the Mediator, and, from the import of the context, the application of the phrase "Word of God," is expressive of his character as Conqueror, and not of a related state in which he exists. In fact, in this description, The Word is applied to him in his contingent character of Mediator, not in his eternally related state; and, in consequence, it does not here denote his absolute eternity in the Godhead.*

Having thus shown that the term The Word, cannot apply to the related state of the second person in the Godhead, we shall now illustrate the manner in which it is applied to that person.

As words are representatives of qualities of, and ideas in, the mind, and, as The Word, when predicated of this person, must exhibit him in some character, the character indicated by this expression is that of the absolute Divinity of the person described, when he especially acts as the essential representative of the Divine perfections and counsels,

* For an illustration of the epithets in the Apocalypse, see the Letter of Dr. E. D. Clarke, in Walpole's Travels in the East. —London, 1820.

and, in his mediatorial office, as the representative of the Divine will concerning the church, and the glorious plan of redemption and salvation.

In farther illustration of the subject, we shall attempt to prove the Sonship of the second person in the Godhead, from the qualities describing him, and from the different expressions of Scripture concerning him. We shall endeavour to answer the objections used against the term Son, and *Eternal* Son, and the objections urged against the *Eternal* Sonship, in consequence of alleged contradictions.

CHAPTER V.

Observations on terms expressing Related States—Proof of the Eternal Sonship, from the qualities describing the Second Person in the Godhead, and from the different expressions of Scripture respecting him.

WE have already shown, that, if there are three persons eternally in the Godhead, these persons must exist in related states,—that the mode of these eternally related states must be revealed to man in Scripture,—that there are, in the Bible, only two sets of designations, viz. the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit—and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which have been considered as revealing the mode of these eternally related states; and that one of these sets, viz. where the term The Word is employed, does not contain any designation of the eternally related states of the second person in the Godhead—consequently, the term Son, must be the designation of that person.

In consequence of the nature, at present, necessarily inhering in man, he is restricted in the range of his intellect, especially when employed in examining pure spirit. Habituated to objects of sense, from which he obtains all his notions of individuality, he cannot separate these sensible objects from his notions of person or character. *To be* is more or less assimilated, in his reflections, with the things in contact with his senses. Hence there is no existence of person or individual, singularly or relatively, however different from matter, whose epithet is not originally deduced from material objects, except the predication of simple being itself. The underived notion of being is inherent in the mind. It is the foundation of all knowledge and reasoning. It cannot be traced to any combination of sensible objects, because it is the origin from which all combinations are derived; it cannot be derived, because it is the source of all derivations. It cannot be deduced from any mode or form of being, because it is simultaneous with being, and all its modes and forms. It cannot be defined, either by analysis or synthesis, because it is previous to analysis and synthesis. The term יהוה *Jehovah*, in Hebrew,

and *ὅσων* *he who is*, in Greek, are of the description which predicate simple being. The intellect of man, when endeavouring to grasp the nature or essence in which being inheres, is unable to analyze the distinction, or to compound, in definite precision, the union of being and essence. Yet, the two are inseparably engrafted in our thoughts, in the same notion, and the apprehension of this union of being and of essence, in which being is, is the abstract method by which man endeavours to disentangle his mental powers from the contemplation of material objects. In all applications of the abstract notion of being to surrounding objects, we uniformly involve it with materiality, not because these collateral ideas are necessarily connected, but because they have always been simultaneous in our minds. The mind fixes on the external object tangible by the senses, and identifies the external appearance, with the predication of being proposed to it. When the prolongation of being, as it is known amongst the race of men, is announced, the mind instantly fixes on the objects that are prolonged, and that are externally visible,—associates them with those that preceded, and by this association, establishes a rela-

tion in the manner of thinking concerning the objects, as well as between the objects themselves which are contemplated. By this process, the mind apprehends the relation which was really true in itself, before it was thus ascertained. In the Greek, the most refined and correctly expressive of the ancient languages, the prolonged object is termed *ἦν* *Son*, derived from the infinitive *ἦν* of the Hebrew verb *היה* *he was*, the origin of *יהוה* *Jehovah*, the name of God expressing his self-existence. The Saxons express both the luminary of day and the prolonged object of being by the same designation. These are similarly spelt in the Saxon-English—*Sonne*. Our Saxon Ancestors assimilated the reflection of the likeness in the prolonged object derived from him who preceded him, with the reflection of the light which the material world derives from the luminary of day. The only underived term, in our notions, viz. that indicative of being, is employed by the Deity to represent himself, and to indicate his being, and his continuity of being. In the present stage of intellect, there cannot be employed words or representative signs to indicate his mode or modes of being, unless derivative from, and collate-

ral with, those words and representative signs which are predicated of material objects; because all modifications of being are relative. They are relative, either with respect to simple being itself, or with respect to themselves. But all the relative notions which man possesses are derived from material objects. Every term, then, indicative of the modifications of being, must be one deduced from sensible likenesses. Whatever terms are employed, therefore, to delineate the related states in the Godhead, must partake of this allusion to the material world, and of the usage of this allusion adopted in language. The Godhead is expressed by the only simple, underived notion which language possesses: within the Godhead there are related states: man has no pure underived words to express related states, because his knowledge of such states is primarily derived from external nature. The revelation of these states must, then, be clothed in *materially* derivative designations, which are not strictly applicable to the *spiritually* related states of the Godhead, and involve an apparent difficulty or contradiction, on account of the transference of mutually acquired epithets and notions to the uncreated, pure,

and eternal Mind. But the apparent difficulty or contradiction is increased, in our reflection upon it, when qualities are ascribed to such related states designated by those terms which are necessarily employed. The qualities of pure being, in the essence of the Godhead, applied or transferred to the related states in the Godhead, must necessarily produce a seeming discordance, because they are, in one case, attributed to that which has no material derivation in our notions, and, in the other, to related states; the knowledge of the modes of which, and their designations, are necessarily derived, and inseparable from, our material associations. From the constitution of the human soul, any related state or characteristic procedure of the Godhead, invested with the qualities of self-existence, eternity, immensity, and immutability, must involve, when traced to our original acquirement and present definition, an association of qualities belonging to pure being, united with notions derived from material appearances. Whatever term, then, God has employed to announce his related state, it must, in our apprehension, be accompanied with this association, arising, and inseparable from, our limited understanding;

Yet, there will be found sufficient precision to enable us to combine the designations employed, with the related states which they specify. Terms, expressive of relation, imply a similarity of nature, a comparison and the possession of qualities, which enable the comparison to be instituted. The expression 'ὁ λογος, *The Word*, which we have already considered, contains none of the essentials of a related term.—For these, and other reasons, we have rejected it as expressive of a related state, and given it its proper meaning.

In accordance with the preceding observations on the language employed to denominate related states, we shall now examine the term, 'ὁ υἱος, *The Son*. The related states in the Godhead are thus designated in Matthew, xxviii. 19. "*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" We have evinced, that whatever designation is applied to the second person in the Godhead, illustrative of his related state, must be derived from, and associated with, sensible objects, and that, when qualities are ascribed to this divinely related state, they must be transferred, from their application to pure being, to their designation originally de-

rived by us from external objects and their relations. There is no term of a related state, of which any natural perfection of the Deity can be predicated, that is not liable to this sort of objection, which is as applicable to the expression, the Eternal Word, as to that of the Eternal Son. Investigate all the stores of language, examine all the terms used on earth, and, it will be found, that they must, and do, partake of this objection. If there be any force in it, man should object to the nature of his presently constituted intellect, which will not contribute notions and terms that are alone congenial to pure unalloyed spirit. To commence the argument with the sweeping announcement that the phrase Eternal Son is nonsense,—is a preposterous violation of all just reasoning, and argues a monstrous want of knowledge of the source from which are derived all our notions of individuality and of related states. When the opponents have, by fair and vigorous reasoning, shown the absurdity of our assertion, let them adopt the conclusion that it is nonsense. But, to assume, as the premises, the very point in question,—to settle the controversy by a dogmatical, *ex cathedra* sentence, without a single step of of reason-

ing,—is the argumentation of a child, and not of a philosopher.

We may observe, that the second person in the Godhead has different epithets,—some of them derived from his aspect within the Godhead, and some from his aspect towards man. He is termed the Son of God, significant of his eternally related state in the Godhead; the Word, significant of his absolute Divinity, and of his being the representative of the Divine Perfections, Counsels, and Will. In his aspect towards man, he is called Messiah or Christ, the Anointed; Jesus, the Saviour; Son of Man, possessing the human nature; the Lord, moral Governor, in his judicial rectitude and beneficent kindness.

Let the reader avoid confounding our Lord's human nature with his personality.—He is a Divine person; he possesses the Divine nature as a Divine person; he assumed human nature, which never had personality of itself,—otherwise, Christ would have been two persons—an impossibility.

The following remarks, which are the sentiments of Dr. Owen, will assist us in making the requisite discrimination.

Sometimes that which is announced concerning the person of Christ, is verified or true only in one of his natures. “The Word was with God, and The Word was God.”—“Before Abraham was, I am.”—“Upholding all things by the word of his power.” These expressions are referable to Christ, and are true only of the Divine nature. “To us a child is born,” &c. This is true only of his human nature.

Sometimes that which is spoken of the person belongs not distinctly and originally to *either nature*, but belongs to his person, on account of the *union* of both natures. These are the most direct enunciations concerning his Person—such as Prophet, Priest, King, &c.

Sometimes his person is denominated by *one of his natures*, when the acts of *the other* are assigned to him. Example: “They crucified the Lord of Glory.” He is the “Lord of Glory” in his Divine nature only; and, from this, his person is denominated. So “He (God) purchased the Church with his own blood.” “The Son of Man, who is in heaven.” He is God only in his Divine nature; he is Son of Man only in his human nature.

Sometimes the person is denominated *from one nature*; and that which is ascribed to it, is common to *both natures*. Thus, “of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

Sometimes the person is denominated from *both natures*; and that which is proper to *one alone*, is ascribed to him. “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.”

We prove that his designation of Son is expressive of his eternally related state, from the qualities ascribed to him as Son;—Eternity is ascribed to him as Son.

The Spirit, the third person in the Godhead, is admitted, by all sides, to be eternal. He is expressly declared to be so in Scripture. Hebrews ix. 14. “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?*” But this same Spirit, this Eternal Spirit, is the Spirit of the Father. Romans viii. 11. “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*” Galatians i. 1. “*Paul,*

an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.) This Eternal Spirit is declared to be the Spirit of the Son. Galatians iv. 6. "And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Being, then, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, these latter persons must possess the same qualities as those which inhere in the Spirit. The Spirit is denominated Eternal; consequently, the Father and the Son are Eternal. These terms indicate related states, which are thus Eternal. Scripture, then, has proclaimed the Eternity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If they possess Eternity, they must also possess all the collateral qualities of Godhead, viz. self-existence, immensity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, and the moral attributes. If the Spirit, for instance, be immense, which he must be, as he is Eternal, the Father and the Son are also immense; for the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, and he is the Spirit of the Son: the qualities, therefore, which inhere in him, inhere in the Father and in the Son. The Son of God is, therefore, as Son, immense.—The same may be shown of all the attributes of Deity. The Son pos-

sesses, in himself, all the effulgent and ineffable perfections of Godhead, independently of creation, providence, and redemption; he had this "glory with the Father before the world was." Though nature, animate and inanimate, were swept from being, he must retain this glory. No contingent displays of power or goodness can increase or diminish it. Lasting as his Godhead, no revolution in creation can affect it. Though he had neither assumed humanity, nor received the revenue of redeeming glory, this unutterable glory, in the vastness of his Eternity, must have been his "who inhabiteth the depths of Eternity." The proclamation to the intelligences of heaven is, "Let all the Angels of God worship him;" and the command to men is to honour and worship him. Sonship is ascribed to Christ as his related state in the Divine Essence.

The different repetitions of the voice from heaven, proclaiming our Lord to be the Son, are acknowledged to be the voice of God, in the person of the Father. Matthew iii. 17.; xvii. 5. Mark i. 11.; ix. 7. Luke iii. 22.; ix. 35. John i. 32—34. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" "*Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" "*This is my beloved Son; hear him.*" "*Thou art my*

beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Was it our Lord's human nature that God the Father proclaimed to be his Son, with whom he was well pleased? Surely not: because our Lord's human nature never had subsistence by itself. It could not, therefore, be with this, simply considered.—With what, then, was it? Certainly, with the Divine person, in its union with the human nature, and with all the acts performed by that Divine person, in union with the assumed human nature;—and if so, this Divine person is, properly speaking, the Son of God. This Divine person retained, and could not but retain, his related state of Son to the Father or first person, after he had assumed the human nature into personal union with his Divine. Consequently, the Divine nature of Christ subsisted in the related state of Son, in the Godhead, before he assumed the human nature into union with himself. God, in the person of the Father, was, therefore, eternally well pleased with God in the person of the Son.—From these facts, we deduce the conclusion that the Sonship of Christ is eternal.

It may be objected, by an opponent of the doctrine which we maintain, that it is neither the Divine nature in personality, nor the hu-

man nature without personality, that is the proclaimed Son of God,—but that it is both in union. We answer, that if the Divine nature of our Lord necessarily possess personality in itself;—if it were the same in itself, before it assumed the human nature into union, that it was after that assumption;—and, if it would necessarily have continued the same, though no such assumption had ever taken place,—the assumption of his human nature into union with itself could have made no alteration or change in the Divine nature or persons; therefore, though the enunciation of Son be predicated of our Lord in human nature, that predication is true only of his Divine nature and person. If men be sometimes called sons of God, they have human personality; and, there was a time when they were not the sons of God;—but the human nature of our Lord never had personality of itself. If our Lord be called the Son of God, he can only be so, in that nature, which possessed Sonship, in the proper sense of the term. It must, therefore, be, with respect to his Divine nature, that he was, and is, the Son of God. That nature was, of itself, capable of personality: of this his human nature never was, and never could be

capable. Hence, our Lord is the Son of God, with respect to his Divine nature, which alone was capable of Sonship. Our Lord, therefore, with respect to his Divine nature, ever was, and ever will be, the Son of God.

In the different proclamations of Christ's Sonship, the Holy Spirit, on one occasion, like a Dove,—on another, like a white cloud, accompanied the voice from heaven. Though, at these times, our Lord's bodily appearance was that of a man, yet his personality was that of the Son of God. The voice from heaven concerned the person addressed, not the appearance with which he was invested.

In order to consider, aright, the different voices of the Father, proclaiming the Son to the church and the world, we refer to Matthew xi. 27. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

When the proclamations were made, our Lord was either about to commence his public ministry or engaged in its most important transactions. It was necessary that the Fa-

ther should make such a declaration concerning the Son; for, whatever other views men might have entertained concerning the Saviour, in his work of Redemption, they could not have known that, though invested with our nature, he was the Son of God.

All the three Evangelists, who record our Lord's Baptism, say that the heaven was opened, the Holy Spirit descended, and the voice of God, in the person of the Father, was heard. John, testifying the fact from what he heard and saw, bears record of Christ, that "this is the Son of God." "He was," says John, "before me;" even this person, of whom he bears record, that he is the Son of God. But John was before Christ in priority of time, in human nature. He, therefore, announces the existence of the related state of the Son, before the assumption of Christ's humanity.

In the circumstances attending Christ's Baptism, we perceive that the three blessed persons in the glorious Godhead revealed the eternally related state in which they stand to one another, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each represented by a particular symbol. The Father was represented by the voice; the Son by his human nature; and the

Spirit by the Dove. It will not be asserted that the voice was a person; it was only the symbol of a person, and that person was the first or the Father. It will not be affirmed that the Dove was a person; it was only the symbol of a person; and that person was the third or Holy Spirit. Neither can it be said that the human nature of our Lord was a person; it was only the symbol of a person; and that person was the second or Son.

Those who maintain that the proclamation of the Father refers to our Lord's human nature only, confound the symbol with what is represented by it. To say that the voice addressed the human and Divine natures in union, as Son, is to confound the relation of these natures to the Father, and to represent each as possessing the same related state to the Father, which is absurd. Nothing, therefore, could have been addressed, except our Lord's Divine nature.

Our Lord was declared Son by the angel Gabriel. Luke i. 31—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.*" A slight con-

sideration of this passage will lead the reader to perceive that the three persons of the Godhead are distinctly mentioned to Mary by the angel. The Holy Ghost is obviously mentioned as a person. The Highest refers to the person of the Father: and the Son of God is expressly named;—"that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Now, was not our Lord as much God and man in the womb, and when he was born, as he is *now*? From the moment that he assumed our nature, he was as really God and man, as he is at the present period. That which is the subject of the angel's announcement is the Son,—a Son with proper personality. But our Lord's human nature never had personality of its own. From the moment of its assumption into union with the Divine nature, it subsisted in Divine personality. The angel says, that "the holy thing which should be born, should be called the Son of God." Our Lord, therefore, was the Son of God, with respect to his Divine personality, and not with respect to his human nature. He was surely to be called Son of God; with respect to that nature and that personality which were capable of Divine Sonship. It is evident, therefore, that it was

in our Lord's Divine nature and personality that the angel meant that our Lord should be called the Son of God, because his human nature never had personality of its own.

The difference of name which the angel ascribes to our Lord is striking, and evidently denotes a distinction in the application of the terms *Jesus* and *Son of God*; the one being referable to his human, and the other to his Divine nature. The angel first announces our Lord's humanity, as it was the object which the senses of men beheld, and which, consequently, was the prior impression on the mind, when men either visually perceived, or mentally apprehended, the person of our Lord. "*And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus.*" The angel alludes to the compound person of our Lord, as Messiah, composed of his Divine and human natures, or the manhood existing in union with the Divinity. It is obvious that, in this case, whatever actions are ascribed to this compound person, they must be the actions of the Godhead, operating through the medium of the assumed humanity. The epithets descriptive of the person, either in his existence before these actions occurred, or

after their performance, must, in consequence, really belong to the actual agent, which is the Divine nature. This Divine nature, however, in our apprehension of our Lord as Messiah, can never be abstracted from the bodily tabernacle through which his Divinity acted. Consequently, it is said of this Divinity, "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"

Such were the triumphs which were to grace, and the achievements which were to illustrate, the Messiah. His greatness and his state of "Son of the Highest," are indicative of his Divinity;—his being the Son of David, whose typical throne he was to obtain, indicates his humanity;—his reign over the house of Jacob, and his eternal kingdom, point out the union of his Divinity and humanity. The astonishment of Mary, on receiving this information, induced her to inquire how events so marvellous as those announced were possible. "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 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." The energy of two persons in the Godhead is represented as engaged in the formation of our Lord's human nature. These persons are the Holy Ghost, and the Highest or Father.

The question to be decided, is what object was termed the Son of God? Was it the human nature considered by itself? This it could not be, seeing that humanity never existed of itself, without inhering in the Divinity. Was it the humanity and Divinity when united, which, in consequence of their union, obtained this as a new appellation? We apprehend that it was not. We conceive that the peculiarly appropriate name of our Lord's Divine person is Son of God;—that his person was not changed by the assumption of humanity, and that it is his eternal person, in the complex natures of Divinity and humanity, which is denominated Son of God.

In summing up our observations on the Incarnation, and in proof of the foregoing conclusions, we shall consider the scope of the angel's enunciation of the names of our

Lord. Luke i. 30—35. “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 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.”

Matth. i. 20. “But, while he (Joseph) thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Now, all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin

shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.) Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son: and he called his name JESUS.”

It is affirmed by the angel that the Virgin should conceive and bring forth a son. The language employed is in accordance with the usual notions of mankind. The angel announces an appearance, viz. that of a son born and indicated in the ordinary manner. This substance, when conceived and born, was to receive from men a designation or name, according to Divine appointment.— This name is given for a two-fold reason: first, an obvious and established custom among men, to assist them in distinguishing one especial appearance in human nature from another; second, to denote, not only his especial appearance, or to affix an epithet to the likeness he bore, but, likewise, to denote and distinguish the character, employment, and object, for which this peculiar appearance was conceived, and was born, and did act, viz.—to save his people from their sins. This name

was Jesus. The name was given by Divine appointment; but was not, *de facto*,—*actually* given by God. It was his will that it should be given; and the deed of naming devolved on man. The name is announced prospectively, as an act to take effect when the appearance was presented to the world. In the angel's address, he says to Mary, "*Thou,*" consequent on the conception and birth, "*shalt call his name JESUS.*" In his address to Joseph, he says that Mary should bring forth a son,—"*and thou (Joseph) shalt call his name JESUS.*" This act of naming was, therefore, dependent, in its execution, on the deeds of men. There is a chain of events, in this transaction, connected with the existence and deeds of mortals. The conception and birth were connected with the existence of Mary,—and the subsequent deed of naming was rendered dependent on the act of Mary, and on the act of Joseph. Each of them was separately assured that he and she should thus nominate the appearance which should come into the world; and, in consequence, Joseph "*called his name JESUS.*" The appearance of Jesus in the flesh was an act emanating from the aspect of God towards man. It was not inherent in the Di-

vine essence like its own necessary existence and natural attributes; it was occasioned by the situation of man, and, therefore, in regard to the actual existence of God, was a contingent display of the Deity. The name assigned to the appearance of our Lord, arose from his contingent appearance, indicative of his aspect to man. But the other names, announced by the Angel, were not contingent; they did not depend on his aspect towards man; nor did they result from the situation of man. "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest." The vastest range of human intellect,—the most gorgeous appearance of man's energies and workmanship employed in his service, could not render *him* great. The achievements of this glorious one, in rescuing man from the deepest abyss of degradation and misery could not give him greatness; for that greatness must have preceded, and been the source of, his achievements in effecting their rescue. His greatness, therefore, was inherent in himself. It was lodged in his nature, and its exhibitions were dependent on himself, and not on man. Human nature is not possessed of absolute greatness. All its greatness is comparative: its displays result from opportunities

—are dependent on the existence of fellow men, and are consequent on their inferiority in physical and mental endowments. A breath may create it; a breath may wither it. The greatness of Christ was not thus contingent and fleeting. “Of his kingdom there shall be no end.” It was before man; the situation of man could not produce it;—it could only give occasion for its exercise. His human nature, therefore, was not, in itself, absolutely great, but must have had another source of influential greatness. The Divine nature and person displayed, through it, the inherent and absolute greatness of Godhead. Collateral with this greatness is his name; “and he shall be called the Son of the Highest.” Had his greatness been human, there might have been room for supposing that this designation “Son of the Highest,” was a figurative expression. But his greatness is real. Its reality was not essentially connected with human nature. His collateral epithet must correspond with his real greatness; it is founded on, and inseparable from, that greatness. His greatness is a quality inhering in him. Collateral with that greatness is his state,—a related state of existence, termed *Son*—descriptive of him who was

invested with greatness. Where the reality of his greatness is found, there must also the Sonship of the Highest be found. In his Divinity alone he is absolutely "*great*;"—in his Divinity alone he is "Son of the Highest." This designation depended not on mortals; their deeds could not affect it; their wish to honour or dishonour him could not increase or diminish his quality of greatness, nor render more or less true his related state of "Son of the Highest." Men were participant in conferring on him the term Jesus—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS." The will or intention of men had no participation in the term "Son of the Highest;"—"He shall be called, &c.—" In the one case they were to act as instruments; in the other, they were to acknowledge and honour him in that state which could not be caused by the creation or extinction of the human race. The angel continues, "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This collateral designation is also independent of the will or caprice of mortals. They have no farther concern with it than to receive it. Essentially connected with his "*greatness*," and his related state as "Son of the High-

est," is his epithet—"Son of God." In that nature in which he was absolutely great, he was Son of the Highest, or Son of God.—As we have already shown that his greatness preceded his human appearance, and was necessarily in himself, this quality must have inhered in him in his state collateral with its existence. That state is announced to be the Son of the Highest, the Son of God.—Eternal as his greatness, is his eternity, as Son of the Highest, as Son of God.

Matthew says, that in the incarnation, ancient prophecy was fulfilled. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us. In the fulfilment of this prophecy, events are announced, in some of which mankind were to act as instruments, and be participant in the transaction. The *being with child*, and the *birth*, were connected with the existence of Mary. But the fact of being "*Emmanuel, God with us*," did not depend on the existence of the Virgin, or of any other individual, or set of individuals. He must have been in the nature of God previously to his appearance, otherwise the then generation of mortals, and the fact of his re-

sidence amongst them, not the qualities of his nature, would have constituted him God. But this is an impossibility. "Before Abraham was," or Abraham's children were, he was "God with us." He was not thus designated by any specific act, or by any specific individual,—as he was termed Jesus, but "*they*, (i. e. generally,) shall call" him "God with us." The third person is idiomatically used to signify general expression, or general fact. *They shall call*, synonymous with *he shall be called*. Thus, in English, we write and speak, *they say, they shall say, for it is said, it shall be said*: In French, *on dit*,—*one says*, for *they say, it is said*. When Christ appeared in the flesh, he was to be *generally called* "God with us," as a necessary consequence of his Godhead.

There are, therefore, two parts in the different declarations of the angel. The one specifies the humanity of our Lord, and the time in which that humanity should be designated "Jesus." It particularizes the individuals who should be employed to give effect to this designation. It details the connexion of the human race with that event, and the miraculous conception and birth collateral with the existence of that race. The

other part of the declaration announces the being and qualities of him who came;—their self-existent, eternal, and immutable aspect in the Godhead;—the self-existent, eternal, and immutable “greatness,” or “greatness” of the Godhead, which he possessed;—the related state in which he existed divinely “great,” viz. the “Son of the Highest,” “Son of God;”—the nature which he possessed, viz. that of “God;”—the aspect of that nature to man when he came,—“God with us.”

CHAPTER VI.



Examination of Passages of Scripture, which prove our Lord's Sonship to be Eternal.

CHRIST is affirmed, by the apostle Paul, to be the Son, and, as Son, to possess the qualities of Godhead. Hebrews i. 1. “*God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*”

And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him," &c.

The apostle affirms that, instead of the former revelation by prophets, God had "in these last days spoken unto us by his *Son*." To this person, different acts and qualities are ascribed. The reader will remember our remarks on related terms, showing that all words denoting, or illustrative of, such terms, must be obtained from the ordinary usages of language, and originally derived from sensible objects. In correspondence with this usage, is the present passage. A character is introduced whose employment is to speak to the Church; his name is given, denoting a related state,—“*Son*” of God. We have, then, to ascertain, from the context, whether this related state be essential and eternal in the Godhead, or arise from the aspect which this person bears to man,—and whether this be a necessarily self-existent, or a contingently related state.

Of this person, it is said, “*Whom he (God) hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*” In the first clause, the passage, as Macknight has observed, would be better rendered *constituted*, instead of *ap-*

pointed, heir of all things. There is no phraseology in reference to the Son, in his related state to the Father, which could describe his possession or authority over all things,—except that of “*heir.*” Whilst the one Divine person is announced as Father, it is inconceivable to us what other designation, from our stores of ideas and language, could be employed, unless the present term. For, be it remarked, it is not the authority and power of the Godhead, simply considered, in its Divine nature, which is expressed,—but the authority and power of a person related to another person in the Godhead, which is described. Instead, therefore, of denoting inferiority in him who is constituted “*heir of all things,*” or priority in him who does constitute him,—we only discover that our notions have no other resources, in describing the power and property mutually enjoyed, in the related state of Father and Son,—than to denominate the latter *heir.* The expression, therefore, no more denotes inferiority on the part of the Divine Son, than the expression Father, implies that the Father will die, and be succeeded in his power and authority by the Son.—The latter position will not be affirmed by the boldest opposers of

the Eternal Sonship; and, if they themselves cannot predicate of the one related person what the words literally imply,—by what refinement of sophistry can they literally apply these words to the other? The designation “*heir*,” is connected with that of “*Son*,” and is employed on account of the use of the latter term. Power, dominion, or authority, would have expressed Divine sway over created objects; but could have conveyed no idea of their mutual exercise, in the person of him, who stood in the related state of Divine Son to his Divine Father.—This *heirship* being essentially in the Son, must be of the same nature as his other qualities; which, if they are ascertained to be eternal, and that they are so we shall immediately prove,—must, likewise, render this *heirship* eternal. The appointment, therefore, cannot have arisen from any external circumstances foreseen or existing; but must be constituted by the inherent nature of Godhead itself. The mutual possession of all things is attributed to God, in the related states of the Father and the Son; and this mutual possession causes the term *heir* to be used in reference to the latter person.

“ ——— *by whom also he made the worlds.*”

The act of creation is, in several passages of Scripture, expressly ascribed to God, in the person of the Son. It is an act of omnipotence, which could be only exercised by God himself, mediately or immediately. That it was not exercised mediately is evident from the account in Genesis, and from every mention made of the transaction in Scripture. This person must be *Eternal Son*, because he could not have been rendered Son by the act of creation, or by any proceedings subsequently occurring amongst created existences;—otherwise, creation must have caused a change in the Divine nature;—the finite must have changed the infinite, and introduced, not only a change in the Divine nature, but must have produced the existence of persons in that nature, viz. of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:—or else the Son must stand in the related state of Son to his own creation;—he who created must occupy the situation of son to that which he did create and which differs from his own nature;—but these suppositions are manifestly absurd. The Sonship of Christ is, therefore, independent of, and unconnected with, creation, in any aspect. It is absolute and inherent in the Godhead. The highest grades of immortal and created spirits,

thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, spirits of the just men made perfect, bow before him.—There is a peculiar sublimity in the Apocalypse when describing the throng of intellectual beings in the state of perfection;—the congeries of minds that had blazed in unclouded splendour and stainless purity; “those who had come out of great tribulations;” those whose circuit had been through myriads of worlds, and whose only resting place and halt of complete development of knowledge were the Divine Being and perfections; and those who had seen dimly, darkly, and in part, the depths of creation, providence, and redemption, but who were then “seeing face to face,”—then “knowing, even as also they were known,”—all these, in one ascription and adoration, address the Son, “For thy pleasure they (all things) are and were created.”

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”

He who was the *effulgence* or *resplendent shining* or *brightness* of his Father’s glory, (for all these terms convey the meaning of the original,) must have possessed Divinity within himself, essentially and eternally. If there ever was a time when the Son stood not,

within the Godhead, in the related state of Son to the Father,—then, there was a time in which there was no brightness or effulgence of the Father's glory; because it is the express characteristic of the Son to be "*the brightness of the Father's glory.*"—But the glory of the Godhead is inherent within itself. Its displays to man cannot render it more or less effulgent. When "the heavens declare the glory of God," they only exhibit the glory which preceded, and which now shines in, their appearance. Glory is only given to them, as a *medium*; to "declare" its aspect of effulgence, in the contingent work of creation. The glory of God is underived, like the self-existence of the Godhead. It is the source of all glory. Its exhibition and its effulgence or brightness are different.—The *media* employed to declare it, and its effulgence, are different;—for the effulgence and the glory are collateral. There could be no glory without this effulgence;—and there could be no effulgence without this glory. Their collateral existence is inseparable;—for, without this brightness or effulgence, glory is stripped of the principles which constitute it to be glory, and, without the glory, the effulgence cannot be presented.—We shall

not, at present, stop to inquire, whether, by the Father's glory, the apostle intended his nature or his perfections as God. Whichever of these we understand to be the meaning, our reasoning remains unaffected. But, from collateral passages, and the uniform tenor of Scripture, it is evident, that he meant to specify the Divine perfections. (See Romans i. 23.) If, then, there ever was a time, in which the effulgence of the Father's glory or perfections was not,—there was a time, when the effulgence of his glory or perfections was not self-existent; and, if ever the effulgence was not self-existent, it was not eternal, immense, and immutable. But, we have shown, that the glory and its effulgence are collateral, and inseparable, and, in consequence, what is predicated of the effulgence, is also predicated of the glory or perfections. The Divine perfections, therefore, if this effulgence be not self-existent, are not self-existent, eternal, immense, and immutable; and, consequently, the Godhead is contingent. But this is impossible. Without the eternity of this effulgence, there could neither be light, nor the source of light,—life, nor the source of life. There could neither be Creator nor creation,—the Uncreated nor

the created mind. Without the eternity of this effulgence, there must have pervaded space, the long night “of nothingness.”—Nay, space itself could not have been;—there must have been a dreary void, which cannot be conceived,—because it is impossible. Without the eternity of this effulgence, the sun could not have ruled the day, nor the moon the night,—and God, and Angels, and men, and worlds, and earth, and all things, must have been absorbed in the chaos of nonentity. As this effulgence is eternal, he who possesses it must be eternal. He is the Son; in that related state, he possesses this quality. His Sonship and his effulgence are coeval. He is, therefore, the Eternal Son of God the Father.

The Son is “*the express image of his person.*” The term “*express image,*” must mean likeness, or an express or exact representative; because, an image of a Divine person, in any literal sense, is an impossibility. “*His person*” refers to the Divine nature, in which this person is Father. The Son is a representative of the Father, as a Divine person, in the Divine nature. None but a Divine person can be an express representative of another Divine person in the Divine nature.

Now, if, in any moment, the Son was an express representative of the Father, the Son must have been so from all eternity, and must be so in self-existence. For, as the Father is eternal in his nature, that which expressly represents him must, in like manner, be eternal; otherwise, it could not be an express representation. It could only be a contingent and dependent representation of him; but this is no representation of him in his nature. For, the express representative of the nature must possess the express qualities of the nature of him whom he represents. He, who is this representative, must be an eternal representative. If this representative be presumed ever to have had a beginning, or to have arisen from an aspect towards man in the representing person, then, the express representation of nature could never have been. For, that which has a beginning, or is derived from external procedure towards creation, and is, in consequence, inseparably connected with creation, could not have been a representation of that nature which has no absolute connexion with creation, and is, of itself, independently of creation,—absolutely eternal. To suppose a commencement of essentially eternal repre-

sentation, is to suppose the impossibility of an essentially eternal representation of the Divine nature. But, it is positively affirmed, that there is an express representation of the Divine nature in the person of the Father. It must, therefore, be eternal. Now, this quality of express representation is declared to inhere in the Son. As Son, in the related state of Son, he is the express image or representation of the Father. This quality is eternal; the Son, in whom this quality inheres, is, therefore, Eternal Son.

The aspect of the Deity, in his perfections and nature, proclaims the Eternity of the Sonship. The aspect of the Deity, in his procedure with man, proclaims the same doctrine. Yet, there is this difference; in his aspect as Deity, both his nature and perfections, or glory, are alike indicative of the Eternal Sonship;—in his aspect to creation, his perfections are exhibited in his workmanship, while his nature or essence can never be exhibited by it. The grand display of his glory is within the Godhead, and is, therefore, necessary, and constituted by itself; the contingent exhibitions of that glory are discoverable in the universe, and are as perfect and complete as contingent exhibi-

tions can be. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." The expanse and the glorious orbs which bespangle it,—the regularity and harmony of their motions,—the splendour of their hues, and the vastness of their dimensions, proclaim the glory of God, displayed in their workmanship. The flood of radiance poured from the sun, and the mellow light of the moon—declare his glory. But, glorious as these are in themselves, they tell of a preceding, an ineffable glory, employed in their construction and appearance. Splendid as they are, they evince that there is another splendour, which even the "heaven of heavens cannot contain,"—which none can exhibit, except the Son, who is the effulgence of the Father's glory. He possessed this glory before all worlds; for he describes it, in addressing the Father, as "the glory which he had with him before the world was." This glory or effulgence of the Divine perfections could not be essentially increased or diminished by his appearance in the flesh; for, in his character of The Word, or in his absolutely divine nature, the apostle John

says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The intelligences, who display the powers of mind which he has endowed, exhibit the manifestations of this glory. But, whether we contemplate the range of angelic spirit, or the mightiest spirit of mortal, they are only contingent and subordinate to the essential Godhead. The Seraph who has veiled his face before the resplendence of the Highest, and who, immediately, has received his commands and fulfilled his purposes,—the mind which has soared through creation's objects, and scanned creation's laws,—which has enjoyed the sublimest of the sublime, even contemplations of the manifold displays of this glory,—these beings are only faint scintillations, when compared with the energy of that glory "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man to conceive."

Whilst we are thus assisted, by intelligence and materiality, to advance some steps in the investigation of the effulgence of this glory, as manifested unto us, and whilst we are led to ascertain, from its manifestation,

what it is in itself,—we have no external *media* to guide us, in the investigation of the express representation of the Father's person in the Divine essence. This theme is inscrutable by human intellect. What that essence is, we know not. Its qualities alone can be examined. This subject eludes all the capabilities of thought. It is beyond creation; its margins are beyond our ken; its boundaries are not approachable by our powers. As far as known to us, its comprehension is alone with that Being "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Farther than systems, farther than minds, farther than thoughts of minds, it is "invisible" to human reasoning and human conception, and lies with the "eternal, immortal King." We are surrounded by its qualities in their manifested brightness; we meet them in the minutest and widest existences of being,—yet the loftiest aspiration of spirit has not ascended to the height of the knowledge of the substance, in which these qualities inhere. The brightest ray of soul has set, ere it could shine on this undiscovered, undiscoverable realm of immensity. But what this essence is, the Son is;—in his related state, it is his essence, and with it, he necessarily enjoys its

coeval qualities. He is self-existent, eternal, immense, immutable.

As by his omnipotence the Son created all things, by the same omnipotence he upholds all things,—“*Upholding all things by the word of his power.*” This is analogous to the declaration,—Colossians i. 17. “By him all things consist.” He is the superintending, guiding ruler of minds and of spheres.

Thus far the Apostle has portrayed the nature in which this person was, and is, the Son. But, from the indefinite periods of eternity,—from the indefinite periods before the creation of worlds, and from the periods which have elapsed during their continuance,—the Apostle turns to describe actions performed in time, connected with men, and achieved in their behalf. At the time “*when he (the Son) had purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” The act of making purification of our sins, could not have been accomplished in that Divine nature, in which the Apostle had formerly described the Son. In that nature, he could not make purification of our sins; consequently, this purification was achieved in that nature which he assumed,—the assumption of which could not change his Divine

nature, and could not, therefore, affect his Sonship, which is inherent in that nature. The elevation of the human nature, in consequence of its union with the Divine, is illustrated; "*he* (in that human nature,) *sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*"—meaning, that this nature obtained the highest possible honour. It could not, literally, occupy the right or left of the Divine Majesty; there being no such places, and no juxtaposition connected with Deity.

The atonement which the Son effected in our nature, and the consequent elevation of that nature, do not properly enter into our present investigation.

We have now shown, from the passage examined, that the Son is eternal as Son, because he is "appointed" or constituted "heir of all things;" because "he made the worlds;" because he is the "brightness" or effulgence "of" the Father's "glory" or perfections; because he is "the express image" or representation "of" the Father's "person" in the Divine nature; and, because he "upholds all things by the word of his power."

The Apostle continues the subject in a

different shade of sentiment. Hitherto he has described the absolute qualities and actions of the Son, in, and from, himself, and has referred to what he accomplished for men in the purification of their sins; but he now commences a comparison of this Son with the created objects, which were most exalted and glorious in the estimation of the Hebrews. They gloried exceedingly in the law of Moses, because it was promulgated, and often enforced, by the ministry of angels; and the Apostle illustrates the incomparably superior nature of the Son, in consequence of his inherent dignity: “*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*”—The recapitulation of the Son’s inherent nature, and the procedure and grandeur of his achievements in human nature, have afforded scope for the delineation of the essential excellency of the Son; whilst his comparative greatness, arising from what he is essentially in himself, and what created beings are in themselves, affords scope for farther elucidation of the Son’s splendour. He is not made better than the angels by any external act, but he is in himself *γενόμενος*—*being*, rather than *being made*,—*existing* so

much better than the angels, by how much *he hath by inheritance* κεκληρονομηκεν, *obtained*, —or *hath inherited* a more excellent name. He is Son, and whilst the Father and he mutually enjoy corresponding designations and dominion, the act of possessing such designations and dominion must be expressed in relative terms. To the Son, such possession is ascribed by his *inheriting*. Neither creation, nor any act of creation, could cause him to *inherit* the name of Son; for it is a related state, not existing between creation and him, but between his Father and him in the Godhead. Creation could not give him inheritance in his name of Son, because creation is posterior to him and to his work as Son. This inheritance is consequently in the Divine nature. Others, both angels and men, obtained, metaphorically, this excellent name, but it was by their creation or adoption, not by *inheritance*, that they obtained the appellation of sons of God. It was an external act of the Deity which conferred it; but the name of this person, as Son, is underived; it is inherited in his nature as God, and his inheritance is coeval with his nature—Eternal.

“*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I*

begotten thee?" The passage from which this is taken is Psalm ii. 7. "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." It is obvious that the first part of these expressions used after the word *decree*, cannot refer to the subject of the decree, but is a prelude intimating the related state of the person addressed. The events of the decree are announced as future,—transactions which were to be unfolded in the development of the decree,—triumphs which were to be acquired, and which were to be the result of a process. But this promise of future triumph was made to a person who then was, and, subsequently, was to be. He is described under two designations; the Messiah or the Anointed, v. 2, and the Son, v. 7th & 12th. But the actual coming of the Messiah took place at the incarnation or assumption of human nature by the second person of the Godhead. It is admitted, that before that event, he was only Messiah prospectively, not *de*

facto. Previously to that assumption, this was the designation that would be his—not the designation that actually was his. If he was also Son prospectively, and not *de facto*, when this enunciation of the decree was made,—and if he only became Son when the decree began to take effect, then, there is no designation of any person actually addressed. But this is contrary to the express indication of the passage. For the Son, the person addressed, is represented as then in being, as the Son;—the homage of the Kings and Judges of the earth is commanded to be paid to him, and blessings are indiscriminately promised to all those who trust in him. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” To pay homage in obedience and love; to trust and obtain blessings in him; to kiss or love this person as Son, who was not then in being as Son—are impossibilities, and absolute contradictions in terms. Previously, then, to his Messiahship, and independently of that character, the person addressed, at that time, existed. But the enunciation of the decree bears intrinsic evidence of the then existence of this person as Son. “Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I *shall* give ——.” “*This day or now* I

have begotten,—even now thou art with me as Son.” Thou art with me in that nature, in that absolute Godhead, to which “a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.” “*This day,*” as has been well remarked by the Rev. Adam Gib, of Edinburgh, “cannot be understood as properly denoting any one of *man’s days*, either in David’s time or afterwards. It can only be understood of *God’s day*; the day of *eternity*; which, with God, is all *one day*, without any yesterday or to-morrow,—one permanent day, without any succession of parts,—a perpetual *now*, co-existing with every one of *man’s days*. Thus, as the great *Luther* observes, upon this place: ‘If we will speak as the thing is,—to-day, every day, and always, the Son of God is begotten: For, in eternity, there is neither past nor future; but a perpetual *to-day.*’ And, as he further observes, upon that text: ‘*to-day* is here to be taken for God’s time, not ours: For God is not there speaking with us, but with him who is with God beyond time.’” The term, in the original, signifying *day*, expresses either the definite period comprehended under *to-day*, or any indefinite portion of time;

whichever of these meanings we adopt, must be determined by the circumstances in the context. As we have evinced that the state of Son was prior to the actual Messiahship, and, consequently, not derived from the circumstances of creation—this state must be inherent and inseparable from the Godhead, and must, therefore, be Eternal.

One grand objection offered to our interpretation of the passage is the phraseology, *I have begotten thee*. If this objection refers to the expression used, we reply, it is the only term by which the relation of two persons, when described as that of Father and Son, can be delineated to the human understanding, when the mode by which the Son becomes participant of the Father's nature is announced. This enunciation in Scripture is only to us indicative of the fact that there *is* such a participation of nature, though we cannot apprehend the *mode* or *process* of the participation. To raise an objection on account of the impossibility of a process analogous to that by which participation is effected amongst mankind, is to rebut a difficulty which is raised by the opponent himself, for no such assertion was ever made, nor was ever such notion entertained by any of

the defenders of the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship. They only affirm, from the declaration of Scripture, that there is a mode by which the nature of the Father is participated by the Son; and that the fact is declared that the Son is begotten by the Father, and is signified by the only term, which mankind possess, to designate the mode of participation of nature from him who is Father to him who is Son. If the objectors assert that there can be no such participation, and, consequently, no mode by which the participation is effected, their statement is, in fact, levelled against the related states of the Godhead, and is applicable to the terms Father and Son, as well as to the proposition that the latter person is begotten. But we have already shown, that there are, and must be, related states in the Godhead. If the objectors affirm that we cannot understand the mode of the alleged participation, we need not join issue. In this, we perfectly agree, and confess that the mode of this participation is as incomprehensible to us as to them.

The Apostle quotes this enunciation of the Son's eternal existence to distinguish the difference of the foundation of his Sonship from that of angels and men, in their relation

to God. The emphasis of the sentence is laid on *begotten*, opposed to the sonship of angels and men, which is only figurative. This latter sort of sonship does not arise from participation of the Divine nature, but is founded on the act of creation or adoption. Christ, in the person of the Son, took to himself this designation: John iii. 16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If the term *only begotten Son*, be said to apply to Christ, on account of his miraculous conception, there can, then, be no more reason for giving this epithet to Christ, than to Adam, who was as much the immediate and extraordinary workmanship of God, as the body of Christ was of the Holy Ghost. Paul repeats this enunciation when referring to Christ's resurrection; Acts xiii. 32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." This, however, cannot import, that by raising Christ from the dead,

God begat him into the relation of a Son ; for, in that case, every one whom God has raised, or shall raise from the dead, will thereby be his *only begotten Son*. But God, by that event, declared, but did not constitute the Messiah, in his Divine nature, to be his only begotten Son,—in defiance of the machinations of the Jewish rulers and priests, who put him to death and crucified him, in his human nature, as a blasphemer, because he asserted that he was the Son of God, “ making himself equal with God.” To show the truth of Christ’s assertion, God, by the resurrection, declared him to be what he really was, and enabled men to apprehend and acknowledge him, in the eternity of his Sonship ; but, by that transaction, he did not constitute him Son of God. Romans i. 3, 4. “ Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Christ had, before this, been declared to be the Son of God by voices,—particularly at his baptism. In Hebrews v. 5. “ So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest ; but he that said unto him,

'Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.'" Christ is affirmed not to glorify himself as Messiah or Mediator, when he was made High Priest, for he had glory which no Priesthood or Mediatory office could give him, even the glory which he enjoyed with his Father. Christ himself announces that he was Son before his incarnation, which event, therefore, could neither confer nor affect Sonship. John iii. 17. "For God *sent not his Son* into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." In the state in which he was from everlasting, he was sent, after the language of men, to fulfil the purposes of redeeming love.

We have shown that the person described by the Psalmist, and referred to by the Apostle, is really and essentially Son, that is, he is begotten by the Father. He is not constituted begotten Son by incarnation, because, according to the second Psalm, he was in being as Son before the incarnation: homage and love were to be given to him; blessings were in him, and he was the object of trust or reliance, as Son, before incarnation. He is not constituted begotten Son by the miraculous formation of his human na-

ture in the womb, because, the formation of Adam was equally the miraculous work of God, yet Adam did not, and could not, by that event, become participant of the Divine nature. Our Lord is not constituted begotten Son by his resurrection, for, in that case, all who were ever raised by the resurrection would, thereby, become begotten sons of God, participant of his nature;—an impossibility. He came into the world existing as Son, for he was sent not to become Son, but, as Son, to effect that purpose which could only be effected by himself. As none of the circumstances of creation did constitute him begotten Son, he can only be so in the Godhead.

“Thou art my Son,” says God, “this day have I begotten thee.” *Begotten* is the term meaning, in the universal acceptation of mankind, the notion of participation of nature and qualities enjoyed by one person (Father,) and received by another, (Son,) existing in related states. It is quite immaterial to our argument at what time this *begetting* is understood to be predicated, as it is a *begetting* of *nature* and *qualities*. Whether it is affirmed to be, at the present moment in which we write, or at any previous or future period,—the reality of the *begetting* or *being begot-*

ten, cannot be affected. It cannot be altered by the use of terms, definite or indefinite. It was true at the period when David wrote, centuries before the incarnation; it was true when the angel announced the circumstance to Mary, immediately before the incarnation, and when the voice from heaven, after the incarnation, proclaimed it on the banks of the Jordan, and on the mountain of transfiguration. Now, if the Son be begotten by the Father, he is participant of the Father's nature and qualities, for the very idea of this *begetting*, which does not occur in creation, or by means of creation, implies the participation of nature and qualities. If the Son be participant of the nature and qualities of the Father, he must possess the quality of Eternity, which is essential to the nature of the Father. And as the procedure of the absolute Godhead, within itself, must be collateral with the nature and qualities of Godhead, the procedure of the Father in begetting, and of the Son in being begotten, must be Eternal. If true, at any one moment, it must be true this day, and yesterday, and to-morrow,—from everlasting to everlasting. The begetting by the Father cannot cease, for it is inherent in him, as absolute God, to

beget, independently of, and before, all creation. The Son cannot cease to be begotten, for it is, in like manner, inherent in him, as absolute God, independently of, and before, all creation, to be begotten. If the fact of the participation of nature be true, at any one period, it is true for ever, because the nature is eternal, and must, in all times, possess eternity in its qualities and absolute procedure. The procedure of God, in creation, can be considered, according to our notions, as consummated at different times: the procedure of God, within his nature, can never be consummated, for, in that nature, there is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning." In it, there is neither beginning nor end; in it, there is neither commencement nor consummation; what is true concerning it, is true for ever.

The Apostle continues the enunciation of the Son's titles to ascendancy:—"*And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.*"

In the enumeration of Christ's qualities and actions, in the beginning of this chapter, there is a striking intermixture observable in the recapitulation. The Apostle mingles those qualities and actions, which are only

applicable to absolute Deity, with those connected with his appearance in the flesh, as Messiah, and with what was accomplished in that character. He ascribes to our Lord attributes essential to his being as God, in connexion with those peculiar to his office as Mediator. He obviously supposes that those who perused his epistle would be able, from their previous knowledge, to apply his remarks to the respective and specific natures alluded to, without a distinct mention of each nature, when he ascribed perfections and achievements to it. Those, who do not possess that knowledge of Christ's respective natures, which the Apostle pre-supposes, must be involved in great difficulty, when endeavouring to investigate the qualities and actions which are thus intermingled. This knowledge can only be attained by a careful perusal of all corresponding passages, by an accurate examination of the places where the person and nature of Christ are described, and by strict and just attention to the connexion of the verses of this chapter. The difficulty is increased, and rendered almost perplexing, when, as in the present process, the same interchanging application is introduced to prove Christ's ascendancy.

While one step must, by fair interpretation, be referred to his qualities in the Godhead, another step, by interpretation equally just, must be referred to his power, offices, and actions, in his Mediatorial capacity. The explanation and application must not depend on our own arbitrary selection, or on pre-conceived opinion, but on legitimate reference to the passages quoted, indicating the process of reasoning which the Apostle has actually chosen, not the reasoning which we would choose for him.

The passage last quoted is taken by the Apostle from 2 Samuel vii. 12—17.; and 1 Chronicles xvii. 4—15, in the revelation made to Nathan, and not from the revelation made to David, 1 Chronicles xxii. 8—10. and xxviii. 6, 7. In these latter places, the words are, “He shall be my Son, and I will be his Father,” which is not the order in which they are quoted by the Apostle.—The revelation made to Nathan refers peculiarly to the Messiah; whilst that made to David has reference to Solomon. In the revelation to Nathan, 2 Samuel vii. 12—14. it is said, “When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy Fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed

out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son," &c. In the other passage, contained in the revelation to Nathan, this declaration is given at greater length. 1 Chronicles xvii. 11—14. "And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But I will settle him in mine house, and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for evermore." But Solomon was appointed king during David's life. (1 Kings i. 33, 34.) Solomon was not settled in God's house or temple, and was not raised up by David's sons after the reign and life of David. He who was announced to Nathan, could not, therefore, have been Solomon, but must have been the Messiah who was "settled in God's house or temple, and

in God's kingdom for ever," and who was both Priest and King in that spiritual kingdom. In the enunciation to David, Solomon is expressly mentioned: 1 Chronicles xxii. 9, 10. "Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name, and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." This declaration is not consonant with the circumstances of Messiah, who had not "rest from his enemies," but was persecuted and crucified by them: these events, however, are all strictly applicable to Solomon. In the enunciation to Nathan, David's posterity is promised the establishment of the kingdom unconditionally; but conditions are expressly annexed in the revelation to David. 1 Chronicles xxviii. 7. "Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day." David, therefore, enjoins the service of the Lord on Solomon. v. 9. "If thou seek him he will be found of thee; but

if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." If it be said that this interpretation of these passages is not correct, because it is affirmed, in 2 Samuel vii. 14, 15. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him," &c. we answer, that the word אשר, *asher*, in the 14th verse, translated *If he*, ought, as Pierce has shown, to be rendered *whosoever*, i. e. "*whosoever of Messiah's subjects committeth iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod,*" &c. Various passages might be adduced, in which a similar transition is made from the character and glorious reign of the Messiah, to the conduct of his professed subjects and children. Punishment is denounced on his professed followers, "if they commit iniquity, and forsake the law" of God. In Psalm lxxxix. 30—32. a particular illustration of this mode of digression is exhibited. As we assert that the revelation to Nathan, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," is applicable to the Messiah alone,—it may also be objected that the reasoning of the apostle, proving Christ's superiority over the angels, is fallacious, seeing the same promise was

made to David respecting Solomon, who was not, thereby, proved to have been superior to the angels. But the promise alluded to has a meaning, when it is applied to Messiah, very different from what it has when applied to Solomon. For, in the former case, it refers to the support which Messiah would receive during the period of his appearance on earth—a support explained by the declaration of what God was to him in that Divine nature which gave his Messiahship all its value and worth; and, in the latter case, it refers to the peculiar affection and care which God would bestow on Solomon as his adopted son. God, therefore, declares to the Messiah, in prophecy, what he would do for that nature, which being assumed by the Son, possessed Sonship in union with his Divine nature.

God, in the first declaration in this (5th) verse, speaks of the conversation and intercourse within the Divine nature. “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” In the second declaration, he does not say, I will beget him (as Son) and he (the Son) shall be begotten by me, in his Mediatorial character,—but, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.” The relation mentioned in the first declaration, as we

have already shown, could never have had a beginning or an end; the duration of the relation mentioned in the second, is equally extensive, in regard to Christ's actual Sonship; but, in our Lord's mediatorial character, the Father did ostensibly become Father, in the perceptions of men, because they beheld that appearance, even our Lord's human nature, which, though not the origin or commencement of his Sonship, was the origin or commencement of what they visibly beheld as Sonship. This appearance did not create his Sonship; but it created his visible appearance as Son. It did not constitute his Sonship; but it constituted the external, sensible display which mankind perceived. It did not begin his Sonship; but, with it, commenced the intellectual and corporeal perception of Christ's Sonship. It was not begotten as Son; but it was taken into union by the begotten Son. It was no addition to his Sonship; but it was an addition to the medium by which men beheld his Sonship. The prospective coming of the human nature did not induce the Father to say, "I will be to him a Father," on account of the creation of that nature in time, and its exhibition in future ages; but, because, in future ages,

men would behold that which was the external display of Sonship. This external display was future and contingent, and an object of perception to men, as much as the heavens and all their glory are, with respect to God, future and contingent, and, with respect to men, objects of perception. God was powerful in the creation of the heavens; but that display of power did no more cause the existence of Omnipotence, than the display of the Sonship to men caused the existence of Sonship. God says, "I will get me honour upon Pharoah, and upon all his host; upon his chariots and upon his horsemen." But God did not, thereby, create his honour; neither was the destruction of Pharaoh the cause of God's honour. God says, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;" but he does not say, I will beget him, who is Messiah, my Son. He had already declared, according to the words quoted by the Apostle from the second Psalm, that Sonship was an inherent, self-existent, related state, eternal as his nature. But, as the destruction of Pharaoh was an external display of honour by him who had eternal honour; so the human nature of Christ, in its miraculous conception and preservation,

was an external display of that Sonship which was self-existent and eternal. As the Egyptians were the *media* by which God manifested his honour, so the human nature was the *medium* by which God manifested the Sonship, as eternally existing in the Divine nature, in its related states.

In continuation of the proof of the ascendancy of Christ, the Apostle introduces another quotation: “*And again when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*” Some render the term *πρωτοτοκον*, *first-born*, instead of *first-begotten*. Whichever reading we adopt, it is immaterial to the Apostle’s reasoning in this passage. As there is no Son begotten after this Son, and as none else could be begotten, the phraseology is in accordance with his being *heir of all things*. The *first-begotten* and *first-born* are the related terms used by mankind for that person who is heir, or possesses the dominion and property. According to the interpretation which is given to the adverb *παλιν*, by translating it *the second time*, or *again*, a different meaning is affixed to the circumstances of Christ’s superiority deduced from the quotation, though the Apostle’s reason-

ing remains unaffected. When $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$ is translated *the second time*, the passage must be read—"But when he bringeth *again*, i. e. *the second time*, the first begotten into the world, he saith," &c. That is,—When God, by the resurrection, which may be compared to another incarnation, brought Christ a second time into the world, preparatory to his ascension and glory in human nature, he commanded all the angels to worship him, not only in his Divine nature, but through that human nature which was assumed by the Divine; as he saith in Psalm xcvi. 7. "Worship him, all ye gods," i. e. angels of God. In the usual reading, as in our translation, when $\pi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu$ is rendered *again*, in the beginning of the sentence, it is, by a transposition of the Greek sentence, joined to *he saith*, and bears the same sense as in the foregoing verse, viz. to point out another testimony concerning Christ, referring to the time of his incarnation, when he came into the world, and when this commandment was issued to the angels. But there is no evidence that any such commandment was issued at the time of Christ's incarnation. On the contrary, the Apostle, in his epistle to the Philippians, ii. 8—11. expressly declares that it was

after his death that the angels were appointed to worship Christ, through the medium of his human nature. "And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The translation, then, which renders *παλιν* *the second time*, indicating that it was after Christ's resurrection or second coming into the world, that the commandment to worship was given to the angels,—is undoubtedly correct. As mankind possessed a new *medium* by which they gave homage and worship to the Godhead, when Christ came in the flesh; so the angels, after his resurrection, when he entered heaven in his human nature, possessed not a new object of worship, but a new *medium* by which they might present glory to God. This adoration of the Son, in his human nature, was not adoration to a different person, or to another being, but to that same

being whom they had worshipped from their creation, and who now had another appearance, which could be no addition to his Godhead or personality, but which was subsisting in his Godhead and Divine personality. The actual commencement of the worship of mankind to God, in the human nature, was simultaneous with his appearance on earth after his birth or first coming: the actual commencement of the worship of angels to him, in the human nature, was simultaneous with the appearance of the first begotten, after his resurrection or second coming, when he ascended up on high. This human nature was both the *medium* of worship and that which was worshipped. It was the *medium* of worship, because it indicated the Divine nature in which it had subsistence; it was that which was worshipped, because it was in a Divine person, and with a Divine person, whose personality was not changed or enlarged by its assumption. The *medium* through which worship was given was new, and had a beginning; that which was worshipped was from everlasting, for it was not to the human nature, as human nature, that homage was paid, but to the human nature united to the Divine, inhering in a Divine

person, and inseparately connected with his personality.

The Apostle proceeds in his reasoning: "*And of the Angels he saith,*" (quoted from Psalm civ. 4.) "*Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*" An attempt has been made to evade the force of the latter part of this passage, evincing Christ's Divinity and his Sonship in the Divine nature, by translating it, *God is thy throne*, i. e. the support and glory of thy throne,—and this, because it is affirmed, that *ὁ θεός, God*, is in the Nominative case. But such translators forget that the Nominative is frequently used for the Vocative, by the Attics, the most elegant and correct of Grecian writers. In the Septuagint, it is frequently thus used, particularly in the Psalms; and St. Paul has adopted it in Romans viii. 5. and in the 9th verse of the Chapter which we are now examining. "*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, (or more explicitly and justly translated—O God,) thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:*"—meaning, thereby, that in hu-

man nature he was thus anointed above all created natures. These two verses, which we are examining, (8, 9,) are taken from Psalm xlv. 6, 7. Any comment must weaken the force of their application to the Eternal Sonship of Christ.—Can sophistry evade, can ingenuity distort the import of this address which decisively elucidates the Eternity of our Lord's Sonship? *O God*, (Ὁ Θεός) in the singular number, is never used absolutely or without a restriction to some peculiar consideration of it, respecting any, except the only true God. God himself declares to the Son, "O God, thy throne is for ever and ever." The Eternal God declares the throne of his Son, of his begotten Son, to be Eternal.

The Apostle proceeds,—"*And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands.*" The conjunction *and*, in the beginning of the sentence, is introduced by the Apostle to connect the foregoing testimony with this present, quoted from Psalm cii. 25. where the conjunction is not found. The passage is a continuation of the testimony respecting the Son. If it do not apply to the Son, but to the Father, as some affirm, the Apostle must have introduced into the

reasoning a subject foreign to the discussion, and totally unconnected with the argument. If this declaration do not refer to the Son, the Apostle, after having commenced a process to prove the superiority of the Son, abruptly introduces remarks, not only without any specific reason, but completely foreign from the object which he wished to prove, and disjointed from the regular train of his observations. But Paul, the generally received author of the epistle to the Hebrews, "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the Fathers," could not, independently of the unerring wisdom of the inspiring Spirit, be guilty of such a fallacy, or rather nullity of reasoning. The accuracy of just composition, the necessary connexion in the context, and the obvious tendency of the quotation in the reasoning, evince that the declaration is, in this passage, applicable to the Son, and to the Son alone.

"They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." The Son of God, who is for ever and ever, created the

heavens and the earth. When they disappear, he shall still remain the Son of God. Within the *arcana* of Godhead, in the aspect of creation, in the human nature assumed, he is Son of God. He rules, as Son of God, over the wrecks of nations,—the gradual decay wrought by time, and the shock produced by the sudden revolution. He rules over all, God over all, through the archives of eternity.

“*But, (or moreover,) to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?*” The Apostle, as he has before repeatedly done, changes the nature, though not the force, of his proof. From the sources of reasoning determining Christ’s superiority obtained from his absolute Godhead, he introduces those determining his superiority from the glory of his Messiahship. The text is taken from Psalm cx. to which Christ refers, when speaking to the Pharisees, and which he adduces, as acknowledged by the Jewish Doctors to have been written concerning the Messiah, by the inspiration of the Spirit. The Mediatorial character and human nature of our Lord are exalted above all created beings. He is to reign, in his human na-

ture, above the greatest Angel; in the nature which suffered, he is to triumph; in the nature which was bruised, he is to bruise and vanquish all his foes. Portrayed as a Conqueror, according to the Eastern figure, his enemies are to be trampled under his feet; and Death and Sin led captive at his chariot wheels.

Subservient to these victories, "*Are they not all, (the angels) ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*" Their duty, whilst they worship the King, is to minister to his meanest subject. Christ, therefore, is superior to all angels;—in his Divine nature, because he is Son, only-begotten Son, God the Son, Son for ever and ever, Son still the same, Son whose years shall not fail;—in his human nature, because, in consequence of its union with the Divine, angels worship him, because it is raised to the highest glory, because it will triumph over all its enemies, and because angels minister to the subjects of Messiah's kingdom. The Son is, in one word, superior to all creatures, because he possesses the qualities of the Godhead,—because he is Eternal.

CHAPTER VII.

Continuation of the Examination of Passages of Scripture, which prove the Sonship of Christ to be Eternal.

WE have, in the former chapter, shown the reality of Christ's Sonship in the Godhead, and its eternal, immense, and immutable nature. We now pursue the investigation of other passages of Scripture, equally confirmatory of this doctrine.

It is written, Colossians i. 13—20. "*Who (the Father) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: 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. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; And, (having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

The Apostle, in the verses above quoted, exhibits the nature of that deliverance which had been obtained by the believing Christians,—the condition from which they had been rescued, and that into which they had been translated. He reminds them of the darkness into which they had been plunged,—that darkness which affected both their intellect and moral feelings,—which concealed from them the glories of God's perfections and government, and, above all, his nature, as displayed in the plan of salvation. The tyranny or sway of this darkness continued its dominion until they were "translated into the kingdom of the Father's dear Son," where they were "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." This change he terms a redemption procured by the

blood of Christ; for, in the 14th verse, the words "*through his blood*" are an explication of the clause "*in whom*;" in the same manner as "*forgiveness of sins*" is an explication of "*redemption*." There is a propitiation provided, more effectual than the Levitical sacrifices. By his blood—the price of redemption—we have obtained a complete discharge from the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law;—we have obtained an inheritance of all spiritual and eternal blessings which sin has forfeited. The efficacy of Christ's blood, for such glorious purposes, arises from the dignity of his person, which gave virtue to his Mediatorial office. He who is the head of that kingdom into which we are introduced, is *the Son*, "*who is the image of the invisible God*." These words are peculiarly forcible, and convey not only a direct proof of Christ's Divinity, but also of his Eternal Sonship. This image can be no material representation; it cannot be any sensible likeness; it is not an object which men can physically examine;—for it is expressly said to be *the image of the invisible God*. This image or likeness of the invisible God is not, therefore, one which can experience the common casualties of human nature. It cannot be born; for that which

is born is no representation of an invisible being, much less of the invisible God. It cannot hunger and thirst; for these properties are peculiar to animated beings, who are the images of visible animated creatures. It cannot exhibit the external indications of joy and sorrow; for these are characteristic expressions of countenance or bodily gesture, belonging to sensitive natures. It cannot die; for death, or the cessation of all animal functions in the different component parts, is peculiar to organized matter—a visible substance, which can never be the image of an invisible substance. It cannot possess length or breadth or thickness; it cannot have form or parts; it cannot have impenetrability, or colour, or hardness, or softness; it cannot, in fine, be matter, or any composition of matter. Possessing none of these qualities, this image cannot be human nature:—for all the properties which we have named, inseparably and essentially belong to human nature—which is a “true body,” united to a “reasonable soul.” Christ, in his appearance in the flesh, possessed such human nature; he had a “true body” and a “reasonable soul.” In his human nature he was born; he hungered and thirsted; he groaned in spirit and wept; he

died; he had length and breadth and thickness; he had form, and hardness and softness. He said to his terrified disciples, when, on account of his sudden appearance, they thought they had seen a spirit, "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb. And he took it and did eat before them." To remove the unbelief of Thomas, he said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing." Possessing such qualities, the human nature of our Lord could not be the image of the invisible God, but was the image of visible man. Glorious and exalted as is the humanity of Christ, it could not possess qualities which are a contradiction of its existence. Elevated in consequence of its union to Divinity, it did not become Divinity, nor did it cease to be humanity. Whilst it is, and was, and must be, possessing the at-

tributes which are inherent in its own nature, and which are inseparable from humanity, it is impossible that it can be the image of any being that is invisible, and, in whom, consequently, the properties of matter do not inhere. It cannot, therefore, be the image of the invisible God. John, whilst he and the thousands of the land of Judea beheld the human nature of Christ, asserts that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." If the external appearance of our Lord's human nature be the image of God, then, the multitudes that surrounded him in his youth, who were present at his baptism, and who witnessed his public ministry, must have also seen God; his image or representation being visible in that human nature.*

If there be an image or representation of God who is perfect,—that image must be like

* We need scarcely remark, that our Lord's declaration, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is no contradiction to this reasoning. Our Lord, in these words, evidently means that the existence of the Father was as obvious as his own, on account of the external works which were performed by the Father and himself, in the Divine nature; and which works, when perceived by men, were manifestations of the Father and the Son. Our Lord subsequently explains himself, and shows that he could not

him,—must be complete and perfect,—and must represent him as he actually is. But that which is as God is, must possess the same qualities; if, then, the human nature of Christ was the image of God,—God, in opposition to the words of John, was seen at different times by those who beheld Christ's appearance in the flesh. Christ says, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." Now, in his human nature, Christ had shape, and all the properties connected with the possession of shape, and this shape was seen of

allude to perception of the Father by external organs, when he says, "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

It is possible some may object to our illustration of, and reasoning from, the position that the Son is the image of the invisible God, because, say they, it is affirmed of man that he was "created in the image of God;" yet man, by being in that image, could not possess Divine perfections, that he might, thereby, represent the Eternal Being.—We answer: that man, being created, could only possess finite qualities,—that these finite qualities of excellence did, to the utmost extent of human nature, and as far as it was capable, represent, or give an image of, God,—that the Son, as an image of God, must, to the utmost extent of his nature, represent the invisible God—and that the Son, being a *Divine* person, his representation must possess all the qualities of Divinity; consequently, being an image of God to the utmost extent of his nature, he is an eternal representative. But, if the Son be an eternal representative, he is eternal Son.

men. If, therefore, he be the image of the Father, in his human nature, men have seen the shape of the Father; which is contrary to his own express declaration. Our Lord farther affirms, "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father." Christ is not, then, in his human nature, the image of the invisible God. An image is a delineation by which the being represented can be recognized,—But God cannot be recognized, unless in the possession of his Eternity, Omniscience, and Omnipotence; Immensity, Immutability, and Self-existence. If he be divested of these qualities, there can be no recognition of Godhead. But matter, in any shape or in any modification, united to human spirit—to angelic nature or to Divinity itself, cannot delineate these qualities of Deity. The humanity of Christ not only was not, but never can become, the image of the invisible God. In that nature which can alone delineate the invisible God, he is Son; for he cannot delineate the Godhead in his humanity. Yet such delineation must be inherent in him, and inseparable from him, and can be only found in his Divine nature. Now, *image*, in Scripture, denotes likeness, and

even sameness of nature and properties. 1 Corinthians xv. 49. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Hebrews x. 1. "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things." *The very image* is here opposed to the bare features without the substance and properties. As the Son, therefore, is the image of the invisible God, he must possess the qualities of Godhead. Now, the God, who is King invisible, is also eternal, immortal;—the Son, who is his image, and who delineates him, must be to us invisible, and eternal, immortal. The Son is, therefore, the eternal image of the invisible God. Glorious as is the kingdom which he has purchased in his humanity, more glorious is that kingdom, which is his, without purchase.—Exalted as is his human nature, more exalted is that Sonship,—that eternally related state in which he was from everlasting with the Father. Could the intellect of man penetrate that veil which hides the splendours of eternal duration, it would discover the Holy Three, not only as God *absolute*, but as God *related*. Though the Holy Three are invisible to us,—though sense cannot perceive, or

intellect comprehend them,—though the talents of angel and of man cannot develop the profundity of that being in whom all things are,—yet we rejoice that we are accounted worthy to understand, and intellectually to discern, that there are, and must be, eternally related states within the Godhead; and that he, who bore *our* image in his human nature, bears the image of the *invisible God*, in his Divine nature. But this concentration of glories is too much for the human intellect. We know that the Godhead exists; to gaze on its rays would overwhelm us. We know that the Son is eternal; how he is Son, the manner in which he became Son, is an extent of illumination which we are not permitted to explore.

The Son is also said to be “*the first born of every creature,*” or *the first born of the whole creation*, as the expression *πρωτης κτισεως* is translated in Romans viii. 22. In the Arian acceptation of this passage, *the first born of the whole creation* means *the first made creature*. But such a construction is overturned by the reasoning adopted to prove the position.—When the Apostle affirms that the Son created all things, this reasoning does not establish that he is the first made creature, unless

we suppose that his power to create arose from his being the first made creature. Such a supposition is manifestly absurd. Neither can the creation of all things by the Son establish that he, first of all, created himself. Such are the obvious contradictions which arise from the assertion that the first born of the whole creation signifies the first made creature. The expression *first born of the whole creation*, requires a just comparison with collateral passages. It corresponds with the declaration in Hebrews, that the Son is heir of all things, and evidently implies a related notion, because it is connected, and associated with, the related term Son. It is employed to designate the absolute Lordship or dominion of the Son over all things. Its use is derived from the authority and power always conferred on the first born, and uniformly associated, by the Jews, with the idea of the person who was heir or lord of all things possessed by his father. The sole circumstance of his being first born caused him to inherit this extent of authority. The authority, when considered as mutually vested in the father and the son, was the authority of the father and of the first born. Thus, 2 Chronicles xxi. 3. "But the kingdom gave

he to Jehoram, because he was the first born." The first born was lord of the rest of the family, who were his servants. This is evident from what Isaac says to Esau, after he had conferred the right of primogeniture on Jacob,—Genesis xxvii. 37. "And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants." Among the Oriental nations, *first born*, *heir*, and *lord*, were synonymous expressions. Galatians iv. 1. "Now, I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." "*Heres apud antiquos pro Domino ponebatur. The heir, amongst the ancients, was used for the lord.*"* "Among the children, the eldest son was "invested with peculiar privileges, particularly, he had a right to a double portion of "his father's estate, that is, of all that he was "in possession of when he died, but not (as "Mr. Selden shows to be the opinion of the "Jewish lawyers,) of that which was his in "reversion after his death. And this claim "was so unalterable, that the father had no "power to disinherit him;—" "The Jews

* See Vinnius' note on Justinian's Instit. lib. 2. tit. 19. last section.

“ commonly take notice of three prerogatives
 “ belonging to the first born: a double part
 “ of the inheritance, the priesthood, and the
 “ kingdom, (as they speak) that is, the prin-
 “ cipal authority among his brethren;”——
 “ The first born among the old Hebrews
 “ were eminently distinguished, as it were,
 “ by a natural right from the rest of the chil-
 “ dren, otherwise it could not have been so
 “ criminal in Esau, to have sold the preroga-
 “ tive of his birth-right.”—Lewis’ Hebrew
 Antiquities, vol. iii.

The interpretation which renders the phrase *the first born of every creature* to be *Lord* or *Governor of all things*, will be found to be the only one which will harmonize with the Apostle’s reasoning. It is in accordance with the other qualities belonging to the Son, and assimilates with his related state of Son. While the simple expression *Lord*, denotes his authority as absolute God, without reference to his related state in the Godhead;—the expression *first born*, denotes the same authority, and conveys, in addition, the idea that that authority is exercised reciprocally by one person with another, both existing in related states, viz. those of Father and Son. Authority and dominion are in con-

gruity with our ideas of Godhead; heirship or right of primogeniture are in congruity with our ideas of the related states of Father and Son. When the Son is termed *heir*, we associate with the designation, the objects which he possesses and over which he reigns;—when he is termed *first born*, we associate with the designation, the rights or necessary privileges which he enjoys, and, in virtue of which, he exercises rule and pre-eminence over the objects possessed; and when the person designated is termed *Son*, we associate with the expression, a related state in which this person exists with another,—who must be the Father. When he is termed *Lord*, we associate the same authority which he inherits as Son, as heir, as first-born,—without reference to the related state with which the term Lord is connected. The argument is, therefore, obvious and cogent. He is heir, first born or Lord of all things, because he created all things. The same power which brought them into being, cannot be lost or diminished, when they are in being.

If a different explication be given of the expression *πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως*, rendering it *the first begotten before all creatures*,—the pre-eminence of the Son and his absolute om-

nipotence are unaffected. We are thus led to view the simple and underived related state of Son, within the Godhead, independently of, and before, creation. This latter explanation describes the eternal generation of the Son, within the Divine essence; the former, which we have adopted, describes the Son's eternal omnipotence, which was, and is, displayed in creation, and in the preservation of creation. The one displays the state of existence inherent in the Deity; the other, the power which is collateral with that state, and predicated of the Son.

“*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.*” The casual particle *ὅτι* *For*, (or rather *Because*) in the beginning of this passage, refers to both parts of the preceding verse. The Son is the image of the invisible God, as well as the first born of the whole creation; “*because by him were all things created,*” &c. The objects of creation are described as things in heaven and things in earth, visible and invisible. The things visible are those in earth, the material fabric of which, and all that it contains, are

said to be—Hebrews xi. 3. “τα βλεπομενα, *things which are seen.*” The things invisible are affirmed to be in the heavens, and are the different ranks of angels—*thrones, dominions, (or Lordships,) principalities, (or governments,) powers.* In Ephesians i. 21. the parallel terms mean the different classes of angels; whether good or bad. In Colossians ii. 10. the expression *principality and power,* designates good angels, over whom Christ is supreme. Yet the words, in the 15th verse of the same chapter, and in Ephesians vi. 12., denote the evil angels, who war against God and God’s people. In Luke xii. 11., they signify earthly governors:—“And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto τας αρχας και τας εξουσιαις, *magistrates and powers,* take ye no thought,” &c. These appellations are, generally, referable to every object possessing authority, and are here peculiarly illustrative of the orders of those invisible beings who are in heaven.

“*All things were created by him, and for him.*” Some opponents of Christ’s Divinity and Sonship understand the *all things created by the Son,* to mean the *Gospel dispensation and Church.* According to this view of *creating all things,* the first born of the whole

creation, in verse 15th, signifies the first made of the Christian Church. The Apostle is made to reason that the Son is the first made member of the Christian Church, because by him the Church was created. But there is no justice in such reasoning; neither is there any necessary connexion between the creation of the Church by the Son, and himself being its first member. Pierce says, of this interpretation, "It is so forced and violent, that it can hardly be thought men would have espoused it, but for the sake of an hypothesis." Others contend that the creation of all things which are in heaven, by the Son, means the new-modelling of the heavenly hosts. If this statement mean that the Son, after his exaltation, divested those angels, who "ministered to the heirs of salvation," of the situations which they held, and placed others in their stead,—it implies that those angels, who were thus divested, had performed their functions improperly;—but this is expressly contrary to what is said in the epistle of Jude, that the angels who fell "kept not their first estate," and that those who stood, by implication, kept that estate. If these objectors mean that the Son changed the order which had formerly been established

amongst the angels, and elevated some, by giving them superiority over those to whom they were once inferior, this seems impossible, unless he also changed the nature and qualities of those who were thus exalted. From the enumeration in this and other passages, the subordination amongst the angels seems to have arisen from the qualities which they possessed. To have changed, then, this subordination, by raising the inferior above the superior nature, which had done nothing to cause such degradation, would be incongruous, if not unjust. But, if the Son, in effecting the alleged change, had power to give the nature and qualities of an inferior to a superior being,—why may he not have had the power to create them? It will not obviate the difficulty to say, that the power of changing a nature is inferior to that of creating it; unless it can be shown, that the power of changing an angelic nature may belong to a *mere man*, as those, who deny the Divinity of Christ, affirm the Son to be.—There can be no meaning affixed to the new-modelling of the heavenly beings, which will not show the superiority of him, in whom such power is, over all angelic natures.—Does not this overthrow the Socinian doc-

trine? No legitimate explanation can evade the Apostle's obvious assertion that the Son created all things.

We by no means maintain that the view which we have combated is adopted by *all* those who deny the Eternal Sonship of Christ. But, as it is espoused by those who endeavour to overthrow his Divinity, as well as his Sonship, we felt it necessary to examine their objections.

The mind cannot exhaust the range of objects enhancing the greatness of the Son. Earth is full of this greatness. The heavenly bodies roll in this greatness. Angels enjoy their nature in consequence of its exertion. The objects of sense and the objects of intelligence are alike monuments of its energy. It is on earth; because the Son is there. It is in heaven; because the Son is there. It is in the Godhead, where the Son necessarily and eternally exists.

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” As the omnipotence of the Son was displayed in creating all things, he must necessarily have been existing before them, even as Son, eternally, within the Godhead; and his power is now conspicuous in maintaining and preserving the objects of cre-

ation when brought into being. "By him all things consist." Paul, when preaching on Mars' hill, declares that God created all things, and that, in him, they now subsist. The Son, of whom the same circumstances are exactly predicated, is, therefore, absolute God. Acts xvii. 24—28. "God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

If the Son be before all things, it is impossible to conceive language which more specifically denotes him to be eternal. Being Son, before creation—creation did not cause or produce his Sonship. For though the

aspect of creation might have induced him to assume certain functions, and though he prospectively saw, from all eternity, the functions which he would in consequence assume, yet, the knowledge of what he would be to creation, after it came into being, could not have caused him actually to exist in that certain state before creation. His actual existence in any character connected with creation, must be simultaneous with creation, and not before it. But his actual existence as Son is declared to be before all creation. It is, therefore, independent of creation. If it be asserted that he was Son only prospectively from everlasting, and not *de facto*, then, the Apostle has erred when he says, "And he (the Son) is before all things." On the supposition that the Son is not eternal Son, the Apostle has described an actual state of existence before creation, which was not in being until creation had being; he has described that as independent of creation, which could not be until creation was; he has given to the Son an indefinitely eternal existence, whereas his existence as Son was definite and dependent. If the Son were not in being as Son, before creation, then, if creation had never been, the Son would have never

been. Creation, the effect, must, on such a supposition, have caused its creator, (who was Son before the act of creation,) to become Son in consequence of that act. Angels and men were created by the Son, and, on the supposition of a contingent Sonship, they were the occasion of Sonship to that Son who did create them. The consequent must have produced the antecedent;—but this is too preposterous to be maintained. Yet such conclusions must be deduced, if the Son be not Son eternally,—independently of creation. As the Son was Son, independently of, and before, all creation, when there was no Being but one Being, he was Son in that Being. As that Being is self-existent, eternal, immense, and immutable, omnipotent, and omniscient, the Son, in himself as Son, possesses these qualities of self-existence, eternity, immensity, immutability, omnipotence, and omniscience.

The language of nature—the language of reason—can give no other construction to the passage, than the eternal existence of the Sonship of the person described. Every advance in this research exhibits the Sonship of our Eternal Lord. Inanimate matter is his creation. Before he formed the sterile moun-

tain, or the luxuriant valley; before he decked the sky with stars, or the earth with flowers; before he gave the landscape its hues, or the gale its odours—the heavens their grandeur, or the earth its beauty; before this world heard the thousand notes of song, or the other world its ten thousand times ten thousand notes of the “new song;” before land and sea and air; before suns and systems,—he was Son. Before animated nature; before “the cattle of a thousand hills,” the “fowls of the heaven,” and the “innumerable creeping things of the great and wide sea;” before the generations of men who have appeared, and acted, and disappeared,—he was Son. Before the existence of the spirit that actuates man; before his emotions of joy and sorrow; before his energies that have unfolded science and developed art; before his might which has displayed itself in the loneliness of its own inherent strength, and in the tumult of falling nations, and of rising states; before he enjoyed communion with his creator; before he sinned and maddened in crime; before life and immortality were brought to light,—in life and immortality the Son was. Before angels’ intellect desired to look into the “things of

God ;” before their armies fell, or their armies remained faithful ; before they obeyed commands, or ranged through space ; before thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—the Son was. In the Godhead he was, and is, and shall be, evermore.

“ And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the first born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”

The Apostle has enumerated the qualities, and specified the excellence, of the Son, in that nature which is essentially his ; even in “ eternal power and Godhead ;” he now details the grandeur of his Messiahship, and the glories of his Mediatorial reign. The transition which the Apostle commences in the 15th, and continues to the end of the 19th verse, is employed in descriptions of the uncreated glories of the Son, and his achieved glories as the Messiah. As Messiah, “ he is head of the body, the Church.” In the union of the Son with humanity, he rules pre-eminently over that church which he has founded, constituted, and preserved. The Son, as God, is supreme over creation, and, as Mediator, he is, especially and peculiarly, supreme over the church. As the

head is elevated above all the other members of the body, so he is elevated over all the members of the church, his mystical body.

“*Who is the beginning* ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή.” In this, and in what follows, the majesty of the Son, as the efficient cause and presiding head of the Church, is exhibited in consequence of that fulness which it pleased the Father should dwell in him. The term ἀρχή, rendered *beginning*, was the one employed by the Greek Theist Philosophers, to designate the *unmade, self-existent Deity, the Uncaused Cause of all*. Thus Proclus, speaking of Plato’s opinion concerning the efficient principle or cause, says, ὅτι ὁ Πλάτων ἐπὶ μίαν ἀρχὴν ἀναγεί παντα—that *Plato reduces all things to one principle*, i. e. one self-subsistent Being, whose self-subsistence Plato describes as before all other beings. This was the notion associated with the word ἀρχή by the Greek Theists, in opposition to the reasonings of the Atheistical Philosophers.* In accordance with that which was the grand object of examination in the Greek Schools of Philosophy, Christ calls himself, (Revelation iii. 14.) ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τῶν θεῶν—the *beginning, i. e. the self-existent,*

* See Cudworth’s Intellectual System, p. 243, and *passim*.

efficient cause of the creation of God. In his human nature, this is impossible. It is true in that nature which is Almighty and liveth for ever. It is true of the Son, who in the everlasting nature, created all things. The research of ancient sages, of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, was employed in quest of that principle which brought all things into being; this principle they justly considered underived and self-existent. The Apostle declares that this efficient, self-existent principle is the Son. For he says that the Son created all things, visible and invisible. The Son is, therefore, the ἀρχή—the *beginning*, or *efficient principle* by which all things were created. The Son himself, adopting (if we dare use the expression,) not only the notion employed by the Greek Philosophers, but the very word employed to express that notion, says,—I am ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τῆς Θεοῦ, *the beginning, the efficient cause of the creation of God.* Though the Son be thus the ἀρχή, or *beginning* or *efficient cause of all things*, he is, in the passage which we are examining, considered as the ἀρχή, *the beginning* or *efficient cause*, with respect to restricted objects in creation. The Apostle has introduced the Son in his Messiahship, as head of the Church, and the qua-

lities subsequently enumerated must be confined to him in that capacity. The excellence of his supreme authority in the Church, is the object of the Apostle's examination. He is, then, the efficient cause, the creator, the beginning of the Church; but not as creatures can be termed, in one sense, the beginning of parts of the Church. For they themselves have a beginning within it, but are not the beginning of it. They are employed as instruments by the efficient cause of the Church, but are not themselves efficient causes in promoting its extension. They are caused *to be* by him, who is the cause of *being* in the Church. They are *media*, having all their power derived. The Son is the underived original of the Church, and all in that Church originate with, and are derived from, him. But if the declaration that the Son is the $\alpha\epsilon\chi\eta$, *the beginning or efficient cause*, which he must be, seeing he created all things,—prove his eternal Godhead as Son, the declaration that he is the $\alpha\epsilon\chi\eta$, *the beginning or efficient cause* of the Church, likewise proves his eternal Godhead as Son. For what is true in consequence of his being the cause of creation as a whole, is also true in consequence of his being the cause of the different

and respective portions of existence which compose creation. One of the portions of creation is the Church; the cause which produced it must be as really God, as the cause which produced the orders of spirit or the orbs of matter. An efficient cause must be as much employed to give being to this portion as to any other portion, or all the portions of creation. The power of the Son, in causing this Church, is as much the power of his eternal Godhead, as his power in causing the other parts of creation. The omnipotence, which first called all things into being, must be underived, when exhibited in the minutest particle—in the existence of the church, or in the existence of all things;—otherwise the objects, whether great or small portions of creation, would be derived from some other omnipotence which is not in the Son. But there cannot be two omnipotent Beings. This omnipotence of the underived cause of the Church is not only exerted in producing all its members, but in producing the most resplendent and glorious display within it. It has created that object in which are concentrated all the perfections of God—that object even more illustrious than the brightest seraph who never suffered wo or

degradation in consequence of sin—that object, the medium before which “the things in heaven and the things in earth” bow—that object, before which the angels, the living creatures, and elders, “cast their crowns”—that object which not only “lives and moves and has its being” by the supporting Godhead, but is united with it, being elevated to personal existence with that person who is the eternal, efficient cause of all things. This object, which is the human nature of the first cause, is, in like manner with all beings in the Church, caused by the Son, and the other two Divine persons. Its causation and assumption could not produce, or give Sonship to, its own efficient principle, which is the Son. The formation of the Church is expressly called a creation, and its members are said to be “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” The Son declares that all the members of the Church must be born again; a new creation must take place in their natures, directed by a power as potent as the first creating energy. Though, in God, there can, strictly, be no degrees of omnipotence; yet, in our views of comprehension, this is a more powerful exhibition, because it is an energy to controul and renew

active, vigorous powers, which are opposed to the will of the Creator; whereas, in the first process of creation, they were simply called into existence, not created anew and re-modelled. The Son is the efficient cause of the Church;—none could be such an efficient cause, except the Eternal Being;—the Son is, therefore, Eternal,—the cause of creation—the cause of that portion of creation which is the Church.

The Son is “*πρωτοτοκος εκ των νεκρων, the first born from the dead;—that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*”

This passage has been much disputed, and no little ingenuity has been employed in endeavouring to ascertain the exact meaning of the Apostle. Some understand his meaning to be that the Son, in human nature, was the first that arose from the dead, to immortal life, and that, being the “first fruits of them that slept,” he arose by his own inherent power. In proof of this opinion, it is asserted that those, who were raised from the dead by Elijah, Elisha, and by Christ, *died again*, and that, consequently, their resurrection was not to immortal life,—that those saints who arose and went into the holy city, consequent on Christ’s death, did

not do so until after his resurrection. (See Matthew xxvii. 53.) From the circumstance of Christ being the first of the church who arose to immortal life, they say he is styled the *first born of, or from, the dead*, that, in the resurrection, and “in all things” in the church, “he might have the pre-eminence” or priority of all creatures,—a pre-eminence more especial in as much as he arose by his own power, through which all other creatures are to arise. But if there be any pre-eminence connected with the circumstance of being the first raised from the dead, surely there must also be pre-eminence connected with the circumstance of being altogether prevented from experiencing the power of death; yet we are not aware of any peculiar honours derived by Enoch and Elijah, in consequence of their immediate translation from earth to heaven. Neither do we read of any especial privileges or pre-eminence enjoyed by those saints, who were the first members of the church, delivered from death, after Christ’s resurrection. Nor can we see, in what manner, the mere circumstance of the Son’s resurrection in human nature, as the first who triumphed over death in his own might, could, of itself, exhibit pre-emi-

nence over the Church. In itself, it is merely a fact, which, unless associated with other considerations deduced from, and associated with, the event, does not evince superiority. Had the additional fact been stated, that he arose by his own inherent strength, this would, doubtless, have been an argument showing his pre-eminence or greatness; but as this fact is not adduced in the passage, the Apostle's reasoning can only be collected from what he has expressly mentioned.

To obviate these difficulties, another explanation has been given to the expression, viz. that the Son is *Lord of the dead*; and this, we apprehend, is the true meaning. The particle $\epsilon\kappa$ is very often used as the sign of the Genitive case, and may be translated *of* as well as *from*.

We have already shown, from the Jewish customs, and the expressions of Scripture, that the word $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, literally *first born*, is, also, from uniform association, employed to signify lord or ruler, because the first born was lord of the rest of the family. In announcing the Son to be the Lord of the dead, the Apostle preserves his reasoning entire. He continues the description of the Son's pre-eminent qualities in the Church, having

already described him as the efficient cause, the beginning from which the Church came, —and he farther asserts his supremacy by his Lordship over the dead, instead of mentioning the insulated fact that the Son first arose from the dead. In confirmation of the reading which we have adopted, see Romans xiv. 9. “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” As the first born bears the same signification as lord, we discover, in this explication of the passage, the pre-eminence that the Son especially possesses in his universal reign, which comprehends both “the quick and the dead.”—The apostle John exhibits the splendours of Christ’s exaltation, and expressly attaches this expression to the sway which he exercises over all human greatness:—he says that the Son is prince of the kings of the earth, and makes the expression *πρωτοτοκος εκ των νεκρων*, the first born, (or first begotten, as it is translated in the Revelation,) to precede the declaration of his earthly rule. The Son is, therefore, the Lord who rules over the dead and over death itself.

The human race experience the sway of this principle, which has been boldly termed

a tyrant—"the king of terrors," until the "stronger" king shall "bind him" and divest him of his reign. The Son is Lord of the dead, for he has appointed the season in which death shall prevail over man, and the season when it shall cease. He has ordained the time when he shall destroy death itself. The Son reigns over those of his Church who are alive, and over those who are dead. He reigns over life and over death, that in all respects, in his mediatory functions, he may be pre-eminent.

The *pre-eminence* of the Son in the Church, arises from what he is in himself, being its source,—and from the objects within it which he rules.

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; παν το πληρωμα κατοικησαι—all fulness should dwell." Before examining what this πληρωμα, *pleroma*, *fulness*, which dwells in the Son, is, we shall endeavour to ascertain its connexion and meaning in other passages of Scripture.

Πληρωμα, *fulness*, signifies that which is complete in itself, and which also renders another object complete.—It is especially used, in this sense, to signify the conversion of the Jews, which will render them complete

in the privileges of which they have been almost entirely deprived. It signifies, likewise, the conversion of the Gentiles, which will render them complete in those privileges which they so partially enjoy by the light of nature;—each of which conversions, complete in itself, will render the other complete; and both united, will constitute the completion of the universal Church. This idea of *fulness* or *completion* is taken from a patch, which, when put into a torn garment, mends it, or makes it complete. See Matthew ix. 16. where, in this sense, it is called πληρωμα, *that which is put in to fill up—fulness.*—The conversion of the Jews to the Christian Church is, in Romans xi. 12. called το πληρωμα αυτων, *their fulness.* “Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness?” Their own conversion is that, which communicated or infused into them, renders them complete or full; and their conversion is, to the rest of the world and to the Gentiles, the completion or fulness of riches in the church. The conversion of the Gentiles is, in like manner, called το πληρωμα, *the fulness.* Romans xi. 25. “For I would not, brethren, that

ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The Christian Church is represented as a great temple, in which all nations are to worship; the Gentiles are represented as successively entering it, and, when they shall have gone in, their general entrance is termed *πληρωμα*, *fulness* or *completion* to themselves. On this event, the Jews, who have been blinded, and unable to see the beauty of the Christian temple, or the way of approach within the Christian Church, will likewise enter, being enabled to see clearly the advantageous nature of its worship.

The Church universal is termed the fulness or completion of Christ, in his Mediatorial functions; as that, without which, his Messiahship would be incomplete;—without which, we could form no notion of him as Messiah. This Church is to him a fulness, a completion; he sees it as "the travail of his soul, and is satisfied," "with great desire he has desired" to accomplish its union to himself by his sufferings and victories.—Ephesians i. 22, 23. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head

over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness, *το πληρωμα*, of him that filleth all in all." Christ, in his mediatorial character as Messiah, has universal rule: "all things" are "put in subjection under his feet;" his enemies are to be made his footstool; angels and men are under his sway; evil spirits are under his controul; and the material worlds, with all which they contain, are under his direction:—but this universal reign would be incomplete, unless his especial subjects, the universal Church among men, were also united and subjected to him. This is his mystical body, and is as necessary to him, as the rest of the members, in the corporeal frame, are to the head. His powers, as Messiah, would be incomplete, unless this spiritual power were also his;—his kingdom would be incomplete, if this portion, which is his spiritual kingdom, were not given to him;—there would be a deficiency of subjects, unless he procured his spiritual subjects.

This fulness is also considered as the graces and mercies which are treasured up in Christ, to be communicated by him to each member of his Church; and without which indwelling presence of Christ, by the fulness of grace and mercy, the individual mem-

bers of the Church would not be complete. The fulness of these graces and mercies dwells in Christ as their source; they dwell in the members of his church, who are their recipients from Christ. Every member of Christ's mystical body obtains this effusion of fulness. The Valentinians, one of the sects of the Gnostics, affirmed that they, being the only chosen and spiritual seed of heaven, would, after this life, approach the Divine *pleroma* or fulness, which they termed the habitation of the Deity; whilst all others, having only partial favour, would be unable to reach that elevation. In opposition to such opinions, the apostle John says that the real *pleroma* of the Church is Christ's grace, which is not given to any one more than another, but is communicated to all the members. John i. 16. "And of his fulness (*πληρωμα*) have all we received, and grace for grace." This fulness is said to dwell in the Church, and in each member thereof, being Christ's temple;—as the Shekinah or visible glory of Jehovah dwelt in the Ark and Temple of the Jewish Church. It directs the worship, enlightens the understanding, warms the affections, elevates the soul;—and Christ, by this fulness, is, indeed, *God*

with us. Some shining grace, particularly the superior one of love comprehending all the rest, is denoted by this fulness. Ephesians iii. 17—19. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness (πληρωμα) of God.” The people of the Messiah are formed into a holy temple, for an habitation of God, by the Spirit, through the love of Christ; and, in this temple, Christ displays the fulness of grace and mercy which he possesses. This fulness is said to be laid up in Christ, who dispenses it to his people; for it is written, Ephesians i. 23. “That he filleth all in all;” τὰ πάντα ἐν πασὶ πληροῦμενος—and Ephesians iv. 8—10. “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill (ἐν πληρωσῇ) all things.)” Without this fulness

in the Messiah, his character would not be complete. The graces and mercies, which are the blessings that he confers, are said to be in the members of his Church, being their fulness derived from the inexhaustible source which is in Christ. Without these blessings bestowed on them, they would be incomplete in the Church of the Messiah. Romans xv. 29. "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness (*πληρωμα*) of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

These observations are necessary as a preliminary discussion, in ascertaining the meaning of *πληρωμα*, *fulness*, in the verse immediately under consideration.—We have shown that the foundation of the Church by Christ, its efficient cause, is a peculiar and incommunicable attribute of Deity, who is the *αρχη*, *the beginning* or efficient cause of all things. As a proof that the attributes mentioned in the preceding verse, i. e. being the efficient cause of the Church, and having rule over the dead, are in Christ, the Apostle connects these attributes with what he at present predicates, by the particle *οτι*, *for* or *because* it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness (*πληρωμα*) should dwell. What fulness or *pleroma* is this which does dwell in the Son? Is it his

Church? or is it the revenue of graces and mercies which he bestows on the Church? We apprehend that neither of these is the object alluded to, and, in order to obtain the Apostle's exact meaning, we shall examine the parallel passage in Colossians ii. 9. where it is said of Christ, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—*παν το πληρωμα της θεοτητος σωματικως.*" The expression is here entirely different from any other meaning of *πληρωμα*, fulness, and conveys an idea far beyond any to which we have alluded.

The following observations will lead to the opinion which, we apprehend, the Apostle intended to convey. The word *πληρωμα* is derived from *πληρησ*, signifying not only *full*, but *finished, perfect, complete; that which wants nothing which it ought to have.* Hence, 1 Corinthians x. 26. *πληρωμα της γης*, *the fulness of the earth*, means all that the earth contains—all that belongs to it. The Gnostics, whose doctrines were circulated among professing Christians as early as the apostolic age, maintained, amongst other opinions, that the world was created by an evil principle, and that all matter was essentially evil;—that there was a *pleroma* or fulness in the Deity, consisting of different *Æons* or emanations which he gene-

rated, in which he dwelt, and which were subordinate to him;—that Christ, the Son of God, was one of these Æons who descended into the body of Jesus, and who, when that body suffered, left it and returned to his own *pleroma*;—and that his object, in this descent, was to effect the overthrow of evil and of matter, which he will finally accomplish. These notions were deduced from the Oriental philosophy maintaining the existence of two independent principles—the one good and the other evil. These doctrines were principally prevalent amongst the Churches of Asia, which, therefore, the Apostle was particularly anxious to guard against such dangerous heresies. He declares that in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Now the Godhead expressly means that nature which is God's,—that in which God is what he is. It is thus used by the Apostle, Romans i. 20. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” Now, that which is inseparable from the Godhead,—that which it cannot want to be what it is,—that which it must possess to be Godhead,—is its essential perfections, and the govern-

ment of what it has created. These are united, not only with our notions of Godhead, but with the existence of Godhead itself. Without these there would be no Godhead. They are, therefore, its *πληρωμα*, fulness; they cannot be disunited from it; they must be in it to render it what it is.—These perfections, in opposition to the Gnostic opinion of the Divine *pleroma*, and of the person of Christ, the Apostle declares to be the real *pleroma* of Godhead, which dwells in Christ. But these cannot dwell in the human nature of Christ, nor in any other created nature. Eternity, immensity, and immutability, cannot, in any sense, be said to dwell in that which is created—in that which has dimensions; and in that which experiences change. To affirm so would be a contradiction—the assertion of an absolute impossibility. Yet these perfections, even the Divine perfections, the *pleroma* of the Godhead, are affirmed to be in Christ. They must, therefore, be in that nature which is capable of possessing them. They must inhere in his Divine nature, which is the Godhead, and which took the human nature into union with itself. What the Apostle predicates of Christ is true, therefore, of his Divinity. The Apostle says that

this fulness dwells in Christ, *σωματικως*, *bodily*. The word *σωμα*, commonly translated *body*, like its corresponding Hebrew word *הוּי*, signifies *substance*. In this acceptation, the *pleroma* of Godhead is said to dwell in Christ substantially; i. e. in that substance which is his Godhead are all the perfections correspondent therewith. In the Divine nature of the Messiah, the Apostle announces that the Godhead is; that the *pleroma* of Godhead is there substantially and really.

When it is said, Colossians i. 19. that “it pleased the Father that in him, (in the Son,) should all fulness dwell,” or *continually dwell*, as it might be rendered,—this expression does not mean that by the pleasure of the Father in appointing this fulness, as our Lord’s human nature was appointed, all fulness dwelt in him; but it means that the Father was pleased, and could not but be pleased with his own nature, or Godhead, in which, in the person of the Son, all fulness dwelt. From heaven, this pleasure of the Father was proclaimed, on the banks of the Jordan, to the inhabitants of earth;—this pleasure was the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was;—this pleasure was declared when men beheld the

human nature of the Son;—but neither this declaration, nor the human nature of the Son, was the cause of its commencement. For the Son says to the Father, “Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” And the Father says to the Son, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Son rejoiced in this uncreated pleasure with the Father. “And I was daily his delight,” says he, “rejoicing always before him.” The Father says to him, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” With the joy, then, which is in the Eternal nature, the Father was pleased that in his Son all fulness should dwell. Without the Divine perfections thus dwelling in the Son, he could not be a Divine person.

Having exhibited the Godhead, and perfections of Godhead which dwell in the Son, and in which the Father was well pleased, the Apostle proceeds to describe what has been achieved by the Son in his human nature. “And” the Father was also pleased, (“having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.” The results of the Messiah’s reign are to be the reconcili-

ation of his subjects unto himself, and their union with those spirits who never fell; so that one mighty kingdom shall be established whose principles shall be purity and happiness, whose duration shall be eternity, whose citizens shall be the ransomed of the earth, and the faithful of Heaven,—whose bond of union shall be love.

We have thus an exposition of the Son's greatness, as Messiah, on account of the inherent energy which, as God, he possesses, in being the efficient cause of his Church—the ruler over that Church, and over death. We have the reasons of this greatness assigned—because he has the *all-pleroma*, or *pleroma* of Godhead, even the perfections of Godhead dwelling in his Deity, and because he has, in human nature, through his blood, procured a uniting principle by which his subjects and angels shall coalesce in love to God, in perpetual happiness, and in harmonious perfection.

From the whole passage, we learn that the Son is essentially the image of the invisible Godhead—that he is Lord, by right, of the whole creation—that he is the creator of heaven and earth, and all that they contain—that he exists uncaused, and is the cause of

all—that he preserves all things;—we learn that, having human nature united to himself, and being Messiah, the Son is the head of the Church—that he is the first cause of the Church, which he could not be if he were not God—that he is Lord of the dead—that, in the nature which assumed human nature, and thereby caused his Messiahship, he has the *all-pleroma*,—that, through the efficacy infused into his humanity, he is uniting and will unite angels and men, who, in consequence, in everlasting harmony, will love each other, will love the Messiah who effected this union, and the God who gave energy to Messiah's humanity.

After this recapitulation of the Son's uncaused greatness, who can doubt that he is self-existent and eternal?

CHAPTER VIII.



*Declaration of our Lord, concerning his
Eternal Sonship.*

WHEN our Lord had, on the Sabbath, graciously cured the impotent man lying at the pool of Siloam, he was accused by the Jews of violating the Divine commands concerning the observance of that holy day. (John v. 1—16. To show the utter fallacy of such an accusation, founded on the action performed, and the impossibility of a violation of the Sabbath by him, he defends himself by an exposition of his dignity and authority, v. 17. “*But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*” As Son, he claims an equality with the Father in working, declaring that, when the Father works, whether in creation or providence,—he also works. The Father maintains and preserves his workmanship, as much on the Sabbath as on other days; and it was, there-

fore, competent for the Son, in human nature, to perform, in creation, whatever works seemed good to him. Had the Son been inferior to the Father, his reasoning would have been inconclusive; for no created nature could have a right to work on the day of rest, or on any other occasion, merely because the Father does at all times whatsoever he pleases. If the Son and the Father are equal in working, and the actions of the Son are proper in themselves, as the Father's also are,—the Son, who does thus work, must have been in the state of Son from everlasting. If the Son had ever been in a different state, the work of creation could not have been performed by him, as is asserted in the epistles to the Hebrews and Colossians, and by Christ himself,—but must have been done in the state in which he existed, prior to creation. If actions are erroneously ascribed to him as Son, he not being in that related state prior to, and during the work of, creation, we have no security that actions are not, in like manner, erroneously ascribed to him, subsequently to creation, and during his manifestation in the flesh. But this cannot be;—otherwise, the authenticity of Scripture is destroyed. Our Lord, to prevent the

possibility of such conclusions, expressly declares that all the works which are, are those of the Father and the Son; that they are performed by them in these related states; and that, in these states, they continue, in the Godhead, to rule the universe. The Jews felt the full force and exact import of our Lord's declaration, and their indignation was excited that he, in whom they could see neither "form nor comeliness," should not only maintain his authority over the Sabbath, but assert that God was his Father, "making himself equal with God." v. 18. *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."* The Jews, as a nation, had, in one sense, claimed God as their Father; their prophets and kings had claimed him in that capacity. They must, therefore, have understood our Lord, on this occasion, as claiming him to be his Father in the Godhead. *"By calling God peculiarly his Father, (he) had equalled himself with God, πατερα ιδιον ελεγε τον Θεον, ισον εαυτον ποιων τω Θεω. (English Translation) Said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. On a little reflection, it must be evident that the*

“ sense is here imperfectly expressed. For
 “ how could those men say that Jesus, by
 “ calling God his Father, made himself equal
 “ with God, when they made no scruple
 “ themselves to call God their father (ch.
 “ viii. 41.) and yet would have thought it
 “ very injurious in any man to infer that they
 “ made themselves equal with God? There
 “ must, therefore, be here something pecu-
 “ liar and energetic in the word *ιδιος*. The
 “ expression in most familiar use would have
 “ been *πατερα εαυτου*. And, though I am far
 “ from saying that there are not many cases
 “ in which either expression may be used
 “ indifferently, there are some in which *ιδιος*
 “ is more emphatical, and others in which
 “ it would not be strictly proper. Beza’s
 “ explanation of the word is very just; *suum,*
 “ *ιδιον, id est sibi proprium ac peculiarem.**
 “ In this view, the import of the words is,
 “ that God is Father to him, in a sense where-
 “ in he is Father to no other. Let it be
 “ observed, however, that if the scope of the
 “ context did not necessarily lead to this con-
 “ clusion, I should not infer so much from

* The translation is, *proper and peculiar to one’s self*. In the present passage, consequently, the expression means, *but said also that God was his proper and peculiar Father*.

“the mere application of the word *ιδιος*: for though this is strictly the import of the term, it is often, like many other words, employed with greater latitude.”—See Campbell on the Gospels.

Our Lord, instead of declaring that the Jews had misinterpreted his words, proceeds to enlarge on the very meaning which they assigned, as that which he intended to convey. V. 19. *“Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise.”* Now, as it is admitted that the Father does those works which are peculiar to omnipotence,—for it will not be disputed that the creation of heaven and earth is a work which none but an omnipotent Being could perform,—the Son asserts that *he* does the same work of omnipotence. “Of himself” he can do nothing; by or of himself, separate from the Father, seeing they are both in the Divine essence, it is impossible that he can perform any thing. The Divine nature is undivided; what is done in it by one person must be done by all the persons. One person, the Son, cannot work separately from

the Father; his very nature, from its constitution, must act in union with itself. But the Father is in that nature, as is also the Son;—the act of one must, therefore, be the act of both, for no one of the persons can act separately from the other. When it is said that the Son *sees* the Father doing the works, no other meaning can be affixed to the expression, except that of simultaneous knowledge; for the Godhead cannot be supposed to see by the medium of organic matter, as mankind do. Now, let it be remarked, the Son speaks of what is true in the Divine nature alone. For the created being of the loftiest powers cannot accomplish *per se*, the actions which are essential to Godhead. The greatest external work of Godhead is the causing all things to appear; and the greatest manifestation of Deity, which we can contemplate, is his existence as our uncaused cause. In this greatest external work, the causing of all things, and in this highest glory which we are able to appreciate, the Son declares himself to be in union with the Father. Whatsoever things he doeth, the Son doeth likewise. To assert, therefore, that the person speaking was Son, in consequence of the aspect which he bore to cre-

ation—in consequence of his assumption of Mediatorial functions, or of any other event,—is to assert that he was not Son in the greatest external work of Godhead, which is contrary to his own express affirmation, for he groups all the works of Godhead, or of the Father, as being likewise his. If the Son, then, in the Godhead, be the uncaused cause of all, and if this glory be peculiar to him in his state of Son, no modification of matter or mind—no event in heaven or in earth, can cause *him* to be in the state of Son, within the Godhead, who, as Son, called all things into being. Omnipotence cannot be affected or caused to assume a new state, because the objects which it has called into being are changed. But the Son, as Son, is omnipotent. The principles of purity, or of sin, of happiness, or of misery, cannot affect or change him who is omnipotent. It may be said, did he not become Messiah and Mediator for his people, and did he not, in these characters, and does he not in these characters, perform offices and works which are not essential to him in the Godhead? This is readily granted. But it is necessary to attend to the mode in which these offices and works are performed. They are not the

works of the Godhead, or of the Divine nature, absolutely considered, but of the Divine nature united with that human nature which this person of the Godhead assumed,—and, in virtue of this union, they are efficacious in accomplishing what the expressions import will be achieved. The state, in which the Divine person exists, cannot be changed in consequence of this union, otherwise, humanity would be equal, nay superior, to the Deity, seeing it was able to alter it. Now, he had the state of Son, in his uncaused nature, when he caused all things. But his humanity has apparently changed, and does apparently change in itself, and in its relation to men; or rather, strictly speaking, it appears to them to change in consequence of the changes which they undergo in themselves,—while, in reality, it still continues the same in the principles which are infused into it, in virtue of its union with the Divine nature. In its external indications it was born; it grew in stature; it ceased to possess vital energy; it has had vital energy restored; it has been exalted, and has had a name given to it above every name;—but the principles of its reasonable soul were the same, in increasing vigour, until his exaltation. Its ac-

tuating principle has been love, infused from the eternal love which caused his soul; and this love, during his continuance on earth, expanded with the developement of its powers. The acts of grace and mercy which our Lord accomplished, the miracles which he performed, and the sermons which he preached, were only different exhibitions of love; and his Mediatorial work in heaven is only the continuation of that love which was displayed on earth. When Christ is said to fulfil the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, he cannot be understood, at one time, and to one person, to be actually a Prophet, and, at another time, and to another person, to be a Priest or King, in the manner that different men, at different times, and to different individuals, have borne these offices. But these expressions mean that his energetic love infused by the Divine nature, in which he subsists, is applicable to the state of men whether in ignorance, in guilt, or under the reign of sin. Their different aspects, in these states, are approached and remedied by his all-prevailing love, which does not assume a different nature in consequence of their different conditions, but is the principle which suits all the conditions of men.—

The difference of names applicable to the procedure of Christ, arises from our apprehension of the different situations of men; but does not originate from any actual change in his situation, that he may become suited to them. When Christ sorrowed on earth, this was only the display of his love, arising from men's' hardened and depraved obstinacy; but the love was not, thereby, changed into the unmixed emotion of sorrow. When he rode in triumph amidst the Hosannahs of the multitude, his love was not changed into a Monarchical assumption of grandeur, but was only thus exhibited to the multitude.

In the constitution of the created natures on earth, we discern certain fixed principles which inhere in this constitution, and without which they could not exist as men. They cannot perceive any change, without believing that, in future, the same antecedent circumstances will be followed by the same consequents, and that, therefore, the future train of physical events will resemble the past. They cannot view certain actions without either approbation or disapprobation. But, in addition to these constitutional principles which are inseparable from the existence

of man, there was in the constitution of Christ's nature which had no sin,—a principle which men cannot possess, because they have sin. This is the actuating love communicated from the Divinity, which was inseparable from the being of his reasonable soul, and without which he could not have been Messiah. This principle is both *in the constitution* of his soul, and is *the source* of his Messiahship. This love is presented to man in every situation, and becomes to him prophetic or instructive,—priestly or purifying,—kingly or predominant over sin, in those different respects, in which man views it, and feels it applied to himself. It is not only inherent in the constitution of Christ, but it is the pervading energy which excites and directs the every exertion of his soul. Without this principle constitutionally existing and actively exerted within his nature, he could not have been the Saviour of those who had sinned and excluded themselves from the love of God. As there can be no fixed purpose without a fixed principle—as there can be no end attained, without a fixed purpose directed by a fixed principle, we discern, in Christ, the purpose directed by the inherent principle of his na-

ture, which enabled him to attain the end for which he lived, and died, and rose again—viz. the salvation of his people through his love. By such a review, we perceive the fallacy which supposes the possibility of our Lord becoming Son, as God, in consequence of his procedure in the salvation of man. For there not only can be no change of his state, in his aspect towards man, as God, but, in human nature, there can be no change of the state of his soul—which was essentially formed in, and which acted by, love. The notion which supposes the commencement of our Lord's state of Sonship, must originate, primarily, from an erroneous view of the complexity of his person, and must be originally deduced from an erroneous apprehension of the external changes which his body underwent on earth. When we consider the complex aspect of our Lord, we discover the Divine nature, and his Divine person inseparable therefrom, which were uncaused, and could, therefore, never be caused to become Son, or to take the designation of Son,—and we discover the human nature composed of a true body and a reasonable soul; which reasonable soul never changed in its principle of inherent and actuating energy of love, but only increased

progressively therein, as was consentaneous to the nature of a human soul; and which true body did change, and hunger and thirst, and undergo all the vicissitudes to which a human body is liable in the present state of the world;—for, without these vicissitudes, it would not have been a true body. The opponents of the Eternal Sonship of our Lord are, then, either reduced to the necessity of affirming that there is no person in the Godhead who bears the name of Son and exists in that related state, and, consequently, that there are no persons in the Godhead; (for we have shown, that if there be persons, the Son must be essentially a person)—or else they must assert the preposterous contradiction, that the state of manhood caused to the Son his state of Sonship.—We have shown that his Godhead cannot change its state—that even his human soul never changed, and never can change its functions—that it possesses one and only one influential principle, which must be one, in consequence of the source from which it is derived. This principle increased, because it was in his human soul, but it does not in reality assume different functions; it only appears to do so in consequence of our situation. He has the

all-prevalent energy of this principle in his nature ; and to us, and for us, it is that of a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. It is our state which causes us to experience the benefits flowing therefrom. This principle comes to us in our wants and in our crimes, by the fitness and adaptation of saving love. The love which enlightens our understanding is to us the love of a Prophet ; the love which washes away the guilt of sin is that of a Priest ; and the love which rules in us, and “restrains and conquers all his and our enemies,” is that of a King. But, because such is the fact, we cannot deduce from it the monstrous inference, that a person inhering in the Divine nature assumes another state with reference to the other persons in the Godhead. This would be to affirm that,—because in consequence of our condition the energy of God in Christ must be applied to us so that we feel it in different capacities,—the same energy of the Godhead must, in consequence, be also applied within itself, so that the persons of the Godhead must experience it, rendering one of them Son, and another Father. Christ, in his Mediatorial office, is experimentally apprehended by us in his influential energy, in different capaci-

ties,—but does it, therefore, follow, or can it follow that the application of this energy to the different situations of man will cause the Godhead to experience it, and in this experience of its different persons, cause an alteration of their related states, and give designations illustrative of such states? We have so often shown the impossibility of such a result, that it is needless again to exhibit it. Such a supposition reduces the name of Son, and every other name, and the rest of the Divine persons, to a mere nullity. According to this supposition, we have neither designation nor statement of persons in the Godhead; all the names employed—the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are mere sounds, without reality in the Divine nature; they are merely perceptions and definitions of human feelings receiving certain impressions of Godhead, to which we choose to affix these certain names, and which are communicated to us in Scripture, in accordance with such previous feelings.

The argument deducing the Sonship of Christ from his aspect towards man, when fairly analyzed, reduces not only the Son himself, but the other persons of the Godhead, to mere abstract conceptions of our

minds, when they receive impressions of Divine energy. The reasoning of our adversaries, when divested of foreign associations and sifted to the bottom, stands thus:—the Divine person who immediately accomplished our salvation, and who, therefore, assumed humanity, bears a new relation towards men; he is their Messiah; the designation *Eternal Son* is a contradiction; and Christ is only termed Son on account of the relation which he assumed, and which he bears to man, in his procedure with the other Divine persons to effect man's salvation.

These premises are founded on a fallacy; for the Son, as a Divine person, could assume no new relation or relations toward man; his relation towards man must have always been the same, as it originates with his immutable nature and perfections. The relation of man towards God, and the principles which produced his relationship, were changed; but the principles of the Divine nature, towards an object, can never be changed. Whatever newness of state existed between God and man, was the effect of sin, and, therefore, originated with man, and was a newness of state peculiar and belonging to man, but not to God. When the Son took

humanity, he did not become a new person ; consequently, he could obtain no new relation between himself and man. But the effect of this assumption was, through the medium of his humanity, to restore man to that relation with the Deity which man had lost, and to produce a change in him, so that he might experience that relation from which he had withdrawn himself. The human nature was the mean employed by the Deity to produce this alteration in the state of man, but not in his own state. The utter impossibility of the assumption of a new, different, or changed state towards man, is founded on the inherent immutability of Deity, which cannot be affected by the mutability of creatures. The newness, difference, or change, is in the feelings of the creatures who contemplate and experience the energies of Deity, not in the Deity who is contemplated. This newness is occasioned by the medium, viz. our Lord's human nature, which they either sensibly beheld, or by testimony now credit, and which was employed to produce this change in the feelings of men. But even were it granted that the Deity had assumed a new relation towards man, this would not prove, nor could it by any inference imply,

that the persons in the Godhead had assumed a new relation amongst themselves.—When our opponents affirm that the Sonship of Christ cannot be eternal, because it is a contradiction, this is only taking for granted the thing to be proved, and then reasoning in a circle on their own assertion. They take for granted the newness of a relation on the part of God, towards man; they take for granted the impossibility of the Eternal Sonship of Christ; they admit related states within the Godhead, and assert that one of these is a state not eternal, viz. that of Son, arising from the aspect of God in the plan of salvation. The state of Son must either be a mere name without meaning, or a reality. If it be a reality, it is real within the Godhead; for the most determined opponents of Christ's Sonship do not say that it is a relation between the person so called and man. It must, consequently, be within the Godhead, and between Divine persons. What is within the Godhead must have been always there; otherwise the Godhead is changed. A relation between Divine persons can no more have a beginning than the Divine persons themselves; otherwise, the Divine persons are not eternal, but fortuitous, in their

state of existence. If the term Son be a mere name indicative of no state, but chosen by accident, and given because it is as good as any other name,—the related states of the Godhead and the persons of the Godhead are nullities—language is no more the signification of human thought—universal scepticism respecting ourselves, all things, God himself, is introduced. The plan pursued,—the part (we have no adequate expression for these ideas,) performed by each Divine person in the recovery of man—could not introduce related states within the Godhead;—this could only give certain feelings to man as he experienced the impression of these parts; otherwise his feelings of the procedure of each Divine person, must have created related states in the Godhead—and what he feels, must be felt by the Divine persons, so as to cause their existence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the supposition of our adversaries, viz. because man has sinned, the Divine procedure must be exhibited in states which are not eternal,—the Divinity must introduce a change within itself, consequent on the failure of man, and be a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit, in its persons. But an eternal and immense person acting accord-

ing to his own nature, cannot, by his own act, become a new person, or exist in a new relation to another. When we divest their reasoning of all ambiguity, it resolves itself into this:—that the eternal persons of the Godhead, in restoring man, became what they were not from eternity; one of them, consequently, did become Son in relation to another, or he became Son to man, or his designation of Son is an empty name. We reply: he could not, thereby, become Son to the other Divine persons, because he is an eternal person; he could not become Son to the creatures, because their nature is not his nature, because they cannot change that which is eternal; he could not be Son by mere empty name, because such an assertion overthrows all principles of belief in the existence of God, of created mind, or of created matter. Can the procedure of Divine persons in creation, in providence, or in redemption, cause them to exist in states in which they were not, prior to such external exhibition? Can the mode in which man apprehends Divine persons, constitute in them new states? Can the feelings of man, experiencing, in salvation, these persons to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—be also

their feelings, and produce in them such states? Legitimate reasoning answers, No. Our opponents are driven to the alternative of presuming that God not only changed the relation of man to himself, when he recovered him from sin, but that he also changed his own relation of persons, in order that man might be recovered. They must be brought to this absurd conclusion, when their reasoning is fairly analyzed. When the fallacy is detected, we discover that it originates in the confusion of our mode of apprehending a being, with the being who is apprehended. It rests on the supposition—that because God has revealed himself, in the salvation of man, to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and because we are enabled to apprehend these persons in salvation, and because their procedure in salvation is actually a work of time,—one of these persons is *only in time* actually existing as Son. But our apprehension of a being, and the being who is apprehended, are, in reality, different; our knowledge of the existence of the being acting in any manner, does not give to that being the commencement of existence, in that manner in which the mind contemplates it. The knowledge of the mind respecting a being,

and the being itself, are different. So our knowledge obtained by revelation of the manner in which the Son acts—which knowledge is in our mind—does not make the Son commensurate with our knowledge, or with that salvation in which he acts. Neither, therefore, the existence of man, nor his mode of contemplating the person who is Son, could make him Son. This Divine person exists independently of man or of man's knowledge; and this person, who exists as Son, cannot derive his state from any situation of man, or from any external procedure of his own. What he is at any one period, he must be from eternity. When he is Son, as a Divine person, at one moment, he is Son eternally. If it be said that he became Son by his own mere good pleasure, in order to rescue man, this assertion is only removing the difficulty a step farther, for it supposes the previous state of man to have produced the consequent resolution to become Son, and likewise supposes the Divine Being to be mutable and defective, seeing he could, by his own will, become that which he was not before. The result of the whole examination is the discovery of the mistake which supposes, that our feelings of the ope-

ration of a Divine person, make him to become a Divine person, in consequence of that process in which we feel him to operate; and this mistake farther supposes that there can be contingent states in that Godhead which is eternal.

But some maintain that the person of our Lord is not changed by becoming Son, as this is a mere appellation conferred on his person, when employed in his redeeming aspect; as a title, for example, is conferred on any one who is elevated to the Peerage, yet is not changed in his person, by being called *a Lord*; or as an individual is not rendered different from what he was before, by being made an Ambassador, and styled *your Excellency*. This explanation is only a resort to words employed in human transactions, and a transference of them, as mere sounds without meaning, to remove the difficulty. It takes for granted what must be proved, that the designation *Son* expresses only a name conferred in consequence of the Mediatorial work, after the assumption of human nature. It is inadmissible, because there can be no possible analogy between the things compared; for the titles of men are indicative of *degrees of rank*, which are their own arbitrary

contrivances; whereas, the name of Son expresses no degree of rank or honour, but a positive *participation of nature in a related state*. To assert, then, that the designation Son was bestowed on him, in consequence of an earthly event, is to assert that a new related state of nature was also given to him, subsisting between him and the other persons of the Godhead; which supposition we have already sufficiently refuted. The new title of rank conferred on an individual does not produce a new relation between his nature and any other nature;—but the being made Son cannot be disunited either in our notion or in the reality of the fact, from relation in nature to him to whom he is Son. If it be asserted that the name of Son is only figurative—descriptive of a figurative relation in the Godhead, as we say *son of liberty*, *son of genius*, &c.—then, all the other names, the name of Father, and of Holy Spirit, or whatever other appellations are given to the persons of the Godhead, must be also figurative, as they are used exactly in the same manner, and associated with the appellation Son. If these designations of Divine persons be only figurative, there are no actual and *bona fide* designations of persons in the God-

head; consequently, there is no declaration of Divine persons, nor do the Scriptures contain any account of a Trinity of persons.

Our Lord proceeds to assert his equality with the Father, not only from his participation with him in acts of omnipotence, but also of omniscience: v. 20. "*For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.*" We have already alluded to that everlasting complacency which is described as existing among the Divine persons, and which is here noticed by our Lord as enjoyed between him and the Father. He asserts that he enjoys the love of the Father. If the person, the Father, be eternal, and the person of him who is Son be eternal, this love must have also been eternal. As no change could have rendered the latter person Son,—because this would have been the introduction of a new related state in the nature of the Godhead—the Son must be eternal, in the enjoyment of this love. *And the Father showeth him all things that himself doeth.* We need scarcely notice, that the acts done by the Father in the Godhead, could not have been shown in the mode in which the acts of mortals are

shown to one another, by sensation and perception. The *showing*, therefore, *by the Father*, must signify the inherent knowledge which Divine persons must reciprocally possess of the procedure of each other. One cannot perform an act which is not shown to the other, or which is not perfectly the object of knowledge of the one as much as of the other. The acts of the Godhead, its "all things," can be only shown to, or perfectly comprehended by, him, who is Divine. The Son claims this omniscience—this perfect equality of knowledge, which is mutually possessed between him and the Father.—None but a person in the Divine nature could be shown "all things" which it doeth; the person speaking, is, therefore, in the Divine nature, in that state in which he spoke: for in his *then state of Sonship* he asserted this knowledge to be his. As the Son possesses omniscience, he must possess it in the Divine nature; if the Son be in the Divine nature as Son, he is so eternally, for there can be no change within that nature.

Our Lord says, that these Divine persons would perform still greater works than they had hitherto achieved. Under the continued figure of "being shown" by the Father the

greater works which were to be accomplished by him, in Divine purpose and fulfilment, the Son describes his knowledge, which extended to futurity, and embraced the external "works" of the Godhead, "greater" than those which had been as yet accomplished. The works can only be understood as "greater" in the estimation of men; for with omnipotence there can be neither greater nor less. By these "greater works" which were yet to occur, our Lord, doubtless, meant the glorious exploits of his human nature, in which he was to overthrow the reign of sin and death, destroy his enemies, procure the triumph of virtue, remove the present material system, and in its place, form "new heavens and a new earth." The commencement of these splendid works, our Lord says, would be seen by those Jews who heard him, so that they "would marvel," when that appearance which was "despised and rejected of men," exhibited, in its actions, a power derived from heaven.

V. 21. "*For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*"—The one-ness of the Father and Son, in omnipotent energy, is here described. "My power," says the

Son, in the designation which he gives himself, “ extends to the mansions of death, as well as the Father’s power.”

V. 22. “ *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*”—Our Lord here evidently speaks of himself in the Divinity of his Messiahship, in which Divine nature he asserts his equality with the Father ; for the judgment or equitable determination respecting all thoughts and actions, can only belong to a Divine person, in whom omniscience resides. By the medium of his human nature, our Lord will judge “ the deeds done in the body,” on that day when he will “ give to every man according as his work shall be.”

V. 23—25. “ *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.*” In these, and the preceding verses, the

Son speaks either of his Divinity in itself, or of the Divinity of his Messiahship, having humanity united to it. As Son, in the Divine nature, he claims for himself all the prerogatives of Divinity; and that which is true in the Divine nature, at any one time, is true for ever. The Son is, therefore, essentially God in the Divine nature, and ever must have been Son.

Our Lord, under the designation of the *Son of Man*, speaks, from the 26th and 27th verses, of the immediate acts of his humanity:—But on this topic we shall not now enlarge, as the examination of the expression *Son of Man* will form a subsequent part of our remarks.

The evidence of the Eternal Sonship of Christ is manifest from the language of his own declaration, in his address to his Father, recorded in the xviiiith chapter of John, commonly called his intercessory or mediatory prayer. His human nature had performed the beneficent works of his ministerial character, and the period approached, when he was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” in the prospect of his sufferings. When entering on this depth of humiliation, his “reasonable soul” poured forth its feelings and wishes

to the Godhead, in the person of the Father. But whilst it thus spoke and felt, there are expressions employed which cannot be predicated of any created being, and which he could not have used when declaring the emotions of his soul; for they cannot refer to any nature which is the workmanship of the Deity, but must be true of the Deity itself. We have frequently had occasion to mention the complex kind of our Lord's person, formed of his Divinity and the human nature which he had assumed. This human nature was the medium by which his Divinity displayed itself, and was in union with the Divinity. Through it, the Divine perfections were manifested to men; but they did not exist in it separately from the Divinity. It did not possess these perfections as its own perfections; yet they belonged to that person in whom it existed. Its existence in Divinity was not an existence of simple support and preservation, but a real union or junction (which is the term most adequate to convey the notion,) to that person in whom all things exist.—While the Divine perfections were exhibited through it, as a medium, it had one-ness with him who possessed these perfections. It was not eternal, immense, and im-

mutable, omnipotent and omniscient ; but he who is eternal, immense, and immutable, omnipotent and omniscient, acted by it as an instrument, and the instrument which was thus employed was subsisting in his Divine nature. No change was effected, or could be effected, in the Godhead, by this instrument, yet its inherence in the Godhead was perfect and complete ; not like the inherence of any other being, whose existence is created and preserved by the sustaining power of the Godhead,—but an inherence of such a kind, that the acts performed in it were the acts of the Godhead done through this medium.

The acts of other intelligent beings are their own acts, because they exist each as a separate person ; the acts of this nature were not separate and distinct acts, because it was not separate from the person and nature of the Godhead. When the Godhead exhibits itself through a being animate or inanimate, it does so in two senses. It is the exhibition of the Godhead according to the nature of the being, and it is the exhibition of the being itself ; for what it has, is given to it, and becomes in it qualities of itself, and without these qualities it would not be the

being which it is; nor would it be constituted a being. The qualities which it possesses are not transferred from the Divine qualities, nor are they an infusion of them so that the being may participate in them; but they are created in, and with, the being, to render it that which omnipotence wills. The qualities of being are greater or less, more or less glorious in the judgment of intelligent creatures who apprehend them; but not in the nature of the qualities themselves. For each quality is, *per se*, complete and perfect, in relation to the object which possesses it; and the estimate of the excellence of the beings depends on the law of our constitution, which enables us to form the estimate, not on the beings themselves, abstracted or detached from us, who do form the estimate. When we estimate the objects of the universe, we recognize certain beings of more or less resplendent qualities, and we, accordingly, consider these qualities as more or less resplendent exhibitions of Deity. The predication of exhibitions of the Deity, in the qualities of creatures, is popular language; but when our feelings are analyzed, we merely discern objects which the law of our constitution presents to our judgment, as pos-

sessing qualities of greater or less value, which are given to them as beings complete in themselves, not apportioned from the qualities of the Divinity, but conferred as qualities by the Divinity, when exercising its own qualities. When we say such an object displays the Divine perfections, the language is popular, but not strictly true. It displays, in reality, its own perfections, which are conferred by the Deity in the exercise of his perfections;—and the possession of such perfections by the object evinces the possession of perfections by the Deity. The object possesses its perfections according to its own nature, and the Deity possesses his perfections according to his nature. Such are the objects which the mind of man may contemplate in the universe. They are created by the Deity to be beings *per se*, when created, i. e. complete in themselves, separately from all other beings: this is their constitution. They have qualities in accordance with this mode of being, which are their own qualities, and evince that they are the work of the Deity in his qualities. They exist as beings *per se*, by the preservation or continuity which the Deity affords them in their original con-

formation, from which mode of conformation, they are never detached.

But there is one object in the universe, and only one, of which, the mode of being that all the rest have, cannot be predicated.—This is the human nature of Christ. All the Divine procedure respecting it was directed that it might have a mode of being, different from all other beings who, in Divine preservation, continue beings *per se*. He who possessed this human nature, said, when coming into the world, “a body hast thou prepared me.” It was created and born, not to be as other beings, but for a peculiar and distinct purpose; therefore, existence, as a being *per se*, was not given to it. Definite and actual existence in itself, complete from every other being, cannot be predicated of this “true body and reasonable soul.” For it existed, that it might have existence affiliated with, and real in, another being. It was created; it had existence; it acted in another manner from that in which all other creatures are created, and have existence, and do act. It had an appearance to the senses and intellect of man, such as all the beings of separate existence have. It seemed to them to be such as all others were.—

But its real *de facto*, and intrinsic existence was totally different. It had all the qualities which other beings have; but it was different in its mode of existence. It had being, and the qualities of being, in the state in which it was; but it did not possess the constitution of other beings to be, in itself, existing separately from all others. An intrinsic constitution was given to it, which was given to no other object, viz. the faculty of being, but not of being an existence of itself. Its existence was in the Divine nature; yet not in the Divine nature, generally, but in that person, who, having the Divine nature, completely, as the other persons, took this being into union or junction with himself, so that it might exist and act in him. The existence, which other objects have distinct in themselves, was in this object, perfect and real, in that Divine person for whom it was formed—for whom it possessed this peculiarity of intrinsic constitution. When it acted, its acts were those of human nature, which it was; but its acts were not those of a person or being existing in itself separately from all others: they were the acts of that being whose constitution was framed so that it might exist in another. This object not

only had its existence in the Divine person for whom it was formed, but it had *de facto* union with that person; so that *its* qualities were *his* qualities; *its* actions were *his* actions. This object, which had its existence *in* him, acted *by* him. This union was not any intermixture of nature, neither was it a portion of the one nature superadded to the other; but it was the possession of both natures, the Divine and human, by him who was a person eternally in the Divine nature.

Actions may be predicated of the human nature which have reference to itself, existing in Divinity; actions may be predicated of it, with reference to that person who possesses it. When actions are predicated of the human nature with reference to itself, they are those which are peculiar to human nature, and to this nature, in its constitutionally different mode of existence: when actions are predicated of it with respect to the person who possesses it, they are those of that person. When our Lord says, in the 4th verse of the xviith chap. of John, "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,*" he speaks of the actions of his human nature in itself. When he says, (v. 5th and 24th of

the same chapter,) “*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*”—and, “*for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,*”—he speaks of himself, as the person in whom this human nature was. The expressions “glory which I had with thee before the world was,” and, “lovedst me before the foundation of the world,” must refer to a glory and love distinct from his possession of humanity; for they must have been actually existing at the period to which our Lord refers. It cannot be said that this love of the Father and of the Son existed in decree, and respected his humanity when assumed; because love is an active, energetic principle, subsisting between two objects. Love in decree is a resolve that love shall subsequently exist, at the period resolved in the decree; but this is not love *de facto* in existence; it is love *to be*, but not *in being*. Our Lord says, that before the foundation of the world, there were two persons, reciprocally loving and loved; “*thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*”—The act of loving which is here described, is not a decree to love, in which latter case, the love is dormant, or

not in being, until the event decreed is developed,—but a real and substantial quality possessed and exercised by a person, and existing in that person before this world. The Son, therefore, independently of his assumed humanity, declares that there was a love subsisting between the Father and him. Now, that love, which was before this world, subsisted between the Father and the person who then addressed the Father. He addressed him as a person being in the related state of Son to the Father, and, in this state, the love was reciprocal, and enjoyed by these persons. He was in the state of Son, when he declared the existence of this love; and on him who spake and was Son, this love was fixed before creation. It is impossible for legitimate ingenuity to affix, by any construction, a different meaning to this declaration. If the Son, in his related state of Son, enjoyed love with the Father, before creation, and if there existed this mutual complacency between these two persons,—the Son must be like his quality, independent of creatures, and, therefore, Eternal.

He also possessed “glory with the Father before the world was.” The notion of glory is originally derived from that concentration

of the rays of light which produces a vivid appearance to the senses, and is obtained by a comparison of this, with other appearances less vivid. Glory is transferred from sensible objects, and is figuratively applied to the mind, when its energies produce a vivid emotion in those minds which contemplate its powers, and when this notion is derived from a comparison with less splendid energies.—Hence, glory, stript of the false associations which men have connected with the term, is the exercise of qualities in well regulated minds, which excite veneration and admiration in other well regulated minds. The glory of the Godhead, in creation, is the qualities which it has conferred by the exercise of its own qualities. The glory of the Godhead, in itself, or existing between the Divine persons, must be the mutual possession of Divine perfections, as they inhere in the Godhead. None could have glory with a Divine person before the world was, except a Divine person; as the nature of Divine persons can be rendered neither more nor less excellent by their self existence,—that which they mutually possess as glory is the perfections essential to the Deity. In the state in which he then was, that of Son, he declares

that he had glory or the possession of Divine perfections with the Father. This glory is, therefore, essential to the person speaking, who is the Son ; for that which is essential to a Divine person, must always belong to him in that state in which he is Divine. The Son, before creation, possessed all Divine perfections ; he is, therefore, essential and eternal Son.

The observations which we have made on the person of Christ possessing the Divine and human natures, will enable the reader to apply them to those passages in the intercessory prayer, that respect the actions of the human nature existing in the Divine, and to those that respect the person possessing both Divine and human natures. There is only one passage which it may be requisite for us to examine in consequence of the perverted explanations that have been given of its meaning. John xvii. 3. "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*"

Christ commences his address by the declaration of himself in the person of Son, and, in this capacity, he continues the address to its conclusion. The knowledge of the Fa-

ther the only true God, and Jesus Christ who is sent by the Father, is declared to be eternal life, i. e. this knowledge and the conduct consequent on it.—When we analyze the expression, we discover a knowledge which is to be possessed by a rational being; we discover the objects of this knowledge, the Father and Jesus Christ. The former is spoken of in his absolute state; the latter not only in existence, but as he exists when sent. There is, therefore, a marked difference in the medium of our knowledge of these objects; for the one is spoken of only as existing, and the other as existing when sent to us. The object who is sent is declared to be Jesus Christ. These two designations are the names given to the human nature of our Lord; one of them was announced by the angel, in his message to the Virgin, and the other was foretold in ancient prophecy. Our Lord digresses from the state of his person as Son,—in which he commences and subsequently continues his address,—by the mention of that nature which had existence in his person. This digression cannot be the effect of accident; it must be for some specific purpose, and evidently alludes to his human nature, which

had not Sonship in itself, and which did not eternally exist in the state of Son. He declares the knowledge of this human nature,—Jesus Christ as he was sent,—to be eternal life. Now, the human nature of our Lord was both an object of knowledge and a medium of knowledge by which the Father might be apprehended. His human nature could be known, because it was an object of sensation and intellectual feeling, when it was sent among men. By its very constitution, it could not have separate existence from the Son, in union with whom it was. Correct knowledge of it, led to the knowledge of that person with whom it was in union; and such knowledge necessarily led to that of the other Divine persons. It was, therefore, an object on which the knowledge of man might be exercised, and it was a medium by which the knowledge of the Godhead might be attained. The knowledge of this nature which was sent, comprehends, within it, our duty to God and our duty to man. It comprehends our duty to God; for we are thereby led to ascertain that Divine person in whom this nature subsisted, and who enabled it to perform all duty to God. It was really a being,—though its original constitution was different

from all others, having no separate existence of its own,—and though it performed, through its Divine person, all duty to man. Benevolence shone through all its acts; mercy breathed in its voice; kindness beamed through its looks. This nature exhibited, in perfection, the duty of the individual, of the son, of the neighbour, of the master, of the friend, of the citizen. Its perseverance was undeviating, as its purposes were just. Error did not sully its wisdom; weakness did not form a contrast to its power; guilt did not spot its purity. The human nature of our Lord did not possess the constitution of existing separately, for this express reason, viz. that it might exist far more gloriously than it could have done separately. Hence, when exalted, it exists in a constellation of glories, more illustrious than any being in the universe can possess. It has the utmost extent of perfections resident within it; for all the perfections of Godhead are exerted upon it, that it may pour forth a flood of perfections more effulgently than any other created being. It is a central existence, where the Godhead, the angels, glorified spirits, and good men, meet. It is the vehicle of union, by which men who have departed from God,

may return to him. It is an adaptation which meets the wants, and removes the crimes, of countless myriads. It is that bright and benevolent object, before which the darkness of crime, and the sorrows of earth, shall disappear. It is the Sheckinah of heaven; for in it the Godhead manifests its presence. It possesses the principle which obliterates the principles of evil, and expands the principles of good. It has undergone the vicissitudes of earth, and enjoys the raptures of heaven. From it flows an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which is laid up for the just in other scenes. It has expelled the principles of sin, that men might dwell with God—that God might be their God, and they his people. It is the "all in all" to celestial and terrestrial beings. It kindles within men's souls the warmth of devotion which was extinguished by sin—restores them to that community from which they have estranged themselves—brings them within the circle of that family from which they have strayed—and procures them pardon for that rebellious conduct by which they have broken their fealty to their Governor. Through the abundance of its merits, and from the influences which it imparts, the sorrows of life are

alleviated and sweetened—its joys are enhanced; the gloom which shrouded eternity from time is removed, and the intellectual vision extends to those scenes where the virtuous of this world enjoy “rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” It has, in one word, “finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.”

Transcendent as these qualities and actions of our Lord’s humanity are, they are only those of a creature deriving efficacy from its union with a Divine person, and must be distinguished from the essential qualities and acts of the person of the Son, to whom this nature belongs. Now, eternal life, or a life of continued happiness without any cessation of existence, is declared to be the property of those who have knowledge of “the Father the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.” But the same advantage cannot flow from the Godhead and from any creature, at one and the same time, or at any time. For this would be to affirm that the creature is equal to the Godhead in power, and that it also possesses self-existent, or inherent and underived

being, seeing it can do that which is peculiar to underived power. If it confer advantage only as an instrument, then, the advantage is not primarily derived from it, but is referable, in reality, to him from whom the creature derived the power of conferring the advantage. Hence, when the Son says, in the 2d verse, "*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to us many as thou hast given him,*"—he evidently alludes to the delegated power which was given him in his human nature; which nature, being a creature, could possess no power but what was delegated or given to it. The power of the Son to confer advantage is, therefore, of two sorts; the one is inherent and peculiar to his Divinity, the other is derived, and delegated to that nature which could alone possess power in this manner. His human nature is not the source of the power which gives eternal life, but it is the appointed channel through which the essential power of the Son flows. The human nature has this derived power, that it might disseminate its influences to those who are of like nature with itself. This delegated power in our Lord's human nature scatters its resources, as a mighty ocean, to

fructify, invigorate, and enliven those whom it surrounds. In the effects of this delegated power, we recognize collateral propriety and benefits, which we can discern in no other conceivable arrangement. The human nature of Christ is congenial with that of those who are the immediate objects of his power. It possesses feelings essentially the same in kind, though infinitely more exalted in degree. It has a fellow feeling in their sufferings and wants; it has a sympathetic union of desires with them. It wishes that they shall be as it is, as far as their natures will permit. It infuses a confidence, "a holy boldness" into those who require its aid, that could not otherwise have been obtained.—The principle which this delegated power of giving eternal life is to produce, is the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Now, the knowledge of the Father, who is the only true God, is declared to be collateral with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the only true God and of a creature, cannot, equally, be the means of eternal life. For then, our knowledge of the one would be productive of equal advantage with our knowledge of the other, and effect the same results. This

would prove the objects of knowledge and their qualities to be the same. But this is absurd; for we have designated the one object *God*, and the other *creature*. Jesus Christ, who is sent, cannot, therefore, be *only* a creature, he must be *more* than a creature; yet, the nature which he had in the flesh, was necessarily a creature. Real knowledge of him must include his Godhead, in which the human nature dwelt, and which cannot be separated from that nature after its assumption. When the Father is termed the only true God, his Divine nature is meant, which is the only true God. But the Son is in that Divine nature, as well as the Father, and both persons, with the Holy Spirit, are the only true God. The medium by which we obtain this knowledge is the human nature of our Lord, and this human nature cannot be known, unless we also know the person who possesses it. There, therefore, can be no knowledge of the only true God, unless through this human nature. There is a beautiful descending and ascending series of circumstances in this exhibition of the Godhead. All power, even the power of eternal life which inheres essentially in the persons of the Godhead, is communicated and delegated

to the humanity which has existence in the Son ; from this humanity, eternal life is given to all flesh belonging to the Son ; the eternal life which he gives is obtained through the knowledge infused into those who are the Son's redeemed. This knowledge is fixed on the humanity of the Son, where delegated eternal life resides ; and from the humanity it ascends to the person of the Son—to the Father—to the Godhead. Stupendous heights have been reached by the intellect of man, but this is a surpassing knowledge, which will afford employment to immortal intellect !

This knowledge is not the raving of enthusiasm, nor the dogmatism of bigotry,—but that which rises

“ From Nature, up to Nature's God.”

On earth it infuses the best feelings, the most virtuous emotions. It kindles a glow of gratitude which shall expand through eternity ; it divests the mind of dark and gloomy apprehensions, and enables us to survey creation's grandeur with that sublimity of soul, which the knowledge of the union of the Son, in our nature, excites. It elevates the conception to the real greatness of our nature, which consists in just apprehensions of the nature allied to God, and which is with God.

This knowledge is the object of the Apostle's prayer, when he says, Ephesians iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

CHAPTER IX.

General Observations on Passages of Scripture, declaring the Eternal Sonship of our Lord.

WE have now scrutinized those passages of Scripture, in which the Sonship of Christ is the subject of express examination and explicit announcement,—in which, it is not merely mentioned, but commented upon as a fact to be illustrated. In many other portions of the Sacred Volume, the same truth is decisively stated;—sometimes as the subject of especial declaration; sometimes as an incidental remark illustrative of other positions, but, in all cases, confirmatory of the explanation which we have given of the texts discussed in the preceding chapters. These, we have found, after just explication, uniformly declare the everlasting state of the person in the Godhead termed Son, to be his related state in the Divine nature to the person who

is termed Father. Accordingly, as the writer of the passages which we are about to consider, meant more immediately to proclaim the Sonship, or wished simply to adduce the fact as explanatory of the context, his language is more or less forcible.

The declaration of our Lord's Sonship, in his related state to the Father, is stated with peculiar precision, in John i. 14. "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" John iii. 16—18. "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.*" 1 John iv. 9. "*In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his*

only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

These passages declare our Lord to be *the only-begotten of the Father—the only-begotten Son of the Father—the only-begotten Son of God.* "The Word" which "was with God," "the Word" which "was God" possessed glory, that it became the only-begotten of the Father to exhibit, in his manifestation in the flesh, which was beheld by men. None will affirm that the apostles or others beheld the essential glory of the Word; neither could they behold the essential glory of the only-begotten, which is declared to be the same as the glory of the Word,—they could only behold its exhibitions through its assumed nature. The only-begotten Son of the Father is announced to be *in the bosom of the Father.* This is descriptive of the union of nature and of consequent counsel and design, and especially of complacency subsisting between these persons. Campbell, on the words "in the bosom of the Father," says, "By the expression ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, is meant, not only, 'who is the special object of the Father's love,' but 'who is admitted to his most secret counsels.'" Macknight observes on this ex-

pression, " To be *in one's bosom* denotes the "greatest familiarity and intimacy; a communication of counsels and designs; an entire and tender affection." Language cannot convey in stronger words the existence of the only-begotten Son of the Father in the Godhead. If the expression Son, be a mere title conveying no relation to the person who is Father,—terms must cease to include meaning, and be stript of the property of including rational ideas. Could such expressions be used, in any other case, where an unbiassed mind would not instantly affix the notion of a related state between persons thus described?—Could an unprejudiced mind adopt any other conclusion? The love of the person of the Father, and complete participation in his counsels and designs, are attributed to the only-begotten Son. If there were not the Son eternally enjoying this love, and participating in these counsels and designs, there never was the Eternal Father loving, counselling, and designing. This is the utmost verge of knowledge which the human intellect is permitted to apprehend. When it has explored creation and creation's laws—when it has risen to higher contemplations than the investigation of matter can elicit—

when it has surveyed farther than planets roll or spheres glitter—when it has exhausted the wonders of the telescope and microscope—when it has studied the soul, whose powers have directed these pursuits—when it has left the observation of kindred minds, and learned what is announced of the ranks of the pure spirits—when it has, in thought, ascended to the illimitable vastness of Godhead,—it is permitted to know that harmony active, energetic, eternal, subsists therein, enjoyed between the adorable persons, the Father and the Son!

In our nature complacency is the sweet, refreshing influence which hallows enjoyment, which is the unison of the mental powers, which introduces repose from all that is harassing, and a soul-felt intensity of delight. The mind is alive to enjoyment, and misery is hushed. It feels the flow of what is good, and the retrocession of what is evil. Existence is experienced more alertly, more gladly, more exquisitely. The periods when we were without this feeling were, in our estimation, either those of tempestuous confusion, or the dull, dead level where emotions are absorbed in vacancy.—In complacency we feel joy; we wish joys to be

felt by all. The very ardour of our happiness longs for a congeniality of feeling and sentiment. The aspect of creation is more pleasing. For us, the sun shines brighter, and the earth gives its thousand sweets more lovely. We act better; we think better; we are better. We long to enjoy this for ever! We hold communion with those suited for happier, purer scenes. We wish for the time when this complacency shall be warmer—when communion of soul shall be dearer—when we shall increase in the expanse of this feeling. Such is the complacency of men.—But, in the Godhead, complacency is undefinable, because it is immense,—vast as the Being in whom it dwells,—vast in the nature of him who “filleteth all in all,”—vast in that boundless expanse of delight, from whose stores angels’ joys have flowed, man’s delights have been given. There—is the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father. He sees him; he is with him; he is God.

Unbelief in the name of the only-begotten Son of God is the cause of condemnation. Among the different meanings of *name*, in Scripture, when applied to God, is that of his nature and attributes, which are peculiarly employed when he is propounded to

those who are ignorant of him. As the Jews refused to acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, when he was propounded to them in a miraculous manner, their condemnation was just.

But it may be urged, are not *men* said to be begotten of God? are they not peculiarly called his children and his sons? nay, are they not said to be begotten of those apostles and ministers who are sent by God? and if these expressions be figurative, why may not the expression be also figurative when applied to the persons in the Godhead? We shall answer this objection.

I. There is an actual description given of the nature of the birth of those who are styled begotten of God. John iii. 5—7. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” This passage gives a delineation of the commencement of the sonship of men; there is, however, no description of the commencement of the mode by which the person termed Son did become Son.

II. The mode by which men become figuratively begotten of God is by a change of their moral principle—by the introduction of virtuous principles guiding their minds, and by the overthrow of evil principles which formerly swayed them. But such change was impossible in him who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” in his human nature, and who, in his Divine nature, cannot change. Men become the sons of God in consequence of a change effected in their nature; the change is real; their state of sonship is figurative. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” But the same state, in this instance that of Son, cannot be predicated either figuratively or really of objects that are essentially different; one of which—man—must change in his nature, by obtaining different principles, that he may be in the state predicated; and the other—our Lord—cannot change, and, therefore, cannot, at any subsequent period, be in a state different from what he was at a former period. These objects, therefore, can never be in any state in the same sense, or in the same mode. Men

are rendered figuratively the sons of God, through, or by the medium of, change: our Lord can never be rendered Son through any change. In the sense in which men are begotten of God, our Lord cannot be begotten.

III. Men become the sons of God, at definite periods of their lives, when they renounce the "works of the flesh," and "live after the Spirit;"—we can fix the time when they were not the sons of God. But there can be no time specified in which our Lord was not the Son of God. This term is coeval with his existence; even if we regard only the human nature. The state of men and of our Lord in being begotten sons cannot be compared—cannot originate from the same circumstances—cannot be in the same manner, because the figurative sonship of the former is an event which occurs during their lives; the Sonship of the latter is collateral with his being, even when we refer only to his humanity.

IV. A person can only be termed son figuratively or really. If he be son really, such filiation only exists by participation of nature with him to whom he is Son. It is admitted that men are only sons of God figuratively. Now, Christ is not Son as they

are sons, for he is styled the *only-begotten Son of God*; which expression necessarily excludes the sonship of all others in the mode in which he is Son. No one can *alone* possess that which thousands of others have. No one can *alone* be that which thousands of others are. Many are the begotten sons of God; but they are sons figuratively. He, who is the *only* begotten Son, cannot be Son figuratively, seeing many else are sons figuratively; he must, therefore, be Son really, i. e. he must participate in the nature of him to whom he is Son. The observations of Macknight are so excellent on this subject, that we shall transcribe his note on 1 John iv. 9.—“because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world,” &c. v. 9. “*By this the love of God was manifested, that God sent, &c.* This is an allusion to our Lord’s words, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Christ is called God’s *only-begotten Son*, to distinguish him from all others who in Scripture are called *the sons of God*; and to heighten our idea of God’s love to us in giving a person of such dignity, and so be-

“ loved of God, to die for us. It is supposed
 “ that by giving Christ the title of *God’s only-*
 “ *begotten Son* in this passage, the Apostle
 “ intended to overturn the error of Ebion
 “ and Cerinthus, who affirmed that Christ
 “ was not *God’s Son by nature*, but that,
 “ like other good men, he was honoured with
 “ the *title* of *God’s Son*, on account of his
 “ virtues : in which opinion these heresiarchs
 “ have been followed by some in modern
 “ times. They, however, who hold this opi-
 “ nion, ought to show a reason why the epi-
 “ thet of the *only-begotten* is appropriated to
 “ Christ.”

We have thus evinced the impossibility
 of our Lord’s being begotten of the Father,
 in the same manner in which men are the
 begotten, and sons of God. The filiation of
 nature which our Lord possesses with the
 Father, was the subject of explicit declara-
 tion, in order that the Church might, in all
 ages, have an express and unerring appre-
 hension of those persons in the Godhead,
 whose existence is that of the Godhead it-
 self. The subject is peculiarly liable to mis-
 construction, on account of the weakness of
 our intellect, and the defective state of our
 sources of knowledge. There is a pre-dispo-

sition to wrong apprehensions, not in the constitution of the soul itself, but in the information which we obtain through the medium of our senses, when engaged in the consideration of objects purely intellectual. That the liability of our knowledge to perversion might not mislead us, in this most interesting of all examinations, our Lord is expressly termed the *only-begotten Son*, to exclude all sonship from comparison with his Sonship—to reveal to his Church the real state of the Divine nature—to show them the everlasting stability of their hopes and expectations—to exhibit not only what he has done, in that nature which was the means of salvation, but what he is, in that nature, in which he enjoys immense love with the Father—and to proclaim that “God”—in himself, as well as in his external procedure—“is Love.”

It may be objected to our remarks on the epithet *only-begotten*, that, though Abraham had other sons than Isaac, yet Isaac is called in Scripture his “only-begotten son.” To this we answer:—that he is termed “only son,” in the Old Testament, and “only-begotten son,” in the New, because Abraham’s *other* sons were the children of *bond*

women, and not the *legal heirs* to his possessions;—because Isaac was *supernaturally begotten*, and was his “only son” by his wife Sarah;—because he was the “only son” through whom the visible Church was lineally to descend from Abraham;—because he was the Lord and Priest of Abraham’s family, in whose line the Messiah was to be born;—and because he was the “only-begotten son” by Abraham, from whom the Jewish nation, the figurative sons of God, were to proceed. In illustration of the sonship of Isaac, and of the Israelites, we subjoin Macknight’s remarks on 1 John. ii. 29. “*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.*”——“*Every one who worketh righteousness, hath been begotten.* This is the literal signification of $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\tau\alpha\iota$ from $\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha\omega$ *genero, gigno, I beget.* Accordingly, our translators have so rendered the word, chap. v. 18.—Besides *born of God*, is an idea no where else found in Scripture.

“To understand the true import of the high titles, which, in the New Testament, are given to the disciples of Christ, namely, *the begotten of God*, as here; *the sons of God*, and *children of God*, as in the next

“ chapter ; *the heirs of God*, Romans viii. 17.
 “ *The elect of God ; the adopted of God ;*
 “ *saints ; a royal priesthood ; an holy nation ;*
 “ *a peculiar people*, 1 Peter ii. 9. the follow-
 “ ing observations may be of use:—1. That
 “ these high titles were anciently given to the
 “ Israelites as a nation, because they were
 “ separated from the rest of mankind, to be
 “ God’s visible church, for the purpose of
 “ preserving the knowledge and worship of
 “ him in the world, as the only true God.
 “ This appears from God’s own words : Exo-
 “ dus xix. 3. *Tell the children of Israel ; 4. Ye*
 “ *have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,*
 “ *and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and*
 “ *brought you unto myself. 5. Now, therefore,*
 “ *if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep*
 “ *my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar*
 “ *treasure unto me above all people. 6. And*
 “ *ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,*
 “ *and an holy nation. Deut. xiv. 1. Ye are*
 “ *the children of the Lord your God. 2. For*
 “ *thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God.*
 “ —2. In particular, *the title of God’s son,*
 “ *even his first-born*, was given to the whole
 “ Israelitish nation by God himself, (Exodus
 “ iv. 22.) chiefly because they were the de-
 “ scendants of Isaac, who was supernaturally

“ begotten by Abraham, through the power
“ which accompanied the promise, Genesis
“ xviii. 10. *Lo Sarah shall have a son.* So St.
“ Paul informs us, Romans ix. 7. *Neither be-*
“ *cause they are the seed of Abraham, are they*
“ *all children, namely of God : But in Isaac*
“ *shall a seed be to thee.* 8. *That is, the chil-*
“ *dren of the flesh, these are not the children of*
“ *God : But the children of the promise are*
“ *accounted for seed.* The Apostle’s meaning
“ is, That Ishmael and his posterity, whom
“ Abraham procreated by his own natural
“ strength, being children of the flesh, were
“ not the children of God ; that is, they were
“ not made the visible church and people of
“ God. But Isaac and his descendants, whom
“ Abraham procreated through the strength
“ which accompanied the promise, *Lo Sarah*
“ *shall have a Son,* being more properly pro-
“ created by God than by Abraham, were the
“ children of God ; that is, were made the
“ visible church and people of God, because
“ by their supernatural generation, and their
“ title to inherit Canaan, they were a fit
“ image of the Catholic invisible church of
“ God, consisting of believers of all ages and
“ nations, who being regenerated by the Spi-
“ rit of God, are the true children of God,

“ and heirs of the heavenly country, of which
 “ Canaan was the type.—3. As the promise,
 “ *Lo Sarah shall have a son*, which was given
 “ to Abraham, when he was an hundred
 “ years old, and Sarah was ninety, implied
 “ that that Son was to be supernaturally pro-
 “ created, so the promise given to Abraham,
 “ Genesis xvii. 5. *A Father of many nations*
 “ *I have constituted thee*, implied that the ma-
 “ ny nations of believers, who, by this pro-
 “ mise, were given to Abraham for seed, were
 “ to be generated by the operation of the
 “ Spirit of God producing in them faith and
 “ obedience, similar to the faith and obedi-
 “ ence for which Abraham was constituted
 “ the father of all believers.—This higher ge-
 “ neration, by which believers have the moral
 “ nature of God communicated to them, is
 “ excellently described, John i. 12. *As many*
 “ *as received him, to them gave he power to*
 “ *become the sons of God, even to them who*
 “ *believe on his name.* 13. *Οι εγεννηθησαν*
 “ *which were begotten not of blood, nor of the*
 “ *will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but*
 “ *of God:* that is, men become the true sons
 “ of God, not by their being naturally de-
 “ scended from this or that father, nor by
 “ their being called the sons of God by men

“ like themselves, but by God’s bestowing on
“ them that high appellation on account of
“ their faith and holiness.—4. If the Israelites,
“ of whom the ancient visible church and
“ people of God was composed, were all
“ called *the sons of God*, because Isaac, from
“ whom they descended, was supernaturally
“ begotten by the power of God; certainly
“ believers of all ages and nations, of whom
“ the invisible Catholic church and people of
“ God is composed, may, with much greater
“ propriety, be called *the sons of God*, since
“ they are begotten of God, and possess the
“ moral nature of God. This Catholic in-
“ visible church of God is not limited to any
“ one race of men, nor to any one age or
“ country of the world. It hath subsisted
“ from the beginning, and is scattered over
“ the whole earth. But after the general
“ judgment, the members of this widely ex-
“ tended church will be gathered together,
“ and carried by Christ in a body, into the
“ heavenly country, their promised inheri-
“ tance, of which Canaan, the inheritance of
“ Abraham’s natural seed by Isaac, was the
“ emblem and pledge.”

The speciality of our Lord’s Sonship, and the propriety which he possesses in the Fa-

ther's nature, are particularly noticed in Romans viii. 3. "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*" —32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* As our Lord terms God the Father in John v. 18,—*πατέρα ιδιον*, *his peculiar and proper Father*, in the manner in which he could be Father to none else, so the Apostle, in this last quoted verse, terms the Son, *ιδιος υιος*, *his own Son*, —*the peculiar and proper Son of the Father*, in that sense in which none else could be Son. All others are sons of God in consequence of their creation, or of a change of their moral principles; but the Son could not be so, in consequence of either of these events, for he is *ιδιος υιος*, *Son*, in the manner in which none else is Son. Neither the creation of his human nature, nor any event occurring therein, could constitute him Son.

It is evident, from the subsequent passages, that the Jews universally believed the *Son of God to be God*, and that they accounted it blasphemy in one, whom they esteemed a mortal, to assume this character. John v. 17,

18. "Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." John x. 33. "The Jews answered him saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Matthew xxvi. 63—66. "And the High Priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." John xix. 7. "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

That the Son of God was not only God, in the universal opinion of the Jews, but was God *in fact*, as well as *in opinion*, is obvious, from 1 John v. 4. The characteristic distinction of those who overcome the world is, that they are spiritually born of God. “*For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*” They who overcome the world are those who are born of God, and who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. V. 5. “*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*”

The testimony of Scripture is decisive; its contents evince that the Son of God is Eternal. Hear its declaration: 1 John v. 11—13. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

We shall conclude this series of observations by such reflections as naturally arise from the subject.

The three persons of the Godhead are represented as employed in the plan of redemption. One of these specifically accomplished that salvation by himself. The name *person* is a philosophical term, which is attributable to all who are comprehended under it, and which becomes specific only, when applied to an object, whose state is either previously understood by the intellect, or is made known by description. This state, amongst men, is only definitely known by related notions, which enable us, when a particular object is mentioned, to apprehend its relation to other objects. As men are temporary, all such relations are necessarily originated in time; and have periods whence they are dated. The persons with whom we are thus acquainted, whether of our own or any other created race, are, therefore, restricted to those specific periods, both in our apprehension of them and in themselves, at which their related state commenced. The persons—the notion of whose individuality is obtained by their con-

nexion with others, either expressly known, or understood to have existed,—may possess other adventitious adjuncts, whose existence does not increase or diminish the reality of their personality. These adjuncts arise from the exertion of their powers as individuals, and are adventitious; for they may disappear without affecting the identity of the person. Such adjuncts depend on the circumstances in which the person is placed, and on his capability to evolve his energies in these circumstances. They are, generally, those of rank, fame, and imputed talents. With the cessation of the circumstances and energies which gave birth to these adjuncts, they cease to be applicable to the person, who still remains the same.

Provided there were only one individual of the same class in existence, excepting one's self, the very circumstance of the one individual being thus alone, and distinct from all other objects, would enable the other to apprehend the identity of that individual, seeing he could not be confounded with any other. But at the moment in which two objects are presented to the mind, the very fact of the presentation induces a comparison, the effect of which is to distinguish the one

object from the other; whilst, at the same time, we distinguish them both from all other objects. This law of our constitution preserves our knowledge of the identity of all beings, within the reach of our sensible organs, and enables us to transfer to those, who are not the objects of our senses, the principles of identity which we have thus mentally obtained. Through the medium of testimony, we rely on the comparisons made by others, who have sensibly beheld the objects referred to, and we receive the declaration of what they have witnessed, as if we ourselves had witnessed the same circumstances. The process, in this latter case, is threefold. We first, on beholding the being, determine that he must be a separate existence and have identity; we then, at the same time, determine, by comparison, the principles which shall, in our minds, establish that identity, so that we may think and act upon it; and lastly, we credit those who inform us that they have beheld and compared, as we would have done in their case.

The principles by which we originally institute a comparison between objects, so that we may distinguish the one from the other, are founded on the law of our race,

by which the different individuals succeed each other, by the peculiar propinquity of nature of Father to Son. That which, in this case, is true of all men, is true of each individual. Though this fact does not always enter, indeed, but seldom enters, into our thoughts, when comparing and distinguishing individuals, yet, it is inconceivable, how there could be any comparisons without it. It is the first essay of comparison which displays itself; for the infant uniformly first distinguishes its parents, or those who act as the parents would have done. It is the first association in our minds, when contemplating the object; for we uniformly first institute a comparison between the infant and its parents, known or unknown. When the parents are unknown, our notions immediately institute a filiation between the child and the parents who, we certainly know, must have existed. The parents must have existed before any comparison could be instituted between the children of the same family; which latter comparison is a consequence of our being enabled to institute the former one.

When, from particular families, we extend our comparisons to mankind, any know-

ledge of distinction which we obtain among them, must necessarily be preceded by the same facts. Mankind participate of the same general nature, and of the mode by which that nature is obtained. When we compare the present with the past generation, or any generation of the past with another, it is only a comparison of groups of individuals related to groups that preceded, as parents and children. Yet the fact of such relation does not introduce any comparison into our means of ascertaining the separate existence and identity of individuals; it is the mode by which we are enabled to effect such knowledge, though it does not constitute to the individual his own separate existence and identity. Existence, in a related state, among persons, is, therefore, the only existence which, in our present state, can enable us to obtain the information of the distinction of one individual from another; yet this information does not *make* the respective individuals *persons*, but is essentially necessary to, and inseparable from, our apprehension of them, *as* persons.

The persons, whose knowledge of separate existence we have thus obtained, depend on circumstances for the length of their con-

tinuance, as objects of our apprehension.— When they disappear from our senses, by the process of death in the disorganization of their parts, the possibility of such comparisons concerning the actual state of the individuals ceases, but the truth remains unalterable, that such comparisons were made and were true. Hence arises our historical knowledge, a chain of testimonies, the last link of which descends to us, assuring us, on creditable grounds, that comparisons were instituted, when the objects were cognizable by the senses of those who beheld them.

Existence, in a related state, is, therefore, the foundation of all knowledge of the past and of the present, unless that which is intuitive. That which is intuitive is the simple feeling of existence, enabling us to perceive that we exist, and that others exist. But this intuitive knowledge never could confer on us the mode, by which we discriminate the existence of one being from another,— unless it were accompanied with the process of comparison, which arises from related states. Our intuition is the very first movement of thought, in this investigation, or rather, it is the inception of investigation resident within us. Related states are pre-

sented to that mind which is endowed with this inception of investigation, and which evolves the train of thought by the apprehension of these related states. This apprehension is consecutive with our principles of comparison, and is more or less just, according to the scope and range of objects before the mind. Such is the mode by which our knowledge is obtained.

In the revelation which God has given to us, he announces that there are persons, in his simple and undivided nature, and that one of these persons specially effected the plan of salvation. Being participant of a nature which is undivided, these persons cannot be separate and distinct Gods, as men are separate and distinct individuals, who possess a nature that is divisible. The states, in which they are persons, yet one God, are described: 1st, As a *generation* of that person who effected our salvation, from another person who addresses the person begotten thus, “*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*” 2d. As a *procession* of the person who applies salvation, from the other two persons.—Of the person who applies salvation, the person who effected salvation says, “*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will*

send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." With reference to the other two, the person promised by our Lord is termed "*the Spirit of the Father*" and "*the Spirit of the Son.*" In accordance with "the begetting" and "being begotten" of the two persons first mentioned, they are termed the FATHER and the SON; and, in accordance with the "procession" of the last person mentioned, from these two, who are Father and Son, he is termed the HOLY SPIRIT.—These names are, therefore, significant of their respective states of existence in the undivided nature, and are given on account of that state of existence which is termed "being begotten" and "proceeding from." The names do not precede their state, but are the peculiar and appropriate expressions describing that which is announced as previously existing; the states are true, not on account of the designations given, but of the facts expressly recorded. The person who effected our salvation, and who is Son, thus arranged the order of these persons,—"*The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*" That which is inherent in the Divine nature, must inhere for ever, because it is immutable. The

knowledge which is thus communicated to us does not constitute these persons to be persons, any more than the knowledge which we obtain of men, constitutes them to be the individuals which they are. These persons of the Godhead must, respectively, be in some definite states of existence, peculiar to each of them; otherwise, they are not persons, but one person,—which is absurd.—That which has no state of existence peculiar to itself, in relation to others of its own nature, may be in being, as inanimate matter, but cannot possess the properties of peculiar exertion or activity, which are necessary to the being of a person. This is a grade of existence infinitely beyond that of simple being,—for being can be predicated of all objects rational and irrational, animate and inanimate. The states of existence, in which the persons of the Divine nature are,—are those of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If there be no specific enunciation of the state of existence of that Divine person who effected our salvation,—we do not know what person effected our salvation, but only that *a Divine person* did so. Neither do we know what Divine person he is, who is represented as more peculiarly devising salvation;—nor

do we know what Divine person he is, who applies salvation. All that we know is, that there are persons, but, with respect to each, nothing is predicated or actually revealed. For if there be no state revealed, then, the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere adjuncts or titles, referable to any state of Divine existence; the terms Saviour, Messiah, King, Priest, Prophet, Comforter, Sanctifier, &c. have no especial person to whom they belong, but are referable indefinitely to persons, whose states we cannot tell, because they are presented to our minds only by titles, and not by expressions determining their peculiar modes of existence. But such a revelation is surely preposterous; for it fails in the essential point of a revelation, viz. the description of those persons from whom it comes, and whom it *apparently* declares,—yet *virtually* does not declare.

If the peculiar designations of generation and procession, which the Divine persons appropriate to each other, be only titular adjuncts,—we cannot tell how many persons are in the Divine nature; nor can we tell whether any person be therein,—seeing the *same persons* may bear the titles of Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Messiah, Comforter, High Priest, &c.

—if these be terms indicative, merely, of actions, which obtain such titles, in the Divine procedure affecting our race. Unless the *status*, the *locus standi*, the *state of being* which the others have not, and which is essential to the predicated person be revealed,—we have no stability of conception,—we have no conception of one person as distinct from another;—the mind has no rest on this subject,—it has no object on which to concentrate its thoughts;—neither individuality nor comparison of related existence are presented to it.

The foundation of our knowledge of *person* is not, in this case, obtained: man cannot elicit his powers on those objects which are inaccessible to his intellect, in any mode in which he can attempt to examine them. The revelation, then, which supposes the absence of the state of existence of Divine persons, we humbly submit, must be a nugatory revelation, and irrespective of what ought to be its principal object. All other designations, in that revelation, are, confessedly, titular, and,—unless the designations Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, contain the state of existence of the Divine persons,—their state is not revealed.

If it be said that the Divine person was in the state of Son of God, that he might, on

earth, accomplish the salvation of his people, —then, on the accomplishment of that work, he may cease to be Son, and in fact, according to such a supposition, he will cease to be Son, seeing this state was assumed for an especial purpose. But we have, in that case, no guarantee that the advantages obtained for us will not likewise cease,—seeing no advantages can be permanent, unless the state in which they were procured be also permanent. But permanency in the Godhead can have no beginning; the state in which the Son, as God, obtained advantages for men, must be his state, independently of all advantages procured for created objects.

The inherent states of the persons of the Godhead are not caused by our knowledge of them;—the revelation of these states is necessary to give us knowledge of the persons of the Godhead.

CHAPTER X.

Observations on the expression Son of Man.

WE have shown the nature of our Lord's Sonship in the Godhead,—that he is Son, essentially in the Divine nature,—that he is Son in self-existence,—that he never could have begun to be Son, and will never cease to be Son,—that he is peculiarly and properly the Eternal Son of God. We have endeavoured to refute the opinions of those who imagine that he is styled Son of God, in consequence of his Messiahship or any other event, and who maintain that his designation, Son of God, is only a *title*. We have endeavoured to prove, from the tenor of Scripture, that this designation determines his state of existence in the Godhead.

In the course of our remarks we have, in some measure, anticipated observations on the human nature of our Lord, which is now more peculiarly our subject of illustration.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the expression *Son of Man*, is used in Scripture, sometimes to denominate the whole human race, and sometimes an individual of that race. The term is particularly vigorous, seeing it not only exhibits the existence of men, but particularly illustrates the mode by which men come into being, and are continued in being. It expresses the existence of mankind, and their existence in a related state. It distinguishes from all other appearances, which are recorded as having occurred in this world—whether those of God himself or of angels.

Our readers will remember our observations on the nature of existence, especially in Chapter VIII. We have there shown that, among men, the peculiar constitution of their being causes them to exist in related states; and that all beings, more especially persons, are, by the very conformation of their being, framed to exist as separate and distinct beings, independent of all other beings. The only exception, with which we are acquainted, in the universe of God, to this law of the constitution of existence is that of our Lord's human nature, denominated *Son of Man*. This human nature, we remarked, was expressly

formed that it might subsist in another being. It cannot have separate existence of its own; it cannot be in itself a being independent of every other. It only is, that it may be in another. It is not a person of itself, but obtains personality with that nature to which it is united—in which the person who assumed it essentially is.

The human nature of our Lord—that which is denominated Son of Man—was peculiarly formed, and produced in a manner different from all other men, in order that it might exist in a manner different from their existence, and that it might possess a constitution, whose principles would cause it to be a being subsisting in another being. Of the original formation of this nature it is said, Matthew i. 20. “But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” In Luke i. 31. the angel says to Mary, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son,

and shalt call his name JESUS.” 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,” &c.

Our Lord’s human nature—the Son of Man—being thus formed, was born. Matth. i. 24, 25. “ Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.” Luke ii. 6, 7. “ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Galatians iv. 4. “ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law—.”

Our Lord, as Son of Man, underwent all the vicissitudes which are incident to humanity, excepting those which partake of sin. He was exposed to those privations which are peculiar to human nature, in our present state of existence. Matthew viii. 20. “ And

Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

In his humanity, our Lord experienced sufferings and sorrows. Luke ix. 21, 22. "And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing, saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

The Son of Man was betrayed. Matthew xvii. 22, 23. "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." Luke xxii. 48. "But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

The Son of Man lay in the grave, and arose from the state of the dead. Matthew xii. 40. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

The Son of Man ascended from earth to heaven. John vi. 61, 62. "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it,

he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"

The Son of Man is now in heaven, in the most glorious exaltation. Acts vii. 55, 56. "But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

The Son of Man shall again descend in glory, and judge the world. Matthew xxiv. 30. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." xxv. 31, 32. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations:——"

The Son of Man is the object of belief and reliance. Mark viii. 38. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed,

when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." John vi. 53, 54. "Then Jesus said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Through the Son of Man, sins are forgiven. Matthew ix. 2. "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." v. 6. "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

Through the Son of Man holy principles are infused into the soul. Matthew xiii. 37, 38. "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man: The field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one:—43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of the Father."

We have shown, from the foregoing passages, that the expression *Son of Man*, obviously denotes the nature which the Son of God assumed. Indeed, its usage appears nugatory, unless it be expressly opposed to the phrase *Son of God*;—these terms being indicative of the different aspects of his natures. But the expression Son of Man affords a clue which tends to unravel the entanglements of this controversy. Seeing the two epithets are bestowed on our Lord, they are admitted, by every one, to be indicative of *something*. All who examine the subject, either in a cursory or strict manner, allow that the phrase Son of Man, denotes participation of the nature of man,—possession of those qualities which are peculiar to man,—and actions appropriate to the character of man. The reality of the human nature cannot be doubted and never was doubted, unless by those disturbers of the Church, in its primitive ages, who denied the actual appearance of Jesus, and the validity of his sufferings,—who contended that a sort of pantomime was played off on the senses of men, without any character having sustained a real part. Actions, feelings, emotions, sayings of a particular kind, are attributed to his human nature, so that,

independently of any express declaration of his being the Son of Man, the vestige of doubt cannot remain in the mind of any one of competent understanding, that these circumstances must belong to human nature. The expression must not only mark the reality of human nature, but also the *related state* of human nature, which, as we have already remarked, the phrase Son of Man must convey. The reality of his human nature could not be doubted, in consequence of its qualities; the reality of his relation to mankind could not be doubted, seeing he was formed of the substance of the Virgin Mary—"that which is conceived *in her* is of the Holy Ghost;"—seeing he was "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh;" "for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Now, whilst we readily grant that the term Son of God, of itself, unconnected with other circumstances, and applied to mankind, may, and does, signify only a figurative Sonship arising from congeniality of principles in *our* nature, with the perfections of God,—we ask, can a figurative meaning be given to it, when it is put in direct opposition, and in the most elegant, lively antithesis, to the phrase Son of Man? Can a mere figurative designation

—a title—be put in antithesis to that which, *bona fide*, represents what the words import? Can a mere sound be placed in opposition to that which signifies a positive substance?—Impossible.—No usage of language,—no conformation of thought can permit such abuse, or rather negation of words. We do, indeed, occasionally, in common language, put a title in opposition to a person, who is named. But, in such a case, it is uniformly the person who bears the title, that is opposed. The *prince* may be put in opposition to the *poor man*. But is it the mere letters, the literal characters, the empty title, which we oppose to the poor man? Surely not:—it is the person who bears the title,—who is in the state which the title designates. The common sense of mankind, and the universal usage of language denote, thereby, a person who actually exists in the state of *princedom*, as opposed to a person who actually is in the state of *poverty*. Terms, indicative of persons in a state opposed to each other, uniformly contain the states which are thus contradistinguished. According to this rule, the terms Son of Man, and Son of God, are opposed. Matthew xvi. 13—17. “*When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he*

asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Unless the humanity, and the related state in which it exists, be here opposed to the Divinity, and its related state, antitheses must be stript of their meaning, and common sense abandoned in language. All determinate notions must be absorbed in a chaos of words, if a being in a certain state of existence, and an abstract title be thus placed in opposition to each other. But what convinces us, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Christ's humanity is real—that he is the Son of Man—and that he was born of the Virgin Mary? It is his actions—his general and particular procedure.—And what convinces us that, in the nature of God, he is the Son of God? It is his actions—his general and particular procedure. We are convinced, because the Son of God

created all things in heaven and in earth,—because all things are created for him,—because the Son is before all things,—and because all things consist in the Son. If the actions of the Son of Man be sufficient to indicate, without any hesitation on our part, that he is formed of the substance of human nature, and, in that human nature, is a Son,—surely the actions peculiar to Godhead are sufficient to indicate that the Son of God is God, and, in the Divine nature, is Son.

There is one expression concerning the Son of Man, which requires our particular consideration; seeing that at first sight, and in its literal acceptation, it would seem to controvert the tenor of every other passage, in which the Son of Man is named. John iii. 13. *“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.”* The difficulty, however, is only apparent; for none acquainted with the properties of matter can suppose that our Lord meant to affirm, that his body in which he spake, and which was on earth, was, at the same moment, in heaven. To *ascend up to heaven* is the phraseology of Scripture for searching into, and having knowledge of, divine truths. In this

sense it is used, Deut. xxx. 11, 12. where it is said of the commandment of God, "Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us?" i. e. Who shall enter into God's secret counsel, and learn it by immediate knowledge? Rom. x. 6. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above.)" The expression, *no man hath ascended up to heaven*, evidently means, from the tenor of the passage, *no man hath explored and revealed the truths of heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven*. But how, it will be asked, could the Son of Man come down from heaven, and, at the same time, be in heaven? The term Son of Man, is sometimes used to denote the Messiah, on account of the appearance which he would present, when he came among men. *That which mankind beheld* is, by the figure *synecdoche*, placed for *the whole person*. From the appearance of the human nature, which alone was cognizable by the senses, the appellation Son of Man is given to the Messiah, in ancient prophecy. Psalm lxxx. 17. "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,

upon the *Son of Man*, whom thou madest strong for thyself." Daniel vii. 13, 14. "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the *Son of Man* came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The Son of Man, therefore, in this passage, means the complex person of the Messiah—his Divine and human natures. According to this explication, Christ says, *No man hath revealed the Divine truths, unless the Messiah, who, from his external appearance, is styled the Son of Man—who, in his Divinity, which is in heaven, assumed humanity on earth—and who, even now, is in heaven, in the bosom of the Father.* We subjoin the note of the valuable commentator Guyse, on this verse: "As the Divine and human natures were united in the person of Christ, attributions are made of the properties of one nature to him, whilst he is spoken of under a title which relates to his other nature. Thus, when it is said, (1 Cor. ii.

“ 8.) *The Lord of glory was crucified, and*
 “ (Acts xx. 28.) *he is called God, who pur-*
 “ *chased the Church with his own blood. The*
 “ *meaning is not that he, as the Lord of*
 “ *glory, was crucified, or, as God, shed his*
 “ *blood, as if the Divine nature could be cru-*
 “ *cified and bleed; but that the person, who*
 “ *was the Lord of glory in one nature, was*
 “ *crucified in the other; and the person who*
 “ *was God in one nature, redeemed the*
 “ *Church with his own blood, which be-*
 “ *longed to his other nature. So when it is*
 “ *said, The Son of Man is in heaven, the*
 “ *meaning is not that he, as the Son of Man,*
 “ *was there whilst he was on earth; but that*
 “ *he who was here in his human nature, was*
 “ *there in his Divine.”*

It is said in John v. 26, 27. “ *For as the*
Father hath life in himself; so hath he given
to the Son to have life in himself: and hath
given him authority to execute judgment also,
because he is the Son of Man.” The mean-
 ing of this passage (v. 27th,) evidently is, that
 the judgment is lodged in the Son, *because he*
is the Son of Man. When duly weighed, per-
 haps no passage in Scripture more decisively
 illustrates the nature of our Lord’s inherent
 state of Sonship, and his assumed nature of

Son of Man. Our Lord, in the preceding verses, declares himself to be the Son of God, the Father; he describes his equality with him, in omnipotence, omniscience, and other Divine attributes, and in his complete participation of counsel and design; he then mentions a peculiar office which belongs to him, in a most appropriate manner,—adding, as the reason, that he is the Son of Man. This is the office of judgment—the final rewarding and punishing “all his and our enemies.” The particular propriety of this judgment being conferred on the Son seems to consist in this,—that a created being will be the medium, through which, determination on all actions shall be made, and rewards and punishments distributed to created beings assembled before the judgment-seat.—By his voice—by the proclamation of the Son of Man,—all men shall be called from their tombs to meet him in judgment. V. 28, 29. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” This is the grand transaction which the Son shall achieve, in the nature which is *Son of*

Man. This is the last victory; when all his enemies shall be scattered before him. Ancient prophecy glows with the description of this epoch, when the greatness of the human nature shall be pre-eminent amongst those who "shine as the brightness of the firmament," "as the stars for ever and ever." Of the authority which is given to the Son to execute judgment, *because he is the Son of Man*, Jeremiah thus writes, xxiii. 5, 6. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"

CHAPTER XI.

Objections to the Eternal Sonship of our Lord founded on assumed meanings of Scripture, refuted.

THERE is one expression which *apparently* militates against the direct equality, which the Son claims with the Father, particularly in his attribute of omniscience. Mark xiii. 32. "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*" Matthew xxiv. 36. "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*" Scripture cannot contradict scripture; and, in order to evolve its just and rational meaning, scripture must be compared with collateral scripture. Our Lord, in other passages, when he speaks as the Son, seems to indicate that the knowledge of all transactions resides in him. He says that the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment;—and surely if he be to execute judg-

ment, he must know *when* he is to execute it? He says that the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son;—surely, then, the Son, to whom judgment is committed, knows *the time* in which he is to superintend it? The Apostle says that the Son “created all things,” and “by him all things consist.”—If *all things be consisting in*, or preserved by, the Son,—surely the Son must have knowledge of the movements which he himself directs? “All things were created by him and for him;”—surely, then, he must know the things which exist for himself, and the time of those events which occur for himself? The tenor of scripture, especially in several passages which we have examined, evidently indicates that omniscience must belong to the Son;—consequently, that his declaration of not knowing the specific period when certain events would take place, must be understood differently from that meaning which the words *literally* convey.

Macknight, of whose very able criticisms we have, in this Dissertation, frequently availed ourselves, gives the following solution of the Son’s declaration:—“Mark xiii. 32. “For of that day, &c.—It may seem strange “that the Son, who declared, that he would

“ come before the generation then in being
 “ went off the stage, and who, in the prophe-
 “ cy, had been pointing out the various signs
 “ by which the disciples might foresee his ap-
 “ proach, should not have known the day and
 “ the hour, or the particular time of his own
 “ coming. This difficulty some endeavour
 “ to obviate by supposing that our Lord spake
 “ here of himself only as a man. But the
 “ name *Father*, following that of *Son*, shows
 “ that he spake of himself as the *Son of God*,
 “ and not as the Son of man. Besides, the
 “ gradation in the sentence seems to forbid
 “ this solution. For the Son being mentioned
 “ after the angels, and immediately before the
 “ Father, is thereby declared to be more ex-
 “ cellent than they, which is not in respect of
 “ his human nature; and therefore he cannot
 “ be supposed to speak of himself in that na-
 “ ture. The proper translation of the pas-
 “ sage, I think, affords a better solution. The
 “ word *οιδειν* here seems to have the force of
 “ the Hebrew conjugation Hiphil, which, in
 “ verbs denoting action, makes that action,
 “ whatever it is, pass to another. Wherefore
 “ *ειδενω*, which properly signifies *I know*, used
 “ in the sense of the conjugation Hiphil, sig-
 “ nifies *I make another to know*, I declare.

“ The word has this meaning without dis-
 “ pute, 1 Corinthians ii. *I determined* (*εἰδεναί*)
 “ *to know nothing among you but Jesus*
 “ *Christ, and him crucified,* i. e. I deter-
 “ mined to make known, to preach nothing
 “ among you but Jesus Christ. So likewise
 “ in the text: But of that day and that hour,
 “ none maketh you to know: none hath
 “ power to make you know it; just as the
 “ phrase, Matthew xx. 23. ‘is not mine to
 “ give,’ signifies, ‘is not in my power to
 “ give:’ no, not the angels, neither the Son,
 “ but the Father; neither man nor angel, nor
 “ even the Son himself, can reveal the day
 “ and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem to
 “ you; because the Father hath determined
 “ that it should not be revealed. The Divine
 “ Wisdom saw fit to conceal from the Apos-
 “ tles the precise period of the destruction of
 “ Jerusalem, in order that they might be laid
 “ under a necessity of watching continually.
 “ And this vigilance was especially proper at
 “ that time, because the success of the Gospel
 “ depended, in a great measure, upon the ac-
 “ tivity and exemplary lives of those who first
 “ published it.” Accordingly, in the verse of
 1 Cor. ii. where *εἰδεναί* is used transitively,
 Locke paraphrases the word, “ I resolved to

own or show no other knowledge among you," and Whitby, in like manner, "I determined not to discover any thing." Mac-knight, in accordance with the foregoing observations, paraphrases the verse in question, (Mark xiii. 32.) as follows: "*But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man. I have told you, that all the things I have been predicting shall happen before this generation dies. Nevertheless, to point out the time to you more particularly, by showing you the precise year, and month, and day, of the several events, is not in the power of any man: no man hath it in his power to make you know this; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.* (Matth.) In particular concerning himself, Jesus declared that he could not make them know the day and hour of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, not because he was ignorant of that event, but because the Father, as Governor of the world, had put times and seasons in his own power, (Acts i. 7.) in order that, from the uncertainty of the thing, the disciples might be always kept upon their guard; for which reason he had given his Son no commission to reveal it more particularly than he has done

“ in this celebrated prediction. Thus Jesus
 “ described the destruction of the Jewish na-
 “ tion, marked a variety of particulars which
 “ were to accompany or precede it, and as-
 “ sured his disciples that the day and hour
 “ thereof was not to be discovered by them.”

As the most celebrated critics admit that εἰδέναι must be rendered in 1 Cor ii. 2. *to declare* or *make known*, it is impossible to refuse the same meaning to the original word translated *knoweth* in Matth. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32.—seeing the text absolutely requires this translation, to avoid the contradiction of parallel passages. It is in vain to say that such a translation is a blinking of the question, unless it can be shown that all our commentators are in error when they understand εἰδέναι—rendered in the authorized version *to know*—as meaning *to make known*. Common sense requires us to adopt this latter interpretation in 1 Cor. ii. 2. ; the harmony of Scripture requires us to adopt the same meaning in the passages quoted from the Gospels. From the mode in which the Son speaks of the Father and addresses him, particularly in the xviith of John, and from the whole tenor of Scripture it appears, that during the subjection of our Lord's human nature, which was evinced

by humiliation, the Father was supreme in the administration of the kingdom of grace and of the kingdom of the universe, until our Lord's ascension, when the supremacy of all things devolved on him, as the mediatorial King. In the interval between the formation of the Son's humanity, and his investiture with universal rule, by the transference of supremacy,—the direction of all events was assumed and administered by the Father, in whom were centered all the external displays of Godhead. Our Lord, in his Messiahship on earth, was under the guidance of this supremacy of rule by the Father. Hence, with regard to the mission on which he was sent, and the commission which was given him to execute, he says, "My Father is greater than I:" while, at the same time, speaking of the inherent dignity of his person, he exclaims "I and my Father are one." Our Lord says that he was "sent,"—there was "work given him to finish,"—he "came forth" on purpose that he might "fulfil" all that was necessary during the subjection of his humanity to the peculiar superintendence of the Father. Our Lord says to his followers, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and, in the passage which we have been con-

sidering, he declares,—in accordance with his other enunciations of the Father's paramount government, during his humiliation,—that the time of the destruction of Jerusalem was not given to him to reveal in his mission as Messiah, but was reserved for important reasons, by the Father who, during our Lord's subjection to him in human nature, had "the times and the seasons" in his own power.

We come now to examine that passage in which the termination of Christ's mediatorial kingdom is mentioned, and to investigate the meaning of *the subjection of the Son*, which has given rise to so many contradictory opinions. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*"

It is necessary for us to attend to the purposes for which our Lord assumed human nature, and to the achievements which have been, and are to be, accomplished in that nature. We must attend to its different situations at different periods,—which situations correspond with the work that it had to effect, and the dignity with which it was invested. The states in which our Lord's human nature has hitherto been, are those of *humiliation* and *exaltation*.

In his state of humiliation he was “despised and rejected of men,”—“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;” when men saw him he had “no form nor comeliness,” there was no “beauty” in him “that we should desire him.” The hardships and distresses of this world pressed heavily upon him; his soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;” one dark cloud continually hung over him, whose gloom was, indeed, at intervals, pierced by those rays of Godhead which shone through him. His actions were the principal distinction between him and those men with whom he associated: For, in his appearance, “his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” He “made himself of no reputation, and took up-

on 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." In this state, the humanity of our Lord was subject to the Father and the other persons of the Godhead, and it was subject, in a manner visible to mankind. They beheld the external marks of its subjection; they perceived his appearance in the flesh,—suffering, and exposed to, the calamities of life. Its aspect towards men was that of one who underwent difficulties for some specific purpose,—who endured woes to obtain an important result,—whose griefs were the portion of a magnificent design. The mode in which the subjection of our Lord's humanity was displayed, was in sufferings. It might have exhibited grandeur of the most elevated description, and still have been subject to the Godhead; it might have been surrounded by legions of angels, and still have fulfilled the plans of omnipotence. But this was not the way in which the Divine measures were to be effected. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconcilia-

tion for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Being subject, in the purpose of God, his subjection was manifested by sufferings, that through these sufferings a revenue of glory might be subsequently derived. In our present state of humanity, humiliation and accompanying sufferings are, in the well regulated mind, wisely connected with the ultimate progress of piety, and the establishment of real greatness in the soul. It were needless to expatiate on the firmness which they are calculated to promote in disastrous vicissitudes,—the benevolence which they infuse by producing sympathy for others,—the reliance which they excite on the Supreme Being who orders all things for the best,—and the expectations which they induce us to form of another and a better scene of existence. We have, in mankind, abundant proofs of the utility of sufferings. Though we cannot tell the primary reasons why Christ was, in this respect, made "like unto his brethren," we evidently feel the advantages

which result to us from this conformity. As the humanity of our Lord was formed for the express purpose of existing in his Divinity,—it was formed, in an especial manner, to assume the appearances and subjection consonant to the designs of Divinity. It had no will of its own to assume any state; it had no inherent constitution to exist in any condition which was its own; it could only exist, according to the volition of Divinity founded on the Divine constitution. The subjection in its humiliation was, therefore, of two kinds,—a necessary subjection to the Godhead, in whatever condition it existed; and a peculiar subjection, indicated by its sufferings in that particular state of humiliation. In relation to God, this subjection was a devotion to the Divine will, and a particular devotion to that person in whom it subsisted. This devotion was essential to its very nature, and communicated in its original conformation. Whilst its actions on earth were really those of humanity,—they were those of humanity whose procedure was in union with a Divine person. They flowed from that person, and were really his; yet they were not the actions of his Divinity, but of his humanity subsisting in his Divine nature. The Son of God could not suffer

in his essential nature; yet his assumed human nature was humbled, was "made under the law;" was "made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But whilst the Messiah experienced this temporary humiliation, the inherent glory of his person was not, and could not be, lost. This humiliation was not natural to him, but was submitted to, that the glory which was natural to a being received into personal union by one of the persons of the Godhead, might afterwards be exhibited. When, therefore, the eclipse of the Messiah's human nature was past, it appeared in that splendour which it naturally possessed, and which was peculiar to its exalted state of existence. When he "ascended up on high," after his woes on earth, "he sat down at the right hand of God, till all his enemies should be made his footstool." Then the full effulgence of Deity beamed through it, when, in the evolution of his purpose, the Father of glory "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave

him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The Son represents himself as possessing inherent power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again. John x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." In the first of these passages, quoted from the epistle to the Ephesians, it is expressly said that the Father raised the humanity of our Lord from the dead; in the latter, the Son asserts that that power is inherent in himself. The Son cannot speak of his human nature, as having the power of raising itself from the dead, inhering *in itself*. For no such power of communicating life to itself when the vital energy has ceased, can be inherent in any creature; seeing it is the peculiar power of the Deity to communicate life to his creatures. It must, therefore, be resident in the nature in which our Lord is essentially Son, and be true in his Divinity, in which his human nature exists. The humiliation of this human nature is,

therefore, in conformity with the volition of the Father and the Son. As it respects the Father, it is a subjection of humiliation under him, as supreme, because this nature does not belong to his person ;—it is the subjection of the Son, because this is the Son's human nature, in which he wills that there shall be subjection.

The exaltation of this human nature, in the mediatorial kingdom, is an exaltation from which subjection is excluded. Subjection is excluded, because the Son reigns supreme over this kingdom ; it is given solely to him by the Father ; it is administered by the Son, in such a manner, that, though the supremacy of the Godhead is unaffected, that supremacy is devolved on the Son. Universal power is lodged in him, and this universal power is exerted through the medium, and by the instrumentality, of his humanity. In this humanity, when on the eve of assuming his mediatorial sway, he says, " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Respecting this humanity he declared, that its resurrection, the inception of his greatness, was effected by his own energy. The Father is declared to have exerted his energy in this inception ; for he raised him from the dead, and delivered up to

the Son an undivided and complete supremacy, in the mediatorial administration. In this exaltation, the Father is expressly said to have invested the Son with this uncontrolled rule. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The subjection of all things to Jesus is, therefore, a subjection to the Son, in his human nature; which is more especially called Jesus, because it was the means appointed to procure salvation. The surrender of all rule was made by the Father to the Son, who accepted of that surrender, and exercises his sway through the human nature, which is the medium of his Kingship. The Kingly authority which belonged to the humanity, in consequence of its union with Deity, was in abeyance during its continuance on earth;—when the surrounding veil of humiliation was withdrawn, its native dignity burst forth;—but the climax of its grandeur was attained, when the Son received the universal government, and, through the nature which was employed to effect salvation,

dispensed the universal government. In this mediatorial kingdom, the humanity of the Son is, in one sense, subject to the Father, because it is a *creature*; yet, in another sense, it is *not* subject. For the kingdom is peculiarly the Son's, who is subject to none; and his humanity is *the creature*, through which he organizes the procedure of his kingdom. The sole reign of the Son may, therefore, be viewed in two lights: It is strictly and primarily, the reign of the Divine nature; and it is, secondarily, the reign of the Son in human nature, because his humanity is the medium by which he displays his reign. The proceedings of this kingdom will "*put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*"

Prophecy will be fulfilled; for according to the prediction (in Psalm viii. 6.) "*He hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*" The Father gave to the Son all rule, but could not *give himself* to be ruled. He only ceased actively to exert his own external power in the supreme administration of the mediatorial kingdom, and gave to the Son,

solely, the *external* manifestations of Godhead. The inherent power and perfections of the Father could not cease, but the display of these is entirely dependent on the nature and will of God. He therefore, for infinitely wise purposes, has revealed that all the external displays of Godhead, in the mediatorial kingdom, are from the person of the Son, who chooses that his human nature shall be the medium of these displays.

When the objects of the mediatorial kingdom are accomplished by the Son—when “*all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*” To understand in what the subjection of the Son consists, it is necessary again to revert to the different states of the Son’s humanity.—He was subject to the Father in his humiliation, because it was in the designs of the Godhead that he should be thus subject; he was not subject to the Father in his human nature in the mediatorial kingdom and exaltation, because the humanity subsisted in the Son, who was not subject to the Father, but had the means of subjecting all things lodged in himself: these means he employs through the human nature, which is his subjecting instru-

ment. But when the end of the mediatorial kingdom shall come, the instrument which he employed, viz. his human nature, will cease to be his medium of power, and return to the state of subjection to the Father in which it was in his humiliation;—not, however, to be again exposed to degradation; for the cessation of all displays of authority *by* it and *through* it will ensue. The kingdom of the universe will no more be exclusively in the Son, but in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—in God, “*that God may be all in all.*” The human nature of our Lord has two aspects;—by the Son, it is employed as the means by which he reigns,—by his subjects, it is employed as the means through which they express their devotion to him. Neither the governor nor the governed will, after the completion of that kingdom, employ any medium. The humanity of the Son, we may justly presume, will be placed in the situation in which it would have been, had there been no mediatorial kingdom, and no exclusive authority vested in the person in whom it subsists. Like all other creatures, it will be subjected to the Godhead, retaining the glory which it can never lose,—union to that person in whom it suffered, in whom it was employed

to dispense the mediatorial sway, and in whom it will, through eternity, be the object which will possess the renown of having been employed to establish and complete the mediatorial kingdom. The glorious beings brought to everlasting felicity in the exercise of Messiah's kingdom will, then, immediately address the Godhead, and from it receive communications of increasing happiness.—The humanity of our Lord, in those ages whose *arcana* are not revealed, will still exist, and exist in union with that person who assumed it. The particular manner of its actions, and the connexion between it and other beings, are alluded to, yet not specifically declared. In the Revelation of John, when all the transactions of the mediatorial kingdom were represented as finished, and the new heavens and the new earth established, he saw no temple in the great and holy city, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.” He declares that its “light” or splendour flows from “the glory of God which does

lighten it," and says that "the Lamb is the light thereof," not that he does lighten it. There "the pure river of the water of life" flows from "the throne of God and of the Lamb." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him,"—i. e. the servants of God shall serve him. "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The particular mode in which the humanity of the Son shall exhibit the glory of its Divine union, when it is subjected in the kingdom of the Godhead's glory, is not described. But, from these passages, it seems evident, that it will be a transcendent manifestation of Divine glory, flowing, more immediately, from the Son, and subordinate to the Deity, in his eternal power and Godhead.

CHAPTER XII.

The Word and The Son are both designations to which eternity is attributable.

MANY who contend that the Eternal Sonship of our Lord is unscriptural, affirm that the true designation of the person of the Godhead who came in the flesh, is *λογος*, *Logos*, *The Word*. It is neither our intention nor our province to review the learned observations which have been made respecting the exact meaning of the term *Logos*, and the manner in which it has been used by the Platonic and Jewish Philosophers. It is sufficient for our purpose to remark that it signifies *The Word*, as it is rendered by all translators in John i.,—and *Discourse* and *Reason*, in classical authors, and some few passages of scripture. The latter meaning answers more especially to the import of *σοφία*, *Wisdom*, in Proverbs viii. But in whatever shade of acceptation the expression is understood,

the sense of the context and the mode of description, undoubtedly require us to understand a person who is mentioned under this designation. The term, when signifying *The Word*, whether understood in its original derivation or in its general use, expresses a declaration or communication of thought, by such a medium as the person employing it shall enable another to comprehend his thoughts. When applied to a person, it represents him who, as an agent, declares or communicates the thoughts of one person to another. Applied to a Divine person, there is no conceivable combination of our notions, which will permit us, when we analyze the term, to understand any other than a person thus described, on account of the quality of declaring or communicating which he possesses. Campbell, when examining the interpretation *Reason*, which has been assigned to *Logos*, says of the common translation, *The Word*,—"But as the common rendering, "which is also not without its plausibility, "has had the concurrent testimony of translators, ancient as well as modern, and seems "well adapted to the office of Messiah, *as the "oracle and interpreter of God*, I thought it, "upon the whole, better to retain it." The

meaning of the expression *The Word*, must convey the combined notion of a Divine person, and the inherent quality of communicating which he possesses, from which quality the name is obtained. But *The Word* does not express a state of existence, according to the nature of the person whom it represents; it is not like the expressions Man, Father, Son, descriptive of a certain state of being, in a certain nature. We can readily comprehend the attribute of the person who is The Word, on account of which attribute he is so named, but we obtain no idea of the state in which the Divine nature exists, in that person, who is The Word. Whereas, the expression Son, determinately marks the state in which the person thus called exists, in relation to the other persons of the Divine nature. It appears strange, that the opponents of the Eternal Sonship should fix on a term, expressive of no state in the Divine nature, as the eternal and appropriate name of this person in the Godhead, whilst they reject one which is decisively and peculiarly applicable to the state of being of this person in relation to another.—But such is the effect of adherence to a favourite theory, when it is requisite to carry it over all obstacles. By these

remarks, we cannot be understood to affirm that *The Word* is not expressive of a Divine person;—we only assert, that whilst it undoubtedly indicates a Divine person, it discloses him in the possession of a certain attribute,—not in his related state of existence in the Divine nature. But our opponents admit the eternal existence of the *Logos* in the Godhead, and allow that he essentially exists in the Divine nature;—our object, therefore, is to prove that this *Logos* must, in his state of existence in the Divine nature, be also the *Son of God*. In this attempt, we shall endeavour to show, that whatever attributes and actions, peculiar to Divinity, are assigned to *Logos* or *The Word*,—these are also assigned to the *Son*.

John i. 1. “*The Word was with God.*” Co-existence with God, in the person of the Father, is predicated of the Son. John i. 18. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John xvii. 5. “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. v. 24. For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

John i. 1. "*And The Word was God.*" The Son is, in like manner, termed God, and that expressly by the Father. Hebrews i. 8. "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

V. 2, 3. "*The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*" The Son is thus addressed by God the Father, in Hebrews i. 10.: "And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands." Of the Son it is said, in Colossians i. 16—18. "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. And he is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, ——"

V. 4. "*In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*" Of the Son, it is said, 1 John v. 11, 12. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath

life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." John v 26. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." John x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John xii. 46. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

V. 11, 12. "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*" In like manner it is said, John vi. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

V. 14. "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*" Analagous to this are the words of 1 John i. 1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have

looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: 2. (For the life was manifested,—”) In like manner, the Son was made flesh, and was manifested. Galatians iv. 4. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.” Romans viii. 3. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” 1 John iii. 8. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

After the declaration of these actions and attributes of the *Logos*, all of which, we have shown, are also predicated of the Son, the writer sums up his detail with the glory of the *Logos*, which he affirms is the same glory as that which the Son possesses.

V. 14. “*And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*” The particule ‘*ως* as, expresses, in the original, more than *likeness* or *similarity*. It denotes that which is *indeed* or *really* an identical possession of what has been mentioned. Mac-knight, in his Fourth Essay, prefixed to the Translation of the Epistles, says, under the

particle 'ως,—“ Ως is sometimes used affirmatively, and must be translated *indeed, truly, certainly, actually*; for Hesychius and Phavorinus tell us, that 'ως is put for οντως, αληθως.* Nehemiah vii. 2. † Αυτος 'ως ανηρ αληθης, *He was indeed a true man.*—Matth. xiv. 5. *He feared the multitude, because they counted him (John, 'ως πρωφητης) really a prophet.*—John i. 14. *We beheld his glory, the glory, ('ως μονογενης) indeed of the only begotten of the Father.*” According to this import of the particle 'ως, Doddridge thus paraphrases the passage:—“ And we who are now recording these things, contemplated his glory with so strict an attention, that, from our own personal knowledge, we can bear our testimony to it, that it was in every respect *such a glory as became the only begotten of the Father.*” Guyse states, in a note, the true signification of the particle 'ως; and paraphrases the passage in the following manner: “ We saw the glory of his Divine wisdom, power, holiness, and grace, which, on various occasions, displayed themselves in him; we saw the glory of his God-like miracles, and of his sovereign way

* Really, truly.

† Septuagint.

“ of performing them ; we saw the glory that
 “ shone in his transfiguration, resurrection,
 “ and ascension to heaven ; (εθεασαμεθα) we
 “ steadfastly considered and observed it with
 “ the closest attention, and highest wonder,
 “ as the glory that was really becoming the
 “ Son of God, and was proper and peculiar
 “ to him, who is originally the same in nature
 “ with the Father, and eternally begotten of
 “ him, in such an inconceivable manner, as
 “ none ever besides him.” As the precise
 meaning of the Evangelist is of particular im-
 portance, we refer to Acts xvii. 22. Rom. ix.
 32. 2 Cor. ii. 17. Eph. v. 8., in addition to
 the passages we have before mentioned, where
 the particle *ως* has the same meaning as in
 the text which we are examining. The 14th
 v. of the 1st chap. of John, obviously esta-
 blishes the collateral actions and attributes,
 especially the glory of The Word, and the
 only begotten of the Father.

We have shown, from parallel texts of
 scripture, that every declaration, which main-
 tains the eternity, and other natural and mor-
 al qualities of the Word, maintains also the
 eternity and natural and moral qualities of the
 Son of God. Co-existence with God the

Father,—the being God,—the creation of all things,—inherence of life,—power of introduction to God's family,—manifestation in the flesh, are all ascribed to The Word and to the Son of God ; and lastly, the Evangelist declares their identity, or that The Word and the Son are the same person, as the glory which is predicated of the person under each designation, is the *same glory*. That which is true of The Word is, therefore, true of the Son. He is, consequently, *Eternal*.

CHAPTER XIII.



Examination of the term Father, in connexion with the term Son, when used to designate Persons in the Divine nature.

God is frequently termed, in Scripture, a *Father*, on account of the relation in which he stands to men in their creation and preservation. The creative power,—the care and protection which he continually exercises,—the inception of life which inheres in him,—and the watchful superintendence by which he continues in the individual, and in succession, the life which he has communicated,—are the causes of this appellation. He is, likewise, termed *Father*, on account of the principles of holiness and virtue which are peculiarly derived from himself, and which he implants in the minds of intelligent beings. This residence and exercise of virtuous principles are the sources of well-regulated life.

and of perpetual enjoyment; they are the well-being and happiness of the soul. The infusion of such principles into those who have lost them, is termed a "new life," a "new birth" obtained from God, "the author of every good and perfect gift." This title is given to God, on account of the government or rule which he exercises, and the direction which he possesses of "all his creatures, and all their actions." It denotes the ineffable honour and dignity which he enjoys—which essentially belong to him—and which are manifested in his government of all events. God is termed Father, because he instructs and enlightens his creatures. He is the source of knowledge as well as of being; from him we obtain the powers that enable us to explore useful knowledge; and, from himself *immediately* comes the most important of all knowledge which is received and treasured up by the appropriate mental faculties that he has originally conferred. He is termed Father, on account of the peculiar and distinguished regard and rule which he exercises over those to whom he reveals himself, in another manner than he does to the world. These are more particularly denominated his children, because he favours them with his

regard, guides them by his counsel, supports them by his power, guards them from evil, conducts them through life, and after death receives them into glory.

In all the cases which we have mentioned, we readily discover the reasons why God is termed a Father. We recognize the transference of figurative notions in the transactions of men, to the procedure of God; for we cannot suppose that God is related to the objects we have mentioned, as earthly fathers are to their children. They do not participate of his essence; they are not possessors of his Divine nature; nor do they, in that nature, enjoy propinquity or relationship in the same mode of being. We are able to determine the relative situations of the parties, and to perceive the exact place which objects occupy, when God is termed their Father. We determine that the beings predicated cannot be his sons, and that he cannot be their Father in consequence of mutual possession of the same essence, because all those objects to whom God is Father, are extraneous to the Divine essence. They are extraneous to his nature, because it is eternal; they have a beginning, and that which has a beginning can neither be the Divine

essence, nor, even if we could suppose the possibility of division in the Divine essence, can they be a portion of that essence. It is the possession of this beginning of being, and of mutability in being, which shows the utter impossibility of an eternal, infinite, immutable essence being portioned through space, and modified into different creatures, as some philosophic speculators have asserted. While the Father of the universe is omnipresent and omniscient, he is not, and from his essential nature, cannot be the *το παν* of the universe, in the acceptation of some of the Grecian and later cosmogonists. We ascertain, therefore, that God is Father of the universe, in a manner which does not admit of relation in his essence. The objects of the universe, to whom he is Father, are without his essence; they are not *sui generis*; they exist by him, but they are not God; they are in being, but they are so during the will of the Creator. It is the dissimilarity of all things from the Divine nature that is the occasion of the supreme government and direction of creatures by God, because they are not his essence, which is infinite and unchangeable. To suppose the Deity *supreme over himself*, is a use of terms without meaning, or rather a nega-

tion of terms. In whatever sense the appellation *Father of the creatures* is applied, we discover that the phrase arises from the adaptation of God, in the exercise of his perfections, to confer benefits on the creatures to whom he is Father, and from the adaptation of the creature, in his conformation, to receive and retain the benefits which are conferred. It uniformly conveys the notion of supreme government and donation of benefits; and the Being, who is supreme, and does confer benefits, is always spoken of as in the act of conferring, or as the source of, benefits,—or as the director of these benefits to their appointed destination. There must be an inferiority in those creatures to whom God is Father, because this is essential to, and inseparable from, their nature. They exist in inferiority, and cannot be divested of this inferiority, in any case, or by any combination of circumstances. We need not enumerate the various passages of scripture, in which God is termed a Father, according to the different acceptations which we have mentioned. They are so obvious that there is no scope for disputation, or the introduction of various meanings.

But there is a mode, in which God is Fa-

ther, different from any which we have mentioned; in which his relation, as Father, must be as essentially different, as the difference of the essence in which he is predicated. It is affirmed that a person existing in the Divine nature is Father to another who is Son. Both are affirmed to be Divine, and to possess the nature and perfections of Godhead. The constitution of the nature of each person causes the relation of Father and Son to be infinitely different from the relation of Father to the creatures. We can no longer contemplate objects which are extraneous to the Divinity, but must examine persons in related states, within the Divinity. That which was true of those extraneous to the Divinity, cannot be true of those persons who are in the Divinity,—who have no beginning, between whom there can neither be superiority nor inferiority,—one of whom cannot be supreme, or confer benefits on another. We need not transcribe the passages already referred to, especially John v. and xvii. In all these, the relation between the Divine person is spoken of as that of Father and Son, in which the persons reciprocally address each other;—the one acknowledging and affirming the other to be Father, and the

person, thus acknowledged, affirming the other to be his Son. In addition to the places of scripture which we have examined, we adduce John xiv. 10, 11. "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.*" 13. *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*" 20. *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."* John xvi. 15. "*All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.*" From these texts, we discover the relation of the persons—the equality of the persons in attributes—and the inherence of each, in the other, in the same nature; so that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father. The declaration of the Son, respecting the reality of their relation and mutual inherence in the same nature, is perfectly decisive,—“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” As they are different persons, the *being in each other* cannot mean that they are

the same person, for this would be a contradiction; it must, therefore, signify that they are both persons in that nature—even in the Godhead which is one and indivisible. Now, if they possess the same nature, and be Father and Son in each other, they must possess the properties of that nature. As this examination is so important, we shall repeat, here, the first step of our reasoning. The Father is in the Son,—the Son is in the Father;—they cannot, thereby, be one and the same person, because distinct property of being is attributed to each person. There is no other sense left in which they can be in each other, unless by a mutual possession of the Divine nature. This is not a research in which it is presumption for mortals to introduce their examination; for the proposition affirmed by the Son is expressly propounded by him to mortals, as a subject of belief. Seeing the Father is possessor of the Divine nature, all notions of relationship, such as that existing between creatures and the Godhead, must be excluded. Whatever the relation is, it must, like the properties of the Divine nature, be eternal,—and both persons, being in the Divine nature, the relation must be homogeneous. We have discovered two persons who—

on the express declaration of one of them, propounded as an article of knowledge and of consequent belief—possess homogeny. It is in this very homogeny that they are Father and Son, seeing the person of the Father exists, indisputably, without assumption of any creature into union with himself. The Son has assumed humanity; but that humanity could not, by itself, be Son to a Divine person who did not assume it. Of the Son, it is said, that “all things which the Father hath are his,”—but it is impossible that all things which a Divine person hath, can belong to any humanity or any creature whatsoever. Neither can humanity and a Divine person be mutually possessors of the same nature of which the Father and Son are possessors.

Though the revelation of the relation of the persons of the Godhead be confessedly less explicit in the Old Testament than in the New,—yet, there are, undoubtedly, expressions which anticipate to the Jewish Church the revelation subsequently promulgated to the Christian. These expressions refer to the period when the Son was made manifest in the flesh; when the revelation of the persons, subsisting in the Godhead, was announced in the most decisive and perspicuous manner.

In the coming of the Messiah, this grand disclosure of Divine existence was to be announced with the corresponding and important truths of our religion. 2 Samuel vii. 14. *“I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son.”* It is said of the Messiah, Psalm lxxxix. 26, 27. *“He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth.”*

It has been objected to the account we have given of the designations and subsisting states of the Divine persons, that the person termed the Son is also termed the Father in the prophetic announcement of Isaiah, ix. 6, —consequently, that the terms employed to denote these persons are only contingent expressions; enabling mankind to understand the parts which these persons occupy in their procedure with men. In order to understand the scope of the epithet in question, we shall examine the other epithets and the design of the context. The verse alluded to declares, *“For 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, The Prince of Peace.”*

The first declaration is that *unto us a child shall be born*, which evidently denotes that a child shall come into the world in the ordinary manner. The second declaration is that a son is *given*,—not that a son is *born*. The distinction is worthy of particular attention. The prophet has already sufficiently described the appearance of humanity in the person whom he foretels. To repeat the same identical circumstance is an unmeaning redundancy, and an apparent inaccuracy, for which we cannot account, on the supposition that the *child born* and the *son given* denote the same thing. There must, therefore, be something more in the import of the words *unto us a Son is given*. The *gift of the Son* is placed obviously in contradistinction to the *birth of the child*. The passage, when fairly analyzed, appears to convey the actual announcement of the two natures which Messiah was to possess,—the human and the Divine. In exact fulfilment of this prediction, it is said by the Messiah himself, John iii. 16, 17. “For God so loved the world, that he *gave* his *only-begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but

that the world through him might be saved." The office which was to be possessed by the *child born* and the *Son given*, is next mentioned,—“And the government shall be upon his shoulder.” The mediatorial sway and universal kingdom which the Son was to receive and exercise in human nature, are foretold in this declaration. His titles, describing his qualities, are then enumerated,—“And his name shall be called Wonderful.” In all his actions—in the righteousness which he has procured, he is truly wonderful, and, above all, he is wonderful in the glories of his person, for it is said, “no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” He is the “Counsellor.” He participates in all the designs and counsels of the Godhead; he is the Counsellor of all his people; he guides them in every dilemma and danger. He is the “mighty God,” even that God who is omnipotent. He is “The everlasting Father.” In the original, there is no adjective which signifies *everlasting*. The expression is אבי ער *Father* or *Governor, director, appointer of the future dispensation* of events. The following observations will evince that this is a correct translation of the passage:—The word אבי means not only superintendence in general

government, but particularly in religious instruction and care. Judges xvii. 10. "And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me (אב) a *Father* and a Priest," &c. xviii. 19. "And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us (אב) a *Father* and a Priest." 2 Kings xiii. 14. "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, (אבי אבי) O my Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." The term is used in the same sense in many other parts of the Old Testament.

The word ער, denoting sometimes past eternity, sometimes *past* and *future* eternity, for the most part signifies *future eternity*.—Thus Job xix. 24. "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock (לער) for ever," or *to future eternity*. Psalm lxxxix. 29. "His seed also will I make to endure (לער) for ever," or *through all future time*. We adduce these from a number of texts, for the sake of example.

The real meaning of the Prophet, therefore, is, that the *child born* and the *Son given* would institute, establish, and direct, the fu-

ture movements of the Church and world ; so that the New Testament dispensation, under his auspices, would be the medium by which his mediatorial reign would be extended through the universe.

We have remarked, that the person introduced is expressly brought to our notice as a Son. The employment of the person is stated as consisting of government ; his titles are mentioned. One of these is *the Father of future Eternity*. This appellation does not describe *his mode of existence as a Divine person*, for all the corresponding epithets only describe his dignity and attributes,—the possession of matchless and glorious power. He is called the Father of futurity, but not in relation to any person. He himself is solely named and described. Had another person of the Godhead been introduced, in relation to whom, the Messiah was termed Father, the fact would, undoubtedly, be decisive, that the designations Father and Son, were not indicative of eternal states, within the Divine essence. But no such circumstance is stated by the Prophet. He does not say that it is in the Divine nature that the Messiah, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, is Father, but simply that he is the

Father of future Eternity, the Director of events in the future dispensation. He speaks of Messiah as God; but none that peruses the passage with attention will say that he speaks of this Divine person in reference to other Divine persons. It is solely the Divine person who was to be Messiah that the Prophet portrays; it is that person in his own peculiar character. There is, therefore, no possible room for affirming that the relations of the persons in the Godhead are confounded, and their terms employed, the one for the other, indiscriminately.

We have already mentioned that the supreme Governor, with respect to his creatures, is termed Father, on account of the universal rule which he exercises, and the protection which he affords. This appellation, descriptive of the connexion between God and his creatures, is true of every one of the Divine persons, and of the three Divine persons—one God. The relation to the creatures is as true of the Son and Holy Ghost, as of the Father, in the Divine nature; for all these persons are—respectively, and in union—the Father of the universe, the Father in creation, in government, in protection. But the Son, as Messiah, is fore-

told in his protecting kindness and mercy, as “a Father to the fatherless.” Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6. “A Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains.” But neither in this last passage, nor in Isaiah ix. 6., is the Messiah introduced in relation to another Divine person. He himself is solely introduced,—and he is proclaimed to be a Father to the fatherless, and the Father of futurity. This last expression is a statement of his authority or government of the world, and all the transactions occurring therein, especially with regard to the mediatory dispensation which peculiarly belonged to the Messiah.

By an adherence to the marked distinction between designations applied to the Deity, in his relation to his creatures, and in his relation to himself existing in persons, we shall be readily able to discover when epithets are applied to the Godhead generally, and when they are applied to the persons of the Godhead. In the present instance, the Prophet describes the Messiah as ruling all events which are considered as occurring in futurity. Hence, the Messiah is, by a figure,

declared to be the Father or Director of futurity, especially of the Mediatorial kingdom.

It is in vain to presume that the epithets *Father* and *Son* are communicated to us, in acquiescence with our present state of belief, and in accommodation to our pre-conceived notions. We have evinced, from the sense of the particular passages which we have examined, and from the contradictions and impossibilities which would ensue, on such a supposition, that no such accommodating revelation can be understood to have been given. But, independently of the specific and irrefragable proofs that such principles of accommodation have not been adopted, it is impossible, on general grounds, to conceive that a perfect Being could communicate a revelation of himself, founded on defective and erroneous information. Language is the communication of thought from one being to another. According to the nature and extent of thought, in the person to whom the communication is made, his capacity will apprehend and retain the communications which are made to him. But if the person communicating information be possessed of far greater knowledge than the

person who is instructed ; if, in consequence of his superiority of intellect, he accommodate himself to the limited intellectual stores of the other, and employ such terms, and give such representations of the very object which he wishes to impress on the mind, as shall induce the other to acquiesce in, and believe, a fallacy and an impossibility,—his information, instead of an advantage, would, in such a case, be an evident disadvantage to the less informed person. If the object which is to be revealed, be explained in a perverted and incongruous manner,—not as it is in itself, but as the person communicating imagines the less-informed person will be most readily able to apprehend with his limited stock of notions,—if, in addition, the object be one affecting the manners, morals, and life of the person who is instructed,—we are at a loss whether to deplore the insufficiency of the communication or the erroneous belief which the other has adopted, and which will prove so fatal in practice. Should a philosopher land on an island whose inhabitants were hitherto ignorant of the rest of the world,—should he endeavour to impress on their belief that the ship in which he arrived was an animal obedient to his will,—should he in-

form them that there were people of a different nature, form, and intellect, in the regions which he had left, and that these people were his worshippers,—should he, by his superior knowledge in arts and sciences, so influence these inhabitants, as to induce them to worship him as their God,—what conclusion should we form of the integrity of this philosopher? Instead of conveying such fallacious sentiments, would it not rather be his bounden duty to inform and enlarge the minds of those amongst whom he had arrived,—to cultivate their understandings, as far as in him lay, until they should be able to apprehend the nature and uses of the ship, the situation of other countries, the improvements and civilization of their inhabitants, and the station that he himself occupied amongst them? If such would be the procedure of a mortal, when enlightening his fellow creatures, how much more correct, just, and precise, must the revelation of the Supreme Creator be, when enlightening his creatures in regard to himself? Would he disclose himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, if there were not the person, the Son, eternally subsisting in his nature? Would he have proclaimed that the Son of God is to be believed in, ho-

noured as the Father is worshipped,—unless this Son were eternal, and, as Son, possessor of all the attributes of Godhead? Would this Son have received, and commanded to be paid to himself, worship, which is only the due of an eternal Being, if the Son had not himself been eternal? These are difficulties, which, we apprehend, the opponents of our Lord's eternal Sonship cannot reconcile.

The Holy Spirit has used the terms Father and Son, as signs representing persons. These, we have shown, cannot mean titles of honour or office, conferred in acquiescence with the notions of mankind, but must, *de facto*, contain within them the related state in which these persons exist. These persons are subsisting in the Divine nature. The Divine nature is, without dispute, eternal and immutable. If the signs representing the persons described by the Holy Spirit be really true, and indicative of the meanings which they convey,—the persons within the Divine essence are eternal and immutable;—the Divine nature is simple, indivisible, and necessary;—what one person, in that nature, possesses, the other persons must also possess. Now, that nature which is indivi-

sible, must be wholly possessed by each of the persons inhering therein,—by the one termed Son, as well as by the one termed Father. If the one termed Son be possessor of the whole of the Divine nature, he must be possessor thereof necessarily, eternally, and immutably; otherwise the Divine nature is not necessary, eternal, and immutable. The necessity, eternity, and immutability, of the Son are, therefore, collateral with these perfections inhering in the Father. The very existence of the Father exhibits to us the necessity of an existence, which has a relation to him who is Father. There is a Divine person existing in the Divine nature, proclaimed by the Holy Spirit to be in the relation of Son to the Father. The undisputed state of eternity, in which we believe the Father and Spirit to exist, depends on the same evidence as the eternity of the Son.

CHAPTER XIV.



Opinions of some of the Fathers, Reformers of the Church, &c. respecting the Eternal Sonship of Christ.

WE do not adduce an epitome of the opinions of some of those eminent men who flourished in the primitive periods of the Church, as arguments to *prove* the Eternal Sonship of Christ;—we only annex these opinions, because they demonstrate the sentiments of many, whose opportunities of knowledge, from the earliest preachers of Christianity, were most extensive, and whose rank, piety, and research, are universally acknowledged by the Catholic church. The number of quotations might have been easily augmented; but as this Dissertation has already exceeded its intended limits, the author confines himself to the following selection.

HERMAS, who flourished about the year 70, writes thus: “The Son of God is more

ancient than any creature, (Col. i. 15.) inso-
much that he was in council with the Father,
upon the subject of creation.

“ The name of the Son of God is great,
and without bound ; and the whole world is
upheld by him.”*

ST. JUSTIN, who flourished from 133 to
167, writes—“ The Son proceeded from the
Father before all creatures, by his power and
will.”†

In regard to worship, he says, “ We wor-
ship and adore Him, and the Son, (who came
from him, and taught us these things,)—and
the Prophetic Spirit, honouring them with
reason and truth.”‡

That ST. JUSTIN understood The Word
to be eternally begotten by the Father is evi-
dent, when he says, “ The Word of Wisdom,
which word is itself God, being begotten by
the Father of all things, will bear me wit-
ness.”§

ATHENAGORAS, who wrote about the
year 177, says, “ By him and through him

* *Burgh's Inquiry into the opinions of Christians of the three
first Centuries*, p. 17.

† *Dial. cum Trypho* p. 227. B. C.

‡ *In Apol. ad Imp.* p. 56. C.—See also p. 60. C. &c.

§ *Dial. cum Trypho* p. 284. C. D. Colon. 1686.

were all things made, the Father and Son being one, the Son being in the Father, and the Father in the Son, in the unity and power of the Spirit.

“ We profess God, and the Son his Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are truly one, as concerning power.”*

ATHENAGORAS farther says, “ As we assert a God, and his Son, who is his Word, and the Holy Spirit, united in power, viz. the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: for the Son is the Mind, the Word, the Wisdom of the Father; and the Spirit is an efflux, as light from fire: so we believe also good and bad angels.”†

TERTULLIAN, A. D. 194—212, says, “ The names of the Father, God Almighty, the Most High, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Israel, He who is, as the Scriptures teach us: these, we say, belong to the Son likewise, and that the Son came in these, and *always acted* in them, and so manifested them in himself to men. ‘ All that the Father hath,’ saith he, ‘ is mine:’ why then not his names?”

* Burgh, p. 63, 66.

† Athenagoras in *Legatione pro Christianis*, p. 27. *A. Ed. Colon.* 1686.

Wherefore, when thou readest *Almighty God*, and the *Most High*, and the *Lord of Hosts*, and the *King of Israel*, and *He who is*, consider whether the Son be not demonstrated hereby; who is, *in his own right*, God Almighty, as he is the Word of the Almighty God."*

"Some think," says this author, "that Omnipotent is a title which does not agree to the Son: as if he, who is to come, were not Omnipotent. Whereas, the Son of the Almighty, is as well Almighty, as the Son of God is God."†

ST. CLEMENT, A. D. 200, says, "So that the God of all things is only one good and just Creator, the Son in the Father."‡

The SYNOD of ANTIOCH, in their letter to Paul of Samosata, about 270, say, "The *Messenger* of the Father is the Son, who himself is Lord and God."§

We are indebted to Hugh Stuart Boyd, Esq. well known as the author of *Translations from the Fathers*, &c. for the translation of several passages in the primitive Writers, respecting our Lord's Eternal Sonship. These

* *Tertullian con. Prax. C. 17.* † *Ibid.*

‡ *L. 1. Pædag. C. 8. p. 119. D. Paris, 1629.*

§ *Epist. Synod. Antioch. ad Paul. Samos.*

were made for the express purpose of illustrating the doctrine which it has been the object of this Dissertation to maintain, and appeared first in the Methodist Magazine for 1818. One translation is from the Homily of ST. BASIL "*On The Faith.*" ST. BASIL was one of the most illustrious ornaments of the Christian Church, and flourished about the end of the fourth Century. The following is an extract, as translated by Mr. Boyd—one of the most classically correct Greek scholars of the present day.

“ I purpose to inquire, not how great God is, but how far he may be apprehended.—What though our eyes be unable to pierce through the regions of unbounded space, shall we refuse to contemplate that portion of the universe which is accessible to our view? Let us, then, by the tribute of our words, discharge some portion of the debt of piety; let not the greatness and the magnificence of the argument confound us in eternal silence. Not even the tongues of angels, whatever they may be,—not even the lips of the archangels,—not all the united voices of all the supramundane powers, could worthily celebrate the smallest part, much less the whole, of this stupendous subject. If thou desirest to speak

of God, or to hear him spoken of, burst asunder the fetters of the body, and break from the thralldom of the senses; leave the earth behind thee, leave the ocean beneath thee, rise above this lowly atmosphere; escape the influence of the seasons; outstrip the march of time; regard not the beauteous fabric of the earth, but ascend above the firmament. Consider those resplendent orbs, those starry wonders, which blaze around thee, which astonish thee with their harmonious order, their stupendous bulk, the benefits they afford to man, their wondrous movements, their effulgence, their arrangement, their oppositions and conjunctions. Behold the milder lustre of the moon, and the more gorgeous glories of the sun. Having beheld them all, and having soared above them all, with thy pure unclouded intellect, contemplate the intellectual beauties, the celestial armies, the chorus, of the angels, the præfecture of the arch-angels, the glory of the potentates, the precedency of the thrones, the principalities, the powers, and the dominions. Having surveyed them all, having penetrated creation with a glance, upborne on the wings of intellect, continue thine aspiring flight, and contemplate the nature of Divinity. A nature, permanent,

unchangeable, undeviating, uncompounded, and indivisible. A Being who dwells in splendour unapproachable; a potentate ineffable; a greatness uncircumscribable; a glory all irradiating; a goodness all desirable; a beauty undefinable; a beauty which is apprehended by the ravished soul, but which bids defiance to the powers of expression!

“There, in unclouded majesty, are enthroned the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; an independent nature; a regal domination; an unoriginated excellence. Behold the Father, the cause of all things, the source of being to the things which be, the origin of existence. From him proceeded the fountain of life, the wisdom, the power, the unvarying image of God, who is invisible.—The Son, who was begotten by the Father, the living Word, he who is with God, and is God; essentially existing, not ascititious; subsisting before the ages, not afterwards engendered; the Son, and not the servant; the Maker, and not the work; the Creator, and not the creature; he is every thing which the Father is. You will observe that I say, “the Father and the Son.” Be careful to mark their peculiar distinctions. He, therefore, continuing to be the Son, is every thing which

the Father is ; according to that saying of our Lord, " Whatsoever the Father hath is mine ;" for surely those things which are inherent, in the prototype, must also belong unto the image.—We have beheld his glory, saith the Evangelist, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father ; that is, the glory, not of those wondrous powers, which were bestowed upon him by the munificence of God ; but the glory of the Son, who, from the sameness of his nature, possessed the dignity of the paternal Godhead. To receive is common to all created natures, but to have the natural right of possession is the property of him who is the begotten Son. Since, then, the Son, by natural right, possesses whatever belongs unto the Father ; and since the only begotten hath in himself the whole, not possessing any thing which is participated by another, we learn, from the very appellation of *the Son*, that he is participant of the Father's nature ; not having been made by a decree, but having beamed forth from the paternal essence, indivisibly and eternally conjoined unto the Father ; his equal in excellency, his equal in power, the participator of his glory. Tell me, what is the Son but a seal and an image, representing the entire Father ?

“When we descend from his Divinity to his humanity, when we discourse of his manifestation in the flesh, to effect the redemption of the world; when we describe him saying, that he was sent forth, that he was unable to do any thing of himself, and had received a mandate, let not these things incline thee to detract from the Divinity of the only begotten Son. Let not that condescension which was occasioned by thy necessity, be brought forward to lessen the dignity of the Omnipotent. Understand, that his nature was such as became a God, and when you meet with any thing that is lowly and ignoble, refer it to the economy of redemption.—The economy of redemption! Oh! if on this exhaustless subject we were now to attempt discoursing, we should be adding to our present argument an infinitude of ideas, and an infinity of words.”*

Mr. Boyd has also translated the sentiments of ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN, the co-temporary of BASIL, Archbishop of Constantinople, and one of the most illustrious fathers of the fourth Century. The following passage is taken from his oration “*On the Birth of Christ* :”—

* Benedictine Ed. vol. ii. & Paris Ed. 1618. vol. i.

“ Since these things need a greater remedy, they obtained a greater. This was He, the Word of God; He, the everlasting, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Incorporeal, the Light of Light, the beginning proceeding from the beginning, the fountain of life and immortality, the impression of the Archetype, the indelible character, the unvarying image, the Word of the Father, commensurate with his illimitable nature. He approaches unto his own image; to redeem our bodies he is invested with a body; and to redeem our souls he unites himself to a rational soul, that by human nature, human nature might be purified.—In every respect, save only in respect of sin, he becomes a man, and is born of a virgin. As God assumes this nature in the moment of its creation, and thereby prevents its individual subsistence; from two contrarious natures one Christ is formed; of these the one was stamped with dignity, and the other impressed that dignity upon it. O wondrous union! O ineffable conjunction! The Ever-living begins to be; the Uncreated is formed; the Infinite is circumscribed; he is circumscribed by a rational soul; the intermediate link which connects the incorporeal nature of God with the grosser nature of ma-

terial beings. He who possesses the riches of the universe is rendered poor, he is clothed with the garment of my poverty, that I might be enriched with the treasures of his Godhead. He who is full of blessedness is emptied; yea for a little season, he is emptied of his glory, that I may participate for ever in his fulness. O what an exuberance of the riches of his goodness! And what is this mystery by which I am affected? I partook of the celestial image, and I did not preserve it. He participates of my lowly flesh, that he may not only restore the image, but make this flesh immortal. He is associated with us in a second participation, which is more august and more astonishing than the first. For then he imparted that which was superior to our nature; now he partakes of that which is inferior to his dignity. This is more Godlike than the other. In the eyes of all who can understand, this will shine with a more transcending lustre."

In his oration "*On the decency to be observed in disputations;*" ST. GREGORY thus lays down the doctrine of the Church, with respect to the three persons in the Godhead: "It behoves us to acknowledge one God the Father, unoriginated and unbegotten; one

Son, begotten by the Father ; and one Spirit, deriving his subsistence from God ; conceding to the Father, the distinction of being the Unbegotten ; and to the Son, the distinction of being the Begotten : but in other respects he is their equal, the same in nature, exalted on one common throne, encircled with one common glory, and invested with one common dignity.”

In his oration “ *On the Constitution of Bishops*,” after explaining and enforcing the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, our saint answers an objection. “ I recommend his answer” says Mr. Boyd, “ to the notice of those who, at the present day, object to this sublime truth.” It is as follows :—

“ But if, because mortal bodies are generated, and born in time, you maintain that the Son also must have begun to exist in time, you are investing an incorporeal nature with a corporeal form. And if, because the sons begotten by men were at one time not in existence, but afterwards began to be, you maintain that the Son also was brought from non-existence into being, you are comparing things which are not analogous. You confound God and man, a corporeal substance and the incorporeal divinity.”

IN later times, when the Reformers were enabled to dissipate the cloud of error which had so long darkened the church, their sentiments on the Eternal Sonship were decisively perspicuous.

In the Creed of the Church of England, the opinions of the Reformers are thus expressed :

“ I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible :

“ And in one Lord Jesus Christ, The only begotten Son of God ; Begotten of his Father before all worlds ; God of God ; Light of Light ; Very God of very God ; Begotten, not made ; Being of one substance with the Father ; By whom all things were made : Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven ; And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary ; And was made man ; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, and was buried ; And the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures ; And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with

glory, to judge both the quick and the dead :
Whose kingdom shall have no end.”

The II. Article of the Church of England is as follows ;—

“ *Of the Word, or Son of GOD, which was made very man.*

“ The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance : so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man ; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.”

In the “ Confession of Faith” of the Divines assembled at Westminster, and adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1647,—it is said,

“ In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity ; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding ; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father ; the Holy

Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.”

“ It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

“ The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.”

“ In the Larger Catechism, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1648,—the opinions of the Reformers respecting the Sonship of our Lord are thus expressed :

Q. “ How many persons are there in the Godhead ?

A. “ There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory ; although distinguished by their personal properties.

Q. “ What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead ?

A. “ It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Q. “ How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father ?

A. “ The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

Q. “ Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace ?

A. "The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person for ever.

Q. "How did Christ being the Son of God, become man?"

A. "Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin."

The same doctrine is more briefly enforced in the Shorter Catechism adopted by the same Church.

Q. "Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?"

A. "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever."

The celebrated ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON thus expresses himself in his exposition of the Creed, commonly called the Apostle's Creed:

“ We have discoursed of the attributes of God elsewhere, as also of the Trinity which is here expressed in these words: *I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* That sublime mystery is to be cautiously treated of, and rather humbly to be admired, than curiously dived into. The day will come (truly *a day*, for here we are beset with the gloomy nightly shades of ignorance,) wherein we shall see him as he is. In the mean time, let us devoutly worship him as he has revealed himself to us; for this is the true way to that heavenly country, where we shall see him face to face. And it is our interest here to believe the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, and to trust in them as such, for this is the spring of all our hope, that the middle of the three became our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit our guide and teacher, and the Father reconciles us to himself by the Son, and renews us by the Spirit.

“ *Father.*] First the Father, of his only begotten Son Christ, and through him our Father, by the grace of adoption. And so Christ does clearly insinuate the order of our filiation—*I ascend to my Father and your Father; my God and your God.* He says, not to

our Father, but to my Father, and your Father; first mine, and then yours through me.”

“ *His only Son.*] Other sons he hath, angels and men by creation and adoption; but this his only begotten Son as God, by eternal and ineffable generation, and as man peculiarly the Son of God, both in regard of his singular unexampled conception by the Holy Ghost, and by that personal union with the Deity, which accompanied that conception, and by that fulness of all grace which flowed from that union. The unfolding of these would require a long time, and, after all, more would remain unsaid and unconceived by us; for *his generation who can declare?*”

“ Let us remember this, that our sonship is the product of his, *He is the only begotten Son of God*, and yet, *To as many as received him he gave this privilege, to be the sons of God.*”

“ The Son was fit to be incarnate for his work, the middle person in the Godhead to be man’s Mediator with God. That we had lost was the dignity of the sons of God, and therefore his *only Son*, *only* fit to restore us to it. The beauty defaced in us was the image of God; therefore the repairing and

re-imparting it, a fit work for his purest and most perfect image, his Son, the character of his person."

"*He*, the Lord Jesus, shall be judge in that great day, the Father, and Spirit, and his authority are all one, for they are all one God and one judge ; but it shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour God-man, *Jesus Christ*. That eternal *Word* by whom all things were made, by him all shall be judged, and so he shall be the *Word* in that last act of time, as in the first ; he shall judicially pronounce that great and final sentence, that shall stand unalterable in eternity : and not only as the eternal Son of God, but withal the Son of man, and so sit as king, and invested with all power in heaven and earth. *By that man whom he hath appointed to judge the quick and the dead. This same Jesus shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* The powers of the world and of hell are combined against his throne, therefore they shall be his footstool sitting on that throne ; and the crown which he hath purchased for believers, he shall set it on their heads with his own hand. This shall be exceeding joy and comfort to all that have believed on him, that their

Redeemer shall be their judge, he that was judged for them, shall judge them, and pass sentence, according to that covenant of grace that holds in him, pronouncing them free from the wrath which he himself endured for them, and heirs of that life that he bought with his dearest blood.”

“ *I believe in the Holy Ghost.*] God is both a Spirit and holy; but this name, personally taken, is peculiarly that of the third person, proceeding from the Father and the Son, by a way that can neither be expressed nor conceived; holy in himself, and the author and cause of all holiness in us.

“ It is neither useful nor safe for us to entangle our thoughts in disputes concerning this mystery, but it is necessary that we know, and acknowledge, and believe, in this *Holy Spirit*; it is he in whom and by whom we believe: we cannot know God, nor the things of God, but by the Spirit of God, nor say that Jesus is God, but by the same Spirit. We know that this Holy Trinity co-operates in the work of our salvation; the Father hath given us his Son, and the Son hath sent us his Spirit, and the Spirit gives us faith, which unites us to the Son, and through him to the Father: the Father ordained our

redemption, the Son wrought it, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it.”*

In a recent publication by the present Lord Bishop of St. David's, there are some excellent observations on the Sonship of Jesus Christ, particularly those of LORD MONBODDO. We, however, beg not to be understood as advocating LORD MONBODDO's *general sentiments*, which exhibit a strange compound of learning, penetration, and genius, with the most absurd whims and conceits. The following are his Lordship's opinions on the Eternal Sonship:

“ There is another mystery in the Christian Religion which is as incomprehensible, by those who are not philosophers, as the doctrine of the Trinity is. The mystery I mean is the eternal generation of the Son of God. The Son, or Second Person of the Trinity, is, according to the doctrine of the Christian Church, eternal as well as the Father, from whom he is produced: And this is what is meant by the eternal generation of the Son. Now to a man, who is not a philosopher, it must appear inconceivable that one being

* Jerment's Ed. of Archbishop Leighton's Works, 1806.

should be produced by another, and yet be co-existent with him from all eternity. It is not, therefore, I think, to be wondered that there should be such a heresy in the Church as Arianism, or that it should have been once so prevalent. Now the doctrine of Arius was, that, as the Son, or Second Person of the Trinity was produced, (or *begotten*, as it is expressed in Scripture,) by the Father, he must have been in existence posterior to him; and then he must have existed *in time*, and not from all eternity, as the Father existed; and, accordingly, Arius maintained that there was a time when he was not. His expression was, *ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν*. But ancient learning will explain this mystery, as well as the mystery of the Trinity, and show that one thing may proceed from another as its cause, and yet be coeval with it. This may be explained by an example which every man, who has learned the elements of geometry, will readily understand: It is this; that every corollary of a proposition is a truth eternal as well as the proposition itself; and yet it is derived from the proposition as its cause, and could not have existed if the proposition had not been an eternal truth.

“What has led Arius and his followers into the error of supposing that the Son, being produced by the Father, could not be co-eternal with him, but must have existed in time, is what we observe of the production of things on this earth, where the production is always posterior in its existence to the cause producing it. But this is only true of things material, which have no permanent existence, but are constantly changing, being never the same thing for two moments together; so that they cannot be said properly to exist, but are always in the state of becoming something different from what they are; *ουκ εστι αλλα γινεται*, as it is expressed in Greek: Whereas beings Divine have a real existence, and are the *τα οντως οντα*; and the same is true of all immaterial Beings.

“But setting aside things immaterial, there is one material thing which will illustrate this matter very much, and make it intelligible, even to those who are not philosophers. The thing I mean is the Sun, which produces rays that are coeval with the cause producing them: as we cannot suppose the Sun to exist without rays. And this example, with the other I have given from the theorems of science, proves this general pro-

position, that wherever any thing, by the necessity of its nature, produces another thing, both the thing produced and the cause, or that which produces it, must be co-existent: So that if the cause be eternal, the production also must be eternal. Now, this is the case of the generation of the Son of God; for as production is essential to the Supreme Being, and as the first production, according to the order of nature, must have been the principle of intelligence, or the Second Person of the Trinity, it was necessary that this production should be coeval with the First Person of the Trinity, from which it is derived, and consequently co-eternal with him. And in this way, I think, the eternal generation is clearly explained, as it is shown that the First Person of the Trinity could not exist without producing the Second. Whoever does not believe this, must believe as Arius did, that *the time* was when our Saviour did not exist; and that he was produced in the way of common generation here on earth. Now this is a heresy that strikes at the very foundation of the Christian religion, but which, as I have shown, was an error that men, who were not philosophers, would naturally fall into, and was therefore a more

general heresy, and more predominant than any other that ever was in the Christian Church.

“ And thus, I think, the two fundamental principles of the Christian religion, the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the eternal generation of the Son of God, are clearly explained. And as they are thus made comprehensible by us, they may be believed, and ought to be believed ; as I think I have shown that they are truths of philosophy as well as of religion. And for the same reason that the Second Person of the Trinity must have been begotten from all eternity of the First, so the Third must have proceeded from the Second.”*

The following observations are explanatory of the sentiments of the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A. M. the venerable founder of the Society of *Wesleyan Methodists*.

In his notes on the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, he says, “ Thou art my Son, God of God, Light of Light. This

* Tracts on the Doctrine of the Trinity, collected and edited by the Right Reverend Thomas Burgess, D. D. F. R. S. & F. A. S. Bishop of St. David's, 1814, p. 78, &c.

day have I begotten thee. I have begotten thee from eternity, which, by its unalterable permanency of duration, is one continued, unsuccessive day. I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. I will own myself to be his Father, and him to be my Son, by eminent tokens of my peculiar love.—The former clause relates to his natural Sonship, by an eternal inconceivable generation; the other to his Father's acknowledgment, and treatment of him, as his incarnate Son." Again, "*By whom also he made the worlds*; therefore the Son was before all worlds. His glory reaches from everlasting to everlasting, though God spake by Him to us only in these last days."

The subjoined popular illustration of Christ's Sonship first appeared in the *Biblical Magazine* for 1801, under the signature of GAIUS, and is unquestionably the production of the late Rev. ANDREW FULLER.

"The meaning of the terms *Son of God*, *only begotten Son of God*, is doubtless of importance, seeing the belief of the idea signified by them was made a leading article in the primitive professions of faith, John iii. 18. vi. 40. xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. 1 John iv. 15. Whatever disputes have risen of late among

Christians, there appears to have been none upon the subject in the times of the apostles. Both Jews and Christians appear to have agreed in this: the only question that divided them was, whether Christ was the Son of God or not? If there had been any ambiguity in the term, it would have been very unfit to express the first article of the Christian Faith.

“It is true that our Lord was miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that such a conception was peculiar to him; but on this account it does not follow that he became the *Son*, or *only begotten Son of God*. Whether this appellation be not expressive of his Divine personality, antecedent to all considerations of his being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, let the following things determine:—

“First. The glory of *the only begotten of the Father*, and the glory of the Word, are used as convertible terms, as being the same: but the latter is used to denote the Divine person of Christ, antecedent to his being made [flesh; the same, therefore, must be true of the former. ‘The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory,’ i. e. the glory of the Word, ‘The glory as of the only be-

gotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. It is true, it was by the Word being made flesh and dwelling among us, that his glory became *apparent*; but the glory itself was that of the Eternal Word, and this is the same as 'the glory of the only begotten of the Father.'

"Secondly. The Son of God 'dwelleth in the bosom of the Father,' is intimately acquainted with his character and designs, and therefore fit to be employed in making them known to men. 'The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' John i. 18. If this be applied to his Divine person, or that 'eternal life which was in the Father, and was manifested to us,' 1 John i. 2., it is natural and proper; it assigns his omniscience as qualifying him for making known the mind of God: but if he became the 'only begotten of the Father' by his miraculous conception, the beauty of the passage vanishes.

"Thirdly. God is frequently said to have 'sent his Son into the world,' John vii. 16. x. 36. 1 John iv. 9.; but this implies that he was his Son antecedent to his being sent. To suppose otherwise is no less absurd than supposing that when Christ sent forth his

twelve disciples, they were not disciples but in consequence of his sending them, or of some preparation pertaining to their mission.

“ Fourthly. Christ is called the Son of God antecedently to his miraculous conception, and consequently he did not become such by it. ‘ In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son,’ &c. Galatians iv. 4. The terms ‘ *made of a woman, made under the law,*’ are a parenthesis. The position affirmed is, that God sent forth his Son to redeem the transgressors of the law. This being ‘ *made of a woman, made under the law,*’ or covenant of works which man had broken, expresses the necessary means for the accomplishment of this great end, which means, though preceding our redemption, yet follow the Sonship of the Redeemer. There is equal proof that Christ was the *Son of God* before he was made of a woman, as that he was the *Word* before he was *made flesh*. If it be alleged that Christ is called the Son of God on account of his being made of a woman ; I answer, if so, it is also on account of his being ‘ *made under the law,*’ which is too absurd to admit of a question. ‘ God sent his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh,’ Romans viii. 3. This is equal

to saying, that the Son of God assumed human nature: he must, therefore, have been the Son of God antecedent to his assumption of it.

“Fifthly. Christ is called the Son of God antecedently to his being manifested to destroy the works of the devil, but he was manifested by taking upon him human nature, consequently he was the Son of God antecedently to the human nature being assumed. There is equal proof from the phraseology of 1 John iii. 8., that he was the Son of God antecedent to his being ‘manifested to destroy the works of the devil,’ as there is from that of 1 Tim. iii. 15. that he was God antecedent to his being ‘manifested in the flesh;’ or from 1 John i. 2. that ‘that Eternal Life which was with the Father,’ was such antecedent to his being manifested to us.

“Sixthly. The ordinance of baptism is commanded to be administered ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ Matth. xxviii. 19. The Father and the Holy Ghost will be allowed to be Divine persons; and what good reason can be given for another idea being affixed to the term *Son?*

“Seventhly. The proper Deity of Christ precedes his office of Mediator or High Priest of our profession, and renders it an exercise of *condescension*; but the same is true of his Sonship. ‘He maketh the Son a High Priest;’ ‘Though he was a Son, yet learned,’ &c. Heb. vii. 28. v. 8. His being the Son of God, therefore, amounts to the same thing as his being a Divine Person.

“Eighthly. It is the proper Deity of Christ which gives *dignity* to his office of Mediator; but this dignity is ascribed to his being the Son of God: ‘We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God,’ Heb. iv. 14. His being the Son of God, therefore, amounts to the same thing as his being a Divine Person.

“Lastly. It is the proper Deity of Christ which gives efficacy to his sufferings. ‘By himself he purges our sins,’ Heb. i. 3.; but this efficacy is ascribed to his being the Son of God. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,’ 1 John i. 7. His being the Son of God, therefore, amounts to the same thing as his being a Divine Person.

“Those who attribute Christ’s Sonship to his miraculous conception, are nevertheless constrained to allow that the term implies pro-

per divinity. Indeed this is evident from John v. 18. where his saying that God was his own Father, is supposed to be making himself equal with God. But if the miraculous conception be the proper foundation of the Sonship, why should it contain such an implication? A holy creature might be produced by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, which yet might be merely a creature, i. e. he might, on this hypothesis, profess to be the Son of God, and yet be so far from making himself equal with God, as to pretend to be nothing more than man.

“ It will be alleged that the Holy Spirit expressly attributes the Sonship of Christ to his miraculous conception, Luke i. 35. It has been thought that the Son of God in this passage is used in a peculiar sense; or that it respects the origin of Christ’s human nature, as not being by ordinary generation of man, but by the extraordinary influence of God, and that he is here called the Son of God in the same sense as Adam is so called, (Luke iii. 38.) If this be the meaning of the term in the passage in question, I should think it will be allowed to be peculiar, and that therefore no general conclusion can be drawn from it as to the meaning of the term in other passages. But

granting that the Sonship of Christ is to be here taken in the same sense as it is generally to be taken throughout the New Testament, still it does not follow that the miraculous conception is the origin of it.

“It may be a reason given why Christ is *called* the Son of God, but not why he *is* so. Christ is called the Son of God as raised from the dead, and as exalted at the right hand of God, Acts xiii. 33. Hebrews i. 4, 5. Did he then become the Son of God by these events? If it arose from his miraculous conception, it could not for that reason arise from his resurrection or exaltation. But if each be understood of his being hereby ‘proved, acknowledged,’ or, as the Scriptures express it, ‘*declared* to be the Son of God with power,’ all is easy and expressive.

“It is also alleged, that Christ, when called the Son of God, is commonly spoken of as engaged in the work of mediation, and not simply as a Divine Person antecedent to it. Answer: In a History of the Rebellion in 1745, the name of his Royal Highness, the Commander-in-Chief, would often be mentioned in connexion with his equipage and exploits, but none would infer from thence that he thereby became the King’s Son.

“ It is further objected, that Sonship implies *inferiority*, and therefore cannot be attributed to the Divine Person of Christ.—But whatever inferiority may be attached to the idea of Sonship, it is not an inferiority of *nature* which is the point in question. And if any regard be paid to the Scriptures, the very contrary is true. Christ’s claiming to be the Son of God was making himself not inferior to, but equal with God.

“ Once more. Sonship, it is said, implies *posteriority*, so that Christ, as a Son, could not have existed till after the Father, and therefore to attribute no other Divinity to him than what is attributed 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, that is, that 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, the sun must have existed

before it could shine ; but in the order of time the sun and its rays are coeval ; it never existed a single instant without them. 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 purpose ; for a God without thought or purpose, were no God ; and thus, though in the order of nature the Father must have existed before the Son, the Father and the Son are properly Eternal.”

CONCLUSION.

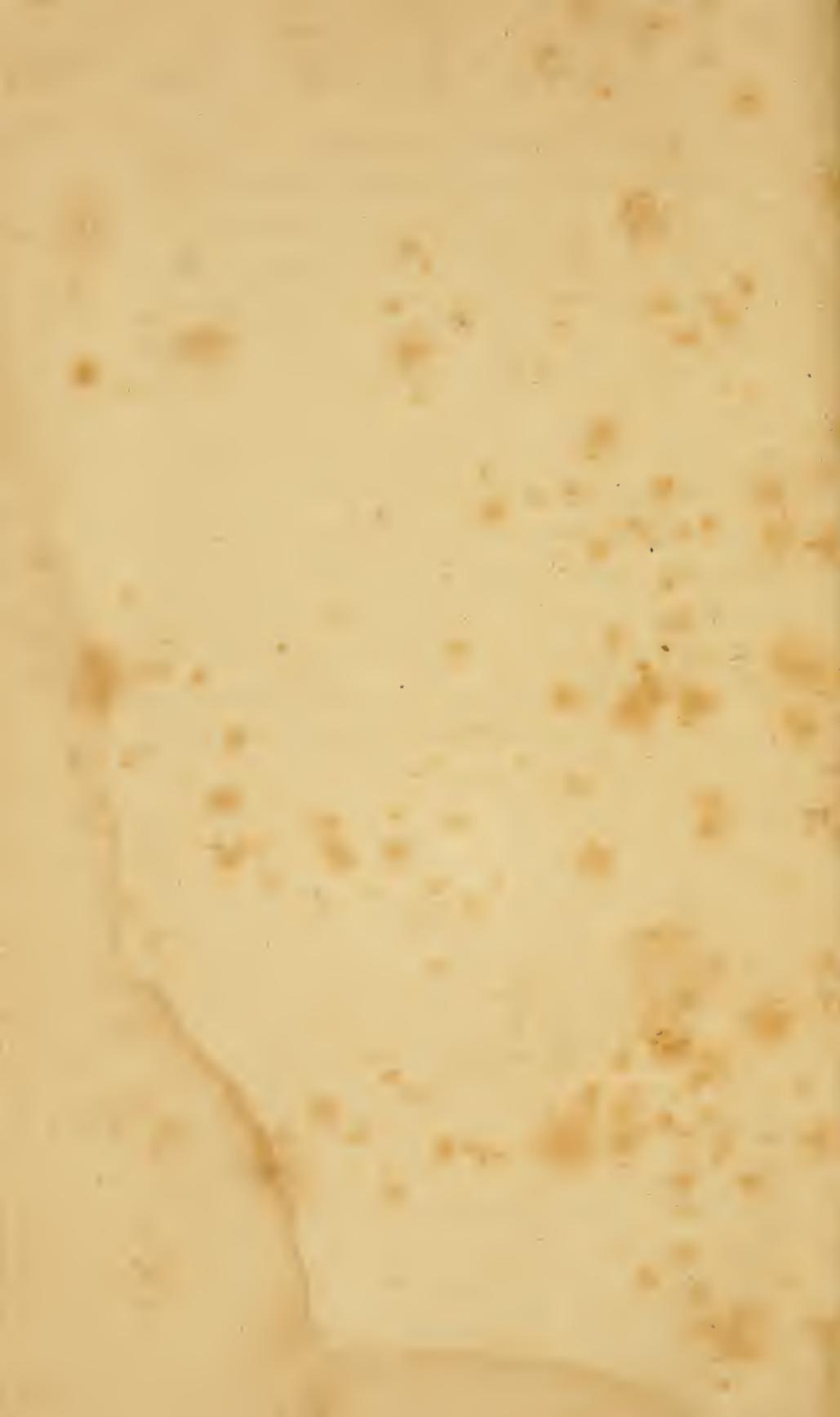


WE have now finished our examination of this important subject. The reader will determine with what force we have adduced the proofs from Scripture, either illustrative or confirmatory of the doctrine of our Lord's Eternal Sonship. This doctrine is not restricted to abstract speculation or ingenious discussion.—The Question is important to the Christian; because, by its issue, he receives or rejects tenets which contain the mode of existence of the Supreme Being, in a certain manner. It is important; because our apprehension of the state of the person who accomplished our salvation is involved in the result. It is important; because our knowledge of the three persons of the Godhead is thereby affected. The first principles of revelation, which unfold the being and character of God, are interested in the conclusion which is attained. The Christian Philosopher who endeavours to ascertain the consistency of the Scripture doctrines and practice, must be

desirous of obtaining the scriptural information which teaches not only that God exists, —but the mode in which he does exist. The humble and practical Christian must be solicitous to know the eternal state of that Lord and Redeemer who, “as the Son of Man, came to give his life a ransom for many.”

May the investigation of this subject increase our knowledge and love of him “who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”







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