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THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST

CONSIDERED, ILLUSTRATED, AND DEFENDED,

AND FULLY PROVED TO BE

A TRUTH REVEALED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES;

INCLUDING ALSO,

A RESPECTFUL ANSWER

TO ALL

THE OBJECTIONS AND ARGUMENTS

WHICH HAVE BEEN URGED BY THE REV. DR. ADAM CLARKE AGAINST
SUCH A FILIATION.

~~~~~  
BY ROBERT MARTIN.  
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“ We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the SON to be the
“ Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the
“ SON of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Who is he
“ that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the
“ SON of God.”—ST. JOHN.

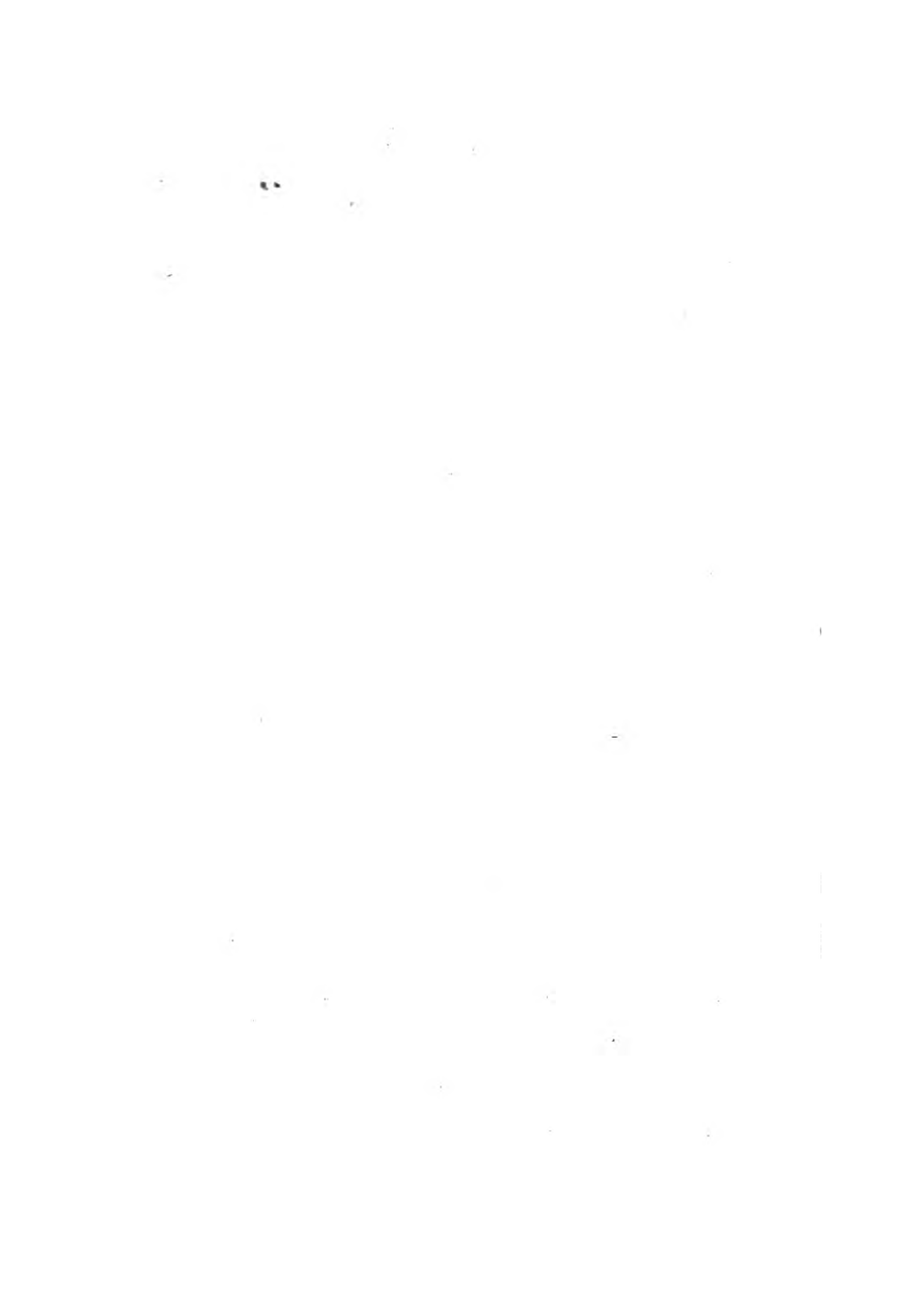
OXFORD:

PRINTED BY J. HAN, ST. ALDATE'S;

AND SOLD BY T. BLANSHARD, 14, CITY ROAD, AND 66, PATERNOSTER
ROW, LONDON.

1821.





PREFACE.



THIS treatise was not written by its author in a party spirit, or with any want of personal respect for the worthy individuals whose views of the Sonship of Christ he now wishes most *respectfully* to controvert ; one of whom, viz. the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, especially, he holds in the very highest esteem and veneration, because of his long standing in the Christian ministry, his deservedly high character for great piety, extensive learning, extraordinary labours, and usefulness ; and of him he can heartily say, “ Whose shoe’s latchet I am not,” in any of these respects, “ worthy to unloose.”

Indeed this distinguished minister and learned writer, with his characteristic candour and greatness of soul, gives his readers full liberty to examine and discuss, to receive or reject, any of the sentiments advanced by him ; by adopting the *four* articles which constitute the charge wherewith Dr. Taylor commences his theological lectures. I. “ I do *solemnly charge* you, in the name of the God of truth, and of our Lord

Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and before whose judgment-seat you must, in no long time, appear. II. That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle or sentiment by me taught or advanced, *but only so far as it shall appear to you to be justified by proper evidence from revelation*, or the reason of things. III. That if, at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be *dubious* or *false*, you either suspect, or totally reject such principle or sentiment. IV. That you keep your mind always *open to evidence*;—and that you *steadily assert for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience.* “Thus,” says the Rev. Dr. Clarke, “I have done with Dr. Taylor’s works, and thus I DESIRE every intelligent reader to do with my own^a.”

The writer of these pages holds the scriptural opinions of the ancient Fathers of the Christian church in very high estimation, as far as he knows them; as he does those also of the venerable founder of the societies to which he has

^a Rev. Dr. Clarke’s Remarks at the end of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians.

the honour and happiness to belong ; he most cordially believes *all* the doctrines peculiar to Methodism, because he is fully convinced that they are according to, and derived from, the Holy Scriptures. For his creed is not founded upon the opinions of any class of men, but on the infallible revelation of God.

In defending the eternal Sonship of Christ, he appeals not to the writings of any man, or number of men, either ancient or modern, as a decisive or infallible criterion ; but to that which is the *only* unerring and immutable standard, the word of God ; humbly hoping that he has fully proved this doctrine to be true, by arguments drawn from divine *revelation alone*.

While this work is written on the important doctrine which the title-page professes to treat of, it is hoped it will also prove the personal paternity of the Father, the divinity of Christ, and the personality and proper deity of the Holy Ghost, and consequently, the scriptural doctrine of a Trinity, mysteriously and ineffably united in one adorable and infinite Godhead.

Into this treatise I have taken the liberty of introducing several quotations from “ An

Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity," by the learned Professor Kidd, including his arguments deduced from part of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, which are acknowledged where they are inserted.

If by the present effort it be fully proved, that this confessedly mysterious Sonship is revealed in the Scriptures, so that the minds of those persons who may consult this work shall, with the divine blessing, be thereby enlightened, and preserved from error; the design of its author will be fully accomplished, and in time and eternity God shall have *all* the glory.

ROBERT MARTIN.

Bury, December 24, 1817.

P. S. This work was almost ready for the press when the preceding remarks were composed, as they were written last; and this manuscript has remained nearly in the state in which it now appears from that time to the present moment. I have read much of what has since been so ably written, by different authors, in defence of this doctrine, and perceiving that the ground which I had taken, is little more than touched upon by any of them, I still conceive it my duty to publish these arguments.

In the language of an able writer on this doctrine, I would observe *once* for all, "That I have not taken up the subject under the idea that the learned annotator does not most firmly believe in the essential divinity of Christ; of this doctrine, his notes afford ample proof, and contain masterly and irrefragable arguments; and I am further persuaded, that at the time he wrote those passages, in which he restricts the application of the term Son of God, as it occurs in the Old and New Testaments as an appellation of Christ, to his human nature, he conscientiously believed that he was removing an objection to the doctrine of our Lord's divinity.

"The enquiry is precisely this; are the appellations "SON," "SON OF GOD," and others of similar import, in the New Testament, to be considered, *in every instance*, designations of our Lord's human nature, and imposed with reference to his miraculous conception; or are they used also as appellations of his divine nature, with reference to his personal existence in the Trinity, and expressive of one of his peculiar and eternal relations, in that personality, to God the Father? This is the question; and if it can be proved, that the doctrines of the eternal filiation of Christ, and the essential personal paterernity of God the Father, are contained in Scripture, the matter, as to most readers, will, I hope, be considered sufficiently determined.

"These particulars being premised, I hope that it will appear to all my readers, that I enter upon the discussion with the respect for Dr. Clarke, which his learn-

ing and talents demand; and that it is quite consistent with this respect, to feel that we owe, more than to any man, a deference to truth—the one is feeling and propriety, the other is imperative duty^b.”

R. M.

Oxford, September 28, 1821.

^b Rev. R. Watson's "Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ."

THE
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ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST,
&c.

THOSE Scriptures which teach us the sublime and mysterious doctrine of a Trinity, do not present it to our view, as a subject which our Maker expects, or requires us fully to understand; but as a revealed truth which we ought cordially to believe. “Baptize all nations,” said our Lord, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Thus he declares the union of three adorable Persons in the Divine Essence; and on this authority he requires us to believe it; although we cannot understand in time or eternity *how* “these three are in nature one.” Neither can we ever comprehend, or be able fully to explain, the nature of that relation which subsists between the first and second persons of the Godhead, as Father and Son in the Divine Essence; but if such a relationship be revealed in Scripture, and if Christ be *there* called the Son of God, in such a way as *cannot* be applied to his person and character as the Son of Mary, and in reference to the formation of his manhood by the Holy Ghost; we

ought on such authority to believe in a divine eternal Sonship, although the precise nature of it may be far, yea, infinitely above our comprehension and reason; because if thus spoken of in Scripture, it is a revealed doctrine. For nothing can be said of the incomprehensibility of Christ's being the Son of God in his divine nature, that will not apply with an equal degree of force to the doctrine of a Trinity in unity; but that doctrine is revealed in the Scriptures, and orthodox Christians believe what God has so revealed, although they cannot comprehend *how* these three are in nature one: if therefore it be so revealed we ought to believe it, although we cannot fully understand the *nature* of the eternal Sonship of Christ.

The peculiar qualities of this relation may be among the "Many things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. Part of these God hath 'revealed to us by his Spirit:' *revealed*, unveiled, uncovered: that part he requires us to believe. Part of them he has not revealed; that part we need not, indeed cannot believe; it is far above ought of our sight. Now where is the wisdom of rejecting what is revealed, because we do not understand what is not revealed? Of denying the *fact*, which God has unveiled, because we cannot see the *manner*, which is veiled still."

The "Son of God" is a title which appears to be given in Scripture to Christ as God-man, for various and sufficient reasons. He seems to be so called, *in a certain sense*, because his human nature, which was

* Rev. Mr. Wesley's Sermon on the Trinity.

conceived by the Virgin Mary, was formed or created by the Holy Ghost. For "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 that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God^b." Christ was very God, and very man, having a real animal body, and a rational soul; and if we call the male offspring of a man his son, because as his sire, he derived existence from him, "therefore also that holy person which" was born of the Virgin may be properly called the Son of God, because his manhood was conceived by her, in consequence of the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and of the power of the Highest overshadowing her.

He seems to be called the Son of God also in the sacred writings, partly in allusion to the commission which, as God-man, he received from his Father; and to the offices which, as Mediator, he sustained and executed. For when the Jews were about to stone him, "Because," said they, "that thou being a man makest thyself God;" he reasoned with them thus, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; 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?" If prophets, judges, and the kings of Israel, were called by the honorary title of gods, merely on account of their offices, and because the word of God came to them, surely he whom the Father had sanctified, and sent into the world, did not blaspheme, when he said, "I am the Son of God^c."

^b Luke i. 35.

^c John x. 33—36.

This name to which, for the reasons stated already, he appears fully entitled, he has another strong claim to, partly in reference to his incarnation and manhood, and in immediate allusion to his resurrection from the dead. For St. Paul said to the Jews, "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^d." To the Romans this Apostle asserted, that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead^e." To the Colossians he said, "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^f."

He is also called the Son of God, partly because of, and in reference to, his mediatorial office. "Ask of me," said the Father to him, "and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession^g." St. Paul also said to the Ephesians, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, according to the working of his mighty power, 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^h." Thus it appears evident, from the united testimony of the Scriptures just quoted, that Christ, as God incarnate, has this fourfold right to be called the "SON OF GOD;" but certainly, not independent

^d Acts xiii. 33.

^e Rom. i. 4.

^f Col. i. 18. and Rev. i. 5.

^g Psalm ii. 8.

^h Eph. i. 17—21.

of, or unconnected with, or without allusion to, his divine nature.

For we hope to *prove* in these pages that our blessed Lord is called the Son of God in the Holy Scriptures, without any reference whatsoever to his incarnation, or conception by the Virgin Mary, or to his formation as man, by the Holy Ghost; but that in his divine nature he is, and in reference to it he is called the Son of God. Although the nature of this Sonship may not be fully understood, or perhaps cannot be exactly explained, either by angels or men, because it appears to be ineffable. For "It is one of the loudest dictates of REASON, that, as we cannot grasp the universe with our hands, so we cannot comprehend the Maker of the universe with our thoughtsⁱ."

But against the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ our Lord, the following objections are raised; viz. "If Christ be the Son of God as to his *divine nature*, then he cannot be eternal: for *Son* implies a *Father*, and *Father* implies, in reference to *Son*, *precedency in time*, if not in *nature* too. *Father* and *Son* imply the idea of *generation*, and *generation* implies a *time* in which it was effected, and *time* also antecedent to such *generation*^k." This objection is raised and entirely rests upon the supposition, that, "If our Lord be the Son of God, as to his divine nature," there must be an exact analogy between that sonship and the generation, paternity, and filiation of mankind, in all those particulars which the argument under consideration points out; and that without such an analogy between the two filiations, a divine Sonship

ⁱ Fletcher.

^k Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary on Luke i. 35.

cannot possibly exist. From the same premises it is also argued, that if such a relationship do really subsist, it must completely destroy the eternity of our blessed Lord, and rob him at once of all claim to Godhead. For "Son implies a Father, and Father implies, in reference to Son, precedency in time, if not in nature too." Therefore because in human nature, and among animal beings, Father and Son imply the idea of carnal generation, which implies the complete production of a son of man, consisting of a body and a soul, and because this procreation implies a time in which it was effected, and also time antecedent to such generation; and therefore, because a finite animal parent must be in existence before the generation and birth of his son procreated by him, which implies also the division of the parents' animal nature and substance, and the increase of his species; it is on this ground argued, that the terms begotten, Father, and Son, must imply the very same things when applied even to the spiritual, divine, and infinite nature of Christ, and to a spiritual paternity and filiation existing between the first and second persons of the Godhead in the Divine Essence. But that Essence is immaterial, spiritual, indivisible, and infinite; and consequently it is incapable of either multiplication or division; therefore whatever else these terms may mean, when they are applied in Scripture to the first and second persons of the Godhead, and to their Divine Essence, they cannot include the same things, nor can these relations in that Essence either imply or possess the same qualities, as begetting, and the relations of Father, and Son, do in carnal and finite generation, paternity, and filiation.

But because the perfect analogy in all respects which

this objection supposes between a spiritual, divine, and infinite Father and Son, and carnal generation and sonship, cannot exist, without "destroying the eternity of our blessed Lord, and robbing him at once of his Godhead;" this learned and pious author gives up the divine, eternal Sonship of Christ, as "dangerous, absurd, and self-contradictory!" But who does not at once perceive, that if human nature and the Divine Essence; human beings and the Divine subsistents, were in nature, essence, and in all other respects perfectly similar; then indeed generation, paternity, and filiation, when applied to the first and second subsistents of the Godhead, and to the Divine nature, would perfectly analogize with human nature in all these circumstances, qualities, and relations; which would for ever destroy the eternity of our blessed Lord, and rob him of his Godhead.

But between the properties, qualities, and relations of the Divine Essence, and those of human nature, in all stages of their existence, and between the Divine and the human being, in all their operations, there is and must be an immense, immutable, and infinite disparity; which must always subsist between the infinite Creator, and his finite creatures. Therefore an attempt to illustrate and explain the nature and manner in which human generation is effected, by a reference to the way in which plants vegetate, by the formation of fossils, and the generation of fish, fowl, reptiles, and insects, would be made with infinitely more propriety, than any attempt to elucidate, much less to overturn, the paternity of the first, and the filiation of the second subsistent of the Godhead, by the begetting, the generation, paternity, and sonship of mankind. Because, between the pro-

creation of man, and the production of plants, and the generation of any or all of the inferior animals, there is not an infinite disparity; but between human paternity, generation, and filiation, and the relations of Father and Son in the Divine Essence, there is and must ever be. To the reader, we presume, it must be obvious, that there is no generation, and that there are no relations known, in heaven or upon earth, analogous to the divine Sonship of Christ, or to which it can or ought to be compared; any such comparison is altogether unsuitable, unnatural, unauthorised, and in the highest degree improper. "To whom then will ye liken ME, or shall I be equal, saith the holy One." Therefore as no such analogy exists, all the objections which have been raised upon it, against the divine eternal Sonship of our Lord, must fall completely to the ground, as a splendid castle in the air, without any foundation whatsoever to stand upon.

But, "generation," it is said, "implies *a time* in which it was effected, and time also *antecedent* to such generation¹." The expression "*time*," upon which the whole strength and force of this objection is founded, and upon which it rests, is in its general acceptation very properly applied to that portion of duration which has been divided, and contradistinguished from a past eternity, since the creation of the universe, by the revolutions and motions of the heavenly bodies. *They* were designed by the Creator of worlds, "To divide the day from the night; and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:" and by their motions and revolutions dura-

¹ Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary on Luke i. 35.

tion has been measured and calculated on our globe, since the worlds were made ; by seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, centuries, and thousands of years ; and the ages which have elapsed since the creation of the universe, and those also which shall pass away to the end of *this* world, we call *time*. Which expression cannot be applied to the existence of God, or to the mode of calculating duration, either in heaven or hell ; for it is applicable only to the manner in which it has been, is now, and shall be reckoned and calculated on earth, or in the visible universe, from the creation to the end of this world : all duration antecedent to the creation of worlds was one vast and unmeasured eternity.

The proper eternity of God is described in Scripture as existence *before* the creation of the present system of worlds. “ Or ever the hills were made, or the mountains were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” Now as it is said in the Scriptures that the worlds were created by the SON OF GOD, it therefore follows, as a necessary consequence, that when they were so created he was in his divine nature the Son of God ; for the Son conceived by, and born of, the Virgin Mary, and formed by the Holy Ghost, had no being or existence till *four* thousand years after the creation of worlds ; therefore that “ SON, *by* whom he made” them, *four* thousand years before the Son of Mary was born, must be in his divine nature the Son, and consequently the eternal Son of God. For it is clear and evident that “ his Son, by whom God made the worlds ;” by whom “ the hills were made,” and “ the mountains were brought forth ;” by whom *all* the springs of the universe, and all

the wheels of time were first put in motion, must be the eternal Son of God. Therefore this SON was not “begotten in *time* ;” for in consequence of his creating work, “the evening and the morning were the first day” of TIME. “And now, O Father,” said he, “glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee BEFORE the world was.” “The life was manifested,” said the apostle John, “and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Here, “the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us, even his Son Jesus Christ ;”—are spoken of as the very same person, and as standing in an eternal relation to the Father, who is the first person of the Godhead. For “we know,” says the same apostle, “that the SON OF GOD IS COME, and has given us an understanding, that we might know him that is true, even his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life^m.”

It is also said, “That if this *divine nature were begotten of the Father*, then it must be in time ; i. e. there must be a period *when it did not exist*, and a period when it *began* to exist. This destroys the eternity of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godheadⁿ.” The eternal Sonship of Christ does not imply that his “DIVINE NATURE WAS,” in this sense of the word, “BEGOTTEN,” i. e. “ORIGINATED, PROCREATED, OR PRO-

^m John xvii. 5. 1 John i. 2, 3. v. 20.
Commentary on Luke i. 35.

ⁿ Rev. Dr. A. Clarke’s

DUCE^d BY THE FATHER.” For, *all orthodox* Christians believe, and the doctrine of eternal Sonship teaches us, that although the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are as persons perfectly distinct, and in respect to their personality and operations, distinguishable from each other; yet that they possess ONE infinite nature and essence, which is in each, and in all the three subsistents of the Godhead the very same: the only difference or distinction between them being, “the distinct personality of each subsistent.” For “the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the GODHEAD of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, IS ALL ONE: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal”.

Therefore the doctrine of eternal Sonship does not teach us that the “divine nature of the Son” was “begotten,” i. e. originated, produced, or procreated by the Father. But this argument against an eternal filiation proves too much, and therefore it goes for nothing, and destroys itself completely; for if the Father and Son are ONE IN NATURE, as we are taught by the doctrine of a divine Sonship: to say that the divine nature of the Son was begotten by the Father, in the sense above stated, is not only absurd, and what the doctrine of such a sonship does not teach; but represents the Father as begetting his own nature, and consequently as acting before he existed; and on the same ground there must also be a period

° Athanasian Creed.

when even "the divine nature of the Father did not exist, and a period when it began to exist;" this would destroy the eternity even of the Father himself, and rob him at once of all claim to Godhead. But the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, as has been already intimated, and as we shall presently see more clearly, does neither teach, or render such a production of the divine nature of the Son at all, or in any wise necessary, "But the GODHEAD OF THE FATHER, OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, IS ALL ONE;" therefore if the divine nature of the Father be eternal, the divine nature of the Son is also eternal, because they are "ALL ONE" IN NATURE. Consequently there never was "a period when the divine nature of the Son *did not exist* ; nor a period when it began to exist;" so that the eternal Sonship of Christ does not destroy "the eternity of our blessed Lord," or "rob him" at ALL "of his Godhead."

Concerning "the Divine Nature," Professor Kidd thus argues; "In speaking of the Divine Being, we always keep in view the Divine Essence, the divine perfections, and the divine modes of subsistence, or the divine persons respectively.—We consider the Divine Being as necessarily self-existent, necessarily possessing life, spirituality, intelligence, moral excellence, and efficiency; and we consider these as perfections which are inseparable: and though we may contemplate them distinctly, yet we must ever suppose them inseparable from the Divine Essence, and from one another, and necessarily possessing underived activity, energy, and operation. In speaking of the modes of distinct subsistence, after shewing that the Divine Essence and perfections must

subsist distinctly in three, and can subsist in neither more nor less than three; when we fix our thoughts upon the mode, we must attend to order; and contemplating the first mode as naturally and necessarily constituted by the economy of the Divine Essence and perfections, and having the whole of the Divine Nature in itself:—now, contemplating this, and knowing that the Divine Essence necessarily possesses life, spirituality, intelligence, moral excellence, and efficiency, and therefore must naturally be active, energetic, operative, and influential;—in order that we may account for the full and perfect exercise of the whole of these, to the very uttermost of their own nature, we say,—the first mode, according to all the qualities and attributes of its own nature, communicates the whole of the Divine Essence and perfections, necessarily, eternally, immensely, and immutably, that they may subsist in a mode distinct, not separate, from what they do in itself; and as this communication, which is a full and perfect manifestation or display of the divine efficiency, according to its own nature, and, together with it, the whole of the Divine Essence, and other perfections, which we have already proved to be inseparable; and as this communication is entirely founded upon the activity, energy, and operative influence of the Divine Essence and perfections, as already proved; and as the Divine Nature is thus necessarily and essentially active, energetic, operative, and influential, so is the divine efficiency or power. For the divine power is derived from the Divine Nature; and as the divine efficiency is active, energetic, operative, and influential, so is the divine will: for the divine will is

derived from the divine power or efficiency. And thus we see, it is the very nature of the Divine Being, as subsisting in the first mode, to communicate, according to the economy of its own nature, by the divine efficiency, the whole of the Divine Essence and perfections eternally, immensely, and immutably, that they may subsist in another distinct mode; and nothing less than this can be a full and perfect exertion or manifestation of the divine efficiency, to the very uttermost: and this communication of the Divine Essence and perfections, together with this distinct mode, necessarily and essentially constitute personality. Thus, we discover, by demonstration, that there must necessarily be, by the law of the activity, energy, operation, and influence of the Divine Essence and perfections, two distinct, not separate, modes of subsistence in the Divine Essence. And as the Divine Essence is the same in each, and in both these distinct modes of subsistence, it must necessarily partake of each and of both; and as this distinction is in personality, the Essence must necessarily partake of personality from each and from both, and from each and from both alike; for the distinction is in nothing else but personality.

“ From the very nature of the life, intelligence, moral excellence, and efficiency, and these being eternal, immense, and immutable, it is absolutely impossible that this communication can be temporary, or have either beginning or ending. The very nature of the activity, energy, operation, and influence of the Divine Essence, precludes such a notion. This communication, therefore, according to the law of the spontaneous activity of the Divine

Essence and perfections, must be necessary and essential to the very nature, perfection, and happiness of the Divine Being^p.”

Our Lord himself appears to state the nature of his divine Sonship, in these words; “As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ^q.” “Now it may be necessary, first of all, to ascertain how, or in what manner, the Father hath life in himself. And it is plain he must have it naturally, necessarily, independently, and underrived, entirely in himself; and in the very same manner that he hath life in himself, our Lord declares, and teaches us to believe, that he hath given to the Son to have life in himself. The two Greek particles, Ὡσπερ and οὕτως, in the opposite clauses of the verse, are corresponding the one to the other, and express SIMILARITY IN ALL RESPECTS.—How, then, hath the Father given to the Son to have life in himself? The answer is,—By the natural economy of the Divine Essence and perfections, in the communication of the whole to subsist in a mode distinct from what they do in the Father; and thereby the personality of the Son is constituted, naturally, necessarily, eternally, immensely, and immutably.—The Son, therefore, has natural, necessary, independent, and underrived life in himself, by having the whole of the Divine Essence and perfections, in personality, distinctly in himself, as well as the Father. If any language can express the equality of the Father and the Son, the language of this verse must. And thus the Father and

^p Kidd's Essay on the Trinity, p. 61—68.

^q John v. 26.

the Son are in every respect equal in essence, existence, or life, and all perfections natural and moral^r.”

To Jesus Christ being called, as to his Divine Nature, the Son of God, the same author objects, by also remarking; “ I have not been able to find any *express* declaration in the Scriptures concerning it^s.” But it may be said, that there is an “ *express declaration*” of a doctrine in Scripture, when it is found in the *literal* sense of any passage or passages in the Bible; and when no other parts of revelation oblige us to depart from that meaning; and especially when the sense of other passages confine us to such an acceptation; so that no consistent interpretation can be made out, without admitting this doctrine: in this sort of “ declarations” in favour of eternal Sonship, the Scriptures abound. The words of David quoted by St. Paul, by which we have proved that our Lord is called the Son of God, PARTLY in allusion to his manhood, because of his resurrection from the dead, prove much more; for the apostle speaks of his resurrection as an undeniable proof of his divine Sonship; by saying, he is “ declared to be the Son of God with power; according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:” which did not alone constitute, but prove, and “ declare” him “ to be the Son of God^t.” But the eternal counsels of God on this subject, are more fully declared by the Son of God himself, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the second Psalm; “ I will declare the decree, the LORD hath said to me; Thou art my Son, THIS DAY have I begotten thee.

^r Kidd's Essay.

^s Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary on Luke i. 3.

^t Rom. i. 4.

Ask of me, and I will 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." These words which are applied to the Son by St. Paul, the Father appears to have addressed to his Son, when he "possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old;" when "he was by him as one brought up with him: and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." "THE LORD," i. e. God my Father, "hath said to me, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE." "THIS DAY;" A DAY OF EQUAL DATE WITH THE ETERNAL DECREE; a day without beginning or end, the day of proper eternity. For THIS DAY appears to be a term used by the most High, to describe that which is properly eternal. This appears plain from the expressions used, "THE LORD HATH SAID TO ME;" therefore it had been said to him, *before* he declared it, for he stated it in the *past tense*. "THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE;" this could not be on the day of his conception, for he was not then, as the offspring of Mary, capable of hearing, nor of stating it; beside, the Son of the Virgin was formed not by the first person of the Godhead, but by "the Holy Ghost:" nor was it said to him on the day of his resurrection from the dead; for centuries before these words were recorded by David, as declared to him by the second person of the Godhead, as having been said by the Father to the Son, in the *past tense*. Therefore "this day" must be the day of proper eternity; for in the invisible world, and as applied to the existence of God, there is no revolution of days, or nights, of months, or years; but as it respects himself,

a past and future eternity is with him "THIS DAY," OR NOW. Therefore the Sonship of Christ thus stated must be an *eternal* Sonship.

For if he were not the Son of God, till as man he was formed by the Holy Ghost, and born of Mary, the command given in the last verse of the same Psalm would be very limited in its application. "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." These words, "Kiss the Son," cannot be understood *literally*; therefore, to "Kiss the Son," must be to believe and trust in, to admire, esteem, and exalt him very highly in our hearts; and to love, delight in, worship, and adore him. But if he were not the Son of God before as man he was born of Mary, this command could not be binding upon the people of God till that time; consequently none of the Old Testament saints could obey that command, or enjoy that privilege. But *under*, and to the people of the Mosaic dispensation; to David, and all his contemporaries of the favoured Israelitish tribes, this command was given, and also to all their successors under that dispensation; and upon them it was *then* binding; consequently there must have been, even in the days of the Psalmist, a "Son to kiss." Jesus was not then born, he had not then clothed himself with with *our* nature; he was not then the Son of Mary; therefore he was not the Son *they* were at that time commanded to "kiss," but the divine eternal Son of God was that Son, who "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The ancients understood, even under the Old Testament dispensation, that God had a proper Son; for Agur said, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists?"

who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Nebuchadnezzar said, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire,—and the form of the fourth is like the SON OF GOD." All the Old Testament saints from Adam to old Simeon, looked to this Son, as the object of their faith, love, worship, and adoration. *All* the faithful Israelites "drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them" through the wilderness, "and that Rock was Christ." "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," "The elders, by faith in him, obtained a good report." On kissing the Son, the late pious and venerable Mr. Fletcher writes thus; "David, speaking of the Son manifested in the flesh, introduces Jehovah as saying to the Messiah, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Struck with the awfulness of this divine declaration, the Psalmist cries out, "Serve Jehovah with fear, kiss the Son;" give him the kiss of adoration, by trusting in him as Jehovah the Saviour; "kiss him, lest ye perish out of the way of saving faith;" if "his wrath," the terrible wrath of the Lamb described, Rev. vi. 13. "be kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him." And to prove that this Son of Jehovah whom we are to *trust in*, under pain of destruction, is not a *mere* man, but the PROPER SON OF GOD, we need only compare with the above these two Scriptures: "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is everlasting strength." And

^a Prov. xxx. 4.

“Cursed is the man that trusteth in MAN, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah^x.”

The following passage furnishes an ample “declaration” of the eternal Sonship of our Lord. “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH.—BEFORE THE MOUNTAINS WERE SETTLED, BEFORE THE HILLS WAS I BROUGHT FORTH:—then was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men^y.” What is said of Wisdom in these verses can be ascribed *only* to the second person of the Godhead; for he distinguishes himself from the first subsistent of the Divine Essence, by saying, “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of HIS way, before HIS works of old. Then was I by HIM—brought up with HIM—HIS delight—always before HIM.” That this is not said of the THIRD person of the Godhead is evident, because the speaker says, “Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you^z.” If he were the Holy Ghost, the Spirit would be pouring out the Spirit, which is absurd. Therefore the person speaking in these verses is the second subsistent of the Divine Essence, whom St. Paul calls, twice in one chapter, by this appellation; “Christ, the power of God, and the WISDOM OF GOD.—But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us WISDOM^a.” Many things

^x Isa. xxvi. 4. Jer. xvii. 5. ^y Prov. viii. 22—31. ^z Prov. i. 23.

^a 1 Cor. i. 24, 30.

are said of WISDOM in these verses which are applicable only to Christ. For he who speaks is a proper person; "The Lord possessed me;—I was set up from everlasting." Could these words be spoken, with propriety, of Wisdom, as a moral quality? Could such a quality be said to rejoice in the habitable part of his earth? Could it say, "My delights were with the sons of men?" For a virtue, or moral quality, cannot be any where, but in the mind of the person possessed of it. "Wisdom" is said "to cry" in the chief places of concourse; whose words are, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you^b." It is therefore evident that the speaker is a divine person; for he says, "I am understanding." Angels and men may be said to *have* understanding, but no man or angel could or dare say, "I am understanding."

Nor is it an objection of any weight against the application of these verses to the eternal generation and Sonship of our Lord, that he is of the masculine; but Wisdom is represented in this passage as of the *feminine gender*; but let it be remembered, that all the three genders are applied in Scripture to our blessed Lord. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise HIS heel." "In that day," says Isaiah, "there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to IT shall the Gentiles seek, and HIS rest shall be glorious." Here Christ is spoken of both in the *masculine* and *neuter genders*; and God is represented as of

^b Prov. i. 20—23. viii. 14.

a gender, which, if it be not *feminine*, certainly is not *masculine*; "God is light." This objection then to the application of these words to the Son of God has no weight whatsoever. That the eternal generation and Sonship of Christ are taught in these verses, we learn from other portions of Scripture. "The Lord possessed me;" i. e. as his eternal Wisdom, Word, and Son;—for "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He "was made flesh, and dwelt among" men, as "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "Before his works of old," St. Paul says, "this dear Son—is before all things, and by him all things consist." I had "glory with the Father," said this eternal Son, "before the world was." "I was set up from everlasting;" i. e. to create, uphold, and govern the worlds; to redeem and judge mankind.

This eternal generation and Sonship appears also to be "*declared*" by the prophet Micah, in these memorable words: "But thou Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting^c." Here the prophet speaks of A TWO-FOLD GOING FORTH; "he shall COME FORTH unto me;" i. e. from the city of Beth-lehem, which was a going FORTH IN TIME; but his "GOINGS FORTH have been from of old," EVEN "FROM EVERLASTING." By Solomon he is spoken of as "BROUGHT FORTH;" by Micah as "GOING FORTH;" by the former this is said to be "before the mountains

^c Micah v. 2.

were settled;" by the latter "from everlasting:" according to the testimony of both, his relation to the Father is eternal; and the one is a confirmation of the other. Our Lord himself, speaking of his divine eternal Sonship, uses nearly the same terms as Solomon and Micah. "I proceeded forth, and came from God.—I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father^d." Therefore it is evident, that in the same character and relation in which he went to the Father, he previously came forth from him; for if he were not the SON OF GOD, till "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among" men, there could be no Father till the same time; and on this ground he could have had no Father to proceed from. But as the Son of God, he is represented as equal to, and *one* with, his eternal Father. "Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.—He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.—Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me^e." It is impossible for language to be plainer, or more decisively declarative of the existence of a divine relationship between the first and second persons of the Godhead, than that of these verses, when fairly followed out. "If these words contain any meaning at all, they must signify two divine persons, as Father and Son, distinct, but not separate. The mutual in-being of the one in the other, expressed in these verses, clearly proves the essence and perfections to be the same in each, that is, that they are consubstantial; and the names or terms, Father and Son, as clearly prove

^d John viii. 42. xvi. 28.

^e John x. 30. xii. 44. xiv. 9—11.

distinction of the persons. Such is the plain, evident, and decisive declaration, which the second person of the Divine Essence, after having assumed our nature, makes concerning himself, and also concerning the first person of the Godhead^c.”

The eternal Sonship of Christ can, we conceive, be proved, and is “*declared*,” by his various appearances, under former dispensations, to patriarchs and prophets, as that “Son who was in the bosom of the Father,” and who “hath declared him.” No sooner had man broken the divine law, than he appeared as the glorious Mediator, saying, “Adam, where art thou?” The same person appeared to Hagar by the fountain of water in the wilderness, and said to her, “I will multiply thy seed exceedingly—and she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me^f.” “The Lord appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre—the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do^g?” “The Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father^h.” He appeared also to Jacob above the mysterious ladder at Beth-el; “The Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and of Isaac.” He appeared again to Jacob, when he “called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to faceⁱ.” He appeared also to Moses and Aaron, “They saw the God of Israel: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” Moses saw him in the burning bush, and when he “passed before him, proclaiming his name^k.” Isaiah says, “I saw also the

^c Kidd’s Essay.

^f Gen. xvi. 7, 10, 13.

^g Gen. xviii. 1, 17.

^h Gen. xxvi. 24.

ⁱ Gen. xxviii. 13. xxxii. 30.

^k Exod. xxxiv.

5, 6.

Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple¹." But were we to cite *all* the appearances of God to the Old Testament saints, it would be necessary to quote much of the Bible. The Scriptures assure us that it was Christ who accompanied the Israelites in all their journeys from Egypt to Canaan. For "they all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." They tempted Christ, and were destroyed of serpents^m. We are also assured most expressly in the word of God, that it was not the Father, in his own proper person, who on these occasions appeared to the ancient people of God; but that Son who was "in the bosom of the Father." For "No man," says St. John, "hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"; i. e. "the Father." If God were seen by Adam and Eve after their fall in paradise; by Noah, Abraham, Hagar, Isaac, and Jacob; by Moses, Aaron, and Isaiah; and if "no man hath seen God the Father at any time," surely that "only begotten Son," who appeared to these persons, and "declared him" to the Old Testament saints, could not *then* be the Son of Mary: because he was seen by Adam and Eve near four thousand years before her Son was born; and many of these appearances were made, and revelations given, centuries, yea thousands of years before his manhood was formed by the Holy Ghost, conceived, or born of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, the Son who declared the Father to the Old Testament saints, and who was seen by them, must have been that "only

¹ Isa. vi. 1.

^m 1 Cor. x. 4, 9.

ⁿ John i. 18.

begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father—or ever the hills were made, or the mountains were brought forth;” who is “from everlasting to everlasting, the only begotten Son of God.”

We have another strong “*declaration*” of the eternal Sonship of Christ, in these words; “The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.” After what order Melchisedec was a priest, the apostle explains at large. “Being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also, king of Salem, which is king of peace: without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, he abideth a priest continually.” Who Melchisedec was, has nothing to do with this argument; whether he were the Son of God, who appeared to Abraham, as he did afterwards to Joshua, “as captain of the hosts of the Lord;” or whether he were a person whose appearance in outward circumstances bore some analogy to the Son of God. But the apostle asserts his similarity to that Son, in this particular, that he had no “beginning of days.” But the Son of God, who was of the Virgin, had the Holy Spirit for his Father, Mary for his mother; her son had “beginning of days,” for his existence as man had a commencement; and in “the fulness of time” he was born of her. Melchisedec therefore could not be “like unto the Son of God,” unless that Son was without “beginning of days.” In these words the apostle then directly asserts, that the Son of God had “NO BEGINNING

• Heb. vii. 21.

‡ Heb. vii. 2, 3.

OF DAYS." Which is the same as if he had declared, that he was the Son of God from eternity; for he testifies, that he had "neither beginning of days, nor end of life."

These titles, the Word, or *Λόγος*, *Logos*, and the Son of God, are both in Scripture applied to the *divine nature* of our Lord. "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." It is evident that the terms Word and "only begotten" here used, are both applied to the divine nature and person of Christ. For what glory did his contemporaries behold, but "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?" as if the evangelist had said, "We beheld the glory of the divine Word, or Son, manifested through the flesh, or manhood, while he dwelt amongst us." That the Word and Son is one and the self-same person, called by these two names, is plain, from the same works which are ascribed to the Word being ascribed also to the Son of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made¹." The very same things are said to have been made by the Son of God. For God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son—by whom also he made the worlds." The creation of worlds never was ascribed to the human nature of Christ, the Son of Mary; nor could it be, with any propriety of language. But we have just seen, that the creation of worlds is ascribed to the Son of God; and that Son was God.

¹ John i. 1, 3.

For he is “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” And “unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:” here the Son is explicitly declared to be the God of nature, grace, and glory. St. Paul says, “The Father,” the first person of the Godhead, “hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son—who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;” and “his dear Son” being the apostle’s proper antecedent, he thus proceeds, without any change of the person; “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.” If “his dear Son” here spoken of were created or made, and “all things were created by him,” then he must have made himself; and if he did so, he must have acted before he existed, which is absolutely impossible, because it involves a plain contradiction. But on the same ground on which a contradiction is inadmissible, the evidence is decisive, that he must be eternal; and he who is the eternal Son, must be the eternal Son of God. For every being or thing that exists, must either have been made, or must exist without being made. But since creation is exclusively and positively ascribed to “the Father’s dear Son;” that Son must have existed before all creation; he must therefore have had an uncreated existence: and no being can thus exist but God.

† Heb. i. 8.

• Col. i. 12—17.

We cannot reasonably, or consistent with truth, confine the creative power which St. Paul thus ascribes to "the Father's dear Son," to the creation of this world which we inhabit, or to all its appendages and inhabitants, or to all the globes which compose the universe. The language of this apostle forbids such a conclusion. "For," he says, "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." This language is so plain, that it bids complete defiance to sophistry. These expressions, in their vast embrace, encircle both earth and heaven; including creation in all its modes, varieties, and periods. "His dear Son" is said to be "before all things;" now he who is "before all things," is not a thing; for if he were, he could not be "before all things," unless he were before himself, which is utterly impossible. He therefore who is not a thing, is not a creature; and he who exists, and is not a creature, must be the Creator; and he who is the Creator must necessarily be God. Thus the creation of the manhood of Christ by the Holy Ghost, the rudiments of which was derived from Adam, through Abraham, Judah, David, and the Virgin Mary, is for ever excluded as the reason of his being called God's "dear Son;" for those rudiments are some of the "*things*" which that Son made when he created Adam, and all other things. "He that built all things is God^t;" and the same apostle who makes this declaration asserts,

^t Heb. iii. 4.

that the "dear Son" made all things. Therefore if he who made all things is God, and all things were made by the "dear Son" of the Father, it follows as an inevitable consequence, that the Father's "dear Son" is God. This argument is altogether syllogistic; the premises are the declarations of the Scriptures, and the conclusion is irresistible. He who made all things is God; all things were created by the Father's "dear Son," into whose kingdom he hath translated us, in whose blood we have redemption; therefore this "dear Son" is God.

Let us now hear our Lord's own "*declarations*" on this subject, in the following words, in which he expressly calls the *first* person of the Godhead his Father, without the least ambiguity or equivocation. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen (ἐμὲ) me, hath seen (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father. Believest thou not that (ἐγὼ) I am (ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ) in the Father, and (ὁ Πατὴρ ἐμοὶ ἐστὶ) the Father in me? The words that (ἐγὼ) I speak unto you, (ἐγὼ) I speak not of myself; but (ὁ δὲ Πατὴρ ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων) the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that (ἐγὼ) I am (ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ) in the Father, and (ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ) the Father in me".^{*} These words evidently signify two divine persons, as Father and Son, distinct, but not separate; and the mutual in-being of the one in the other, as taught by these

^{*} John xiv. 8—11.

words, proves the essence and perfections to be the same in each, while the words, Father and Son, as clearly prove the distinction of the persons.

“ Our Lord, speaking of his own disciples, comforts them thus: ‘ And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. (ὁ Πατήρ μου) My Father (ὃς δέδωκέ μοι) who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them (ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου) out of my Father’s hand. (Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἓν ἔσμεν.) I and my Father are one*.’ One nature, one essence, one being, one God. Whatsoever the one is, that the other is, be that what it may,—consubstantial, though still distinct in subsistence and personality. He calls the first person of the Godhead most expressly his Father. ‘ But Jesus answered them, (ὁ Πατήρ μου) My Father worketh hitherto, (καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι) 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.’ Which he certainly did, for his words clearly imply this, and so his enemies understood them. He undoubtedly declares, in the seventeenth verse, that the Father and he, as Father and Son, are one in working, which they could not possibly be, were they not one in essence, in perfections, and one in all respects, except in distinct personality and relation, the one being the Father, the other the Son. For he calls God his Father; and one divine person can be the Father of another, in no respect whatsoever, but by the law of the constitution and economy of the Divine Es-

* John x. 28—30.

† John v. 17, 18.

sence and perfections, communicating the same essence and perfections, whereby they subsist in a mode distinct from what they do in the mode or person communicating, and thereby constituting personality. And to this distinct personality, or Sounship, our Lord refers, claiming divine personality, and in all respects partaking of the Divine Essence and perfections, in perfect equality with the Father, and claiming necessarily to be in all respects consubstantial, except in distinct subsistence. And after, as the Son, referring to and claiming this distinct personality, as co-eternal, co-immense, and co-immutable with the first person as the Father, he says, ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;’ evidently meaning all the works in creation and providence. The Greek phrase, *ὡς ἄρτι*, signifies *to this time, to the present*, that is, in all works whatsoever. It is perfectly evident from these words, that the person here spoken of, and called ‘the Son,’ is not a creature, however exalted in duration and capacity any might conceive him to be: for if so, and if the words be true, ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;’ he must have created himself; and if he created himself, he must have been in existence before he was created, that is, in existence and not in existence at the very same time, which is both contradictory and absurd. And if every work performed by the Father, was equally performed by the Son, the Son must, in all respects, be equal to the Father, in nature and perfections. This, these words of our Lord, fully signify and imply; and in this sense the Jews understood them: and, indeed, they can bear no other legitimate construction, or interpretation.

“When our Lord perceived that the Jews understood

his expressions in their proper sense and acceptation, he supported the assertion he had made, by others equally strong, and significant of the same doctrine. ‘Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, (ὁ Υἱὸς) the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father do; for what things soever (ἐκείνος) he doeth, these (ὁ Υἱὸς) also doeth the Son likewise.’ These words plainly declare, that the Father and the Son are one in design. Nothing can be plainer. In this verse our Lord speaks of himself in the *first* person, and calls himself expressly τὸν Υἱὸν, *the Son*. He speaks also concerning the *first* person, and calls him expressly τὸν Πατέρα, *the Father*. He says expressly, ‘(ὁ Υἱὸς) The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father do;’ and he adds, ‘for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.’ Two things are here affirmed by our Redeemer: the first, that he can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do;—by which we are to understand, that such is the unity of these blessed persons in essence and perfections, and such is their subsistence in distinct personality, that the will, the purpose, the wisdom, and the power, in all acts, are the very same in each; and this is also one of the strongest proofs that the Son, as such, is a divine person, that can be conceived or imagined by the human mind.

“He says also, ‘The Son doeth what he seeth the Father do.’ Surely this can never be applied to a creature, whether human, angelic, or super-angelic. No created mind can SEE the works of the eternal God, as they are immediately effected by sovereign power and will. This

is absolutely impossible. A created being, however exalted, even though it could see, in a spiritual sense, what the glorious first person does, could only see this by perceiving the effects produced. Yet, even then, it could not do the things which it would thus see done, by perceiving the effects produced; for this would be to say, that after a created being had seen the universe produced, it could produce another. Such reasoning will not be adopted by any man in his sober senses.—The second thing affirmed is, that by the word *seeth*, in this clause, our Lord must mean, that such is the harmony in counsel, purpose, will, power, and execution, of all the works of the blessed persons in their distinct subsistence, that the one may be said to do what the other does; and the order of working is correspondent to the order of subsistence. The Father is the *first* person; the Son the *second*: hence the propriety of the expression, ‘what he (the Son) *seeth* the Father do.’ Now, the will and power of each is exerted in union, and in all respects the same, as the last clause of the verse clearly teaches.—‘For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.’ If there be not equality in essence and perfections; if there be not distinction in personality, expressed by these words of our Lord; (to speak with reverence,) they can have no consistent meaning. For if we suppose this Son to be a creature, however exalted,—the first of all created beings, if you please,—and apply these words to him; then it clearly follows, that he must first have seen himself created, as one of those things which he *seeth* the Father do; and after this he must have created himself, as doing one of those things which he *seeth* the Father

do; and then it will follow, that he was in existence before he was created, and not in existence till after he was created; an absurdity and impossibility too glaring to be admitted into sober reasoning. Therefore, when our Lord says that the SON SEETH WHAT THE FATHER DOETH, we must understand the Greek word βλέπω as meaning perfect knowledge, intimate acquaintance, exact and correspondent harmony, between these blessed persons in all things. A clearer proof of the personality and divine eternal Sonship of the second, and of the personality of the first mode of subsistence in the Divine Essence, cannot be expressed. The words are simple, comprehensive, energetic, and convey these truths with a pointed and expressive emphasis^z.

“ ‘The Father (φιλεῖ) loveth the Son, and the Father (δείκνυσιν) sheweth the Son all that he doeth*.’ If by the term Son here used, our Lord means *only* his manhood, which was formed by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; and calls himself the Son only because of, and in allusion to, that formation and birth; if these words have any meaning, they would and must signify, that the Father shewed him himself before he was created, and then afterwards created him. Nothing can be more preposterous. But apply the words as they ought to be, and they refer to the immediate fellowship of the divine Father and Son in the works of creation, providence, and redemption: all of which may be naturally understood of these persons, as Father and Son, in the Divine Essence.

But, if the term Son here used *refer only* to the Son

^z John v. 19.

^{*} John v. 20.

of Mary, created by the Holy Ghost, without any allusion to a divine Sonship, which must, in the nature of things, be eternal: then, according to this verse, he must see another greater than himself created, or else see himself created again, and made greater; which are absurdities so glaring, that none will spend a single moment on the thought. If, then, there be not two divine persons signified in the language of this verse, as Father and Son in the Divine Essence, the words can have no meaning, and are quite unintelligible: but surely the plainest reader will evidently perceive, that our Lord speaks of the Father and the Son (himself, as to his divine nature,) as two distinct persons, in all respects the very same in design, volition, and operation.

“ ‘For as (ὁ Πατήρ) the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so (ὁ Υἱός) the Son quickeneth whom he will^b.’ The Father quickeneth the dead, and the Son quickeneth whomsoever of the dead he will. The verb ζωοποιῶ is used in both clauses of the verse, and is equally applied to the Father and to the Son, to teach us that their power is the same; which can be upon no other principle than that these persons are consubstantial; each equally partaker of the whole of the Divine Essence and perfections.

“ The Father and the Son are declared to be equal also in knowledge and authority. ‘For (ὁ Πατήρ) the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment (τῷ Υἱῷ) to the Son^c.’ If the Son were not a divine person, in all respects equal with the Father, he could by no means discharge the office of judgment upon all

^b John v. 21.

^c John v. 22.

created rational beings, exactly according to all the thoughts, words, and deeds of angels and men, both good and bad, and also according to the will of the Father, as moral Governor of the universe. If he were not a divine person, and in all respects equal with the Father, he could not authoritatively pronounce sentence in judgment upon angels and men, and execute that sentence when pronounced; for he must have all authority necessarily and equally with the Father, before he could do this. Therefore the Father and the Son must be in all respects equal in knowledge, authority, and will, otherwise the Son could not judge the world in perfect righteousness and equity at the great day. If the Father and the Son be not spoken of in this verse, as two divine persons, ineffably related to each other, as Father and Son; and in all respects equal, there never were two persons spoken of, either divine or human.

“ The perfect equality of the Father and Son, as such, is pointed out still more strongly in the twenty-third verse: the expressions of it prove that the Father and the Son must be equal in essence, glory, majesty, dignity, will, and all perfections natural and moral, and, therefore, equally and distinctly the object of all religious worship from the rational moral creature; the Holy Spirit being understood as not excluded. ‘ That all men should honour (τὸν Υἱὸν) the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not (τὸν Υἱὸν) the Son, honoureth not (τὸν Πατέρα) the Father which hath sent him.’ Now, were they not, as Father and Son, equal in nature and perfections, how could this possibly be ?

“ Our Lord again repeats the declaration that he is the SON OF GOD: from which declaration we can be at

no loss to discover his meaning in all that he had said in the foregoing discourse concerning himself. ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice (τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ) of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live^d.’ Whose voice but his, who is a divine person, could effect such great things as these? No greater effect can be ascribed to the Divine Being, whether we suppose a unity or trinity of persons to be in the Divine Essence. Every verse, therefore, declares more strongly than another, the certainty of our Lord’s divine personality and Sonship. If we believe not him, it is in vain to seek for other evidence.

“ These declarations of our Lord, which we have quoted from the fifth chapter of John, afford ample and undeniable proof that he is the Son of God in his divine nature; and they run in the following order.—That the Father and he are one in volition and operations in all works. That they are one in counsel and every act. One in the most intimate union and fellowship. One in power. One in knowledge. One in essence and perfections, as Father and Son. One in life and existence. One in authority. One in will^e.” These attributes and perfections, this co-eternity and co-equality with the FATHER which our Lord ascribes to himself as the SON, never can apply to the manhood of Christ the Son of Mary, which was formed or created by the Holy Ghost, in time; therefore, in his divine nature he is, and must be, truly and properly the Son of God.

But this doctrine is established by “ declarations” still

^d John v. 25.

^e Professor Kidd.

more “express, in the Scriptures,” than those which have been already produced: which are as follows. “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here the *three* persons of the divine essence are *distinctly* revealed, and individually spoken of; the *person* of Christ which was baptized by John in Jordan; the *person* of the Holy Ghost, who “in a bodily shape like a dove,” rested upon our Lord^g; and the *person* of the Father, who said, by a voice out of heaven, “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON.” The manhood of Christ was formed by the Holy Ghost; but these words contain the “*express declaration*” of the *first* subsistent of the Divine Essence, in which he says, “This is MY beloved Son;” consequently, he is the Son of God in his divine nature. The voice is represented in these words as proceeding from a different place to that in which the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit were manifested, more forcibly to manifest these words as the “*express declaration*” of the first person of the Godhead, that HE IS THE FATHER, AND THAT CHRIST IS HIS BELOVED SON.

Another more “*express declaration*” concerning the divine eternal Sonship of Christ, we find in these words; “Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, in whom I AM well pleased, hear ye him^h.” The

^f Matt. iii. 16, 17.

^g Luke iii. 22.

^h Matt. xvii. 5.

manhood of our blessed Lord was formed by the Holy Ghost; but here we have the “express declaration” of the *first* subsistent of the Divine Essence concerning the *second*, saying, “This is MY beloved Son;” to be in strict propriety entitled to the name Son, the Father and Son must be of the same nature; but that animal body and rational soul, which was miraculously formed or created of Mary, not by the *first* person of the Godhead, but by the Holy Ghost, were not of the same nature with God, who is an infinite Spirit; therefore he cannot be called, in allusion merely to his human nature, the only begotten Son of God. But because of his relation in his divine nature to the *first* person of the Godhead, as declared in this verse, with whom, and the Holy Spirit, he is one in nature, and consequently one God. That these words, spoken on the mount, were an “express declaration” of a divine relation subsisting between the *first* and *second* persons of the Godhead in the divine nature, is undeniably evident from the words of Peter. “HE RECEIVED FROM GOD THE FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount’.”

If a doubt should still exist in any mind, whether Christ be the divine eternal Son of God or not, his own “express declaration,” upon oath, that in his divine nature he is the true and proper Son of God, should silence for ever such a doubt. When the high priest said to him, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou

ⁱ 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said ;” i. e. “ I am that which thou sayest.” The high priest understood him to declare, without any allusion to the miraculous conception, that he was truly and properly “ the Son of God ;” for “ he 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 ?” The whole court “ answered and said, He is guilty of death^k :” and it was for this declaration, which they considered blasphemous, that they condemned, and put him to death. Here then he declares that he is “ the Son of God” by an oath, so that he has not only attested the truth of this doctrine by “ express declarations,” but by a solemn oath. “ Men verily swear by the greater : and an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife.” “ The Son of God,” therefore, “ willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the eternity and immutability of his” Sonship, “ confirmed it by an oath ; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.”

“ Will you not his *Word* receive ?

“ Will you not his OATH believe ?”

Of our Lord, being the Son of God in his “ divine nature,” we have another “ express declaration” in Scripture, in these words of St. Paul ; “ Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of HIS SON into your hearts,

^k Matt. xxvi. 63—66.

crying, Abba, Father¹." But if it be *only* "in reference to the human nature that Christ is the *Son of God*," it must follow, as a necessary and undeniable consequence, that "the Spirit of God's Son," who is sent into the hearts of believers, is the spirit of the human nature of Christ," which was formed by the Holy Ghost; and of which spirit our Saviour said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful;" and, "Father, into thy hands I commend my SPIRIT;" for, the "Spirit of" the Son could not exist as such, before the existence of *that Son*; for that would be to exist and not to exist, at the same time, which is self-contradictory and absurd. Therefore, if it be "in reference to the human nature that Christ is the *Son of God*," then the Spirit of that Son must be the spirit of "the human nature." But on this ground we should get completely rid both of the Son, and the Spirit of the Son, as *divine* persons; and be at once plunged headlong into the whirlpool of Unitarianism, and involved in ALL its doctrinal calamities; being left completely without a Redeemer, or an atonement; without a divine Comforter, or a Sanctifier: and if we attempt to struggle out of this abyss, we shall be shipwrecked on the tremendous rocks of Sabellianism. Nor shall we escape *all* the dangers of our alarming situation, by adopting the comment of this very learned and pious Commentator, on these words of St. Paul: which runs thus; "God the *Father*, called generally the *first person* of the glorious TRINITY, hath sent forth the SPIRIT, the *Holy Ghost*, the *second person* of that *Trinity*; of his SON, Jesus Christ, the *third person* of the TRINITY—

¹ Gal. iv. 6. ^m Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary on Luke i. 35.

crying, Abba, Father! from the fullest and most satisfactory evidence, that God the Father, Son, and Spirit, had become their portionⁿ." The revealed order of the persons of the Trinity stands thus; "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" in which order, stated by Christ himself, "the Father" stands *first*, "the Son" *second*, and "the Holy Ghost" as the *third* person of the adorable Trinity. What authorities this learned Commentator may have to support this transposition of the order of the persons of the Godhead I know not; but for an alteration in the revealed order of the persons of the Trinity, which is of such vast importance, NO authorities are adduced, either from earth or heaven. To make such an alteration in the order in which the divine persons stand in the Divine Essence, as revealed by our Lord himself, "is, in my" humble "opinion," (to use the words of this author, but with *all due* respect,) "anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous.—Therefore, let all those who value *Jesus* and their *salvation* abide by the *Scriptures*."

But we learn from the word of God who "the Spirit of his Son" is, whom "God sends forth into the hearts" of his children, crying, Abba, Father." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you^o." The Holy Ghost is "the Spirit itself," which "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This "Spirit of God moved upon the

ⁿ Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary on Gal. iv. 6. • 1 Cor. iii
vi. 19, Rom. viii. 16.

face of the waters" when the universe was created; "by his Spirit he" *then* "garnished the heavens." Job said, "The Spirit of God made me." He strove with man in the days of Noah; for "God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." In the days of Moses, "the Spirit rested upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied." "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel—upon Gideon—upon Jephtha—and upon Sampson." "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, and he prophesied." "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David." "The Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they prophesied. "The Spirit came" also "upon Amasai." And "upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the Lord, in the midst of the congregation." Ezekiel said, "The Spirit entered into me, when he spake unto me;" yea, this very Spirit was in *all* the ancient prophets, "who enquired and searched diligently," while they "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory of Christ." But this Spirit of the Son, is an ETERNAL Spirit; because our Lord, at the time of his death on the cross, "Through the ETERNAL SPIRIT, offered himself without spot unto God^p." It is therefore evident, that the Spirit of the Son is not the Spirit of "the human nature of Christ," but the Holy Ghost, who is "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT;" therefore, that Son, whose Spirit he is, must be an ETERNAL SON; for the Spirit of the Son could not, as such, exist before the Son; as the one, therefore, is un-

^p Gen. i. 2. Heb. ix. 14. I Pet. i. 10, 11.

created, the other is uncreated; and as the one is ETERNAL, the other is ETERNAL.

The Rev. Dr. A. Clarke gives it as his “*established*” opinion, that the human nature of Christ was “*a real creation*. [That which is conceived (or formed) in her.] So I think $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\eta\delta\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon$ should be translated in this place: as it appears that the human nature of Jesus Christ was *a real creation* in the womb of the Virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit.” The same author observes on Luke i. 35; “As there is a plain allusion to the Spirit of God brooding over the face of the waters, to render them prolific, Gen. i. 2, I am the more firmly established in the opinion advanced on Matt. i. 20, that the rudiments of the human nature of Christ was *a real creation* in the womb of the Virgin, by the energy of the Spirit of God.” We are fully persuaded, that an attentive examination of all the passages of Scripture, in the Old and New Testaments, where the conception and birth of Christ are spoken of, or foretold, will fully confirm these views of the learned Commentator; for if it be not said, in the first chapter and twentieth verse of St. Matthew, or in the first chapter and thirty-fifth verse of St. Luke, we believe it is no where else expressly or directly said, in the word of God, that the human nature of Christ was *begotten* by the Holy Ghost. But he cannot, because of that “*real creation*” of his human nature, in the womb of the Virgin, be called “the only begotten Son of God;” for Adam was also created; “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female, created he

9 Rev. Dr. A. Clarke’s Commentary on Matt. i. 20. and Luke i. 35.

them.” It is therefore granted, that “the rudiments of the human nature of Christ was *a real creation* in the womb of the Virgin, by the energy of the Spirit of God.” The embryo thus formed, derived its physical nutriment from Mary, and in due time after this “*real creation*,” he was born of the Virgin, in Bethlehem, a perfect male child; for which reason he appears to be called “the Son of David.” But he could not, because of his having been so created by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, be said to be “the only begotten Son of God;” because Adam is called the son of God by St. Luke, in consequence of his “*real creation* :” “which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.”

Therefore Adam was the first *created* human being; and if Christ be called the Son of God, because his human nature was “a real creation,” by the energy of the Spirit of God, he cannot, on that ground, be said to be the only begotten Son of God; for Adam’s formation was also miraculous, he having been *created* by the energy of God; therefore, he was, in this sense, the first begotten (created) Son of God. Consequently, our Lord must be the Son of God, on a very different ground, yea, EVEN IN HIS DIVINE NATURE. We must, therefore, conclude, with the late pious and venerable Mr. Fletcher, “*That there is in the Godhead a Son, who was in the beginning with the Father, and who was as truly God with him, as Isaac, the proper son of Abraham, was truly man like his father.* This will appear beyond all doubt, if the reader weigh the following scriptural remarks upon our Lord’s Sonship. 1. Some are the *created*

† Gen. i. 27.

† Luke i. 32.

† Luke iii. 38.

sons of God, whether they are supernaturally formed out of nothing, as angels; or of pre-existent matter, as our first parents. 2. Others are the *reputed* sons of God, as all those who profess to serve him with filial reverence. 3. Others are *titular* sons of God, as all those to whom a share of God's supreme authority has been delegated. 4. Others are (in one sense) the *adopted* sons of God, as Saint John, and all those who, receiving by faith the *proper* Son, and being led by the Spirit, receive the initial redemption, viz. the *redemption of their souls*. 5. Others, as Enoch, Elijah, and the saints, who now share in the resurrection, *being sons of the resurrection, are the adopted sons of God, in the full sense of the word; for they have received the full adoption, viz. the redemption of their bodies*.*

The first and the last of these five degrees of sonship are the most extraordinary; but neither is *peculiar to our Lord*. For if, with respect to his humanity, he was miraculously and supernaturally formed of the substance of his Virgin mother Mary, Adam was thus formed of the substance of our then virgin mother, the earth. And if our Lord burst triumphantly out of the womb of the grave, on the day of his resurrection, so did several of the saints their graves, three days before, being opened miraculously, when he entered, as Prince of life, into the territories of death: for, when he gave up the ghost, *the earth did quake, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose, and came out of their graves, after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many*. It could not

* Luke xx. 36. Rom. viii. 14, 23.

he said, therefore, that, as son *of the resurrection*, he is God's *only begotten Son*; seeing many rose with or immediately after him, even the multitude of rescued prisoners, who graced his triumph when *he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive*. It follows then, that our Lord hath a peculiar and incommunicable Sonship*.”

The Holy Ghost is a proper personal subsistent in the Divine Essence, having an understanding and a will, and being capable of distinct personal operations; and to him all the divine titles are applied, by which the true God is called in Scripture: and all the natural and moral perfections of God are ascribed, in the sacred writings, to the Holy Ghost. According to the explicit testimony of revelation, all the works of God, in creation and providence, were performed by him, in union with the other persons of the Godhead; and all the worship due to the true God, is, in the same union, to be paid to the Holy Ghost. Therefore, he is of an infinite nature and essence, and one with the Father and the Son; consequently, he is truly and properly God. Of this we have abundant proof in the Scriptures. He is a person, for he has an understanding; “The Spirit searcheth ALL things, yea, the deep things of God.” One who is capable of “searching ALL things,” even “THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD,” must have an infinite understanding, because “the deep things of God” are infinite mysteries; but these are searched by, and known to, the Holy Ghost; therefore he has an infinite understanding. That he has also a will, is plain from his commands, and be-

* Mr. Fletcher's Rational Vindication of the Catholic Faith, &c.

cause "he divides to every man severally as he will". His proper personality is further evident, from his having spoken to and conversed with men, as a real person. The Holy Ghost said, "Your Fathers tempted ME, and saw MY works.—I WAS GRIEVED with this generation". The fact is, eternity, immutability, omnipotence, and all the other perfections and attributes of Deity, are ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Ghost, as well as all the works of God in creation and providence. He inspired all the sacred writers; for these "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He was also the agent in working all the miracles of the primitive church. And his being united with the Father and the Son in the form of baptism, is a decisive proof, that in this union he is entitled to all the worship which the sacrament of baptism binds Christians to pay to the Father and the Son. He is addressed by St. Paul in prayer, with the other subsistents of the Godhead. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen". But were I to produce all the scriptural proofs of the proper personal Deity of the Holy Ghost which might be adduced, they would swell this work into a large volume, and lead us from the peculiar doctrine under discussion; that portion of evidence which has been advanced on this subject now, will suffice to mark his distinct personality.

I would, therefore, proceed, by remarking, that we are taught, by an express revelation from God, that the "Fa-

† 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. xii. 11.

* Heb. iii. 7—11.

• Gen. i. 2.

Job xxvi. 13. 2 Pet. i. 21. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

ther, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" are distinct, although not separate, but united persons in the Godhead. In this revealed order of subsistence, the "FATHER is the FIRST, the SON the SECOND, and the HOLY GHOST is the THIRD PERSON of the Divine Essence. But it was the Holy Ghost, who is the THIRD, and not the FIRST PERSON of the adorable Godhead, who was the FATHER of "that holy thing" which was born of the Virgin Mary.

To this view of the subject it may, however, be objected, that, because the FIRST and the THIRD persons of the Godhead are ONE IN NATURE; and as "the holy thing which" was born of the Virgin was formed, or created, by the Holy Ghost; that, therefore, because of the union and oneness in nature of the FIRST and THIRD persons of the Trinity, the SECOND subsistent may, for this reason, be said to be the Son of the FIRST person of the Divine Essence. But this argument against an *eternal* Sonship proves too much, and, therefore, destroys itself. For, if because the manhood of Christ was formed, or created, by the Holy Ghost, our Lord may be called the Son of the FIRST subsistent of the Divine Essence, because the FIRST and the THIRD persons of the Godhead are in nature one; the SECOND and the THIRD persons are *also one in nature*; therefore, by parity of reasoning, THE SON IS THE SON OF THE SON; which is an absurdity too glaring to be admitted into sober argumentation: and, consequently, the SECOND must be the Son of the FIRST person of the Godhead, in some way totally independent of his manhood, and of the formation of it by the Holy Ghost: and therefore he is, and must be, the Son of God in his divine nature. The sacred writers appear peculiarly anxious to distinguish the FIRST person of the

Godhead, as the Father of the Son, from the Holy Ghost. "This Jesus hath God raised up.—Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.—Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.—Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—By Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.—Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.—Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.—Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.—Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.—Our fellowship is with the Father, and with HIS SON Jesus Christ.—Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, THE SON OF THE FATHER^b."

Our Lord, throughout the New Testament, calls the FIRST person of the Godhead, and not the Holy Ghost,

^b Acts ii. 32, 33. 1 Cor. xv. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. Gal. i. 1. Eph. i. 2, 3. Col. i. 3. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Tim. i. 2. Titus i. 4. Jude i. 1 John i. 3. 2 John iii.

by whom his human nature was created, most expressly his Father. "Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.—Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. 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^c." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father.—Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.—All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.—I shall shew you plainly of the Father.—And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you.—I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.—Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.—As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.—I am not alone; but I and the Father that sent me.—The Father that sent me beareth witness of me.—Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.—As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.—The Father hath not left me alone.—I speak that which I have seen with my Father—I honour my Father.—It is my Father that honoureth me.—Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy

^c Matt. xi. 25—27.

Son also may glorify thee.—Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.—That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee^d.” It is evident, that in all these citations our Lord calls the **FIRST** person of the Godhead his **Father**; but if all the passages of Scripture were quoted, where Christ and his apostles speak of the same divine person, as the Father of this adorable Son, we might cite a great part of the New Testament.

The sacred writers most explicitly declare, that the Son of Mary was formed by the Spirit of God; for “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.” “Now,” says Matthew, “the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” And “the angel of the Lord appeared” to her espoused husband “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^e.” Therefore, it is undeniably evident and clear, not admitting even of the least doubt, that the human nature of Jesus Christ, which was born of the Virgin, was “**OF THE HOLY GHOST,**” who is the **THIRD**; and that, in this respect, he was not the Son of the **FIRST** person of the Divine Essence. Consequently, to assert that he is called the Son of God in

^d John viii. 38. xiii. 3. xv. 15. xvi. 25—28. xvii. 24. x. 15. viii. 16, 18, 19, 28, 29, 38, 49, 54. xvii. 1, 11, 21. ^e Luke i. 35. Matt. i. 18, 20.

Scripture, *only* in allusion “to his human nature having been formed, or created, by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary;” and that he is not so called, in reference to his DIVINE NATURE, is a plain declaration, that the glorious FIRST and SECOND persons of the Godhead do not stand related to each other at all, or in any respect whatsoever, as FATHER and SON. “This is highly dangerous, and unscriptural.” For the Scriptures, as we have already seen, call the *first* person, and not the Holy Ghost, his Father; and the Son addresses the *first person* of the Godhead, and speaks of him as his *Father* throughout the New Testament; but he in no part of it calls the Holy Ghost his Father. Therefore, according to the clear revelation of God, and the manner in which the Son speaks of the *first* person of the divine nature, and addresses him as his *Father*; also of himself as the Son of the blessed *first person*; and of the *third person*, who was the Creator, and, consequently, the Father of his “human nature;” whom he does not call his Father, but the Holy Ghost: therefore, the first and second persons of the Divine Essence must be to each other a Father and a Son, in some ineffable way; and our Lord must be the Son of God, in the strictest sense of the word, in his divine nature.

For, at the very same time that our Lord calls the *first* person of the Godhead his Father, most expressly, he makes the plainest distinction that is possible between the Father, as such, and the Holy Ghost. By the personal acts which he ascribes to the Spirit of God, he distinguishes the *first* person, as his Father, from the *third* person of the Divine Essence: for he said, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Com-

forter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." This Comforter, said he, "Is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.—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." Here our Lord calls the *first* person, most expressly and undeniably, "the Father;" and the *third* person, as expressly, "the Holy Ghost." It is most evident, and beyond even the possibility of a doubt, that he does not, by these two appellations, mean one and the self-same divine person: for, he says, he "will pray the Father" to send the Comforter to his church, calling him "the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in *his* name." And he sends "the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, from the Father; which proceedeth from the Father." Therefore, the Holy Ghost is not that Father, nor the self-same subsistent as that Father; nor is the creation of the human nature the only begetting, or the scriptural Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, if this were really so, the Father would be sending forth the Father, and the Father would be proceeding from the Father, and the Son would be praying for all this. But these are absurdities too glaring to be indulged for a single moment by common sense. Now we conceive it must be as clear to the reader as the light of heaven can make it, that the first and second persons of the Godhead are to each other a Father and a Son, in the Divine Essence. And as the Divine Essence and perfections are the very same in each and in both the Father and

the Son ; and as the only distinction between them is in personality, by which probably the relation is constituted ; therefore, the divine nature of the Son, is in every respect, and in every sense of the word, as completely “ unoriginated ” as that of the Father ; because, though distinct in personality, they possess the self-same Nature and Essence, and are consubstantial ; therefore, they are in nature co-eternal, co-immense, and co-immutable. Consequently, the terms, “ eternal generation, eternal Son, and eternal Sonship,” when applied to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, are neither “ dangerous, self-contradictory, or absurd ; ” but legitimate, and strictly proper ; because the use of these terms is fully authorised, both by reason and Scripture ; and this doctrine gives no more countenance to Arianism, than it does to Socinianism, or to the Sabellian heresy. No, the absurdity, self-contradiction, and danger, all lie on the other side of this doctrine : for, in addition to those which we have before noticed, the supposition that he is called “ the only begotten Son of God,” because of the formation of his human nature, by the Spirit of God, which “ was a *real creation* in the womb of the Virgin, by the Holy Ghost,” leads to false and absurd conclusions, which are subversive of the whole Gospel plan of salvation ; such as these : “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten (or of the only created) of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten (or the only created) Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten (or his only created) Son, that who-

soever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten (or his only created) Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his (created) Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Does not every reader see the serious consequences resulting from this view of the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus Christ? But the term God, in all these quotations, refers to the *first person* of the Godhead, and "the only begotten Son" is his Son, in his divine nature, without any reference whatsoever to his incarnation. Because, it is the *first person* of the Godhead, and not the *third*, whose "only begotten Son" the *second person* is expressly said to be, in *all* the Scriptures where he is so called; but it was the *third*, and not the *first person*, as we have already demonstratively proved, who was the Father of his human nature: the "*real creation*," therefore, of that nature, by the energy of the Spirit of God, in the womb of the Virgin, cannot be spoken of as the only begetting of the Son, because this only begetting is expressly ascribed to the *first*, and not to the *third person* of the Divine Essence; hence it is evident, that it is a *divine*, and, consequently, an *eternal* Sonship, which is thus spoken of in the Scriptures.

The same learned author remarks, that this term, "only begotten Son," has two general acceptations in Scripture: it signifies, 1. The *only child* in a family. 2. The *most beloved*, or him who is *dearest* to his parents, though there may be other children in the family.^s But these

^s Rev. Dr. A. Clarke's Sermon on John iii. 16.

are not the *only* reasons why our Lord is so called; because we hope we have already proved, that he is in his divine nature the Son of God; as he said, "I know him, for I am from him:" he is, therefore, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God."

Because the divine nature is immaterial, incorporeal, indivisible, eternal, immense, immutable, and infinite; therefore this Son cannot have *only* a part of it in him, but the whole; consequently, he is co-essential with, and of the same substance as the Father; as he said, "I and the Father are one:" in which words, the plurality of the verb, and the neutrality of the noun, together with the distinct personality which is ascribed to each, speak a perfect identity of their essence: therefore, being of the same nature with the Father, he is his perfect similitude and image, and, consequently his proper Son. For proper similitude consists in identity of nature; and hence this Son is properly called "the image of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person^h."

This, therefore, is a much more proper Sonship than any natural generation of the creature can possibly be; because it is more perfect, and also because the identity of the nature is infinitely perfect. For, in human generation, the Son begotten is of the same nature as his Father; but it is by a division of the material substance of the parent; and this division includes imperfection, because it implies a substance which is corporeal and divisible. But the Divine Essence is simple, incorporeal, spiritual, indivisible, and infinite; therefore, our Lord is the Son of God, not by derivation or division, but by pos-

^h 2 Cor. iv. 4. Heb. i. 3.

sessing the whole of the **Divine Essence** and perfections personally in himself. In *natural* generation, the Father necessarily precedeth the Son, and, in respect to time and age, begetteth one **YOUNGER** than himself; for natural generation was designed and ordained, by the Creator, for the increase and perpetuity of the human species; because the individuals of the human race should successively fail; therefore the Father produces, in the order of providence, by procreation, another man to live after him, and to perpetuate the existence of his nature, when what is animal of his own person is completely decomposed and dissolved in the grave.

But this implies the imperfection of mortality, and has nothing at all to do with, or no relation to him who inhabiteth eternity; who was always a Father, as he was always God. In human generation the son is of the **SAME NATURE** as his Father, but he is not the self-same man; for though he has an essence of the same nature, yet he has not the self-same identical nature and essence, and therefore every individual son of Adam becomes another distinct and separate man. But the **Divine Essence**, because of its unity, simplicity, spirituality, indivisibility, immutability, and infinity, is utterly incapable of either multiplication or division; therefore, he who is the only-begotten Son of the Father, hath the self-same nature and essence, and is the same God; the Father is God, the Son is also God: they are perfectly distinct only in personality; but in nature eternally, immensely, and immutably **ONE**. We are, therefore, naturally led to conclude, that our Lord is "the only begotten Son of God, and the first-born of every creature," in some such way as no other was ever so naturally begotten by the Father; and, consequently, that he is truly, properly, and to all

intents and purposes, the “only begotten Son of God.” For the restraining term “*only*” does not belong to the Father, as if “the only begotten” meant no more than begotten by the Father *only*, as some have asserted. For this is contrary to the use of the word in the Scriptures, and in the common language of men, who use it not to describe him who was begotten by but *one*; but him who has been exclusively, only, and *alone* begotten by ANY. In this acceptation of the term, and as being in his divine nature the Son, and the eternal Son of God, our Lord, and he *only* is entitled to this name; for in *all* the family of the Almighty, in heaven and earth, there is, and there can be, NO SUCH SON AS HE IS.

Nor does the term, “only begotten Son,” *merely* mean that our Lord is “*the most beloved*” of all the sons; as those who have denied his divinity and Godhead, have long since, yea, some centuries ago affirmed. “Because,” said they, “Isaac was called the *only son*, and the *only begotten son* of Abraham, though he had Ishmael beside.” But “*the most beloved*,” and “*the only begotten*,” are not the *same*; because the one has the nature of a cause, in relation to the other; and nothing can, at the self-same time, be both cause and effect to itself. For, though it be true that the *only* Son is the *beloved* Son; yet, he is the beloved, because he is the *only* Son; not the *only* because he is the beloved Son. Therefore, although Christ be “the only begotten,” and “*the beloved*” Son of God; yet, these two qualities are not synonymous, but the latter depends upon the former, as its cause; because *unigeniture* is the foundation of this singular love. Isaac was called “the only begotten, and the only son of Abraham,” for other reasons beside

his being singularly beloved by his Father; he was the only son of Sarah, the free woman, and his beloved wife; he was the *only* son of the promise made to that venerable patriarch; which was, that "Sarah shall have a son," and "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Hence St. Paul says, expressly, "By faith Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten Son¹." And as primogeniture consists in prelation, so does unigeniture in exclusion; none can, therefore, be strictly, truly, and properly called "the only begotten Son," but he who exclusively and *alone* was so begotten. Therefore, the eternal Son of God is that Son, who is "*most beloved*, or him who is dearest to his" Father, "though," as we have already seen, "there are other children in the family." He only is that Son, who, as such, could suitably call into exercise the Father's attribute of infinite paternal love; and who could be loved by him, as a Father, with a love which is infinite, eternal, immense, and immutable; for if he became the Son of God first, when the human nature of Christ was created of Mary, by the Holy Ghost, then he first became, as the Son, the object of his Father's love; for, on this supposition, till angels and men were created, God had no Son, as such, divine, angelic, or human, to love; therefore, the Father's paternal love could not be called forth eternally by a Son; and, consequently, that peculiar quality of that infinite perfection of the Deity, could not be exercised toward a Son before the worlds were created, or the Messiah was born; and this supposition, that the divine Being possessed from eternity an unemployed perfection, argues imperfection,

¹ Heb. xi. 17.

which is impossible, because God is infinitely perfect. It is also contrary to Scripture; "For," said our Lord, "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world^k." Therefore no other Son, but a divine, eternal Son, in all the family of God, could be capable of being the object of the Father's infinite and eternal love; and no other Son could be capable of returning it eternally, immensely, and immutably. Consequently, he is "the only begotten Son of God," in the fullest and strictest sense of the term. Therefore, it is as evident as scriptural arguments, which cannot be resisted, can make it, that the FIRST AND SECOND PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD STAND ETERNALLY AND IMMUTABLY RELATED TO EACH OTHER, IN THE DIVINE ESSENCE, AS FATHER AND SON.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are distinct in personality, but one in nature and essence; which revealed truth can never be better expressed in *human* or un-inspired language, than in the following form of sound words. "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not

^k John xvii. 24.

three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as is afore-said, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.—Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that *we* also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the substance of his Mother, born in the world; perfect God, and perfect Man; of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood. Who although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; one altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; who

suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire¹."

Now, I would most respectfully ask, What doctrine of the Gospel which is peculiar to Methodism, is more clearly or expressly declared in Scripture, than that of the divine and eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ? To deny this doctrine is imminently dangerous; for "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Believing this doctrine, which is so clearly revealed in the Scriptures, is of the last importance, both to promote and permanently secure our salvation in time, and through eternity. For "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.—Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God^m."

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

¹ Athanasian Creed.

^m 1 John ii. 22, 23. v. 5. iv. 15.