

BT 215

D25

810

copy 1

Presented by Rev. Mr. Dodge to S. W. Allen

T 215
D25
810
Copy 1

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

==

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED JULY 31, 1810,

BEFORE THE

HAVERHILL ASSOCIATION;

AND

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

By DANIEL DANA, A. M.
PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT.

==

HAVERHILL, (MASS.)
PRINTED AND SOLD BY WILLIAM B. ALLEN.
1810.

HLR 30537

BT 215
II 25
1810

A SERMON, &c.



ROMANS, IX, 5.

— CHRIST . . . WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.

THE subject which this passage brings to view, is all-interesting. In the great business of religion, we have much, very much to do with Jesus Christ. We shall all soon appear before him, as our final Judge. To have some just knowledge of him, then, must be of infinite moment. If Christ be a creature, those who treat him as God, are chargeable with idolatry. This all allow. If he be God, are those who degrade him to the level of a mere creature, in no danger of impiety?—Let us, my brethren, feel the solemnity of the subject. Let us contemplate it with the profoundest seriousness and humility. And may *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of himself, and of his dear Son!*

Our text asserts the DEITY of Christ, in terms as strong and unequivocal, as language could well afford. That the Savior is *man*, all admit. And this the Apostle virtually declares in the context; for he represents him as descended, *according to the flesh*, from the Jewish nation. But, adds the Apostle, he has a nature infinitely superior to the human. He is "*over all, God blessed for ever.*"—I am sensible, indeed, that certain critics have attempted to wrest from us this inspired attestation of the Savior's divinity, by giving a different translation of the original text. But in doing this, they have violated the most established rules

of construction* ; and their labors have recoiled on themselves. This passage, however, is far, very far from standing alone. The doctrine it contains, is familiar to the word of God. Let us attentively consult this holy Oracle, and obediently receive its unerring dictates.

What I propose, is,

I. Briefly to advert to some of the principal and most convincing proofs of the deity of Christ.

II. To refute some of the leading objections which have been raised against this doctrine.

III. To show that, considered in its aspects and connexions, it is a doctrine of peculiar importance.

Without hesitation it may be affirmed, that no doctrine of the word of God is susceptible of fuller proof, than that of the Savior's deity. The evidence is even *superabundant*. Each argument which supports it, taken separately, is absolutely conclusive. And each receives additional light and force from a great variety of others. It might be distinctly shown, that the most sacred and appropriate *names* of Jehovah are, in scripture, frequently and familiarly applied to Jesus Christ. It might be shown, that the incommunicable *perfections*, and most stupendous *works* of Deity, are abundantly ascribed to him. It might be shown, that he is represented as the proper object of *religious homage*, and actually receives the worship, both of men and angels. It might be shown,

* The method proposed, is, so to alter the pointing and translation of the passage, as that it shall stand thus : OF WHOM, AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL :---GOD BE BLESSED FOR EVER. To this it is objected, and on high critical authority, that in every OTHER instance in which the expression BLESSED BE GOD, is found in the new Testament, the Greek ARTICLE is used ; and the collocation is likewise different from that in the present passage. Indeed, so palpably does the rendering suggested oppose the rules of legitimate criticism, that it is discarded by SOCINUS himself. See DR. MACKNIGHT'S remarks on the text,

that a great variety of passages in the old Testament, which by universal acknowledgment, refer to Jehovah, are, in the new, unreservedly applied to Jesus Christ.—These arguments are among the most common, and the most convincing. But I shall wave a particular illustration of them, and confine myself to a single idea. It is this: that the moment the deity of Christ is denied, the most *absurd* and *shocking consequences* directly and inevitably follow. These consequences are various and almost endless; though but a small portion of them can be distinctly specified.

And *first*. If Christ be not God, it is impossible for the most accurate and discerning reader to understand the true meaning and scope of the bible. It will be readily admitted, that one of the first requisites in a revelation from heaven, is, that it be perspicuous and intelligible; especially on those great points which principally concern our faith, our worship, and our practice. If God be pleased to communicate himself to man, on subjects of everlasting moment, he will use a language which will not permit the honest and attentive inquirer to doubt of his real meaning. To suppose the contrary, would be to impeach at once the wisdom and benevolence of the Deity. In connexion with this remark, consider, my brethren, that it is a capital and uniform feature of the bible, that it asserts the character, and vindicates the claims, of the ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD; while it proscribes with detestation every form of idolatry, and every approach to it. Consider, likewise, that another feature equally prominent, is, that it aims to bring the *highest possible honors* to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; to enthrone him in every heart; to cause every knee to bow to his sceptre, and every tongue to celebrate his praise. What is the necessary inference from these two important and undeniable facts?—It can be no other than this: that Jesus Christ is God.

If he be not God, how can he be vindicated (I speak it with trembling) from the charge of encouraging idolatry ; since, on various occasions, he not only willingly received, but explicitly claimed the highest honors which men could pay ?—He constantly exhibited himself as the great object of *faith* ; a faith which it would have been impious to repose in a creature. *For thus saith the LORD, Cursed be the man who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.—* He demanded *supreme love* ;—and what more than this, was ever claimed by Jehovah himself ? He required his disciples to be willing to do, to venture, and to suffer every thing, *for his name's sake*—the very demand which, both in substance and form, is frequently made in the Old Testament, by that God who has declared, that *he will not give his glory to another*.—He claimed a sovereignty over the sabbath. He claimed the church as his own. In a word, he represented himself as participating in the glory of his Father. *The son of man said he, shall come in the glory of his father.** What creature ever dared prefer such claims, or utter such language ? Who could possibly do it, without impiety and blasphemy, but the coequal, coeternal Son of God ?

If Christ be not God, the christian church is far less privileged than the church in ancient time. Then, good men put their trust in God, chose him as their felicity, consecrated themselves to his honor, and solaced themselves in his care, as their compassionate Shepherd, their all-sufficient Friend. What a sad falling away must it be, if this weighty charge, and these sacred honors, are devolved on a creature ! How inferior the Christian, to the Jewish Church ! But who knows not that the doctrine of the scripture is the exact reverse of this ? Therefore Christ must be God.

* See Dr. JAMIESON'S Vindication of the scripture doctrine, &c.

If Christ be not God, the generality of the Christian world have been in a gross delusion to the present day. It is undeniable, that the great majority of Christian believers have viewed, honored, and depended on him, in this character. Is it probable, that the best men the world ever saw, should be permitted to fall into the direst and most destructive of errors? Was all their trust reposed in a *God who could not save*? Were all their consolations in life and death; were all their transporting hopes of complete bliss in their Savior's presence, the offspring of mere enthusiasm and delusion?

If Christ be not God, christians need constantly be cautioned, not against loving and trusting him too little, but against loving and trusting him *too much*. To give him a *supreme* affection, must be downright idolatry. To confide in him with unlimited reliance, must be folly and madness. It must be subversive of piety, and ruinous to the soul. Grant that as a Friend and Benefactor, he claims their tender and grateful affection, still, on the supposition made, this tribute must be altogether different both in kind and degree, from that which they are bound to render to the Deity. It must fall as much below it, as a creature falls below the infinite Creator. What strange and novel doctrine would this be! How repugnant to every principle of revelation! How grating, how insupportable to the feelings of every pious mind!

Finally; let it be considered, that the moment we deny the proper deity of Christ, we make the scriptures speak a language perfectly discordant and self-contradictory. We make them speak of a *created God*; of a *dependent* being, as the *Creator*, *Upholder* and *Governor* of the universe; of an *eternal* being, who once *did not exist*; of a creature whom it is sin to worship, and perdition not to worship; "of infinite perfections, and yet all derived; of an omniscience which does not know all things, and an omnipotence which cannot do all things."—My breth-

ren, it must not, it cannot a moment be believed, that the book of God contains such gross inconsistencies and absurdities as these.—The consequence is, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly divine; GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER.

I am now, in the SECOND place, to consider and refute some OBJECTIONS which have been raised against this doctrine. In doing this, I shall endeavor to select, not the weakest, but the principal and most plausible; and those on which, so far as my information extends, their patrons have placed their chief reliance, for the support of their cause.

Suffer me, however, to premise one remark. If the doctrine under consideration be established by competent evidence, no contrary reasonings can be of great weight. There are a multitude of truths which we firmly believe, against which, however, a subtle disputant might easily produce objections which we could not satisfactorily obviate. This remark, while it applies to almost every subject within the compass of human thought, or observation, applies with peculiar force to the doctrines of religion. It deserves, therefore, to be constantly kept in mind, during the present discussion.

First. Some think it a sufficient and conclusive objection to this doctrine, that it is *mysterious*. But it is remarkable, that the inspired Apostle had a very different conception. *Without controversy*, says he, *great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.* Here we see, that in the moment in which he admits the deity of Christ to be a *mystery*, a *great mystery*, he nevertheless asserts it as a fact, and states it as matter of faith. He did not think that because it was mysterious, it was of course *incredible*. Nor can any one entertain this idea, who thinks soberly. The faculties of our minds are extremely limited in their operations. Every day and hour, we are presented with objects which we cannot pretend completely to explain, or comprehend. Above us, and around us, mysteries constantly arrest our atten-

tion. To us, the works of creation, and the ways of providence, are equally and altogether unsearchable. Above all, "what a miracle to man, is man!" Who can explain the nature and operations of a soul? Yet who so degraded, so stupified, as to doubt whether he *has* a soul? The connexion of our *material* and *spiritual* part, is wonderful indeed. How mental ideas are obtained through the medium of the bodily organs; how, by an act of my will, I raise my hand; how, by addressing words to your ears, I can excite thoughts and emotions in your minds, is perfectly incomprehensible. Yet who doubts the *reality* of these things, or of thousands beside, of a similar nature? If all the works and ways of Deity, then, are mysterious; if facts which constantly occur in the course of his providence are mysterious; is it not perfectly credible that his *nature* is much more so? Especially, when a revelation is given us purposely to communicate such truths as our minds could never explore, may it not be expected that many of these truths will likewise be such as our minds can never completely grasp?—The fact is, that neither the thræfold distinction in the divine nature, nor the union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ, is more incomprehensible than many things in natural religion, the truth of which all but atheists acknowledge. They are not more incomprehensible than the existence of a Being underived, eternal, and every where present.

A *second* objection against the deity of Christ, is this: that if it were a truth, it would have been more abundantly and explicitly declared in the sacred scriptures. Especially, it might have been expected that Christ himself, and his Apostles, would have clearly taught it. But the *reverse* of this, says the objector, is the case. In reply, it is granted, that it was the first and principal object, both of our Savior, and his Apostles, to establish his divine mission and Messiahship. And why? The moment that this point was settled, his deity followed of course. All who believed him to be the true Messiah, would believe him to be

just such a person as the prophets foretold : and it is undeniable that they described him as a divine person. They spoke of him under the appellations of JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, IMMANUEL, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE JUST GOD AND SAVIOR. Whatever, then, proved him to be the Messiah, proved him to be truly and properly God. There was no occasion for our Savior, or his Apostles, to go into a labored proof of his essential dignity. They needed only to *ascertain the person* of whom the prophets wrote. Those who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was that person, might directly and undeniably infer his divinity. Hence we find our Savior giving this direction to the Jews : *Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me.* This observation is sanctioned by some of the most accurate divines. And it needs only to be kept in mind, in order completely to account for it, that the doctrine of our Savior's divinity is more sparingly taught by him and his Apostles, than some might have expected. But the fact is, that the objection is by no means true, in its full extent. Our Savior and his Apostles did *not* maintain that cautious reserve which has been stated. We have already seen that our Lord himself did, even while on earth, demand the homage of an implicit faith, a supreme affection, and an unlimited devotion. He asserted his property in the church. He claimed a sovereignty over the sabbath. He claimed a participation in the honors, the prerogatives, and the throne of his Father. No creature could advance such pretensions without arrogance and impiety. We might add, that at his birth, he was expressly styled *Immanuel*, or *God with us*. At his baptism, a striking attestation was given to his divinity. In the course of his ministry, those names, perfections and prerogatives were attributed to him, which belong to none but Deity. In the epistles, his divine dignity is still more unequivocally and frequently declared.— In a word, I appeal to the reason and conscience of every thinking man, and ask ; if when our Savior is styled *GOD*, *GOD*

MANIFEST IN FLESH, GOD OUR SAVIOR, THE TRUE GOD, THE MIGHTY GOD, GOD BLESSED FOREVER ; if when he is represented as ALMIGHTY, OMNISCIENT, OMNIPRESENT ; the CREATOR, PRESERVER, and JUDGE of the world,—men yet demand farther evidence, they do not act an unreasonable part ? If after all this, they remain unconvinced, must it not be from some other cause than the want of evidence ?

Thirdly. It is objected, that the scripture, speaking of Jesus Christ, in connexion with the Father, frequently applies to him such expressions as signify inferiority and dependence. It declares, that *the head of Christ is God* ; that *the Son does nothing of himself* ; that *he does the work which the Father gave him to do* ; that he conducts *according to a commandment received from the Father* ; that *he does not know the day and hour of the last judgment* ; and in a word, that *the Father is greater than he*. This objection, my brethren, deserves a serious consideration ; and I shall endeavor, not to evade, but fairly to meet and discuss it. One thing which obviously occurs in reply, and which even those who urge it, must grant to be true, is this : that if these expressions imply an inferiority in Christ to the Father, expressions of an opposite kind occur not less frequently He is expressly declared to be *God*, to be *equal with God*, to be *one with the Father*, and to *know all things*. Hence, then, it is clear beyond dispute, that the scripture, in different parts, makes seemingly contrary declarations respecting Jesus Christ ; declarations in such a degree incompatible with each other, that they cannot be true in the *same respect*, and the *same sense*. Yet these seemingly contradictory assertions must be reconciled. And our adversaries are as much bound to effect this reconciliation as we. Have they any scheme to accomplish it ? No : they do not so much as pretend to this. Those expressions which imply the Savior's inferiority to the Father, they construe in their literal and most extensive sense. But those which indicate his *equality*, they either explain away, or expunge from the bible. Can this be a

suitable method of treating that holy book which was dictated by the infallible Spirit, and whose every word is eternal truth? It surely cannot. Some scheme must then be adopted, which will reconcile these apparently jarring texts. This scheme can be no other than that which considers Christ as *combining two natures in his one person*: and likewise as acting in a *subordinate office* as Mediator. In this way, seeming incongruities are reconciled, and the scripture appears worthy of its Author. Thus, and thus alone, each class of texts before mentioned, receives a natural unforced construction. On this hypothesis, Christ is God; and he is man, and Mediator. As God, he is equal and one with the Father. As man, he is inferior to him. As God, he knows all things. As man, he must be ignorant of many; and even as Mediator, he may be said *not to know them* in this sense; that it is no part of his mediatorial office and commission to make them known. He is God; and therefore acts in all things from the dictates of his own sovereign pleasure. He is man, and Mediator; and in these characters, receives and executes the commands of the Father. Let the advocates of any other scheme make the scripture speak a consistent language, if they can.

Fourthly. It has been objected, that the very names of *Father* and *Son* imply the inferiority of the latter. We reply, that this is by no means clear; nor is it even probable. The sense usually attached to these expressions among men, does not apply here; except in this regard, that the Son of God is of the same *nature* with the Father. But this, far from arguing inferiority, argues a real equality. It argues, not *posteriority of existence*, but *self-existence* and *eternity*. And the argument is strengthened, when we add, that the Jews understood Christ's calling God his *Father*, as a *making of himself equal with God*. They considered the expression as blasphemous. They declared that though a *man*, he *made himself God*. And as our Savior said nothing by way of retraction; as he did not deny, that in

claiming to be the *Son of God*, he made himself God, we cannot rationally doubt that this is the real import and force of the expression.

Other scriptures, in the moment in which they represent Christ as the Son of God, exhibit striking and irresistible evidence of his equality with the Father. *No one*, saith Christ, knoweth the *Son*, but the *Father*. In another passage, *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father*. The former expression implies, that Christ is incomprehensible by all creatures: the latter, that he knows the Father as perfectly as he is known by him. Both, therefore, strongly attest his divinity. Elsewhere he declares, that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*. Why? *That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the *Father* is represented as addressing the "*Son*" in this style: *Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever*. Much critical ingenuity, and learned labor have been employed to torture the original of this text into a different meaning. But common sense revolts. And the passage, in its natural and just construction, affords decisive evidence of the true and eternal divinity of the Son.

Fifthly. An objection against the deity of Christ has been drawn from that passage in the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which it is declared; *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him which did put all things under him, that God may be all in all*. But this passage doubtless has reference to the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, in distinction from the absolute kingdom of God, as Creator. This mediatorial kingdom, when all its interesting and glorious purposes shall have been accomplished, shall have an end. Christ will solemnly resign it into the hands of his Father; and as man and Mediator, will explicitly subject *himself* to him. But with much force and justice

it has been remarked, that "Christ's delivering up the kingdom to God the Father, no more proves that he will, in all respects, cease to be a king, or to have any farther dominion, than the Father's delivering the kingdom to the Son, proves that the Father himself then ceased to be a king, and parted with his own dominion over all." Christ's essential kingdom, which he possesses as God, is interminable. Nor will he, in his human nature cease to wear the honors of his mediatorial offices and works, nor to appear as the glorious Head of that beloved Church which he has purchased with his blood. But after his great commission shall have been fulfilled and resigned, the GOD-HEAD, including the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be exhibited and glorified as *all in all*; and without the intervention of a Mediator, will govern all creatures and worlds for evermore.

Sixthly. It has been objected to the deity of Christ, that in one instance, at least, he refused the ascription of divine perfection to himself, by replying to one who called him "Good Master," "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one; that is God." But a momentary attention to his passage may convince us that a *contrary* construction is far more natural. Our Savior doubtless considered the person addressing him as ascribing a divine perfection to one whom *he* viewed as a mere creature. By this gentle rebuke, therefore, he seems to call upon him, either to retract his ascription, or be consistent, and own him as God. The passage, therefore, far from invalidating the Savior's divinity, affords a positive argument in its support.

Seventhly. It may be thought by some, that our Savior's reply to the mother of Zebedee's children, is incompatible with his divinity. To her request that they might be permitted to "sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom," he is represented as answering, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared by my Father."—But

the translation is, in this instance, erroneous; and communicates an idea of which there is no trace in the original. Let the words which our translators have *supplied*, and which are printed in italics, be expunged; and let the particle *but* be exchanged for *except*, (which is here the correct rendering) and we shall have the true meaning of the passage:—*Such honor is not mine to give; except to those for whom it is prepared by my Father.* Thus it will be found, that our Savior does not disclaim the power of awarding the distinguished honors and felicities of his kingdom; but simply declares the *rule* by which he will award them. These distinctions will be made in correspondence with the eternal counsels and appointments of the Father—a declaration which no wise derogates from his divine dignity and glory.*

* Learned Socinians, particularly of late, have multiplied comments on the original of the new Testament; and industriously circulated the idea, that a more correct translation than the common, would give material strength to their cause. But the friends of the Savior's deity have little ground of alarm. Nor need they regret the critical zeal of their opponents. It has proved contagious. The spirit of investigation has EXTENDED itself; and truth can never suffer by investigation. Men of talents and learning have pushed their researches far into the original languages of scripture, and into its distinguishing doctrines. The result is, that not only new PROOFS of the divinity of Christ have been discovered, but new SOURCES of evidence have been laid open. As an instance, I feel impelled to mention some recent discoveries respecting the GREEK ARTICLE, made by MR. GRANVILLE SHARP, a British writer. By a critical and laborious investigation of the uses of this article in the new Testament, he has found much new evidence of the divinity of Christ, in passages which are wrongly translated in the common version. One of his fundamental principles is this: that WHEN TWO PERSONAL PRONOUNS ARE CONNECTED BY THE COPULATIVE KAI, IF THE FORMER HAS THE DEFINITIVE ARTICLE, AND THE LATTER HAS NOT, THEY BOTH RELATE TO THE SAME PERSON. By the application of this simple principle, he has derived many clear and unanswerable testimonies to the divinity of Christ, from passages which, in the common translation, have rather a contrary appearance. I might instance in 2 Thess. 1, 12; which, according to the proposed and correct translation, stands thus:

I will name but one objection more. It is drawn from that reply of our Savior to the Jews who charged him with blasphemy in making himself God. "Is it not written," saith he, "in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods, to 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?"—Some would have it thought that our Savior, in this passage, claims a sort of metaphorical divinity, such as belonged to the Jewish magistrates; and that he entirely disclaims every other. But such a construction is superficial and unmeaning. The true construction is probably this. The Jewish magistrates were types of Christ. Their authority in the church was a faint emblem of his. Hence they were denominated gods. "The scripture cannot be broken;" therefore types must have their antitypes. "How dare you then," the Savior seems to say, "charge blasphemy on me, for asserting my equality and oneness with the Father; since I am the true Messiah, divinely set apart, and sent into the world; and thus the antitype of those types; the substance of those shadows; and all that in *reality*, which they were but in *name* and *representation*."*—Here then, instead of a renunciation of our Savior's claims to divinity, we have an explicit, a forcible and public avowal of them.—But I pass to shew,

In the THIRD place, that this doctrine of the deity of Christ, considered in its aspects and consequences, is a doctrine of great

"According to the grace of JESUS CHRIST, OUR GOD AND LORD."—And in Titus 2, 13; which should be read, "Looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearance of OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST." Mr. SHARP's general principles, and his mode of applying them, are sanctioned by the most eminent British critics and scholars; and his publication is doubtless worthy the most attentive perusal of every biblical student.

* See Dr. GUYSE in loco.

importance. This is a most interesting part of the subject, and would afford ample scope for a sermon. But I must restrain myself; and offer a few hints only, on which your meditations will easily enlarge.

The opposers of the Savior's divinity, especially in modern times, are prone to represent the doctrine as merely speculative; and, even in that view, of comparatively little importance. But we cannot, without being unfaithful to the cause of truth, refrain from remarking, that in whatever light it is considered, it appears a doctrine of primary importance and interest. Nor would it be difficult to show, that it has an influence on every part of experimental and practical religion.—We might remark,

In the first place, that it affects the very foundations of christian faith and hope. It cannot be a matter of small moment whether the object of our confidence, the foundation on which we build our eternal hopes, is a creature, or the infinite God. If the Savior be not divine, where is our atonement? Where our justifying righteousness? Where the grace we need to conquer our corruptions, to sustain us in death, and carry us triumphantly through it? What satisfying evidence can we have, that he is an *adequate*, as well as a suitable Savior? What evidence, that he will not fail us in the last extremity? An Apostle could say; *I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is ABLE to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* Every christian may say the same, if he has evidence that he in whose hands he has deposited an immortal soul, is divine; but not otherwise. The best and greatest of creatures may disappoint his hope. *The only wise God, and he alone, is able to keep him from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.**

Farther; it is well known that *love of God*, and a *grateful sense of h.s. love* in our redemption, are represented in scripture

* Jude 24, 25:

as the ruling passions of the christian's bosom, and the great, prompting principles of his conduct. Were it possible that a *creature* could redeem us, and had it pleased God to provide such a creature, the favor would be great indeed : but it is difficult to perceive how it could deserve those exalted encomiums, those enraptured celebrations, of which the scripture is so full. How could it be conceived such a sublime and stupendous mystery, that the GREAT SUPREME, who by a word, could call into being millions of the most excellent creatures, should give *one* of this description, to redeem and save a world ? How could this love be properly styled *love that passes knowledge* ? How could it be represented as having lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights absolutely immeasurable ? And with what propriety could it be argued, that because God has not withheld such a *creature*, therefore he will certainly give us *all things* ; all the blessings of grace and glory, of earth and heaven ? But if we suppose that the Redeemer is the Son of God, infinitely superior to all creatures, we are ushered at once into a new world. We perceive the meaning and force of those Apostolic expressions : *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* At such a thought, what heart does not kindle into the liveliest ardors of love ? What bosom does not heave with inexpressible emotions of gratitude to the CONDESCENDING REDEEMER, the DIVINE PHILANTHROPIST ? Who is not ready to breathe out the poet's animated strains :

Talk we of MORALS ? O thou BLEEDING LOVE !
 Thou maker of new morals to mankind !
 The grand morality is love to THEE !

Again ; Christ is continually exhibited as the great object of our obedience ? *He died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.*

Now if he who thus claims our unlimited obedience and devotion, is God, all appears natural, and fit, and proper. If Jesus is divine, he is an adequate object of our obedience. And surely, by stooping from heaven to earth, to redeem and save us, he has obtained the strongest possible claims upon our entire and everlasting devotion. But if he were a creature, would not the very demand of such homage be *erecting the standard of rebellion* against the MAJESTY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH? Could we comply with the demand, without being guilty of the grossest idolatry?—without impiously robbing our Creator and our God of his inalienable right?

In a word; the employment and bliss of heaven are frequently represented in scripture as consisting in praising, glorifying and enjoying JESUS CHRIST. “Father, I will,” (this is his own prayer) “that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Agreeably, the Apostle Paul expresses an ardent *desire to depart, and to be with Christ*, which he feels is *far better* than to be here. And saints who have taken leave of mortality, are described as *beholding the face of the Lamb forever*, and bearing *his name in their foreheads*. They are described as singing the *new song*: “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” Upon this, millions of *angels*, as if unwilling to be outdone in giving glory to the Redeemer, sing, in solemn response: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” The redeemed then resume their enraptured celebrations. “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever.” “What words,” says an excellent commentator, “could more fully and emphatically declare, that Christ is and ought to be worshipped, equally with the Father, by all creatures, to all eternity? Will any one, after reading this, assert that he is a mere man, or a created be-

ing ; or that it is idolatry to worship him ?” What we would particularly remark, however, is this : that such an employment must be perfectly congenial and delightful, it must afford an everlasting gratification, to those who have learned to view Christ as God, to love him as God, to trust him as God, to adore him as God, and expect their everlasting felicity from him as God. But is it not a serious question, whether those who deny the Savior’s divinity, are prepared for this felicity ? Could they relish it ? Were they even admitted within the walls of the new Jerusalem, must they not be *dumb*, having never learned a note of the new and everlasting song, sung by the redeemed of the Lord ?——But I forbear ; and close the subject by a few reflections.

First. If Christ is truly and properly God ; if this doctrine is as clear in its evidence, and as important in its connexions and consequences as we have seen, then it follows, that every opposite doctrine is a great and dangerous error. Indeed, to rob the Redeemer of divine honour and glory, is not merely a great error, but a great sin. If those who do this, should find themselves at last in a *mistake* ; if, instead of coming for their final destiny to the bar of a creature, they should come before the omniscient and almighty God, how great must be their consternation ! It is not for mortals to anticipate the sentence of that tremendous day. Still, for all of the character described, we may well tremble ; we may well drop a tear. We have much reason to apprehend, that they have little acquaintance with themselves ; and but faint impressions of the evil of sin, and of the purity and majesty of that God whom it offends. Should the divine glory flash on their minds ; should they obtain that painful, but necessary knowledge, the knowledge of their own guilt and pollution, they will find, methinks, that they *need* an infinite Savior ; and are undone without one. In the mean time, who can sufficiently regret, that a doctrine so essential in the Christian scheme, so important to the life and power

of religion, should meet with such increasing neglect and opposition in our land. In this favored land, once so remarkable for the purity of its faith and practice, it has become common, deplorably common, to doubt, to deny, to ridicule the divinity of the *Lord who bought us*. Unwearied efforts are made to pour contempt on those doctrines on which our Fathers built their hopes in life, and in death; and to give currency to a superficial, unmeaning, lifeless religion, which has little of christianity beside the name. Thus is moral poison diffused through a thousand channels. Thus are the best and dearest interests of immortal creatures sported with. Thus are opened the sluices of absolute infidelity.—Take away the deity of Christ; and you remove the main pillar which supports the fabric of christianity. Soon his atonement is denied, his intercession disregarded, the evil of sin thought lightly of, and eternity forgotten. Men live and die without God, and without hope; *heathens* with christian names; and principally differenced from heathens unchristianized, by a vast accession of guilt.*——My reverend Fathers and Brethren;

* Seriously entertaining these apprehensions respecting the tendency of antitrinitarian doctrines, and the aspects of the present time, I have thought it a sacred duty, however painful, to express them. Many, I doubt not, who, from one cause or another, may incline to think more favorably of the doctrines in question, are candid inquirers after truth. Some, it may be hoped, who have actually embraced them, have neither in speculation traced them into their pernicious consequences, nor in practice exhibited their corrupting effects. Should a single person of either description, be induced by any thing suggested above, to pause and contemplate the subject in the light of truth and eternity, the writer will be amply rewarded; nor will he much regret the charge of narrowness and bigotry which will doubtless by many be attached to this undisguised exposure of his views and feelings.

A much more particular explanation might have been given, of the sentiments designed to be opposed; as likewise of their congeniality with the corruption of the human heart, and their consequent tendency to cherish, to confirm and increase that corruption. But this would have protracted the sermon to an immoderate length. The following just and

if we have any regard for the honor of our Redeemer, or the souls of men, we shall not be silent, or inactive at such a time. We shall boldly stand up for the truth. We shall watch and guard against the thousand nameless arts and efforts of error and irreligion. We shall especially oppose ourselves with vigor to those false doctrines which aim at the very vitals of christianity, and which thus threaten to spread moral death and desolation all around. Let us be thankful that we have a DIVINE SAVIOR to preach—a Savior not only *suitable*, but *all-sufficient* for the wants and woes of our dying fellow-creatures. And let it animate us to think, that while we preach his *unsearchable riches*, he will afford us his all-gracious presence to support, to cheer, to prosper, and to bless us.

Secondly. The doctrine of the deity of Christ strikingly displays the guilt and danger of those who live in habitual neglect of him, and opposition to his gospel. It is an alarming thought, that as his dignity, excellence and glory are infinite and indefinable, their sin and perverseness in treating him thus, are proportionate. In rejecting Jesus Christ, and his offered salva-

striking remarks on the subject, extracted from the EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE, are calculated to supply the deficiency; and they are recommended to the serious attention of every reader. May they operate as an effectual caution against the errors reprobated!

“To consider the Redeemer as a mere fallible and peccable man - - -
 - - - - - to reject salvation by grace, the atonement of the Savior, and the influences of the Spirit—to affirm the merit of supposed virtue, while at the same time its standard is reduced extremely low---to represent sin as an evil infinitely less, both in its guilt, and its demerit, than serious Christians universally consider it---to represent the future consequences of sin as inexpressibly less tremendous than the scriptures at least SEEM to describe---cannot but be most agreeable and welcome to the haughty, the self-enamored, the worldly-minded, the lover of a little DECENT dissipation, the man who is striving to soothe a disturbed conscience, the unfledged youth who is exquisitely delighted with his fancied superiority to vulgar prejudices, and the semi-infidel, who is too well instructed, to be able to reject the argumentative evidences of divine Revelation.”

tion, they practically despise the eternal God ; they trample on his well-beloved and eternal Son, and seem determined to work their dismal way to destruction, through his tears, and wounds, and blood. This is no tragic representation. It is grounded on the express declarations of scripture. Let every impenitent sinner think of this. At the same time, let him think of that glorious, awful day, when the Savior will be revealed as the Judge ; and when the wicked will be ready to think even perdition light, could they but avoid his flaming eye, his insupportable frown. Think of that day when the kings of the earth, and the great men, the rich, the prosperous, and the proud, shall say “ to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ? ”

Finally. This great doctrine of the deity of Christ speaks a language of encouragement and consolation to the trembling and desponding soul. Are there those who, prest with depravity and guilt, can scarce believe that the mercy of the gospel can ever reach *them*, or that they have any concern in its invitations ? Let them think a moment whose this mercy, and these invitations are. O sinners ! look to Jesus. He is the Savior you want. Were he less than God, you might well despair. But banish the disheartening thought. He is *God all-sufficient* ; therefore he is *mighty to save*. His person is divine ; therefore his atonement is infinite ; his blood can cleanse from crimes red as crimson, or black as hell. He is God ; he has therefore infinite compassion and patience to bear with creatures the most guilty and provoking, and to save them forever. He is God ; and can subdue your strongest corruptions, and most inveterate foes. He is God unchangeable ; nothing therefore shall ever separate those who trust in him, from his love. Like a God, he pardons ; like a God, he comforts, blesses and saves. O come ; lay your guilt at the foot of his cross. Commit your precious,



perishing souls to his hands Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,
and you shall never perish. You shall have a friend in death.
The almighty Savior, the compassionate Shepherd, will go with
you through that dismal vale. And having past the terrors and
the gloom, you shall come forth into the light of his counte-
nance, and adore, and celebrate, and enjoy his love forever.
You shall sing the song, which angels cannot sing, *to him who loved
you, and washed you from your sins, in his own blood.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 517 332 8 ●