

Unitarianism Defined*

Lecture Three: Inferiority and Subordination of the Lord Jesus Christ

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My present object, as an expounder and defender of the Unitarian faith, is to show the Inferiority and Subordination of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the Only True God the Father; in contradistinction to the popular or orthodox belief of his Supreme Deity.

On this point, as upon all points of Christian faith, the teachings of the Scriptures must be final. Whatever view of our Lord they inculcate, no other can be maintained by any Christian believer, by any Protestant at least.

A thorough investigation of this subject supposes of course that we have first the true text of the original Scripture; or second, a true or correct Translation of that text. If it be urged that such questions are beyond the reach of the mass of readers, I must admit that they are; but from that very fact springs one of the most serious and important duties of the Christian Ministry. Why set apart and prepare, by long courses of profound and laborious study and mental discipline, a class of men to be devoted to that ministry, if it be not to qualify them as religious teachers as well as pastors; to interpret on their responsibility to God the Great Charter of the Christian Faith; to give the people the results of their investigations; and while, as respects everything necessary to salvation, the simplest person may open the Bible and gain all needed light, to show that the conclusions which, by prayer and study, they have been led to adopt, are to be taken as true, and on a like

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responsibility received and held? Error always must be harmful and dangerous, or God would not have interposed by His revealed word. I do not say, as is often said in Christian pulpits, that unless you accept the Creed of a particular church there is no hope of salvation for you; but I do say that if there be error in any Creed, if it do not square throughout in every part and parcel with Holy Scripture, no matter by what human authority imposed, we are unhesitatingly bound to reject it; under the same solemn responsibility which presses upon us for the right use of every talent, opportunity, privilege which is ours; nay, more, because the interests involved are paramount to any earthly considerations.

A thorough investigation supposes, in the third place, that we arrive at a true or just interpretation of the sacred text. Such an interpretation must greatly depend upon the solution of the question, whether the words of the writer are to be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense. Undoubtedly the literal sense is in all cases to be preferred, except it violate common sense; or on its face is self-contradictory or absurd; or contradict other and plain statements or declarations of Scripture — since Scripture must be consistent and harmonious with itself. Again; obscure passages are to be explained by those which are more perspicuous, clear and explicit; so that, wherever possible, Scripture may explain itself or be its own interpreter. Still again; the great principle in this connection, the one always to be borne in mind, is that the Bible is to be interpreted as all ancient books are; that no superstitious feeling of its peculiar sanctity is to disturb or embarrass that natural course of investigation into its contents or its significance which we should pursue in the study of any other ancient record which has come down to us. Occasional expressions are to be explained by the general, pervading sense or tenor of the book. Strict regard, as far as possible, is to be had to the time, place, circumstances of the writer, to the manners and customs of the age and country. Rhetorical, figurative, allegorical expressions or allusions are to be specially noted, and their plain import and meaning unfolded and made clear.

For example, our Lord declares of the bread at the Last Supper, “This is my body” — of the wine, “This is my blood.” Deny the principles above stated, insist on the literal meaning of Scripture being in all cases accepted, and how impregnable becomes the position of the Roman Catholic Church, including as it does to this hour the largest part of Christendom, when it plants itself on the precise words of Christ, and then demands assent to its astounding dogma of Transubstantiation!

“If,” says the late Prof. Stuart of Andover:

if there be any book on earth that is addressed to the reason and common sense of mankind, the Bible is preeminently that book. What is the Bible? A revelation from God. A REVELATION! If truly so, then it is designed to be *understood*; for if it be not intelligible, it is surely no *revelation*. It is a revelation through the medium of human language; language such as men employ; such as was framed by them, and is used for their purposes. It is a revelation *by men* (as instruments) and *for men*. It is made *more humano* (after the manner of men) because that on any other ground it might as well not be made at all. If the Bible is not a book which is not intelligible in the same way as other books are, then it is difficult to see how it is a *revelation*. There are only two ways in which the Bible or any other book can be understood; the one is by miraculous illumination, in order that we may have a right view of contents which otherwise would not be intelligible; the other is by the application of such hermeneutical (explanatory) principles as constitute a part of our rational and communicative nature.

Again he says:

The Bible is to be interpreted in the same way as other books are. Why not? When the original Scriptures were first spoken or written (for very much of them, in the Prophets for example, was *spoken* as well as written), were they designed to be *understood* by the men who were addressed? Certainly you will not deny this. But who were these men? Were they inspired? Truly not; they were good and bad, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant; in a word, of all classes, both as to character and knowledge.¹

I know how often it has been charged that Unitarians are always prompt to find interpolations, flaws, false readings, mistakes, and so forth, in the sacred text. But not more so than others who are competent to the work of criticism. All true biblical criticism — a science which has in our own day made such rapid progress, and constitutes so important a department of study in every theological school throughout the country and throughout Christendom; which has numbered on the lists of its devotees some of the noblest minds from century to century, in every age and branch of the church — biblical criticism looks to the purity of the text, before engaging in the work of *exegesis* or interpretation. Our Trinitarian brethren themselves have

¹ *Biblical Repository*, vol. 2, 129, 130.

laid the Christian world under heavy obligations for their many examples of impartial, careful, and able critics and expositors of the sacred text; and let it be remembered that there is not a passage in the Old or the New Testament ever cited upon any particular point in controversy between the Unitarian and Trinitarian or orthodox churches, concerning which we have not the highest Trinitarian authority for the Unitarian interpretation. We often avail ourselves of their labors gladly and gratefully. You have already observed this in my previous Lectures, and you will observe it more as I proceed.

So far as the integrity of the sacred text itself is concerned, we are indeed indebted, for the very best standard editions of the Greek New Testament, to the indefatigable industry and critical exactness of German Trinitarian critics like Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf. Bishop Marsh, noting the “severe” rules which Michaelis recommended for the revision and re-editing of the Greek text, says of Griesbach: “He has prescribed to himself rules equally severe . . . for he has admitted critical conjecture in no instance whatsoever; and where he has expunged, corrected, or added, the evidence (which he has accurately produced) is, in point of authority, three and four-fold in his favor.”² All biblical scholars at home and abroad acknowledge that an epoch in the criticism of the text commenced with the first publication of Griesbach’s Greek Testament, in 1775-77; and now that we have the latest results of Tischendorf’s and Tregelles’ researches brought down almost to this very hour, we may safely say “that the means which we have at our command for editing the Greek New Testament very far exceed those which we possess in the case of any ancient heathen writer whose works have come down to us.”³

Really it seems passing strange, when we think of the services rendered to Truth, the highest Truth, by the labors of such men as I have named, that it should ever be made a cause of reproach against any class of believers that they showed themselves anxious to have the sacred text in its utmost possible integrity, jealous for its entirest purity. Surely, if it were worthy the devotion of a life, as has been the case with so many of the classic scholars of modern Europe, to settle the true reading of some old Greek or Latin heathen writer, much more were it, when the inquiry involves the very teachings of the Anointed of God, and of the chosen and inspired heralds of his divine gospel to the world.⁴

Let me in passing make another remark on what should always be borne

² Marsh’s *Michaelis*, vol. 2, 877, note 2.

³ Norton’s *Statement of Reasons*, 2nd edition, appendix, 440, note C.

in mind in reading and studying the Scripture, whether in the original or the vernacular. The punctuation, the divisions into chapters and verses are all modern, and of course without authority. The most ancient MSS. are with few exceptions without any points. The points at present in the New Testament are coeval with the invention of printing; and in the early printed editions varied in their placing with almost every fresh issue. The division into chapters still in use was the work of Cardinal Hugo, who introduced it into the edition of the Bible which he published in the thirteenth century. That into verses is still more modern; and is traced to Robert Stephens, who introduced it into his edition of 1551. The titles of chapters, and running inscriptions at the top of the pages in our English Bibles are the work of King James' translators, and have nothing corresponding in the original Scriptures. Therefore, when we find printed over the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, in many editions, the words, "The Divinity and Preexistence of Jesus Christ," we should remember that they are merely the words of the translators or editors, and no legitimate part of the Scripture; they are wholly without authority, and may be rejected by every reader. The Bible, indeed, when professedly "without note or comment," should be printed without these titles and inscriptions, since they virtually are notes or comments, and often mislead the uninstructed, who mistake them as parts of the original book. It were better also, as in some modern copies, that the Bible should be printed in paragraphs; the divisions of chapters and verses being at the most indicated by numerals in the margin, for the sake of convenient reference. These divisions often break the connection and mar or obscure the sense. So there are many words in our English version which are printed in the *italic* character, which is used to indicate the fact that no words answering to them exist in the Greek text; but they were inserted by the translators on their own authority alone, though in the hope, very probably, of bringing out the sense more clearly.

After these simple statements as preliminary, I proceed to the precise topic before us — the Inferiority and Subordination of our Lord Jesus Christ, as contra-distinguished from his Supreme Deity. The doctrine of the Trinity, which has already been treated, involves, and indeed declares, according to the popular theology, the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ. Whatever force,

⁴ Griesbach's Greek Testament was first published in this country in 1808, at Boston, from the original German edition; under the joint care of the celebrated Rev. Mr. Buckminster and Mr. Wm. Wells, of that city, both Unitarians. They discovered and corrected several errors in the original.

then, belongs to the argument already urged against the one, equally makes against the other. Inasmuch, however, as we hear nowadays less of the Trinity, and more of the Deity of Christ; as, indeed, this is the great point in controversy concerning the Saviour, and is in some quarters so stated, pressed, and acted upon, as virtually to negative or destroy any proper Trinity in the sense of Three Coequal Persons, each of whom is God, it becomes necessary very carefully to consider the topic presented.

Pray remember that I am here contending, as a Christian Unitarian, only against the dogma of Christ's *Supreme Deity*. His *Divinity* is not in controversy. The attempt is constantly made, I know, to excite odium on the one hand, or throw dust in the eyes of inquirers on the other, by alleging that Unitarians do not believe in the Divinity of the Saviour. Nevertheless they do, as firmly and earnestly as any branch of the church. A being may be Divine without being the Supreme God, and such is Christ. Unitarians believe in his Divinity. They regard, honor, revere, and love him, as the Lord and Head of his church; second only to the Supreme Jehovah in the hearts and consciences of men; the visible vicegerent and representative of the Most High.

The whole tenor and drift of Holy Scripture must leave this view profoundly impressed on the mind of any unbiased and thoughtful reader. It everywhere expresses the reverse of the doctrine of Christ's Supreme Deity; everywhere imports his Inferiority and Subordination to God, even the Father. To this hour the existence of the Jews as a distinct people, scattered though they be among all nations of the earth, yet holding so tenaciously to the strict, simple, personal Unity of God, is a standing testimony to the fact that their sacred books, the Old Testament, contain no other or conflicting doctrine. To this day, the assertion of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and of the Godhead or Supreme Deity of Christ, is the great stumbling-block in the way of the conversion of that people. And no wonder, when one remembers how uniform, how emphatic, are the declarations of the strict and sole Deity of their Jehovah, of His unrivaled, underived Sovereignty; the solemn manner in which those declarations were at various times promulgated, and the awful sanctions by which they were guarded. I confess my own profoundest amazement at the thought that any unprejudiced reader of the Old Testament record should suppose for one moment that the God whom the Jews worshipped could be any other than strictly One, One Person, One Being, One GOD.

Still, we sometimes hear it asserted — loosely enough, indeed — that “from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible teaches the Trinity and the Godhead of Christ.” Aside of this language, quite too loose for serious consideration,

there are some texts in the Old Testament which in the first place it is proper to notice.

The first is Isaiah 7:14, cited and applied to Christ in St. Matthew's Gospel, 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." The whole force of the argument for our Lord's Supreme Deity, drawn or attempted to be drawn from this passage, consists in the significance of a Hebrew name, and its being applied in Matthew to Christ. But it was a common Hebrew custom to give names to children significant or commemorative of Providential or Divine favors expected, or conferred at the time. For one example of this, you have the case of Hagar's child, whom Abram was directed by the angel to call Ishmael, which signifies God shall hear, or God hath heard (Gen. 16:11). Admitting that the passage in Isaiah was strictly prophetic of our Lord, even Bishop Lowth says that in its "historical" or primary sense it referred to a child then, that is in the prophet's time, to be born; and that before he should reach the age of knowing to refuse the evil and choose the good, that is within a few years (compare Is. 8:4), the enemies of Judah should be destroyed.⁵ Hence that child was to be called "God with us"; God then manifesting Himself remarkably for the rescue of His people. Take, then, "the higher secondary sense" in which it is applied in Matthew to Christ, and the same meaning results. At his Advent, God was in him about to bestow the choicest spiritual blessings on mankind, to work a far higher deliverance than that of Judah. In this sense, most gratefully do all Christian Unitarians believe that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.

But further, to show the utter futility of any attempt to prove the Supreme Deity of Christ from the application of this name to him, think of the consequences to which such a mode of reasoning must lead. The argument proves, if it prove anything, altogether too much. If the name Immanuel applied to Christ prove him to be verily God, what shall we say of the name "Abiel," which is being interpreted, "God my Father"; or "Eli," "My God"; or "Elihu," "My God Himself"; or "Elijah," "God the Lord, or Jehovah God"; or "Ithiel," "God with me"? Well might the late Prof. Stuart admit that "To maintain, as some have done, that the name 'Immanuel' proves the doctrine in question (Christ's Divine nature), is a fallacious argument. Is not Jerusalem called 'Jehovah our righteousness'? And is Jerusalem divine because such a name is given to it?"⁶

Again, there is the passage in Isaiah 9:6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us

⁵ Lowth's *Isaiah*, vol. 2, 85.

a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Admitting this passage to be a prophetic description of Christ, it is obvious that the argument from it for his Supreme Deity mainly rests on the two titles — “the Mighty God” and “the Everlasting Father.” That he is “Wonderful,” that he is a “Counselor” — nay, a “Wonderful Counselor” — as Castalio, Doederlein, Gataker, and other Trinitarians read the two words, in connection, and have high rabbinical authority therefor — that he is “The Prince of Peace,” preeminently, gloriously, no believer in Christ doubts for a moment. But what is the force of the other two phrases, or how are they applicable to him?

As to the first, Aquila the Jew, the Seventy,⁷ Theodotian, and Symachus, in their ancient Greek versions of the Old Testament, and the last of them not more recent than the year 200 of our era, all omit the Hebrew word (*Al*) rendered in our version *God*, and read “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty.” Le Clerc, a profound biblical Trinitarian scholar and critic, translates the passage — “Wonderful, Divine (*Al*) Counselor, Mighty.” Grotius, certainly no less distinguished, also a Trinitarian — “Consulter of the Mighty God,” i.e. one who, in all things, asked counsel of God. Gesenius renders the phrase “Mighty Hero.”⁸ No higher Hebraic authority can be quoted than Gesenius. In Ezekiel 31:11 our own translators have rendered the identical Hebrew phrase into the English “Mighty One.” Prof. Noyes, of Harvard University, renders the phrase in his *Translations of the Prophets*, volumes which should be in the hands of every reader of the Old Testament, “Mighty Potentate,” and in this substantially agrees with Luther and De Wette, and as above with Gesenius.

Here, surely, is ample authority, even the highest Trinitarian authority, for understanding the phrase in its application to Christ in a sense far lower than that of a declaration of his Supreme Deity. Besides, Christ and his apostles were familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, which constituted, indeed, the chief literature of the nation. They constantly quoted, and sought and used illustrations from them. Is it credible that if he or they ever supposed or

⁶ *Letters to Channing*, Miscel., 148.

⁷ The Septuagint or Seventy is the translation into Greek of the Hebrew Bible, executed probably by or under direction of the Jewish Sanhedrin at Alexandria, which, in the second century before Christ, had become the residence of great numbers of that people. The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy or seventy-two members; hence the name of the translation.

⁸ In his *Jesaja*, h.l.; as cited by Gibbs in his *Hebrew Lexicon*, under “*Al*”; Andover ed., 1824.

understood, or much more knew, that Isaiah had in this passage foreshadowed or declared his Supreme Deity, they never should have cited or referred to the passage?

As to the second phrase — “Everlasting Father,” Bishop Lowth renders it in his translation — “Father of the Everlasting Age” or dispensation, that is, the Gospel; as Bishop Jewel, in Queen Elizabeth’s time, says: “Essay saith that Christ should be ‘*Pater futuri seculi*’; that is, the Father of the world to come; which is the time of the Gospel.” With this agrees Grotius; while Dr. Adam Clarke renders it exactly like Lowth. The Seventy translate it “Messenger of the Great Counsel” or design, and Le Clerc, “Perpetual Father”; because, he remarks, “Christ is perpetual or everlasting Father of all who shall believe in his religion.” Prof. Noyes retains the rendering of our Received Version in his note explaining the words to mean, very much like Le Clerc, “perpetual guardian and friend of his people.” Any one of these various interpretations of the phrase obviously preserves the Sovereignty and Supremacy of God, and subordinates our Lord to Him.

The entire passage, then, may thus be rendered, on the best critical authority — “Wonderful, Divine Counselor, Mighty; Father of the Everlasting Age; Prince of Peace.”

One more passage has been often cited by our Trinitarian brethren, and which I would briefly notice. It occurs in Jeremiah 23:5, 6: “Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.” Allowing, for the sake of argument, that this text refers to Christ, which is by no means clear — for Grotius thinks it rather refers to King Zerubbabel and the release of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity — then the exposition of Prof. Noyes, in the note to his translation of the passage, well expresses the prophet’s meaning. “This symbolical name” (“Jehovah our Righteousness,” or, as Dr. Noyes renders it, “Jehovah-is-our-salvation”) “was to be given to the glorious king, the Messiah here predicted, to denote that Jehovah would bring salvation to his people by his means, or to denote what is said in the two preceding lines, that ‘in his days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell securely.’”⁹ Dr. Ad. Clarke says: “I believe Jesus to be Jehovah; but I doubt whether this text calls him so. No doctrine so vitally important should be rested on an interpretation so dubious and unsupported by the text.”¹⁰ Dr. Blayney, in his note on the passage, having rendered it — “And this is his name which Jehovah shall call, Our Righteousness,” — says:

A phrase exactly the same as “and Jehovah shall call him so”; which . . . implies that God will make him such as he called him, that is, “our righteousness,” or the author and means of our salvation and acceptance. . . . I doubt not but some persons will be offended with me for depriving them, by this translation, of a favorite argument for proving the Divinity (Deity) of our Saviour from the Old Testament. But I cannot help it. I have done it with no ill design, but purely because I think, and am morally certain, that the text, as it stands, will not properly admit of any other construction. The LXX. have so translated it before me, in an age when there could not possibly be any bias of prejudice either for or against the before-mentioned doctrine; a doctrine *which draws its decisive proofs from the New Testament only*.¹¹

It may be “a favorite argument,” but surely it were a most inconclusive one. The very course of reasoning which would from this passage prove the proper and Supreme Deity of Christ would, from Exodus 17:15, prove the same of the altar which Moses built after the defeat of Amalek, or from 33:16 of this same prophet, prove the proper and Supreme Deity of the city of Jerusalem. Precisely the same language is, in the last-named passage, applied to her.

What the “decisive proofs from the New Testament” are, we shall see by and by. What sort of proofs are devisable and relied upon from the Old Testament we have now seen. None stronger or more “decisive” than those we have examined are cited therefrom by any class of Trinitarians to prove the doctrine of Christ’s Deity.¹²

That Christ is *a* God in a just sense, in the sense in which he himself (John 10:35) explained of others — as one “to whom the word of God came” — is beyond question. In this sense, angels, Moses, Samuel, the kings and judges of Israel are called gods. Seventeen passages at least of this character

⁹ Noyes’ *Prophets*, vol. 2, 273. Dr. Noyes adds in his note: “In regard to the rendering *salvation*, it is a secondary signification of the original term, which, denoting *righteousness*, was used to denote the *favor* of God consequent upon it, and hence, *deliverance*, *blessings*, *salvation*. See Gesenius’ *Lex*. That the substantive verb (is) should be supplied is evident from the application of the name to the city of Jerusalem in ch. 33:16, and from the application of similar names to various persons in the Old Testament; for instance, *Elijah*. It is not at all probable that he was called *My God the Lord*, or *My God, Jehovah*, but *Jehovah is my God*. So the common version correctly renders Ezek. 48:35, ‘The Lord *is* there.’”

¹⁰ Clarke’s *Commentary*, h.l. note.

¹¹ Blayney’s *Jeremiah*, h.l. note.

are to be found in the Old Testament.¹³ The question, therefore, is not whether Christ is ever called in Scripture, or even whether he be, a God; but in what sense? And then, I repeat, on his own express authority in the text just cited from St. John's Gospel, he is a God as being preeminently one "to whom the word of God came." This was his vindication of himself when charged by the cavilling Jews around him with blasphemy, because he had, as they alleged, "being a man, made himself God." In no other sense was he a God. This, we affirm, is the obvious sense. Not that he was the Supreme God, the one Living and True God, the God over all; because Scripture forbids such a belief. To believe that, we should demand nothing less, certainly, than the clear, express, unqualified, unmistakable declarations and testimony of Holy Writ. Let us pass, then, to the New Testament.

What I said before of the entire Scripture holds specially true of the New Testament, that its general tenor and drift are entirely adverse to the dogma of the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ; and express his inferiority and subordination to the Father, as "the Only True God." Do you ask what I mean by the general tenor and drift of Scripture? Precisely what is meant when the phrase is applied to any other book — namely, the first, the prevailing, the obvious impression, made by a careful perusal of the whole; as, for instance, when one reads the *Aeneid* or the *Iliad*, no doubt is felt that Virgil and Homer were polytheists. So in the New Testament, the first and the most obvious impression made is that our Lord is the Son of God, and not God Himself; that God is One and Supreme; that the doctrine of its pages is consistent and uniform throughout, on this point, with that of the Old Testament. One of the scribes asked Jesus: "Which is the first commandment of all?" And he replies in the very words of Moses: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is One Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:28-30). Accordingly, his constant allusions, his uniform habits of speech, his prayers, his whole deportment are in perfect and unbroken sympathy with this idea and doctrine, nay, with this grand paramount truth. The same may be said of the apostles.

¹² While these lectures were in process of delivery, my attention was called by an anonymous note to Daniel 3:25, where Nebuchadnezzar said: "And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." It is enough to say that Wintle, having rendered the passage "a Son of God," on the authority of Jerom and Symmachus, interprets it in his note "some angelic appearance." But the king himself, in verse 28, adverts again to the "appearance," and expressly calls it God's "angel" (Wintle's *Daniel*, 56, note).

¹³ Eg. Ps. 8:5; Judges 13:22; Exod. 7:1; 1 Sam. 28:13, 14; Ps. 82:1, 6; Exod. 15:11, etc.

But, more particularly; throughout the New Testament, Christ is uniformly kept distinct or distinguished from God. If distinct, then, of course, inferior — then not God Supreme. How explicit his own language! “This is Life Eternal, to know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”¹⁴ “We have peace with God,” says St. Paul, “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Two beings are here certainly brought into view. Quite as explicit as his Master’s is the same apostle’s language to Timothy: “One God, and One Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The apostolic benedictions at the beginning of the epistles are in corresponding form. “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7). So throughout Paul’s epistles. James begins thus: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter says: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:3). John in his second epistle: “Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, *the Son of the Father*” (2 John 5:3) — he adds, as though he would have no mistake on this matter. These are examples of what is the uniform style of the apostolic epistles, in which in seventeen passages this distinction is most carefully observed, and in which one Being alone is always called God, the other, without exception, Lord. So in their ascriptions, the same is observable. Thus, St. Paul: “To God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever” (Rom. 16:27). “Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph. 5:20). “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Col. 1:3). Thus, St. Peter: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:3). God is spoken of repeatedly as being “with Christ.”¹⁵ Eleven passages in St. John’s Gospel alone assert that Jesus “came from God” — “went to God.”¹⁶ Twice in his epistles, St. Paul speaks of Christ as “the image of God.”¹⁷ In one he is called “the express image of

¹⁴ John 17:3. These most explicit words of our Lord were uttered in solemn prayer to his God and our God, under circumstances and “at a moment fitted above all others for a clear and full declaration of the fundamental article of Christian belief.” I quote the words of Prof. Huntington, at the beginning of his “Sermon on the Trinity,” in his recently published, and in its practical portions admirable volume, entitled *Christian Believing and Living*. The words are indeed differently applied by him, but are specially pertinent to the case in hand. That sermon I have carefully studied, and cannot find in it the least strength added to the Trinitarian, or the first flaw detected in the Unitarian argument. If my readers would see the essential weakness of that sermon made manifest, let them turn to the masterly review of it in the *Christian Examiner* for March, 1860, and the “Two Discourses” of Rev. Thos. Starr King, delivered Jan. 7 and 14, 1860, published in pamphlet by Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston.

God” (Heb. 1:3). In one he is said to be “in the form of God” (Phil. 2:6). Whatever these passages and expressions mean, they assuredly show distinction of being.

Again, Christ is expressly declared to be inferior and subordinate to God the Father. He himself said: “My Father . . . is greater than all” (John 10:29) and yet more precisely, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). He is said to be “chosen,” “appointed,” “inspired,” “sanctified,” by God; “anointed,” “given,”¹⁸ and thirty-five times in St. John’s Gospel alone, “sent” by God. It is recorded that he came to do his Father’s will — came in the name of the Lord.¹⁹ In St. Matthew’s Gospel he is called the “Servant” of God.²⁰ Surely, the Being who is chosen, appointed, inspired, sanctified, etc., by another must be inferior to Him. Coming, nay, sent to do His will, and receiving His commandment,²¹ he must be subordinate to Him. The epithet servant, however “honorable,” as Mr. Yates says, “on account of the majesty of the person served,” nevertheless speaks for itself as expressive of the inferiority and subordination of our Lord to his God and Father, for which I contend.²²

But again; the wisdom and knowledge of Christ are declared to be derived; and if this be possible, if this be so, he must be inferior to the Source of that wisdom and knowledge, to the Being from whom he received it. “The Father loveth the son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.” “Jesus answered them and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” “I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”²³ What language could be more intelligible or emphatic? How impressive, in connection with the words of Isaiah! (40:13, 14). “Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being His counselor, hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of

¹⁵ E.g. John 3:2; Acts 10:38.

¹⁶ E.g. 3:2; 8:42; 13:3.

¹⁷ 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15.

¹⁸ Matt. 12:18; Luke 4:18; John 3:34. Any concordance will furnish the reader with references to the texts of Scripture, which are too numerous to be cited here.

¹⁹ John 4:34; 6:38; 12:49; Matt. 21:9.

understanding?" Moreover, our Saviour admits that his knowledge was limited; and consequently, Omniscience, the knowledge of all things, knowledge without limitation, and which is an essential, necessary attribute of the Supreme God, is not predicable of, does not belong to Christ. "Of that day and hour," said he, "knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son; but the Father." Thus in Mark's Gospel, while Matthew reads, "but my Father only." The Father, then, knew some things which the Son did not know. If you say "one thing," that makes no important difference. If He pleased to reserve even but one thing from His Son's knowledge, that is enough to show the inferiority, subordination, dependence of the Son. The language of our Lord is very remarkable. Had he then in his mind all that some of his followers to this day have held and taught in mystification of himself, it could hardly have been more distinct. "No man" knows of it; then of course in his human nature — in which Christ was, both in body and soul human, a man, according to the popular theology — our Lord did not know of it. The "angels" do not. "The Son" does not. This title, "the Son," must be taken, according to the popular theology, to denote our Lord's Divine nature, his Godhead; and even in that, then, he did not know "of that day or hour." To the Father only did that knowledge belong; and hence our Lord's inferiority, subordination, dependence on the Father for all that divine knowledge he possessed.

His power, also, was derived; and in that respect, therefore, he was subordinate to God the Father from whom he received it. 1. While he was upon earth, the witnesses of his miraculous works ascribed them to God, as His gift. After he had cured the paralytic, "the multitudes," says the Evangelist, "glorified God which had given such power unto men" (Matt. 9:8). When he had called back to life the widow's son, the standers-by "glorified God," and said: "God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:16). The apostles, after the ascension of their Lord, preaching his Gospel to Jews and heathen, thus spoke: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you." "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power; who went

²⁰ Matt. 12:18. In Acts 3:26; 4:27, 30, the word is the same in the Greek as in Matthew, and should be translated as there. See Robinson's *Lexicon of New Testament*, 608.

²¹ John 12:49; 14:31.

²² Yates' *Vindication*, 81.

²³ John 5:19. See the whole passage to verse 30, as bearing throughout on the point at issue. See also 8:16, 17; 12:49, 50.

about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.”²⁴ How express, too, is his own language: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father.” “The Son can do nothing of himself . . . the Father hath given him authority . . . I can of mine own self do nothing . . . the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”²⁵ Then remember his words at the grave of Lazarus. Martha evidently had no other ground of confidence in his power than as the gift of God. “I know,” she said, “that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” Our Lord seems to have “asked”; for he “lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me! And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe.” Believe — what? That I do this by my own independent power? No; but “that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.” As if he had said: “For the very purpose of convincing these people of my divine mission, I thus publicly, solemnly, express my dependence on Thee for the Power, Thy Gift, which I am about to exercise.”²⁶

2. In his state of exaltation, after he had left the earth, God is still the acknowledged source of his power; while the very fact that he is or could be “exalted” implies his subordination and inferiority to the Being who did or could exalt him. After his Resurrection, and when about to ascend, to “leave the world and go to the Father,” giving his parting commission to the apostles, he said: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). He did not even then say, when his personal mission on earth in the flesh was “finished” — as though he were about to resume a place, an authority, a power which he had once abandoned — “All power in heaven and in earth is mine again”; or, “All power in heaven and in earth, which of course I could not possess in that human nature which I now lay aside, but in my Divine Nature ever held and still hold”; but he said: “All power in heaven and in earth,” in the exalted state to which the Father now raises me, “is given unto me.” This is the obvious significance of his words, and amply borne out by other passages. “I appoint unto you,” he said to the disciples at the Last Supper, “a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me” (Luke 22:29). At the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter’s words were: “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of

²⁴ Acts 2:22; 10:38.

²⁵ John 5:19, 27, 30, 36.

the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”²⁷ So St. Paul: “God hath highly exalted him (Jesus) and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). What could be plainer, than that in his exaltation all his power is the gift of God, and held in subordination to the glory of the Father?

3. In one great province of his power, as Judge of the world, his authority and power are still conferred. “The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment.”²⁸ St. Peter declares it as the express commission of himself and his fellow-apostles, “to testify that it is he (Jesus) which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 11:42). This were enough. But there is a passage too remarkable to be here omitted. It occurs in St. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians; it forms a part of the Scripture selections in the office for the Burial of the Dead in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church; it probably forms part of the Burial Service as conducted by most Protestant ministers. I wonder that any Trinitarian can ever read it, or hear it read, and not feel, despite his hypothesis of the Double Nature of which I shall have more to say in a subsequent Lecture, how strikingly distinct is the apostle’s language in its expression of the subordination of the Son to the Father.

Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign till He [i.e. God] hath put all enemies under his [i.e. Christ’s] feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. For, He hath put all things under his feet. But, when it is said all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁶ John 11:22, 41, 42.

²⁷ Acts 2:32, 33, 36; see also 3:13; 5:31; 1 Pet. 1:21; Eph. 1:19-22; Rev. 2:26, 27.

In the grand consummation of Christ's mission and office, he is to "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." God (note v. 27) is to put "all things" under Christ's feet, except Himself; for the Supremacy is to remain with Him. This exception is manifest or obvious, because His own peculiar underived "glory" He "will not give to another," not even to His dear Son.²⁹ And when "all things" are thus "put under" him by God, the Son is still to be "subject," as he always was, to the Supreme and exhaustless Source of all his power; to the God that raised him up, commissioned and sent him into the world, and who has now exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts 5:31).

²⁸ John 5:22, 27. But read the whole remarkable testimony to the general subject of this lecture, contained in this entire passage from the nineteenth to the thirty-seventh verse inclusive.

²⁹ Isa. 42:8; 48:11.

