

The Self-Existence of Jesus Christ



WILLIAM ROMAINE (1714-1795)

THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

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by William Romaine (1714-1795)

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THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe
not that I am he,
ye shall die in your sins.
—John 8:24*

THIS is a very awakening scripture, and ought to rouse up your particular attention. The doctrine here maintained is the self-existence of Jesus Christ, which is not a mere speculative point. It is not an indifferent thing whether you believe it or not. But your eternal salvation is so much concerned in it that if you do not believe it, you will die in your sins and will have every one of them to answer for at the tribunal of God. Is not this an interesting subject? Is not every one of us nearly¹ concerned in what is to befall us after death? And has not our Lord here forewarned us of what is to befall them who deny His divinity?² They shall die in their sins. And this He repeats twice in the text, the more strongly to impress it upon their memories. And what is it then to die in their sins? Is it a light, trifling matter not worth your care and consideration? To die in the midst of the pollution of a sinful life, to be taken away with all the guilt of it upon your heads, and to find after death no atonement, no mediator, to protect you from the just indignation of the most holy God, ~~w~~Who has declared that He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity (Hab 1:13)—is all this of no consequence to you? Does not the danger come near enough to alarm even the most stupid and insensible sinner? But yet this is not the worst of dying in their sins. It is the most striking circumstance to consider to what a depth of misery your pollution and guilt must sink you. Sin and misery are inseparably connected; and none can deliver you from sin but He Who came to take away the sins of the world (Joh 1:29); and He cannot deliver you as man. He must be God Who can have merit sufficient to take away sin. Therefore, if you deny Him to be God, your sins remain; and misery must be your portion—misery, the greatest you can suffer in soul and body among the condemned spirits in hell for-ever and ever.

This is the meaning of dying in your sins; and can there be any truth more affecting, or any subject more interesting? Does not the very proposing it awaken your hopes and

¹ nearly – intimately; closely.

² divinity – deity.

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fears? Every one of you is concerned, at the peril of his eternal happiness, to come to a point in this case and to be determined; and therefore, men and brethren, let me entreat you to examine the matter strictly and solemnly. The divinity of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of the Christian religion. It is the first and principal article. The whole rests upon it. Even what is called the morality of the gospel receives its obligation from His being the true God. If He was in any respect inferior to the Father, Christianity would be altogether the most stupid and absurd system of religion and the most gross piece of idolatry that was ever invented in the world; for the Christian Church has always acknowledged Jesus Christ to be God co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, and has offered prayers and praises unto Him and served Him with every act of religious worship. And the Church of England has given Him divine honor in the same full and ample manner as He claimed it: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honor the Father" (John 5:23). May He send His Spirit into all your hearts and convince you that He is God indeed, while I am speaking upon the two propositions contained in the text.

First, Jesus Christ is the self-existent God. *Secondly*, If ye believe it not, ye shall die in your sins: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

1. Jesus Christ is the self-existent God

First, The self-existence of Jesus Christ is declared in these words, "believe...that I am," that I have existence in Myself, and exist by a necessity of nature. For I made all things, and without Me was not any-thing made that is made (Joh 1:3). I am the Creator, they are My creatures. And the Creator must exist in a different manner from the creatures. All things are dependent upon Me, and have only a derived existence. They are what I made them, and they continue as long as I support them. No creature ever came into life without My power; and when I take away their breath, they die, and turn again to their dust (Psa 104:29), so that they have only a dependent being, whereas My existence is necessary and underived. I AM is My incommunicable³ name, and what it means is My incommunicable attribute (Exo 3:14).

Thus our blessed Savior is the great and eternal I AM. He is Jehovah; for He exists in a different manner from all other beings and things, as the word Jehovah denotes. The Christian writers, as far as I know, are unanimous in their interpretation of this divine name; they all agree that it relates to the existence of the divine essence and is descrip-

³ incommunicable – unable to be imparted from one to another; "the incommunicable attributes are those of which there is nothing analogous in the creature (e.g. deity)"—*Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Alan Cairns (Chapel Library, 2013), 22.

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tive of that independent property by which Jehovah has existence in Himself, whereas all other beings and things derive their existence from Him. And to this the very Jews assent, acknowledging that Jehovah signifies the essence which necessarily exists. This, therefore, is a settled point. Now our Savior is frequently called Jehovah in the Old Testament, and thereby the self-existence of the divine nature is ascribed to Him. Thus the prophet: "I, even I, am the LORD;⁴ and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa 43:11). There was no Jesus, no Savior, but Jehovah; therefore, Jehovah and Jesus are one. And again we read: "All flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (Isa 49:26). And the prophet Jeremiah says, "Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name" (Jer 50:34). The name Jehovah belongs to the Redeemer; it is His incommunicable title. And since it is agreed on all hands that Jehovah signifies the self-existent essence, consequently Jesus Christ is self-existent; for He is Jehovah. This argument is, I think, very clear and full; and the force of it may be thus summed up: Jehovah is self-existent, but Jesus Christ is Jehovah. Therefore, He is self-existent.

In this sense our Lord says in the text, "If ye believe not that I am"—that Jehovah is in Me of a truth—"ye shall die in your sins." *I AM* cannot relate to His created being. All the sophistry⁵ of Arianism⁶ and Socinianism⁷ cannot wrest the words to such a sense, because the Jews could not but believe that He existed, when they heard Him say, "I AM." Or if it was possible to disbelieve it, yet it would not have been a capital crime, unless He had been something more than a created being; therefore, the very reason of the thing proves that He claimed some manner of existence different from human, and which it is absolutely necessary for every man to believe, unless he would die in his sins and suffer the punishment due to them for ever. The translators have done great injury to this scripture by inserting the word *he*—"I am he"—which is not in the original; and by putting it in, they have destroyed both the sense of the passage, and also the force of the argument. For "I am he" ought to refer to something said; but it has no reference, no sort of connection, either with what goes before or follows after. And therefore it is

⁴ The Authorized Version translators used the words *LORD* and *GOD* in all caps to translate the Hebrew *Jehovah* or *YHWH*.

⁵ sophistry – cunning; trickery.

⁶ Arianism (from Arius, A.D. 250/56-336, bishop of Alexandria) – the doctrinal system that teaches that God the Son was at one point created by God the Father and that before that time the Son did not exist... Though the Son is a heavenly being who existed before the rest of creation and who is far greater than all the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes: he was divine, but not deity. Jehovah's Witnesses are modern day Arians.

⁷ Socinianism – the sect founded by Faustus Socinus, 16th century Italian theologian, who denied the deity of Christ and denied that the cross brought forgiveness of sins.

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as absurd to insert the word here as it would be in Exodus, where, upon Moses' inquiring for some descriptive name by which the Israelites might know that the God of their fathers had sent him to deliver them, "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and...thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exo 3:14). Would it not be abominable nonsense to read the words, "I am he that I am he," and, "I am he hath sent me unto you"? The learned world, Christians and Jews, would not allow of this glaring absurdity; for they have allowed⁸ that this passage in Exodus is expressive of the self-existence of the Deity. *I AM* denotes the necessary manner in which He exists; and since this is the meaning of it in one part of Scripture, certainly it must mean the same thing in every part of Scripture, especially when it is used by that Person Who claimed to Himself all the attributes of divinity. And therefore the meaning of the expression, if there was any obscurity in the usage of it in the New Testament, may be clearly ascertained from its usage in the Old. When God sent Moses to the Israelites with this divine name *I AM*, and when Christ, Who never scrupled to call Himself God, assumed the same name *I AM*, certainly the same words spoken on the same subject must convey the same idea of self-existence. And Whoever is self-existent is the true God; but Christ is self-existent; therefore, He is the true God.

When the Arians and Socinians are pressed hard with Scripture arguments, they will allow Christ to be God in some limited and restrained sense of the word; but they cannot bear to hear of His self-existence, because this makes Him equal with the Father, which they deny. For it seems an insurmountable difficulty to them that He, Whom the Scripture calls a Son, should have the same self-existence with the Father. This is a standing objection with them, and with every other species of infidels; but this objection upon the true state of the case vanishes at once. For it is founded upon a very gross mistake, both of the nature of the doctrine and also of the scripture explanation of it.

The nature of the doctrine is this. In the unity of the divine essence, there are three persons equal in all perfections and attributes, so that none is before or after another. None is greater or less than another, but the glory is equal, the majesty co-eternal. The Trinity in unity is thus expressed in Scripture: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1Jo 5:7).

"One," says the unbeliever. "How can that be? How can three be one? That's a contradiction." If it be, it is a contradiction of his own making; for unless they be three in the same respect as they are one, which opinion could never be maintained by any man in his senses, then he must take the contradiction upon himself. And there may be, for any-thing he knows to the contrary, three persons in one essence, unless he can prove

⁸ **allowed** – agreed.

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that the unity of the essence absolutely excludes personality. But before we can allow him this, he must first give us a plain account of the manner of the existence of the divine essence, and must demonstrate that it cannot admit of any persons in it, which he cannot possibly demonstrate by the light of nature.

The most acute and enlightened genius is not equal to the subject. It is as far above his capacity as the heavens are above the earth. Let him soar aloft upon the strongest pinions⁹ of moral reasoning and try to measure infinity with the longest chain of metaphysical argument; yet when he came down from his towering flight, he could give us no fresh intelligence concerning the divine existence. The mode and manner of it would be still unknown. We know that there is an immortal spirit united to the body; but does any philosopher pretend to determine the mode of the existence of this created spirit? What idea can he form of it? Whence does he borrow this idea? Or in what kind of language will he communicate it unto another? If he be not clear in this more easy point, how can he form an idea of the mode of the existence of Jehovah? Can he determine how an infinite spiritual essence exists? What idea has he of the manner of the existence of an essence which was from eternity and which was the first cause of all other beings?

When unbelievers will write upon this subject and settle the mode of existence of an uncreated essence, then they may speak with some certainty upon it. But while they are forced to confess that they know not the mode of the divine existence, and yet maintain that Jehovah cannot exist but in one person, is it not evident that their conduct is inconsistent? For the personality is founded on the manner in which the essence exists. This they do not pretend to determine, and yet they deny the personality of the essence and venture their eternity upon it. Is not this conduct absurd and irrational? And will you then ever listen to what unbelievers may assert concerning the manner of the divine existence? For they are indeed absolutely ignorant of it, and you may be assured of their ignorance if you only ask them to account for the manner of the existence of a created spirit. And when they give up this point, which they must, then urge this question to them: How can you pretend to account for the manner of the existence of an infinite, uncreated Spirit, after you have owned that you cannot account for the manner of the existence of a finite, created spirit? Even to pretend to it is a most glaring absurdity; and therefore we may conclude, upon the footing of sound reasoning, that there may be three Persons in the unity of the divine essence. And the Scripture positively maintains there are three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, "and these three are one" (1Jo 5:7):...

⁹ pinions – wings.

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If nothing remain for the infidel to object to the state of the doctrine, what can he offer against the Scripture explanation of it? There can be no difficulty but what arises from the names of the divine Persons— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these have been a great handle of objection, and are still with unbelievers who are so blinded with their vices that they know nothing of the true sense and meaning of Scripture but only look into it for matter of cavil. They suppose, with ignorance common to infidelity, that these names were to give us ideas of the manner in which the Persons exist in the essence, but the Scripture had a quite different view in using them. The ever blessed Trinity took the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not to describe in what manner they exist as divine Persons, but in what manner the divine Persons have acted for us men and for our salvation. These names were to give us ideas of the distinct offices which the Trinity had agreed to sustain in the economy of our redemption. The Scripture informs us, [as] St. Paul frequently [does], that the Covenant of Grace was made before the world, and the gracious plan of man's salvation was settled before he had his being (Eph 1:4; 3:11; 2Ti 1:9; Titus 1:2, 1Pe 1:20). According to the plan of this Covenant, one of the divine Persons agreed to demand infinite satisfaction for sin when mankind should offend, and to be the Father of the human nature of Jesus Christ, and our Father through Him; and therefore He is called God the Father, not to describe His nature, but His office. Another of the divine Persons covenanted to become a Son, to take our nature upon Him, and in it to pay the infinite satisfaction for sin, and therefore He is called Son, Son of God, and such like names, not to describe His divine nature, but His divine office. Another of the divine Persons covenanted to make the infinite satisfaction of the Son of God effectual by inspiring the spirits of men and disposing them to receive it; and therefore He is called the Holy Inspirer, or Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, not to describe His divine nature, but His divine office. The terms *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* are terms of economy and are accordingly used in Scripture to describe the distinct parts which the ever blessed and adorable Trinity sustained in our redemption.

I wish it was in my power to explain the Scripture doctrine in such words as you may all easily understand. The doctrine of the Trinity is the most necessary article of the Christian religion, and we cannot take one safe step in the way to heaven without being clear in it. And since it is the very foundation of your faith, I therefore entreat your more particular attention while I am considering it. The Scripture makes no difference between the divine persons except what is made by the distinct offices which they sustain in the Covenant of Grace. The persons are each equal in every perfection and attribute. None is before or after another. None is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. And consequently Christ, who was from eternity co-equal with the Father, did not make Himself inferior because He covenanted to become a Son;

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nor did the Holy Spirit, Who was from eternity co-equal with the Father and the Son, make Himself inferior because He covenanted to make the spirits of men holy by His grace and influence. Son and Holy Spirit are names of office; and the names of their offices certainly cannot lessen the dignity of their nature, but should rather exalt them in our eyes, for whose salvation they condescended to sustain these offices. Our blessed Lord was Jehovah when He covenanted to be made flesh and to become a Son; and the very nature and terms of the covenant prove that at the making of it He must have been a person of the self-existent essence, because He had thereby such offices committed to Him as none but the true God was able to sustain. The whole economy and government of the world, from the time of its creation to the final dissolution, was put into His hands; and therefore the Scripture expressly assures us, that He created it, that He governs it by His providence, that He redeemed His people by His blood, and that He is to come again at the last Day in all His glory to judge it. And He, Who was almighty to create all things, Who was all-wise to govern all things, Who had infinite merit to redeem His body the Church, and Who is to be God the Judge of all at the last great Day—certainly this almighty, this all-wise, this all-meritorious, and divine Judge, must be self-existent. And being possessed of these offices, He might truly say, “I AM,” because He could not but have necessary existence in Himself, Who was the first cause, and Who gave existence to every other being and thing.

What has been said in defense of the first proposition in the text may be summed up with this argument. The divine essence is self-existent; therefore the persons in the essence are also self-existent. But Jesus Christ is one of the persons in the essence; for He is frequently called Jehovah in the Old Testament, and the New declares that He and the Father are one. Consequently, He is self-existent; from whence I raise this syllogism. Whoever is self-existent is the true God, but Jesus Christ is self-existent. Therefore, He is the true God. This is a plain argument and is so evident upon Scripture principles, that I defy all the Arians and Socinians in the world to answer it; for it seems as certain that Jesus Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, as that there is a self-existent essence. Christ is the great and eternal I AM, true and very God, equal in all things with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as touching His Godhead; and therefore to the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, we ascribe equal dominion, and honor, and worship, now and forever, according to the doctrine of the Scripture and the constant practice of the Christian Church. And,

Let no person think that this is a speculative point. It is not an indifferent thing whether you receive it or not; but your eternal state depends upon it. You must receive it, or perish forever; for whosoever disbelieves it shall be damned. This may sound very

Comment [A1]: Needs some research. He seems to be emphasizing the economic Trinity at the expense of the immanent Trinity. See FGB #231 p. 22. These two paragraphs may need to be omitted. Read the following: <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/whats-difference-between-ontological-and-economic-trinity/>. And <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity>. Are Son and Holy Spirit merely names of office? Did the Second Person of the Trinity covenant to become a Son, or was He the only Begotten Son of God from the foundations of the earth? John 17; Hebrews 1; and Colossians 1 seem to point to a relationship of sonship that Christ had with the Father before the world was. Nicene Creed states: “Begotten from the Father before all ages.” Athanasian Creed says: “Begotten before time.”

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harsh in the ears of free and candid disquisitors,¹⁰ but I really cannot soften it. I am not fond of thundering out damnation any more than men in these moderate times may be of hearing it, and you know that I very seldom have the word in my mouth. But there is certainly such a thing as damnation, and the Almighty has threatened to inflict it upon the deniers of Christ's divinity. And let men make ever so light of it, He will infallibly inflict it; and therefore I must again admonish you that whoever does not believe Jesus Christ to be self-existent, and thereby equal to the Father, shall be damned. And does not the text declare the same thing? "They shall die in their sins"; and this is so far from being any thing short of damnation, that dying in sin is the very lowest state of infernal¹¹ misery, as I am to prove under the next heading.

2. If Ye Believe Not That I Am He, Ye Shall Die in Your Sins

Secondly:- "If ye believe not that I AM," says Christ, "ye shall die in your sins." Dying in sin is a clear expression, whose meaning cannot easily be mistaken. It denotes the most dreadful state of departing sinners, who have no mediator or atonement in the world of spirits to which they are going; but they leave this world with all the pollution and guilt of their crimes upon the soul; and when they appear before the tribunal of infinite justice, the horrid deformity and wickedness of them will then be manifest; They will then have no robe to cover the offensive and nauseous leprosy of their impurities; their abominable filthiness will then break out, and how can the most holy and pure God look with delight upon those loathsome lepers? He declares He cannot. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. He cannot behold them; and therefore they must be shut out of His presence, as the lepers were shut out of the camp; and since they never can be made clean, they must be shut out forever. Nothing can purge the conscience from sin, but that offering which perfecteth forever (Heb 9:14). This alone cleanseth us from all sin (1Jo 1:7); but this unbelievers reject, therefore their sin remaineth (Joh 9:41). They must answer for it at the bar of justice, and whatever punishment it deserves they must suffer it in soul and body, and if there be truth in God, their punishment must be eternal. These are His own words, at which one might reasonably think the heart of the most obdurate infidel would tremble. "Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. 33:13-14). Who shall? Certainly they who die in their sins. Sin first kindled these flames

¹⁰ disquisitors – inquirers.

¹¹ infernal – belonging to hell.

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of hell, and sinners must endure them. And the chief of sinners, the Arians and Socinians, must dwell with the devouring fire, and with everlasting burnings.

I have seen the deniers of Christ's divinity very warm and angry at this state of the case, and have heard them complain loudly of our want of charity. They do not love to be told of hell torments, and they think it very hard, that they should be sent to hell for a speculative point, (as they softly term rejecting Christ's self-existence) quite a harmless opinion with them, a mere subject of debate and free enquiry. It may seem very light to them, but it is in fact of the same consequence as denying the being of God: and if they will make their free enquiries and debates about it, and after enquiring and debating, reject it, they should remember that they do this at the peril of their lives. Denying Christ to be self-existent is not a small crime, it is the greatest that a man can commit; for what is it to deny the king's title to the crown? Is it not high treason? And what is it then to deny the Godhead of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Is not this high treason against the supreme Majesty of heaven? And when unbelievers deny the Godhead of Jesus Christ, try to rob Him of His self-existence, erect societies on purpose to stab Him with their insolent blasphemies, and would pull Him out of His eternal throne, and then endeavor what in them lies to strip Him of His divine glory, degrading and sinking Him down into a mere creature, and trampling under foot, as if He were but dross and dung, the most adorable God of heaven and earth;—what will you call these offenses? Are they not overt acts of open rebellion and of high treason? And if the least of these against an earthly king would render the offenders unnatural rebels and worthy of death, must not the crimes increase in proportion to the infinite dignity of the King against ~~w~~Whom they are committed? High treason against the Godhead of Jesus Christ, how much soever unbelievers may try to palliate¹² it, is certainly an infinite crime, and if God be true, it will meet with an infinite punishment; for if ye believe not that I AM, says the self-existent God Himself, ye shall die in your sins, and these unatoned for shall not only exclude you from the glories of heaven, but shall also justly sentence you to the endless torments of hell.

As this method of proceeding against the deniers of Christ's self-existence is not, as they would insinuate, harsh and rigorous, but is founded in truth and equity; because every man is a sinner, and guilty in the sight of God, not only by actual, but also by original transgression, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" (Rom 5:18); and therefore all men being under sentence of condemnation, want¹³ an atonement for their sins. This atonement is required by, and is to be made to, infinite justice, and whoever makes it must be an infinite Person, capable of doing an

¹² palliate – lessen the seriousness of.

¹³ want – need; lack.

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infinitely meritorious act; so that He cannot be any-thing less than a Person of the self-existent essence. If ~~h~~he were a creature of ever so great dignity, the very highest in the rank of beings, yet as he is but a creature, he could do no action which could merit for another, much less which could have infinite merit; consequently he could make no atonement to infinite justice, and therefore unless Christ be self-existent, we must all die in our sins, and answer for them before the tribunal of God: and the just wages of sin is death, death of the body to this world, and death both of body and soul from God and His glory in the next world, for-~~ev~~er and ever.

And this is indeed the melancholy case of every infidel. He denies the virtue of Christ's merits to atone as God, and, of course, he can have no atonement; for nothing less than an infinite Being can make an infinite atonement; and the infidel, without such an atonement, must be under the guilt both of original and actual transgression. He has no sacrifice, no atonement, to propitiate the justice of God the Father, by ~~W~~whom a firm and sure decree has been in this case made and provided, that, "without shedding of blood ~~[there]~~ is no remission:" (Heb 9:22). But he rejects the merits of the blood of the Lamb of God, which has been shed for sin, and which alone can take away the sins of the world; for which reason there is no remission for him, but he dies in his sins, with all the pollution and the guilt of them upon his conscience, and when he appears at the bar of justice, he will find his Judge a jealous God, and a consuming fire. And how will he then be able to protect himself from the wrath of the Almighty? Offended Omnipotence he cannot escape, he cannot resist; and who can say what a degree of misery offended Omnipotence will inflict? Oh, it is a dreadful thing, beyond imagination dreadful, to fall into the hands of the living God!

And whoever rejects the divine merits of Christ's atonement; will feel His everlasting displeasure: for after rejecting them, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. ~~And if he who~~He that despised Moses's' law died without mercy; under two or three witnesses; ~~o~~Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" (Heb 10:26-29). -Hath trodden under foot His divinity (as all infidels do), hath trampled, and even stamped upon the glory of the self-existent God, as if He was something baser than a worm, "and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace:" (v. 29). Doing despite unto the Spirit of grace is the last stage of infidelity, and may the almighty God keep every one of you from it, lest you should die in your sins and perish forever.

I chose to finish the second proposition in the text with these striking words of St. Paul; (Heb. 10:26, ~~27, etc.~~ 29) because they are clear and full to the point, and expressly

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declare the judgment and fiery indignation; ~~which-that~~ every-one will meet with who treads under foot the Son of God. Let the infidel consider; whether he does not tread Him under his feet, when he ridicules the almighty Creator of the world, and with treason blacker than ever was hatched in hell, tries to rob the eternal God of His divinity. Does not he account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; who sets no value upon the most precious blood of the Lamb of God? And must not he die in his sins, and rise from the dead in his sins, and appear in his sins at the last great day, and go with his sins to the place of eternal punishment, who contrary to God's decree has resolved to put his trial upon this issue; that without shedding of blood there may be remission?

Before any remission can be obtained, there must not only be blood shed, but also blood of an infinite value, and there cannot be infinite value in any sacrifice, except in "the precious blood of Christ, as of a ~~L~~amb without blemish and without spot" (1Pe 1:19). The merits of this unblemished and spotless Lamb the infidels deny, whereby they reject the only method which God has appointed for the remission of sins. This crime approaches so very near to doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and to grieving and quenching Him, that my heart mourns for these deluded men, and I cannot but wish they were as much concerned for their own salvation as I am for them. I see their guilt, to which they are blind. I see their danger, against which they shut their eyes. I behold them ready to die in their sins, and the pit of destruction open to receive them; they are on the very precipice, and in a moment may fall into hell.

My dear fellow-creatures, would to God I could call you fellow-Christians, if you have any love left for your immortal souls, stop and consider. Pray God to open your eyes, that you may see your danger. Oh! see how near you are to the pit! If you take one step more, you may perish forever. And why will you choose eternal misery? I call upon and ~~e~~ntreat you, while there is yet a possibility of escaping it, to awaken your hopes and fears: if it be given you to throw down your arms and submit, still you may find mercy. For He is gracious and full of compassion. He has gifts for men, even for the rebellious. He can give the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of Himself. Ask, seek, and you shall find faith and repentance from His sovereign grace. With Him is plenteous redemption. Oh! that you may from your own experience acknowledge Him to be a God almighty to pardon. And if none of these motives prevail with you to open your eyes, may He, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," shine into your "hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6).

And now having gone through the argument, I ~~i~~entreat you, my brethren, to give me your favorable attention, while I am endeavoring to make some improvement of what has been said, and to bring it home with power and conviction to your hearts. The

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Scripture which we have been considering is most awful and solemn, and holds out to us a doctrine of eternal importance, viz.¹⁴ that we must die in our sins, unless we believe the self-existence of Jesus Christ. This doctrine I divided into two propositions:¹⁵ Under the first it was proposed to prove that Jesus Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, from whence it followed, secondly, that every one must die in his sins, unless he believes Christ's self-existence. And if Scripture and fair argument could prevail against men's prejudices and sins, these two propositions would appear as evident as the sun at noon-day. Indeed they do appear with complete evidence to every true Christian; and I openly declare, that I am as fully convinced of the self-existence of Jesus Christ, as I am of any matter of fact.

and Therefore with this full conviction upon my mind, it was incumbent upon me to speak with great openness and freedom to those persons, if there be any of them among you, who deny the self-existence of Jesus Christ. And I hope He will second my entreaties with His grace, and accompany them with His divine blessing, while I am calling upon you once more to consider and to weigh impartially the arguments which have now been laid before you. They contain a very small part of the evidence of our Lord's divinity. The Scripture has offered us several proofs, which have not been at present touched upon; but I hope enough has been said to convince you, if your minds lay open to conviction.

The great infidel objection against Christ's self-existence is taken from the unity of the divine essence. This unity we allow, for it is written, "The Lord-LORD our God is one Lord-LORD;"—Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah" (Deut. 6:4); but then we maintain that the unity of the essence cannot exclude personality, unless it could be demonstrated; that the manner in which the essence exists will not admit of any persons in it. But this you cannot demonstrate. It is impossible to demonstrate it, because you do not know the manner of the existence of any spiritual being; and consequently it is impossible for you to demonstrate; that the Scripture account of personality is false, and yet at the peril of your eternal salvation you will venture to deny what it is impossible you should disprove.

Do you not see what an inconsistent and absurd part you herein act? Do you not openly fight against reason, as well as against Scripture and your own happiness? You have not the shadow of an argument against Christ's divinity, and yet you are not afraid to commit high treason against His supreme Majesty Who is almighty to punish. Why, my brethren, will you fight against the Almighty? Rebel no longer, throw down

¹⁴ viz. - from Latin *videlicet*: that is to say; namely.

¹⁵ allow - recognize; admit as valid.

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your arms, submit to Jesus, prostrate yourselves before Him, and acknowledge Him to be the self-existent God.

If I have not been able to offer any-thing sufficient to awaken and convince you, I have therefore more reason, in the last place, to pray for you. And I am sure all believers will join heartily with me in prayer to God for your conversion. We cannot but mourn over your present guilt; and your approaching ruin, and pour out our requests before the throne of grace for you, because we are assured, that you have departed from the living God. And let us now, my Christian brethren, conclude, as we always begin, with looking up to God for His blessing; that our labors may not be in vain in the Lord.

“Oh most adorable Jesus, our Almighty God and Savior, who hast declared~~de~~ that unless ye believe that I AM, ye shall die in your sins, we bless and praise You for giving us grace to believe in Your self-existence. Keep us, we beseech You, steadfast in this faith, and grant that it may not dwell in our heads; and rest there as a speculative point of science, but enable it to operate upon our hearts, and rest there to produce in us all Your sweet and heavenly tempers, making us holy as You are holy. And, oh Lord, be pleased to awaken and convert all the deniers of Your divinity, and convince them that You are God indeed, by the happy work of Your good Spirit upon their hearts, turning them from the error of their ways, and bringing every one of them into Your flock, that we may become one fold under one Shepherd; and may with one heart and voice give thanks and praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity; to whom be equal honor; and worship; and dominion, now and forever. Amen.”

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