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A
VINDICATION
OF
DR. ADAM CLARKE,
IN ANSWER TO
MR. MOORE'S THOUGHTS
ON
THE ETERNAL SONSHIP

OF THE
SECOND PERSON OF THE HOLY TRINITY,

ADDRESSED

To the People called Methodists,

LATE

IN CONNEXION WITH THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, DECEASED,

and especially

TO THE PREACHERS IN THAT CONNEXION.

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*BY THOMAS EXLEY, A. M.*  
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Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor. x. 31.

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Matt. vi. 22.

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A

VINDICATION

OF

DR. ADAM CLARKE.

HAVING read with much satisfaction and profit what Dr. Clarke has advanced in his Commentary on the first chapter of St. Luke and the first chapter of Hebrews, respecting the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; I became anxious to read Mr. Moore's Thoughts on the same subject, as soon as I heard he had published them: and I may be permitted freely to say, the performance falls, in my estimation, far short of the merit which I had expected it would possess, from my knowledge of the author's experience and excellent judgment. Because of the importance of the subject, I cherished a hope that Dr. Clarke would answer the objections which had been urged against him, and under this impression wrote to him; but found by his answer, that he had not read Mr. Moore's Thoughts, that he had given no cause for the attack upon him, that he did not wish to be interrupted in the progress of his work, and that therefore he must leave these things, saying "my labour is with the Lord, and my work with my God." His reply led me to think deeply and seriously of this matter, and ponder it in my heart, and being satisfied that Dr. Clarke stands on firm ground, I said within myself, in the fear of the Lord, and with a single eye to his glory, I will attempt to shew the insufficiency and weakness of those observations, which Mr. Moore has

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brought forward in favour of the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship. If this attempt contribute to afford an increase of knowledge in the words of the Lord, my desire will be accomplished. I did indeed wish Dr. Clarke to examine the manuscript and make such corrections and alterations as he should find necessary, but he refused to see a word of it, or to have any hand in it; hence I am left alone, and not being much accustomed to write as an author, and not pretending to elegance of diction, I depend entirely on the force of simple truth.

The point in dispute is not the Divinity of our Lord, this is acknowledged on both sides; but the difference of opinion appears to me as follows. Dr. Clarke says, that the expression *Son of God*, is not employed in scripture to denote the *Divine Nature* of Christ, and that it cannot with propriety be used to express that *Divine Nature*; and thus he denies what has been called the *Eternal Sonship*, or *Eternal Generation*, of the second Person in the Trinity. On the other side, Mr. Moore contends for this *Eternal Sonship*, and thus supposes that, *Son of God*, applies to his *Divine*, as well as to his *Human Nature*, so that in respect of his *Divine Nature alone*, he may be called the *Eternal Son*, meaning thereby, that he is from everlasting to everlasting, a *Son*.

In page 6 of the Thoughts, we find the following statement; "Dr. Clarke has told us that the expression, *Eternal Son*, is anti-scriptural, absurd and dangerous." But I would have it carefully observed that the expression is used here according to its signification in the *doctrine of the Eternal Sonship*, in which sense the Doctor opposes it, and properly says it is a self-contradiction; I notice this particularly, to prevent mistakes, because it admits of another meaning; and though the expression be not found in the Holy Scriptures, and is on many accounts exceptionable, yet if it be explained and understood according to this other

sense, the Doctor will say nothing against it; and however he may object to this use of the terms, the sense he not only allows, but strenuously defends: it may be thus explained; Christ is the *Son* of God, and He is *Eternal* with the Father, neither before, after, or produced as touching his Godhead; but produced as touching his manhood: in *that* he is *Eternal*, in *this* he is a *Son*; and because the two natures are in Christ, He is *Eternal* and also a *Son*: hence we may say he is an *Eternal Son*, while we refer the term *Eternal* to his Divine nature, and *Son* to his incarnate nature. According to this interpretation any pious christian may joyfully use the terms, *Eternal*, and *co-eternal Son* in the hymns cited at the commencement of the Thoughts. But it is plain this is not the acceptation intended by Mr. Moore, because he uses it to denote the doctrine of the *Eternal Sonship*, or *Eternal Generation* of the Divine Nature of Christ; and it is only when thus applied, that I here oppose the expression.

Dr. Clarke is noticed on the same page (p. 6) for not quoting scripture to authorize his warnings; and who, I ask, would expect he should, or could do this? when he particularly affirms, he has not been able to find any express declaration in scripture concerning it; however the warnings are good, we are warned to abide by the scriptures; let us do so, and we shall not go astray; "but," says Mr. Moore, "he gives us some *reasons* to shew the absurdity of the term." From the way in which the word *reasons* is marked, and the observations upon it, it seems intended to make us think, either that *reasons* are vain things, or that these are vain reasons. After this, (page 7) an attack is made on reason itself: I cannot conceive what offence it has given, that one of heaven's best gifts to man should be thus abused; what would all other blessings be to us, even revelation itself, were we not blessed with reason? As to the re-

proach cast on it of getting out of its place, and assuming independency, I cannot believe that this is a fact; no, it is shallow opinion and pride, that have assumed the appearance and name of reason, and which aim at independency. What are we to understand by "reason judging in eternal things?" (p. 7) shall we not use our reason in all things? Surely we ought not to judge in any thing, human or divine, without reason. It is added "we dare not bring such a question before that tribunal." But why afraid to bring the question before the tribunal of reason? It appears to me a bad cause which a man dare not bring before that tribunal. Is any part of our religion unreasonable? or any of our service to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost an unreasonable service? Does not God find fault with his creatures for *not* reasoning? *My people do not consider.* Does he not complain of the house of Jacob, that *they have eyes and see not, ears and ear not?* And our Lord says to his disciples, *Having eyes, see ye not?* and *having ears, hear ye not?* as if he had said, God has given you reason, Why don't you use it? But if brought to this tribunal "we must allow it to decide;" and what harm? Will it not be well if the matter be decided by reason; Oh no! thus *eternity* and *the Eternal God* will be judged by a creature of a day." Oh! reason, I would abandon thee if I could be persuaded to form such an opinion of thee! but of course reason was not called upon to dictate that conclusion, she could not be so divided against herself: in my opinion the decision of reason is not a judgment on "*the Eternal God*," but a judgment sanctioned by the Eternal God. I cannot but listen to *reason* while I am assured it was given to me from *above*; and he who gave, requires that I use the blessing.

The seventh page closes thus, "We believe the holy scripture sets forth to our faith, the *Word* and the *Son*, as being one and the same Divine Person,

even the second person of the Trinity; and eternal as the Father, and the Holy Spirit; and that the Catholic Church has ever held this to be the truth. Dr. Clarke, however, counts this Catholic Faith, or as he calls it, the common opinion, to be anti-scriptural, dangerous, and absurd." Is not this a misrepresentation, or a grand mistake? Is this what he calls anti-scriptural, &c. It is not the *Sonship*, it is not the *Divinity* of Christ, it is not the *two natures* in the Redeemer; no, it is *the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship*, the application of the term *Son* to the *Divine Nature alone*, which he considers to be erroneous. He does not scruple to subscribe to all this creed, for he himself uses terms equally strong and pointed; as that *Christ is the Son of God*, that He is *Eternal*, &c. which must be known to those who have read his comment. If I understand his writings, he believes the *Word* and the *Son*, are the same person, even Christ the second person of the Trinity, and Eternal as the Father, and the Holy Spirit; he believes the Son is *eternal*, not generated or produced as to his Divine Nature, and therefore not called Son on that account, but so called for this reason, because *He took on Him the seed of Abraham*. Heb. ii. 16.

It is said (page 9th) of the Creed of St. Athanasius, that it "grinds to powder the Doctor's opinion." Now leaving out the damnatory clauses as not belonging to our present purpose, that creed accords with the Doctor's opinion; there are but two articles, or at the most three, which can possibly be explained to have a sense different from that opinion, and such, if given, does not appear to be the genuine sense; the articles alluded to are,

1. "The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten." Though those who contend for the eternal generation may say, that the term Son in this article, applies exclusively to the Divine nature of Christ, yet this I think cannot be correct. The plain meaning appears to be

according to what follows in the same creed, that the Son of God, is "*God and Man, one Christ,*" and that therefore, because of his divine nature, he cannot be said to be made or created; but because of his human nature, he may be said to be begotten or produced.

2. "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten *before the worlds.*" Here it is evident that only the latter part of this article, "before the worlds," can be thought to bear against the Doctor; and even then it has a forced meaning; for every one understands this passage; *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. And is it not as correct to say of the same person, begotten *before the worlds?* Hence there is nothing in this creed which grinds the Doctor's opinion in the least; on the contrary, it corroborates it abundantly, so much so, that many of its articles could not have been better expressed, if they had been written purposely in its defence. The Doctor, I conceive, would be among the last to give up the Athanasian Creed.

Some may perhaps raise a third objection from this expression, the Son *uncreate*, and again the Son *eternal*, but this is clearly intended to be understood, not of an eternal generation, but according to the sense above explained, and really means the very thing contended for: see the Doctor's notes at the end of Heb. i. where he says he cannot *omit* the word *unoriginated*, or which amounts to the same, *uncreate* or *eternal*. Hence, notwithstanding that every where in these Thoughts, so great a stir is made about the Catholic Faith as standing in opposition to the Doctor's opinion, it appears that that opinion is the Catholic Faith itself, as stated to be so in this very creed, in which the term Son is properly applied to the second person of the Trinity, because he was incarnated, and not because his Divine Nature was produced or begotten; the contrary of which its articles assert, declaring

him in this respect to be *uncreate*, to be *eternal*, which is the same as to be *unoriginated*, or without generation.

In the remarks on the conversation between Dr. Clarke and Mr. Wesley, which took place three years before Mr. Wesley's death, Dr. Clarke is noted in Italics as being "*very young* in the work;" (page 10) be it so that he was *very young*, yet for that very reason, and because he was "his son in the Gospel" we should be the more surprised at his silence.

Again, page 10, it is said the Doctor is not content to hold the fundamentals "for the only good reason — because God has revealed them." The truth is, that this good reason is the very reason why he holds them; and his laborious reasonings (thank God for them) to prove or demonstrate, are to prove or demonstrate, that these are the revelations of God; which was the more necessary as many learned men have cavilled greatly respecting these heavenly truths. But why do we hear so much inveighing against *reason and reasoning*? Surely no man need be told that we know nothing respecting God, the creation, or even ourselves, except what God himself has revealed to us, either in the volume of nature, in that of providence, or in the Holy Scriptures, or by immediate manifestations in some other way from himself: and he also has furnished us with the faculties by which we look into, perceive, and understand these revelations, some of which strike the mind with such force and evidence, that no one can resist them, and nothing can make them clearer. There are other things which God has revealed, which are not placed so immediately in our sight, but he has given us reason to take away the covering, that we may see and know the things which are true, especially the things of God. Thus, that God is *One Self-Existent, Independent Being*, we see wherever we look; the evi-

dence of this revelation is plain and irresistible. Again, his Divine and comprehensive Unity contains three peculiar real distinctions, called Persons, not indeed separable, or capable of any division, but immediately, intimately and directly belonging to the nature or essence of the Great Creator. This is also a revealed truth, but it is not revealed in so many ways, nor in so direct a manner as the former. Hence many who have substituted opinion or prejudice for reason, have denied it to be revealed at all; but reason shews it is the truth of God declared to us in the Holy Scriptures. And this, I think, may suffice to answer what is said at the close of the 10th and commencement of the 11th page. What follows, viz. "*He believes, and God the Holy Ghost witnesses it, that God the Father, for the sake of what God the Son has done and suffered in his behalf, has freely forgiven and accepted him, a guilty sinner, and given him a lot among the sanctified. His peace and joy in believing abounds the more, while he beholds with unveiled face, that the Son was given by the Father in love to the fallen human race, that He might be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly who thus believe in his Son,*" accords precisely with Dr. Clarke's opinion, applying as the sense necessarily requires, the term Son to the incarnate nature of Christ who *suffered*; for we cannot admit that the Divine Nature *suffered*, but that it is eternally the same and not subject to change.

I am sorry to find on the 12th page this sentence, "*The time is evidently come, when we can no longer hope to speak the same thing.*" If this mean in respect to various opinions, perhaps it may be said of almost any two men living; but in grand essential points, Do you not confessedly speak the same thing? Is it not declared by both that you hold the proper Divinity of Christ, though you differ materially in the manner of conceiving it: the manner in which Dr. Clarke considers it

appears to me to be scripturally correct, while the other is not sanctioned by scripture; is contradictory to itself, and though it seems, and is actually intended by its professors, to oppose Arianism, it really coincides with that doctrine, as we shall see below. But the subject is to be examined by the lights of scripture, reason, and antiquity. As scripture and reason shall decide, so will we speak; and we will pay to antiquity all due respect.

I. The first scripture brought forward is Proverbs xxx. 4. "*Who hath ascended up into heaven? or descended? who hath gathered the Wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou can'st tell?*" It cannot be proved that this passage refers to any person in the Trinity at all; it appears more correct to apply it to the Creator and the creation He has made. But grant it applies to Christ our divine Lord, yet surely it may be to him in the character of Messiah, to him in reference to his human nature connected with the divine.

The next scripture (page 13) is the eighth chapter of Proverbs: which it is said "has always been interpreted as belonging to the *Son of God; which Son we must kiss, lest he be angry.*" I will readily grant that this sublime chapter speaks of the Son of God, but it is not true that it has been always so interpreted. The learned and pious Dr. Watts says "it must be acknowledged that it is very hard to prove, that this eighth chapter of Proverbs does certainly denote the person of Christ. Athanasius himself sometimes explains it another way; Bishop Patrick, that noble commentator, will scarce allow it; and many others have been of opinion, that Solomon means only wisdom as a principle of contrivance and counsel, whether human or divine; or, at most, the ideal world in

the mind of God, though he uses such sort of personal characters in his description of this wisdom, in the Hebrew idiom." And if it really speak of one person in the Trinity, it may be as well applied to the Holy Spirit as to the Son, for the name Son, or Son of God, is not there used; but if it relate to Christ, as it most probably does, it does not at all follow that it refers only to his Divine Nature, but will apply in all its force and beauty to Christ, as Christ the Messiah, in which character the human nature is always included; and this Son, whom "the Psalmist says *we must kiss lest he be angry, &c.*" cannot refer to his Divine Nature alone, for in this nature alone we sinners cannot approach him and receive the *kiss of reconciliation*. We cannot approach the Divine Nature but through the Human, this all Christians will allow; and therefore while with Mr. Moore and all Christians we say, the "*Word of Jehovah is the Son whom we are to kiss lest we perish;*" we also say that he is called the Son in reference to his human nature, otherwise, as sinners, he would be to us a consuming fire.

We have then this scripture, "*The Son to whom he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*" The text evidently proves the Divinity of Christ; it proves not that the Divine Nature alone is the Son, but that it is manifested in the Son; which accords with the scriptures, as *the word was made flesh, or became incarnated* by the power of the Holy Ghost; *God was manifested in the flesh*; and since the Son of God has true Godhead belonging to him, it is properly said of Him, *Thy Throne, O God, &c.*

The next quotation is from John (chap. 1.) and I grant the *Word* is called also *the only begotten Son of God*, But why is he so called? most clearly because he was made flesh, the Divine Nature, in connexion with the Human, not exclusive of it, is called, Christ the Son of God; and as stated in

the Athanasian creed, He is "one altogether; not by confusion of substance: but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ." All this is confirmed by the context, *we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* Now in Christ, as the *Son of God, as the only begotten of the Father,* we can behold this glory; but who dares say, he can behold it in his pure Divinity: having regard to this exclusively, we have, because of sin, no access to him, and cannot see his face and live.

I was not a little surprised at the following sentence (page 13) "*Nor is the Son who was in time made of a Woman, made under the law, ever spoken of as not being a Son eternally.*" The dignity of Scripture forbids it; blind and stupid as fallen man is, the scripture no where supposes him so lost to reason as to make it necessary for him to be told, a *Son in time made* is not a *Son eternally*. If such information as this be necessary, it is true, reason is an insignificant thing. The baptismal rite is now produced to support the opinion that the Son is a *Son eternally*; and it is said "*The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are there set forth as the One God,*" this is true, I also believe that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is the *One God*. But this does not prove that the names do apply or can apply to the Divine Nature alone; on the contrary, the terms are evidently used in reference to the scheme of redemption; for we cannot be baptised in the names of the persons of the Godhead simply, because on this ground we cannot be admitted into the heavenly fellowship: therefore in this rite, the humanity is necessarily included; and the terms employed on this and similar occasions are the most proper that can be conceived.

Next is quoted John, chap. x. 30-36, and chap. v. 18; from which it is concluded, "we see here,

that the Jews knew there was a Father and a Son in the Godhead, abstracted from every thing creaturely." This conclusion is by no means allowable, neither does the text prove the Eternal Generation. To shew this, I shall give chiefly the sentiments of the learned and pious Dr. Watts, and extracts from his Questions concerning the Son of God. It is possible indeed that some of the more learned among the Jews might, from the Old Testament, have some notion that the Messiah, or Son of God, was to have real Godhead in him; and hence by way of consequence might charge him with blasphemy. But that they did certainly know this glorious truth is much to be doubted, for the whole nation, with their priests and doctors, were most stupidly and shamefully ignorant of the true character and glory of the Messiah and his kingdom. "Had the Pharisees themselves any notion that Christ was to be the true God, they would never have been puzzled and silenced at the question of our Saviour, Matt. xxii. 43, 44, &c. If the Messiah be the Son of David, how could David call him Lord? or, *If David calls him Lord, how is he his son?* Their supposition of the Godhead of the Messiah would have easily answered this difficulty, if they had had any such opinion." And it appears by what is quoted from Tertullian in the 18th page of the Thoughts, that they did not hold that opinion. The passage is this—"It is the property of the faith of a Jew, so to admit the Divine Unity, as not to include therein *the Son*, and after him *the Spirit*."

Even the disciples themselves had not this view of the subject; thus "when Peter in the name of the rest had made so glorious a confession. Matt. xvi. 16, *Thou art Christ the son of the living God*, he could not mean that Christ was the great and glorious God; for in verse 22, he took up his master very short, and *began to rebuke him*. Surely he would not have rebuked the great God

his maker, at least not immediately after such a confession of his Godhead."

It was the design of these wicked, malicious Jews to bring the highest possible accusation against our Lord, and they ever put such a sense on his words as might give them the greatest advantage against him. "And so," says Dr. Watts, "when he called God his *own Father*, and declared himself to be the Son of God, they, in the fury of their false zeal, construe it into blasphemy; as though to own himself to be the Son of God, were to assume equality with God: whereas Christ shews them plainly, that these words did not necessarily imply such a sense; and this is sufficiently manifest by the defence which Christ made for himself in both those places of the history.

"If we look into John, v. 18, when the Jews accused him that by calling God his Father, he made himself equal with God, he doth by no means vindicate that sense of his name, Son of God, but rather denies his equality with God, considered as a Son, verse 19 &c. *Verily, verily I say—the Son can do nothing of himself: the Father sheweth the Son all things that he doeth, and he will shew him greater works than these.* Thence I infer that he hath not shewed him all yet: and verse 30, *I can of myself do nothing.—I seek not my own will, but the will of him who hath sent me, &c.* All which expressions sufficiently evince, that he did not intend to signify his own Godhead or equality with God, when he called himself the Son of God; for in his very answer to their accusation, he represents himself inferior to, and dependent on, God the Father.

"Now let us look into the other text where our Saviour is thus accused and defends himself. viz. John x. 30—39. He saith *I and my Father are one.* 31. *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.* 32. *Jesus answered them, many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those*

works do ye stone me. 33. *The Jews answered him saying, for a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* 34. *Jesus answered, is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods ?* 35. *If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ;* 36. *Say ye of him, whom the father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemeth ; because I said I am the Son of God ?* In which portion of scripture we may observe these three things :

“ I. That Christ doth neither plainly and expressly own nor deny himself here to be the true God, for this was not a proper time to satisfy the curiosity of the malicious Jews in such a sublime doctrine, in which he had not as yet clearly and fully instructed his own disciples, yet

“ II. He gives several hints of his Godhead, or his being one with the Father, when he says, *I and my Father are one ;* and when he says, (v. 38) *I do the works of my Father, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him ;* by which he secretly intimated that the man Jesus had also a Divine Nature in him, and was personally united to God, though he did not think fit to preach his own Godhead plainly at that time. And indeed if he had not been the true God, and in that sense one with the Father, we may justly suppose that he would upon this occasion have demed himself to be the true God, and thus roundly renounced the conclusion itself which they pretended to draw from his words, as well as he did deny the justness of their consequence, from his calling himself the Son of God: and therefore since he did not renounce the conclusions, we may reasonably infer that he was the true God: but since he does deny the justness of their consequence, we may as reasonably infer that his mere calling himself the Son of God does not prove nor

include his Godhead : which appears plainer under the next particular. I say therefore

“ III. The chief design of his answer was to refute the calumny of the Jews, and the weakness of their inference, by shewing, that the name Son of God doth not necessarily signify one equal to God; but that the necessary sense of it here can rise no higher than to denote one who was nearer to the Father, and was sanctified, sealed, and sent by the Father in a way superior to all former prophets, kings, and magistrates, to whom the word of God came, and who, partly on this account, might be called gods.”

And indeed to take the word *Son* of God to signify in that place an equality with the Father, would destroy the force of our Saviour's argument and defence, and leave the accusation of the malicious Jews in its full force against him. Hence we know certainly, that if our Lord had intended the term *Son* in this place to apply to his Divine Nature alone, He would not have thus opposed the Jewish accusation, but, as we may reasonably conclude, he would have been silent on the subject, or confirmed them in their notion. “ And indeed,” says the same author, “ it is worth our observation here, that though the Jews built part of their accusation upon this saying, *I and my Father are one*, Jesus does not directly answer to those words, nor undertake to vindicate or explain them; because he might design (he undoubtedly did design) in those words to intimate his Godhead or his oneness with God the Father: therefore he neglects and drops this part of the ground of their charge, and applies himself entirely to answer their accusation, as it was built upon his calling God his own Father, and himself the Son of God: and this he did, because he knew that this name did not necessarily imply equality with God, and so he could boldly refute their inference and renounce the charge. Yet it should be observed

also, that before Christ leaves them, he leads them to his Godhead, that is, to his most intimate union with the Godhead of the Father, verse 38. *That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him; that he and his Father are one, as he before expressed his Godhead.*"

Our attention is now called to another scripture, viz. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him:* Matthew, xi. 27. The queries made respecting it (page 15) are well answered in Dr. Clarke's very excellent note on that passage. "None can fully comprehend the nature and attributes of God, but Christ; and none can fully comprehend the nature, incarnation, &c. of Christ, but the Father. The *full* comprehension and acknowledgment of the Godhead, and the mystery of the Trinity, belong to God alone." To the question, "Does this awful change of terms, evidently implying the most perfect equality, rise no higher than *the Son made of a Woman?*" I may answer it does, because Christ is God as well as man; and therefore none knoweth the Son but the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son, having true and perfect Godhead in Himself; and for that reason also He can know the Father: but from this we have no right to infer that the term Son expresses simply His Divinity; on the contrary, it is certainly intended to include His manhood; for by the Son, he means himself, Jesus Christ, who was speaking.

Again, page 15, it is asked respecting John, xvii. 5. "*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*—was it the language of the Son begotten in time &c." "I answer certainly it was, it was the language of that Son in whom was the fulness of the Godhead, and who on that account uses the term Father with the utmost

propriety: for the two natures make one Christ; and this term Christ, or Messiah, always includes the two natures; hence He, Christ, is the Son of God, and less than the Father, as to his Human Nature; and He, Christ, is God, and one with the Father, as to his Divine Nature: and thus our glorious Messiah is "God with God, and man with men." And he is the Son of God, and so speaks of himself, because of the incarnation; and this cannot be denied; for it would be absurd and wicked to say that Christ, as to his Divine Nature alone, here addresses the Father, to obtain the glory which he formerly had, because in respect to his Divine Nature, being of one substance with the Father, his glory changeth not; therefore it must be, that as Christ the Son, he requires that the glory of his own Divinity may be apparent in his Humanity, the work of redemption being accomplished. We are next presented with this passage, *to us there is but one God, even the Father*; from which it is said "Here we see that God in simplest unity, is called the Father; and consequently he is an Eternal Father." Again, "If he be not an Eternal Father, then an Eternity (a parte ante) must have past before he was a Father at all!" And what have we to do with this? Would not the same difficulty arise even if we admit the Eternal Generation; for in the same argument we may use Creator for Father, and conclude, if he be not an Eternal Creator, then an eternity (a parte ante) must have past before he was a Creator at all! and it will hardly be allowed that any creature is eternal. And though there be a beginning when he produced the first creature, and a beginning when he was first a Father; yet because he is Eternal, and because he has become a Creator and a Father; He may be called an Eternal Creator or an Eternal Father: and in the same manner we may say, Eternal Son, if we understand it according to the same sense; that is, that He,

Christ, is Eternal, because he is God; and that He is a Son, because he took our nature. And according to the same meaning, Dr. Clarke himself has said, "the throne of the Eternal King." Note on Heb. i. 5. But though we may say, Eternal Father, and Eternal Son according to this explanation, yet such phraseology is not sanctioned in scripture; and, in my opinion, had better be avoided.

And besides, What are we to understand by the expression, "God in *simplest unity*"? Does the Eternal exist in different manners? has He a more and a less simple unity? No; He is always the same. Now when the Apostle says, "*to us there is but one God, even the Father,*" does Mr. Moore imagine that the first person of the Trinity alone is spoken of exclusively? what else can we think by the phrase, "God in *simplest unity*"; if so, the Apostle excludes the proper Godhead of the *Son* and *Spirit*, which is contrary to the same Apostle's declarations, and to other parts of scripture; and, therefore, impossible: hence most certainly we know that by the term *one God*, here called the Father, the Apostle includes the Spirit, and the Divine Nature of the Son; the *ONE God*, of whom are all things. And when he adds, *and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things*, we must necessarily understand, the Human nature in its connexion with the Divine, who is one Christ, the Son of God; *by whom are all things*; and His Divinity, though distinct, is not separated or separable from the Father and the Spirit, but liveth "with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

Hence it does not appear that the term Father here, is applied to designate the Father of the Divine Nature of Christ; that Nature itself being evidently included in the term: and this is so in other similar places; thus when it is said, *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, Num. xvi. 22. and *the*

Father of Spirits, Heb. xii. 9. Under the term God in the first, and Father in the second text, we must necessarily understand the Divine Nature of the Son, as well as the Father and the Spirit; for that Nature properly and truly *created* all things. Hence, because the scripture does not separate, man ought not to separate the Persons of the Trinity in the Divine Essence, he who knoweth the one, knoweth the other, and we cannot speak of the one, without including the other; the three adorable distinctions or persons being actually comprehended in one nature; and were any of these persons wanting, God would not be what He is; some of the glorious characteristics of the Deity would be wanting, which is impossible. Hence we see that whoever of the old school inferred, page 16, "That the Father as such was

'The fountain of the Godhead own'd,
And foremost of the Three' ",

certainly made a wrong inference; such Trinitarians are condemned by the Athanasian creed, which says, "And in this Trinity, none is afore or after other". And, indeed, *foremost* sounds very strange if it is to be understood of the Divinity alone in the persons of the Godhead, and so does the term *fountain*; true and absolute Godhead has no fountain whence it sprung; it is a nature absolutely self-existent, and is underived, *unoriginated*, not *generated*. But cannot the Doctor "deny it, without at least seeming to fall into that error" of Tritheism "which they abhorred?" See his brief remarks on Heb. i. 8. He says, "a *Trinity of persons* appears to me to belong *essentially* to the Eternal Godhead, neither of which was *before*, *after*, or *produced* from another", &c. Certainly this is far from Tritheism, and has nothing unreasonable in it; for who can reasonably deny that in the infinity of the all perfect nature of God, there may be three distinctions,

inseparable indeed, but so marked, as to warrant the application of the term person; and since God can only be known to fallen man in consequence of the scheme of redemption, so those adorable distinctions, or persons in the Godhead, can only be known for the same reason, and therefore we should expect they would be revealed under the names which these persons in the one Godhead assume in relation to that scheme of redemption: which in fact we find is done. On the contrary, to hold a foremost in the persons of the Godhead, in respect to the Divine nature alone, would seem to favour the error of Tritheism, of which the Doctor is in no danger.

The next scripture is taken from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel and his first Epistle, in which we find these expressions: *That which was from the beginning, The word of Life, The Life, That Eternal Life which was with the Father.* — It cannot be doubted but that these refer to the Divine Nature of our Lord; and this, says the Apostle, *was manifested unto us, we have seen it with our eyes, our hands have handled it, &c.* But how was the Divinity manifested, seen, handled? I answer in the Son; had he not become a Son by *incarnation*, these glorious revelations would never have been made to us sinful men. This cannot be supposed to prove that the only begotten Son is such by any Eternal Generation, as some will have it, but by Divine appointment, for the gracious purpose of our redemption. Here then, speaking of the Divine nature alone, we see that He is called *the LIFE*, and also *the WORD*, and hence *the WORD of LIFE*; not produced or generated, but *which was from the beginning*, that is, always *THAT ETERNAL LIFE which was with the FATHER*, that is contained in the Nature or Divine Essence of the Father, which being absolutely Self-Existent, so is that *ETERNAL LIFE*, absolutely Self-Existent, and concealed from us, till

the unfolding of the glorious plan of redemption, when he was manifested to us in the Human Nature which he took, and on this account he is eminently called the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour.

The arguments from Scripture are closed (page 17) with a reference to the last chapter of the first Epistle of St. John. Concerning which it is said, that "the *Word* and *Son* are used equally as meaning the same person!" This is readily granted; but it proves nothing to the point in debate; the term *Word* (*λογος*) may be applied with propriety to either the Divine Nature alone, or the Human Nature alone, or to the person of Christ which includes both natures. But the term *Son* cannot properly be applied to the Divine Nature alone; as it may to the Human Nature, or to the one Christ; and hence there is a perfect harmony between Dr. Clarke's opinion and the whole of the phraseology and sense of this excellent chapter, which gloriously establishes the Divinity, while it attests the humanity of our great Redeemer. Thus I think it appears, that not one scripture has been found which favours the doctrine of the *Eternal Sonship*; therefore Dr. Clarke is not to be blamed when he called that doctrine, anti-scriptural.

II. But this subject is to be examined in the light of antiquity; and here it will be readily admitted, that whatever may be produced from any man's creed, ancient or modern, it will not affect the present enquiry; because Dr. Clarke has expressly said, that the opinion which he opposes, is the common opinion, thus allowing it more universality than I think belongs to it: the business is not therefore to shew that many have held that opinion (this being fully granted) but to shew whether that opinion be scriptural, rational, and safe. Therefore I might be excused if I entirely passed over this part in silence; however I would pay all due respect to antiquity, and

shall not therefore quite neglect the observations drawn from this source. But let it be observed, that a man culling from the ancient Fathers may defend very opposite doctrines, and in either case seem to have them on his side; yet, strange to tell, in the Thoughts there is scarcely a sentence, if there be one, picked out from the Fathers, which proves that they held the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship.

Respecting the introduction to this part of the Thoughts, let it be understood that Dr. Clarke, as well as the Fathers first mentioned, speaks of *the Word* and *the Son*, as the same Divine Person, and joins the Church in acknowledging “the Father of an infinite majesty”, of his “Honorable, true, and only Son” — the King of Glory, Our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

The quotations from Tertullian and from Mr. Fletcher’s writings (page 18 & 19) do not prove that that Father held the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship. He speaks of the Divine Persons, as all christians ought, under the names by which they are revealed to us, according to their relations in the scheme of redemption; thus it is that he says, “What need of the Gospel, if it did not clearly hold out to us, *the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*, as constituting the Divine Unity?” That is, Of what value would the Gospel be, if it did not declare that *the Son, and the Spirit*, as well as *the Father*, were truly and properly Divine, and that that Divinity of the Persons is comprehended in the nature of God? as constituting the Divine Unity: and that *Unity*, therefore, includes *the Son and the Spirit*, as well as the Father, “and that each may be openly known according to His proper *Names and Persons*”, that is, that these persons might be manifested to us by those proper names which belong to them through their relations to mankind, as exhibited in the Gospel. We believe with Tertullian, that there is one God, the Creator of all things, and

that the Word is included in His nature; and is therefore God, by whom all things were made; "that *this* WORD was called *the* SON", because "He was made flesh": but all this does not shew that he intended these names to denote the Divine Nature of the Persons, exclusively of the Humanity of Christ. He does not even intimate that these names refer to that Divine Nature alone, but all along considers the subject in connexion with the incarnation, as it is found, and as it stands in the Gospel. And in this view, the names have the utmost propriety, and we ought to use them, because the one Eternal Essence subsisting, without division or separation, under THREE *adorable distinctions*, cannot be known to us but through the medium of that gracious event which gave rise to those names.

The Nicene Creed is here produced in defence of the Eternal Sonship, which many think it strongly supports. This creed we allow has ever held an honourable place in the Churches, and we hope will continue to do so still, but it is well known that many parts of it were, at its first introduction, and ever since that time, understood according to very different interpretations; and our venerable Church does not receive it according to any particular sense in which the compilers, or any other persons may have considered it, any further than as that sense accords with the Holy Scriptures; as is most plain from the 8th and 20th Articles. The Arians, against whose errors this creed was particularly composed, wish to have it understood as declaring the Eternal Sonship, and will themselves subscribe to it on this ground, and do expound and profess to receive it in that sense: thus they say, the Word is a person deriving from the Father, both his Being, and his Powers or Attributes; and that the Divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is no other than what is communicated to them from the Father, and thus they

fall into a sort of Tritheism. They deny the persons in the Divine Nature alone, but allow of them by derivation in some unknown manner before all ages; and hence they hold that the Father is strictly and truly God, and the Son and Spirit are so in some lower degree. And it must be confessed, that this doctrine of the Eternal Sonship is the strongest bulwark of Arianism. They will even admit it in as full a sense as its meaning can possibly reach; saying, that "the Son is *eternal*, as having *always* been with the Father, and deriving his Essence or being from him in an ineffable manner, by his *Eternal* Power and will." Clarke's Doctrine of the Trinity, pt. 3, ch. ii. no. 5. But we cannot thus think of the Creed, especially as it was written against that error; and the only part of it which presents any difficulty respecting the question is this, "begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father"; and even here the chief difficulty lies in this sentence, "begotten of his Father before all worlds;" for as it respects the rest, we say truly of Him, that He is begotten, not made: Jesus Christ our Lord, because He is God as well as man, cannot be said to be made or created; but, however, He did not actually exist as Christ, till He took hold of the Human Nature, so then Christ, our Lord, though not created, has been brought into existence, an uncreated, taking into himself a created nature, by the will of God the Father, in which we necessarily include the infinite concurrence of the Holy Spirit, and the Son as to His Divinity. And hence He is the Son of God, his only Son, no other being so in this manner, so as to have in himself true Godhead. Thus hath He come from God, and is God of God, or from God, that is, has come down from heaven, as he himself has told us (John iii. 13.) yet we must

not mistake his meaning, as if his Divine Nature had been lessened; and he therefore adds, that *He is in Heaven: he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven*, so that still he is "of one Substance with the Father," and therefore his being God of God, or Light of Light, or his coming down from heaven, or from God, can only denote his pondeescension in assuming the Human Nature, His Divine Nature remaining unchangeably the same.

We have then only to enquire, how he can be said to be "begotten of his Father before all worlds;" and we may say that this is true, just in the same sense, as he is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; Rev. xiii. 8. or, as we are *chosen in Him before the foundation of the world*: thus as we readily consent, that all things were always known of God, so the incarnation was known and fore-ordained from the beginning, according to the good pleasure of his will; and therefore this Creed itself may be fairly and scripturally understood and subscribed to, without at all considering it as asserting the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship; and from it that doctrine cannot be proved.

What is quoted from Bellarmine, does not favour the Eternal Sonship, it is quite the reverse. "The Union, (says he) is first *natural and eternal*, between *the Father and the Son*; and this Union is inseparable and perpetual; *I and the Father are One*: and our Lord said, *My God*, not *My Father*; for **THE FATHER** is **THE God of the Son**, through the incarnation." That there is a natural and eternal Union, or rather Unity, in the Divine Nature, is not denied; no, it is insisted on: and that "**THE FATHER** is **THE God of THE SON**, through the incarnation," is also insisted on; and this renders the terms, Father and Son, proper; for, how could he be called the God of the Son, if the term Son is to be understood of his Divine Nature, in which he is equal to, and one with the Father?

From what was collected on this head, Mr. Moore concludes "that there was a Father and a Son in the unity of the Godhead, and consequently Natural and Eternal." (page 21.) We do not say there *was*, except in the purpose of God, but that there *is*, a Father and a Son in the unity of the Godhead, the Human Nature being taken into the Divine; and this Son, since he is God, always *was*, *is* now, and ever will be, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the comprehensive, perfect, and infinite unity of God; a unity Natural and Eternal, and we may add, Essential; and therefore not *one* produced from *another*, since that would destroy the Unity, and alter the Existence of God, which is impossible: hence the terms Father and Son are thus applied, because the Word was made flesh, which fills our souls with holy astonishment and joy; this I feel, for tears of joy and gratitude fill my eyes from the pleasing and grateful emotions of my heart while I now write. What is added from that excellent Prelate, Bishop Horne, does not assist the doctrine in question; he says, "Thus we see *that God had a Son to send*;" this is very true; we may say also he had prophets to send, and sent them; but in a much higher sense he had *the Son*, who was given in the purpose and promise of God, and in the fulness of time sent into the world: and even as a Son he was truly divine, because in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, because *he is God manifested in the flesh*. But though God had this Son in his gracious purposes and good will, we are not justified in saying, that the term Son applies to the Divine Nature alone. From all this it appears, that whatever was the opinion of the ancients, these quotations do not prove they held that doctrine in favour of which they are introduced.

III. The business is now to be searched into by the light of reason; but Mr. Moore handles Reason

so roughly that I should be surprised indeed if she favour his cause; on the very onset he libels her for having "asserted her rights over both Scripture and Antiquity" (page 22.) Now this I cannot credit; for Reason herself has informed me again and again, that she never had, and never pretended to have, any right over scripture, and that she attributed the unjust charge to an oversight; as opinion, pride, vanity, and self-will had often dressed themselves in her garb; and hence she was frequently blamed for their faults. Reason also says it will be better not "to wade through the fire and water" noticed on the 22d page; that fire was enkindled, and that water poured out, by pride, vain opinion, and resentment. As we do not set up among the Sophists, we shall leave them at liberty to try their strength if they please, as they are invited, page 23.

After chastising reason, and having sufficiently corrected and humbled her, she is acknowledged "the handmaid of scripture," and as such has performed wonders in our behalf; having "delivered us from ancient and modern superstition; from popery and all its novelties, idolatries, and persecutions." But immediately, as if hurried away by a sudden fit of furious passion, it is asserted, that these good works were not hers; "no reasonings of men could ever have delivered us from any of those debasing errors." And to prove this, the wranglings of a learned assembly, and the fancies of those who pay little regard to the Holy Scriptures, are called upon as witnesses.

Mr. Whiston is now introduced; who, taking up the leaf of a tree, said to his friend, Dr. S. Clarke, "Samuel, here is a demonstration of God superior to any that is in thy book!" On which it is said (page 24) "yes I must *thus believe that He is*, by a display, and a chain of evidence, the smallest link of which demonstrates His being beyond all the mere reasonings of men."

Now what are we to understand by the "mere reasonings of men?" Surely there can be no reasonings but from principles; and the works of God and his revealed will, afford the clearest of all principles; these present themselves with irresistible force to the mind, reason embraces them, and rejects whatever is repugnant to them: and the reasonings of men from these principles, shew his Being beyond contradiction, and set forth the agreement between the things of God variously made known in his visible works, and more expressly declared in the Holy Scriptures. It is said, "*I honour the Son, even as I honour the Father;*" and surely we have reason for so doing. It is added, "*I feel the justice of that awful declaration, he that believeth not shall be damned,*" Now how do I feel the justice of this declaration? certainly because I see it is reasonable that I should believe; it would be directly contrary to reason not to believe the record God has given of his Son; and not to believe that the Son of God, is God as well as man, is truly unreasonable, because He who cannot lie has revealed it unto his rational creatures.

Dr. Clarke has said, "And having seen that the doctrine of an Eternal Sonship produced Arianism, and Arianism produced Socinianism;" and to this Mr. Moore replies (page 25) "We have not seen it, nor do we believe the Doctor has any authority for this declaration." How can we account for such unbelief? Does not Dr. Clarke plainly give his authority from Socrates Scholasticus? That Socinianism sprung from Arianism is well known, and that Arianism sprung from that anti-scriptural doctrine, can hardly be doubted from the authority Dr. Clarke has presented at the end of the 1st chapter of Hebrews. But it is alleged, "No, the Reasoning System introduced by the Father of lies in opposition to Faith, begat Arianism, &c." What

reasoning System? The Father of truth introduced reason, and surely some reasoning system. The Father of lies does not love reasoning so well; but I do not wonder if he attempt to supplant reason, and introduce in place of it, vain wrangling and doubtful disputations, with their evil attendants, which indeed may be called evil reasonings.

But how must we understand this question (page 25) "Can you comprehend an Eternal Sonship?" If it mean, can you comprehend the congruity or incongruity of the expression, *Eternal Sonship*, I cannot acquiesce in the answer given to it; but if it mean to comprehend the Being which that expression is supposed to designate, I hold the question is impertinent; since Dr. Clarke has never pretended to any thing of this sort, but affirms the contrary. See his note on Matt. xi. 27, above quoted; and see also many other places in his excellent commentary.

It is said (page 25) but is no where proved, that "Eternal Sonship or Eternal Generation," and "the sublime doctrine of an *Eternal God*" are only to be believed on similar evidence; this I flatly deny, and have as much right to deny it without giving a reason, as another has to assert it; but I will produce my reason: The doctrine of an Eternal God rests on the clearest evidence, which, like the uninterrupted rays of a glorious Sun, flows into my mind from a view of my own existence, from that of the visible world, and from the plainest declarations of the word of God. Now I have no such evidence for the doctrine of the Eternal Generation, either from my own existence, or from that of the visible world, but on the contrary, I find evidence opposing it. And in the Sacred Oracles, I find it no where declared, either plainly or otherwise, neither do I find any passages which can be fairly interpreted to mean any such thing: Therefore I conclude the

doctrines cannot be received on similar evidence. We are advertised (page 26) not to "forget the two natures of our adorable Lord;" in this we shall do well, and whoever reads Dr. Clarke's notes will find he never forgets this. Then Mr. Moore adds, "With respect to the Divine Nature, our Lord says, *I and the Father are one*; and with respect to the Human, *my Father is greater than I*. What arrogance and folly united would it shew in any creature gravely to declare, *God is greater than I*." And yet it is alleged here that our Lord says in respect to his Human Nature, *my Father is greater than I*. Now it is allowed that this Nature was created, I ask then, does not this argument charge our Lord with arrogance and folly? May we not with greater propriety conclude, that it is of himself, as God and man, making one Christ, and as such having a work of God to perform, that He saith, *My Father is greater than I*. As He who *sends* is greater than He who is *sent*; so God in his own Nature is greater than the Human Nature of Christ, even taking the Humanity in its connexion with the Godhead; in which Union the *human nature* performed effectually and satisfactorily the work of Redemption, the work of the Father; was born, dwelt among us, suffered, died, and rose again, by the power of this Divinity which always includes the Father and the Spirit; these three are One, and however distinct, cannot be separated. Jesus saith, *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*, John xiv. 9.

Respecting the double expression, *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, it is observed, "Were there only an incarnate Son, the language would hardly seem proper" (page 26) I ask, Where would have been the impropriety? If I be a child of God, is he not my God and my Father? But what has this to do with the present business. Who has said there is *only* an incarnate

Son? Not Dr. Clarke, he says there is an incarnate Son, but that the term Son does not apply to the Divine Nature according to the sense of an Eternal Generation, as we have already seen. "But," says Mr. Moore, "if there be indeed a Father and a Son, co-equal, and co-eternal, then *the Son made of a Woman, made under the law*; may speak the language of his second nature, and declare his inferiority." What does this mean? Most certainly the Human Nature is that which was *made of a Woman; made under the law*; who is said here to "speak the language of his second nature and declare his inferiority." What! a second nature inferior to the Human! I cannot understand it. The following part of that paragraph has been repeatedly answered; the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, refers us to his Eternal Divinity (not Sonship) which he had before the *world was*, before there was any Creation.

Dr. Clarke's reason for setting his face against the doctrine of an Eternal Sonship is honourably noticed in (page 27) it is a fear lest he should encourage the Arian heresy; but it is considered groundless, because to allow "an Eternal Son, cuts up that heresy, and leaves it neither root nor branch." However we are not bound to receive this proposition as an axiom; it may perhaps be said in some respects to oppose the heresy, or at least it is so intended by those who hold it, but that it cuts it up is not manifest: its operation on Arianism is like that of a strong wind on a forest, it shakes the trees, and probably tears off a few branches, but the forest laughs at its power, and rejoices in its effects. And should we even allow that it cuts it up, we must still confess that it administers the instrument and the seed for planting it afresh. And even an Arian who is a conscientious Arian, or conscientious man if you

please, will readily subscribe to the Doctrine of an *Eternal Son*; for the Arians hold that God the Father is the fountain of Deity, and thus express their sentiments of the Son; that he is "not un-originated, not underived, or Self-existent; but so deriving His Being or Essence from the Father in a singular and ineffable manner, as that no man can presume to say of Him, as they do of the creature, that *there was a time when He was not*, or that He was produced *out of Nothing*." And again, as before quoted, "THE SON ETERNAL, as having *always* been with the Father, and deriving his essence or being from Him in an ineffable manner by his *Eternal Power and Will*." Dr. S. Clarke's Scrip. Doc. of the Trin. part 3. chap. 2. no. 5. And were it necessary, we could produce much more to the same purpose. Now if this profession of Faith in the very words of a celebrated Arian, is not the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship which Dr. Clarke opposes, and which Mr. Moore defends, it is time that I ask what is the doctrine in question? If they be not the same, it must be owned they are near a-kin.

It is added (page 28) "But the doctrine of an Eternal Son is decisive, and fixes a great gulf between the Christian faith and all these doubtful disputations." This is merely said, and it is as fair to say the contrary. There is indeed a great gulf between the christian faith and these doubtful disputations, but it was not fixed by that doctrine: just the reverse; that doctrine is the very foundation of the disputes; it says the second person is produced or generated; then says the Arian, he cannot be Eternal; hence proceed the disputations: but leave out the unscriptural doctrine, and keep to your Bible as Dr. Clarke advises, and you will see the gulf at once, the Arian cannot reach you. Respecting the Doctrine contended for, it is asked, "Where is the absurdity?" and answered (page 28) "It is in

the argument of all those who deny that *Eternal Sonship*. It is founded on a supposed analogy, where *none* can possibly exist. 'No Son can be so old as his Father, therefore the *Son of God* cannot be an *Eternal Son*.' " Now I say *must* we believe this, because it has been told us? But we are not informed what analogy is supposed; the learned should remember that others cannot always see as far as they: I must confess I stand here among my short sighted brethren; I cannot discover that any analogy is here supposed at all, but such analogy as the terms clearly indicate, and necessarily imply, and which must not merely be supposed, but are positively included in the words, if words have any meaning; in generation, and, therefore, in the term *Son*, some sort of derivation must be understood, and that which is derived cannot be Self-existent. If no analogy can exist in this case, may I be allowed to ask, What am I to understand by the terms *Father* and *Son*, or the *Son of God*? If they include no ideas analogous to those which belong to them when otherwise employed, are not the very terms calculated, not only to fill us with darkness, but also to lead us astray? and therefore I conclude that they really have some sort of analogy to that sense, which they have in common use; otherwise He, who is the light of the world, would not have used them. Hence the argument is not yet shaken. But it is said, and *only said*, "If this could prove any thing, it would prove that *Jehovah is such a one as ourselves*." It would prove no such thing; be not misled by the ambiguity of an expression, *God is Eternal*, and, therefore, the three grand, inseparable, indivisible distinctions in his comprehensive Unity, or Essence, are equally Eternal; and these distinctions are only known to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and man; and hence called the Son of God. And since it is by this relation that these

three Persons in the Godhead are made known to us, they are properly, in reference thereto, denominated *The Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*; and thus there is a good sense in which we say *Eternal Father*, *Eternal Son*, &c. But according to the sense in which Dr. Clarke rejects the expression already declared, it has nothing to do with proving *what* any of the persons in the glorious and Eternal Trinity are *like*; it likens them to none, and none to them. It is hinted; "In this way Mr. Wesley might allow the argument to be conclusive." May we not reply, had Mr. Wesley in this way considered the argument, we cannot account for his silence.

It is asked, "would it not equally prove the *WORD* is not *ETERNAL*?" Answer, No, for the *WORD* ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\varsigma$) signifies *reason* as well as *speech*, and reason and speech belong to the essence or nature of a perfect man, but it does not belong to his nature to have a Son; Adam was a man before he had a son. Hence there is nothing to prevent the application of the term *WORD* to the Divine Nature, since it includes ideas capable of this application, which cannot be said of the term *Son*. In conformity to this, we find the term *WORD* is really used to express the Divine Nature alone before He was made flesh; but this use of the term *Son*, cannot be proved.

But it is said (page 29) "I am sorry to be obliged to combat such an argument. It can hardly be termed a sophism, for it has no difficulty of solution." If this be so, why is not the solution given? Surely the bare assertion, "that it supposes an analogy where none can possibly exist," is not to pass for a solution; and if it is to pass for a solution, we have seen it is not true, and that an analogy is necessarily included in the very terms of the argument; and that analogy must exist as long as the words can be of use to us. The truth is, it is no sophism, but a plain simple

argument, which still maintains its ground, and is impregnable; and, therefore, the exultation which follows is unseasonable, and we must still conclude the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship is absurd.

The same may be shewn thus; to be generated is to be in some way originated or derived; but if the *Godhead* of Christ be any way originated or derived, the Deity does not exist now as always, which is absurd, because we know he is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever. Therefore the *Godhead* of the Son is not originated or derived; and therefore He is not generated. Hence Christ is not called the Son in reference simply to his Divine Nature, but on account of his being made flesh.

The same is likewise manifest by another argument; thus, because God is always the same, if the Divine nature of Christ be produced, it is by an Eternal Generation; and if it be said the Son is begotten of the Father by an Eternal Generation, that is in one *Eternal Now*, then that act of the Father, by which the Son is produced, is not completed, because it is an Eternal act; and plainly that which is an Eternal act, cannot be completed but in Eternity; and, therefore, since the *Eternal Now* is still continued, the Son is not yet begotten, but he is considered and spoken of in that doctrine as produced, so he is produced and not produced, which is absurd.

Again, if it be said he has *BEEN* begotten, and the act by which he has been produced, has *ceased* in the Divine Paternity; then the doctrine of an Eternal Sonship, an Eternal procession or generation, is absurd; for this Eternal act, which according to that doctrine is essential to the Godhead, has ceased to be performed, and therefore the Son being *already produced*, does not now depend on the *Eternal flowing* or *proceeding* by which he has been produced; but according

to the doctrine in dispute, he does essentially depend on that *Eternal Flowing*, which is plainly absurd, as was otherwise shewn above. We have also seen that the doctrine is not scriptural; and from this alone we might suspect that it is dangerous; and that it is really dangerous is plain from the affinity which we have shewn it bears to Arianism, and the grounds which it affords for that Heresy; Hence Dr. Clarke is justified in pronouncing the doctrine to be anti-scriptural, absurd, and dangerous.

A little lower it is inquired; "Was there not some mistake or inaccuracy in the prescribed order, respecting our consecration in Baptism? The opinion, however, that would tempt us to give up this Divine arrangement, and substitute another, is perfectly new, &c." Now, in the first place, the opinion is not perfectly new, it is the doctrine of the Bible, and has been supported by many learned and pious men of the orthodox faith; and it was for want of keeping strictly to this true, pure, and sound Bible doctrine, that there has been so many disputes concerning it in the Church.

But what is of great importance in this business, is the insinuation that this opinion would tempt us to give up the Divine arrangement, &c. than which nothing can be a more gross misrepresentation, which candour obliges me to say is from mistake not from design; there is evidently nothing in it which can suggest the substitution of any other arrangement in the order of Baptism, nor any thing in it whatever inconsistent with the instituted order; and why should it be said to tempt us to give it up? Nay, it requires that order, for it supposes we were created by the One God, consisting of three persons, who, as such, is our Father; and we were redeemed by one Lord Jesus Christ, who is God as well as

man; and we are sanctified by one Spirit, who is included in one essence with the Father and the Son.

It is further insinuated, that it supposes our foundation a sandy one, makes against our safety, liberties, &c. How could this have entered into any man's head? The truth evidently is, that it breaks in on no established order, it touches none of our bulwarks, it lessens none of our liberties or securities, it does not remove *any* of the *sincere milk of the Word*, it does not reckon our foundation a sandy one. Surely Mr. Moore will not attempt to persuade us, that we have for our foundation the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, while he himself has said, he believes the Doctor holds the fundamentals. Let then his fears subside, there is in this opinion nothing contrary to *the form of sound Words*; and, in general, the Fathers of Methodism have adhered to the form of sound words, which we will hold fast; but we do not reckon our Fathers, our venerable and highly respected Fathers, we do not reckon them infallible; they never pretended to it. And it may be, we may meet with a few inaccuracies of different kinds in most of them; and are we to be said to depart from their doctrines, their *form of sound words*, because we leave out those inaccuracies. No, their doctrines, as far as our salvation is concerned, are the doctrines of the Bible. Their doctrines and discipline we believe to be of God, and these we joyfully hold fast. But after all, let me ask, was the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, or the Eternal Generation of Christ, ever insisted on, enjoined, or even proposed as a Methodist doctrine? Why then all this ado? Let us rather lift up our hearts in gratitude to the triune God, our Creator and Father, who has exercised divine compassion towards us after our sad revolt; and let us rejoice that our Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us,

is all-sufficient, being no less than God; and that the Holy Spirit, who influences our minds, and purifies our hearts, is also God, being contained in the same Divine Essence: and therefore we say Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now and for evermore, Amen.