

Of the Distinct Personality, and Deity of the Son.

by John Gill

The Son is a person, and a divine person distinct from the Father and the Spirit, possessing all the divine perfections and doing many works.

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 28:19, John 1:1, John 5:22, John 10:30, Romans 1:4, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:3, 1 John 2:1, Revelation 1:8

Topics: "Deity Of Christ", "Trinity"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the distinct personality and deity of the Son of God, asserting that He is a divine person, separate from the Father and the Holy Spirit. He argues that the Son is the express image of the Father, possessing all divine attributes and performing divine works, such as creation and redemption. Gill supports his claims with scriptural references, demonstrating that the Son's role as mediator, advocate, and judge further affirms His distinct personality and divine nature. He concludes that the worship and honor given to the Son are indicative of His true divinity, as He is to be worshipped alongside the Father. This sermon serves to clarify the essential Christian belief in the Trinity and the nature of Christ as both fully God and fully man.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 1--Chapter 30

OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY,

AND DEITY OF THE SON.

That the Son of God is a person, and a divine person distinct from the Father and the Spirit, cannot be doubted; for since his Father is a person, and he is the "express image of his person", he must be a person too; and he must be the express image of him, as he himself is a divine person, the Son of God, and truly God; and not as he is man and mediator; not as he is man, or as having an human nature, for his Father never had any, and therefore he could not be the image of him in that respect; for though man is the image of God as to some qualities in him, yet is he never called his character or express image, much less the express image of any of the persons in the Deity: nor as mediator, and in an office capacity, for

his Father was never a mediator, nor in an office: it remains therefore that it must be the express image of his person, as he himself is a divine person, abstracted from any consideration of his human nature, and of his office.

For as Plato[1] says, that which is like must needs be of the same species with that to which it is like. The definition of a Person agrees with him: he is an individual, distinct, though not separate from the divine nature, he has in common with the Father and the Spirit; he subsists of himself in that nature distinctly, and independently; is not a part of another, the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in him; nor is his human nature, which he assumed in time, a part of his person, nor adds anything to his personality; but being taken up into union with his person, subsists in it; he has life in himself, and is the living God; is intelligent, has understanding and will; knows himself, his Father and the Spirit, and all creatures and things, and does whatsoever he pleases.

Besides the distinctive, relative property, or personal relation of the Son, which is to be begotten, and which gives and makes the distinction of him, as a divine person, from the Father and Spirit, who are never said to be begotten; there are many other things which show, or make him appear to be a distinct person. 1. His being with God as the Word[2], (John 1:1) and with his Father as a Son, as one brought up with him, (Prov. 8:30) clearly expresses his distinct personality; he must be a person to be with, and to be brought up with another; and he must be distinct from him with whom he is; he cannot with any propriety be said to be with himself, or to be brought up with himself. 2.

His being set up from everlasting as mediator, and the covenant head of the elect; the Father making a covenant with him, and putting the persons of the chosen ones, with all the blessings of grace for them, into his hands, show him to be a person; a mere name and character could not be said to be set up, to be covenanted with, or to have persons and things committed to his care and charge; and these show him to be a distinct person from him who set him up, and entrusted him with all these persons and things (see Prov. 8:23; Ps. 89:3, 28; Deut. 33:3; Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:9). 3.

His being sent in the fulness of time to be the Saviour of his people, and that under the character of the Son of God, shows him to be distinct from the Father, whose Son he is, and by whom he was sent; if he was not a person, but a mere name, he could not be sent; and he must be distinct from him that sent him; he that sends, and he that is sent, cannot be one and the same person; or else it must be said, that he sent himself, which is too gross and absurd to be admitted; see (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 4:9, 14). 4.

His becoming a sacrifice, and making satisfaction for the sins of men, and so the Redeemer and Saviour of them, plainly declare his distinct personality. Was he not a person, he could not offer himself a sacrifice, and he must be distinct from him to whom he offered himself; was he not a person, he could not make satisfaction, or reconcile men to God; or, in other words, make reconciliation and atonement for sin; these are personal acts, and he must be distinct from him to whom the satisfaction, reconciliation, and atonement are made; or to whom men are reconciled by him; if he has redeemed men to God by his blood, as he has, he must be a person that is the redeemer of men, and he must be distinct from him to whom he has redeemed them; for he cannot with propriety be said to reconcile and redeem them to himself; see (Eph 5:2; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 5:10, 11; Rev. 5:9). 5.

His ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, show him to be a person that ascended, and is sat down; and though it was in human nature that he ascended and sat down, yet it was God in that nature "God is gone up with a shout" (Ps. 47:5). "Thou", the Lord God, "hast ascended on high", (Ps.

68:17, 18). "The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand", (Ps. 110:1) and he must be distinct from his God and our God, from his Father and our Father, to whom he ascended, and cannot be the same person with him at whose right hand he sits, (John 20:17; Heb. 1:13). 6.

His advocacy and intercession with his Father, is a plain proof of his distinct personality. He is said to be an "advocate with the Father", (1 John 2:1) and therefore must be a person to act the part of an advocate; and must be distinct from him with whom he advocates; unless it can be thought he is an advocate with himself; he himself says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter", meaning the Spirit of truth, as next explained (John 14:16, 17). Now he must be distinct from the Father to whom he prays, for surely he cannot be supposed to pray to himself; and he must be distinct from the Spirit, for whom he prays.

He appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them, and must be a person to do this; and must be distinct from him in whose presence he appears, and to whom he makes intercession; for he cannot with any propriety be said to appear in his own presence for his people, and to mediate and make intercession for them with himself (see Heb. 7:25, 9:24). 7. His judging the world at the last day, with all the circumstances thereof; gathering all nations before him, dividing them, and setting them, some on his right hand and others on his left, and passing the definitive sentence on them, prove him to be a person, a divine person, and distinct from the Father and the Spirit; for as for "the Father, he judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son", (John 5:22) nor is ever the final judgment of the world ascribed to the Spirit (see Matthew 25:31-41; Acts 10:42, 17:31). 8.

It is promised to the saints that they shall be with Christ, where he is; see him as he is, and behold his glory, and shall reign with him for evermore; and he is represented as the object of their praise, wonder, and worship, to all eternity; and that as distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost; all which, and much more, show him to be a person, and to be distinct from them both; for surely he must be a person, a divine and distinct one, whom the saints shall he, live and dwell with to all eternity; and whom they shall praise, serve, and adore throughout endless ages.

The Deity of Christ may he next considered, and proved; or, that he is a divine Person, truly and properly God. Not a made or created God, as say the Arians. He was made flesh, and made of a woman; but not made God; for then he must make himself, which is absurd; since "without him was not anything made that was made; but all things were made by him" (John 1:3). Nor God by office, as say the Socinians; for then he would be God only in an improper sense; as magistrates are called gods; and not truly and properly God: nor God by name only; as there are called lords many, and gods many; such were the gods of the heathens, inanimate, irrational, lifeless beings, and so could have no divinity in them.

But he is God by nature; as these were not; having the whole essence and nature of God in him. This will appear, 1. First, From the names which are given to him; he has the same glorious names the most high God has; as EjeH, I AM that I AM, (Ex. 3:14) to which our Lord refers, and takes to himself, (John 8:58) and Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature, and peculiar to the most High, (Ps. 83:18) it is not given to angels; for wherever an angel is so called, not a created but the uncreated angel is meant; nor to the ark, (2 Sam. 6:2) for not the ark, but God, whose the ark was, is there called by the name of the Lord of hosts: nor to Jerusalem, (Jer. 33:16) but to the Messiah, (Jer. 23:6) for the words may be rendered, "This is the name wherewith he shall be called by her, the Lord our Righteousness": nor to the church absolutely, (Ezek. 48:35) but in composition, or with addition; and is only symbolical of Jehovah's presence being with her; and the same may be said of mount Moriah; and of some altars, called

Jehovah-Jireh, Jehovah-Nissi, and Jehovah-Shalom; which are only symbolical, and designed to call to remembrance the wonderful appearance of Jehovah; the gracious help, and divine assistance, he granted to his people in those places, (Gen. 22:14; Ex 17:15; Judg. 6:24) nor is this name given to priests and judges, (De 19:17) for Jehovah is not to be explained by them; but is distinguished from them; and though he is joined with them, this only designs his presence in judiciary affairs, agreeable to (Ps. 82:1) if, therefore, it can be proved that the name Jehovah is given to Christ, it will prove him to be the most High over all the earth.

Now we are told that God spake to Moses, and said, "I am the Lord", or Jehovah; by which name he was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, not by that only, or that was not so fully made known to them, as it had been to Moses, and to the Israelites by him, (Ex. 6:2, 3, 3:14) which person that appeared to Moses, and said those words, is called the Angel of the Lord, (Ex. 3:2) not a created angel, (Ex. 3:6) but an uncreated one; and must be understood, not of God the Father, who is never called an angel; but of the Son of God, the Angel of his presence, who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, went before them, and led them through the Red Sea, and wilderness, to the land of Canaan, (Ex 3:8, 13:21, 14:19, 23:20; Isa. 63:9) he, whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness, is expressly called Jehovah, (Ex 17:7) and nothing is more evident than that this Person was Christ, (1 Cor. 10:9) he whom Isaiah saw on a throne, making a very magnificent appearance, is not only called Adonai, (Isa. 6:1) but by the seraphim, Jehovah, (Isa. 6:3) and so by Isaiah, (Isa. 6:5), who was bid to say to the Jews, (Isa. 6:8, 9).

"Hear ye indeed", &c. which words Christ applies to himself; and observes that, "those things Isaiah said, when he saw his glory and spoke of him" (John 12:39, 40, 41). There is a prophecy in (Isa. 40:3). "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord", or of Jehovah, "make straight in the desert, and high way for our God", which, by the evangelist Matthew, is applied unto, and interpreted of John the Baptist, (Matthew 3:1-3) wherefore, the Jehovah, whose way he was to prepare, and our God, whose paths he was to make straight, could be no other than Christ; whose harbinger and forerunner John was, and whose way and paths were prepared and made straight by him, through his preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, and declaring the kingdom of heaven, or of the Messiah, was at hand.

Moreover, the Messiah, or Christ, is expressly called, the Lord, or Jehovah, our righteousness, in (Jer. 23:6) it being his work, as Mediator, to bring in everlasting righteousness; and is the end of the law for it, and is made righteousness to everyone that believes. Once more, Jehovah promises to pour forth the Spirit of grace and supplication on some persons described in (Zech. 12:10) and then adds, "They shall look upon me", Jehovah, "whom they have pierced"; which was fulfilled in Christ, when one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, (John 19:34, 37) the same words are referred to, and applied to Christ (Rev. 1:7).

Now, since in these, and in many other places, Christ is intended by Jehovah, he must be truly and properly God, since this name is incommunicable to any other. It may be observed also, that in some places of scripture, Christ is absolutely called God; as in Psalm 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"; where he is distinguished from God his Father, (Ps. 45:7) and the words are expressly applied to him as the Son of God (Heb. 1:8). "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God", &c. yea, Christ calls himself God; as he well might, since he is in the form of God, and therefore thought it no robbery to be equal to him; saying, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else; I have sworn by myself", &c. (Isa. 45:22, 23) which last words, in connection with the other, are, by the apostle Paul, applied to Christ (Rom. 14:10-12).

The evangelist John, says of the Word, or Son of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and so cannot be understood of any but Christ, that "the Word was God", (John 1:1, 14) and the same inspired writer observes, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us", (1 John 3:16) from whence it follows, that he that laid down his life for men, which can only be said of Christ, and wherein his love to them appeared, must be God. And Christ is not only called God absolutely, but with some additional epithets, with possessive pronouns, as, our God, the Jews were waiting for, and John was the forerunner of, (Isa. 25:9, 40:3) "your God", who should come when miracles would be wrought as proofs of it, (Isa. 35:4, 5) "their God", (Luke 1:16) "my Lord, and my God", by Thomas (John 20:28).

Now though angels, magistrates, and judges, are called gods in an improper and metaphorical sense; yet never called our gods, your gods, &c. Christ is said to be Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, that is, God manifest in the flesh, (Matthew 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:16). Some additional characters are given of Christ, when he is called God; which show him to be truly and properly God; as, "the mighty God", in (Isa. 9:6) which is manifestly a prophecy of him; and who elsewhere is called the most Mighty, the Almighty, (Ps. 45:3; Rev. 1:8) and "over all" God blessed for ever", (Rom. 9:5) over all creatures, angels and men, who are made by him; and he is blessed for ever in himself.

He is called "the great God", whose glorious appearing, and not the Father's, saints are directed to look for; besides, this great God, is explained of Jesus Christ our Saviour in the next clause, Titus 2:13: compare with this Revelation 19:17 where he who is called the great God, is the mighty warrior, whose name is the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords, (Rev. 19:11, 13, 16) Christ is also said to be the "living God", (Heb. 3:12) for he only is spoken of in the context; and this is only said of the most high God; which distinguishes him from all other deities, (Jer. 10:10) and, to add no more, he is called, "the true God", in opposition to all false and fictitious deities, (1 John 5:20) for what is there said, is said expressly of the Son of God. 2.

Secondly, The Deity of Christ may be proved from the divine perfections he is possessed of; "for in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead", (Col. 2:9) not one perfection of the divine nature excepted; or otherwise it could not be said, that all the fulness of Deity was in him. God is necessarily and self-existent, and independent on any; such is Christ, he is *autoyeov*, God of himself: as man and mediator he has a life given him for himself, and others, and lives by the Father; but, as God, he owes his life and being to none; it is not derived from another; he is over all, God blessed for ever.

Eternity is a perfection of God; God is from everlasting to everlasting; Christ was not only before Abraham, but before Adam; and before any creature was in being; for he is the arch, the beginning, the first Cause of the creation of God, (Rev. 3:14) the first born, or rather, the first parent and producer of every creature; as the word *prwtotokov*, by the removal of the accent[3], may be rendered which best agrees with the apostle's reasoning in the next verse; where all things are said to be created by him; and therefore, as the apostle argues, he must be before all things, (Col. 1:15-17) as Mediator, he was set up from everlasting; his goings forth in the covenant were of old; the elect were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them in him, before that began; all which suppose his eternal existence.

Hence he is called Alpha and Omega the first and the last, the beginning and the ending; which is, and was, and is to come; Melchizedek's antitype, having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Rev. 1:8; Heb. 7:3). Omnipresence, or immensity, is another perfection of Deity, (Jer. 23:23, 24). Christ, as the Son of God, was in heaven, in the bosom of his Father; when, as the Son of man, he was here on earth, (John 1:18, 3:13) which he could not be, if he was not omnipresent; nor could he make good his promises to his

ministers, churches, and people, to be with them at all times, in all ages, and in all places, wherever they are, (Matthew 18:20, 28:20) nor walk in the midst of his golden candlesticks, the several churches, in different places; and fill all things and persons in them, as he certainly does, (Rev. 1:13; Eph 4:10).

Omniscience is another divine perfection, and most manifestly appears in Christ; he knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify to him what was in man; he could tell the woman of Samaria all that ever she did; he knew from the beginning who would believe in him, and who would betray him; he knew the secret thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees; and is that Word that is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and he will hereafter let all the world and churches know, that he searches the hearts and reins.

In short, he knows all things, as Peter affirmed unto him, (John 2:24, 25, 4:29, 6:64; Matthew 9:4; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 2:23; John 21:17) and though he is said not to know the day of judgment, this is said of him as the Son of man, not as the Son of God (Mark 13:32). Omnipotence is a perfection that belongs to Christ, and is peculiar to God, who only can do all things; Christ is almighty, and his works declare it; the creation of all things, the sustentation of the universe, the redemption and preservation of his people, and the resurrection of them at the last day; all which are, "according to his mighty power, which is able to subdue all things to himself" (Phil. 3:21).

To observe no more, immutability belongs solely to God; who is without any variableness or shadow of turning; and such is Christ, the same today, yesterday, and for ever, (Heb. 13:8; see Ps. 102:26 compared with Heb. 1:12) and since therefore such perfections of the Godhead are in Christ, he must be truly and properly God. 3. Thirdly, The truth of Christ's proper divinity may be proved from the works done by him; which are the same that are done by the Father; and in which he is a coefficient cause with him; and are done by him *omoiwv*, in like manner as by the Father, (John 5:17, 19) such as the creation of all things out of nothing; of the whole world and all things in it, visible or invisible, (John 1:2, 3; Col. 1:16) the making of the worlds, the heaven and the earth, are particularly ascribed to the Word and Son of God; and he that built all things is God, (Heb. 11:3, 1:10, 3:4) the work of providence, the government of the world, and the disposing of all things in it, Christ is jointly concerned in with the Father; "My Father worketh hitherto; and I work", that is, with him (John 5:17).

Christ upholds all things by his power; bears up the pillars of the earth; and by him do all things consist, (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17) the miracles Christ wrought on earth in human nature, as they were proofs of his Messiahship, so of his Deity; such as curing the lame, the blind, and dumb, and deaf, and even raising the dead, by a word speaking; which were what none but God could do: these prove that the Father was in him, and he in the Father, (Matthew 11:4, 5; John 10:37, 38).

If he was not the mighty God, he could never have been able to have wrought and obtained the redemption and salvation of his people, by his own arm: what gave virtue and efficacy to his blood, to purchase his church and people, and cleanse them from their sins, is his Deity; and so to his righteousness, to make it a justifying one before God; and to his sacrifice, to make it expiatory of sin, and acceptable to God. The acts of forgiveness of sin, and justification from it, are peculiar to God.

None can forgive sin but God; yet Christ has done it, and therefore must be God, (Mark 2:7, 9, 10) it is God that justifies men from sin, and acquits them from condemnation, (Rom. 8:1, 33) and so does Christ (Isa. 53:11). The Resurrection of the dead is a work of almighty power, and which none but God can do; and yet Christ has raised himself from the dead, and thereby is declared to be the Son of God with power;

that is, truly and properly God, (Rom. 1:4; John 2:19, 10:18) and he will raise all the dead at the last day, by his mighty power; and at his all commanding voice, the dead will come forth out of their graves, wherein they have lain, (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

The judgment of the world is committed to him; "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). Now if he was not God omnipotent and omniscient he would never be able to do what he will do; gather all nations before him, separate them, and place them some on his right hand, and some on his left; bring to light the counsels of the heart, and judge the secrets of it, and give to every man for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; pronounce the several decisive sentences, and put them in execution, (Matthew 25: 31-46; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10). 4.

Fourthly, As a further proof of the Deity of Christ, the worship given him both by angels and men may be observed; for when he, God's firstborn, was brought into the world, he said, "Let all the angels of God worship him", (Heb. 1:6) which order to the celestial inhabitants, would never have been given, if he was not God: it is also the declared will of the divine Father of Christ, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"; that is, worship him with the same divine worship; which he would never have declared, who will not give his glory to another besides himself, was not Christ his Son the one God with him (see Ps. 2:12).

Men are directed to exercise faith and hope on him; yea, Christ himself directs unto it, equally to be exercised on him, as on his Father; which he would never have done, but that he and his Father are one, one in nature, and so in power and glory, (John 14:1, 10:30) yea, if he was not God, but a mere man, instead of men being blessed and happy, who make him their hope, and trust in him, they would be cursed for so doing (Jer. 17:5, 7). Baptism, a solemn ordinance of religious worship, is ordered to be administered in his name, equally as in the name of the Father, (Matthew 28:19) which, if a mere creature, would be idolatry and blasphemy; for which reason the apostle Paul was so cautious, lest any should think they were baptized by him in his own name (1 Cor. 1:13-15).

Prayer, another branch of religious worship, is often made to Christ; and that not by a single person only, as by Stephen, in his last moments, (Acts 7:59) but by whole churches and communities; who are said in every place to call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; and how often are grace and peace wished for, by the apostles, as from God our Father, so from the Lord Jesus Christ? (1 Cor. 1:2, 3) all which would never be performed by saints, nor be admitted of by God, was not Christ truly and properly God; nor need we scruple to worship him, nor be fearful lest we should give him too much: and great encouragement we have to commit our souls, and the salvation of them into his hands, and trust him with our all; since he is God the only Saviour. ENDNOTES:

[1] In Parmenide, p. 1113.

[2] Of this name of the Son of God, the Word, see my Doctrine of the Trinity, c. 5. p. 98-120

[3] Vid. Isidor. Pelusiot. Epist. I. 3. ep. 31.

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