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ON THE GOD-MAN.

I. The Incarnation and the Trinity.

Augustine,[1] who, in this matter, is followed by the Mystics of the Middle Ages[2] and by Luther himself, found the eternal fact of the Trinity in the conception of *love*. Hutton[3] has remarked that Plato, when he proclaimed that God was essentially good,[4] was on the verge of the doctrine of necessary distinctions in the Godhead. He came short of making the discovery, because he meant by goodness only benevolence. An apparently slight, but really for him impassable, step. As a matter of fact, it is Christianity that has revealed the Trinity of God; for it declares that God is love, "not of condescension towards inferiors, but of mutual affection for equals." God from eternity must have lived a life of companionship.

In the New Testament one of the co-equal Persons in God is called Son; and as Scripture is our only source of knowledge as to the name, we may presume it intends to teach us what conception that name conveys. In the Epistle to the Hebrews Sonship is said to involve two

[1] *De Trin.*, ix. 12 *ad fin.*: "Est quaedam imago Trinitatis, ipsa mens et notitia ejus, quod est proles ejus et de se ipsa verbum ejus, et amor tertius, et haec tria unum atque una substantia."

[2] See the *Deutsche Theologie*: "God is not absolutely simple [as Origen said, on John i. 21, *ὁ θεὸς ἓν ἐστι καὶ ἁπλοῦν*], but conscious free love in Himself."

[3] Hutton, *Theological Essays*, p. 231, 2nd ed., 1877: "Love was actual in Him as well as potential." He attributes to this thought his conversion from Unitarianism. For a luminous discussion of the various views held of the conception of God cf. Prof. Iverach, *Is God Knowable*, ch. x.

[4] *Rep.*, II. 379: *ἀγαθὸς ὅ γε θεὸς τῷ ὄντι καὶ λεκτέον οὕτως*, and *Tim.* 29 E: *λέγωμεν δή, δι' ἥντινα αἰτίαν γένεσιν καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε ὁ ξυνιστὰς ξυνέστησεν. ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν πάντα ὅ τι μάλιστα γενέσθαι ἐβουλήθη παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ, κ.τ.λ.*

mutually dependent ideas—origin and subordination. We have the former stated, according to the interpretation first suggested by Origen,[1] in Hebrews i. 5: "Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten thee"; and in Hebrews v. 5, the same words, cited from a Messianic psalm, clearly indicate the Son's subjection to the Father, even before "the days of His flesh." We accept these two verses as a declaration of the Son's eternal generation and, in consequence of His filial origin, personal subordination. The origination of the Son is expressed in Hebrews i. 5, "My Son," and His subordination in Hebrews i. 9, "My God." In Philippians ii. 6 the Apostle Paul speaks of the Person, who took the form of a servant, as "being in the form of God"; and Bengel,[2] with his usual felicity, remarks that, though the expressions "to be in the form of God," and "to be equal with God," do not mean "to be God," still He who was in the form of God, and was equal with God, *is* God. But, the Apostle says, He who was equal with God thought not of grasping that equality. Here we have equality and subordination. As the author of the Epistle already cited claims for the Son eternal origination, he declares in *v.* 8 the readiness with which He learned the difficult lessons of His obedience. "Though He were a Son," to whom, therefore, obedience would spring spon-

[1] In *Comm. in Joan.*, tom. I. § 32, he explains σήμερον in Hebrews i. 5 as denoting timeless existence. "To God ἀεὶ ἐστι τὸ σήμερον." The same view is accepted by Athanasius, *Or. I. c. Arian.*, § 14: εἰ δὲ ἀΐδιον γέννημα τοῦ Πάτρος λέγεται, καλῶς λέγεται, and in *De Decr.*, § 13, he has the same doctrine. So Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.*, xi. 5; and Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.*, ii.: "Quamquam etiam possit ille dies in prophetia dictus videri, quo Jesus Christus secundum hominem natus est, tamen *hodie* quia praesentiam significat atque in aeternitate nec praeteritum quidquam est, quasi esse desierit, nec futurum, quasi nondum sit, sed praesens tantum, quia quidquid aeternum est semper est; divinitus accipitur secundum id dictum, *ego hodie genui te*, quo sempiternam generationem virtutis et sapientiae Dei, qui est unigenitus Filius, fides sincerissima et catholica praedicat."

[2] On Phil. ii. 6, ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, "Forma Dei non est natura divina, neque τὸ *esse pariter Deo* est natura divina; sed tamen is, qui in formâ Dei extabat, et qui potuerat *esse pariter Deo* Deus est."

taneously to meet His Father's command, yet, such was the character of His obedience, that He had to learn it through the hardship and painful discipline of sufferings. Bishop Westcott[1] explains the meaning to be "that the nature of Christ's sonship at first sight seems to exclude the thought that He should learn obedience through suffering," that is, that He underwent suffering though He was a Son who was on an equality with His Father, and, therefore, under no obligation to obey. But, even on this, as it appears to the present writer, wrong interpretation, the Son is represented as willing to obey *because He is Son.* Why should He be designated Son in this connection, if it is not because His sonship implies natural willingness to obey, or subordination, even at the possible cost of suffering? Besides, the Son's equality with the Father is expressed with sufficient distinctness in the fifth verse. We infer that subordination, rightly understood, contains a great truth, and Origen's happy phrase, "eternal generation," implies subordination, without sacrificing equality. For a son is by the fact of sonship subordinate; but whatever is eternal and within the Godhead is equal. The subordination of the Son is taught by our Lord Himself in John v. 19, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner"; and in John xiv. 28: "The Father is greater than I," which the Greek expositors rightly consider to include the Son's subordination to the Father within the sphere of the Trinity. The interpretation that the words refer only to the Son's humanity was introduced by Augustine.[2] But the disciples were not in

[1] *In loc.*

[2] Cf. Augustine, *Tract. in Joan.*, lxxix.: "Quid itaque mirum vel quid indignum, si secundum hanc formam servi loquens ait Dei filius, *Pater major me est*, et secundum Dei formam loquens ait idem ipse Dei filius, *Ego et Pater unum sumus*"?

danger of thinking that the human nature of Christ was equal with God. Equality and subordination may be quite consistent with each other.

From His peculiar[1] subordination we infer His Sonship, and from His Sonship His personality. His origin is expressed in the phrase, διὰ τοῦ πάτρος, "generate from ingenerate"; and his subordination in the words, διὰ τὸν πατέρα, leaving the *monarchia*[2] of the Father intact. Similarly, the origination of all things created is expressed by δι' αὐτοῦ, and the subordination of all by δι' αὐτόν. He sustains the same relation of subordination from eternity to the Father which the universe by creation bears to Himself.

He is, therefore, not an eternal attribute of God, as the Old Testament appellation, "Wisdom,"[3] might lead us to think; nor a mere revelation of the Father, as we might be tempted to infer from His being called "the Word" in the Fourth Gospel.[4] He is a personal Son, "God of God, very God of very God," who hears His Father's voice and willingly obeys His behests. In the life of God all things are equal. But, as F. W. Faber[5] beautifully expresses it:

Thy Spirit is Thy jubilee;
  Thy Word is Thy delight;
Thou givest them to equal Thee
  In glory and in might.

Thou art too great to keep unshared
  Thy grand eternity;
They have it as Thy gift to them,
  Which is no gift to Thee.

[1] The word "peculiar" is added to distinguish between the subordination of the Son and that of the Spirit; for we must affirm the *monarchia* of the Father, who alone is *Fons Trinitatis*, if not *Deitatis*. Subordination in the case of the Son is owing to *generation*, but in the case of the Spirit to *procession*. On the reasons why the Son, not the Spirit, became incarnate cf. unsatisfactory answers in Anselm, *De Fide Dei Trinitatis*, cap. v. [al. iv.].

[2] Cf. Newman, *Arians*, p. 191 sqq., Ed. 1833.

[3] Prov. viii. 22. [4] John i. 1. [5] *Hymns*.

Hence we say that the Son is the Archetype of Man, in respect of the two things we have mentioned. He is generated Son as truly as Man is created Son; and, because He is naturally Son, He is personally subordinate to His Father, as truly as Man is under obligation to obey his Creator.

It may be asked why we do not, by parity of reason, make the same assertion concerning the angels. We answer that the same thing can be said of all creatures that have man's moral nature, reason, freedom, and immortality. But man has race existence; the angels have only individual existence. So far as they belong to a type, the angels are human. Man is God's highest creature, therefore; and he aims at becoming, not like the angels, but like the Son of God, who is at once his prototype and his ideal. Between these poles the development of God's revelation in Christ makes its grand and majestic sweep,—from God to man, from man to God, from the highest place on the throne of heaven to the parts lower than the earth,[1] from the humiliation of death to the glorification of a joyful immortality.

In Robertson of Brighton's "Sermon on the Trinity"[2] much, and not a whit too much, is made of what the great preacher calls the humanity of Deity. It was at the period when Mansel[3] was teaching the limits of human knowledge of the Infinite. By this he meant, as he explains in

[1] Eph. iv. 9.

[2] Third Series, p. 60, of the original edition (1857).

[3] Mansel delivered his Bampton Lectures in 1858. Cf. especially Lect. I., p. 17 (Third Ed.), and the corresponding Note 22, p. 284; Lect. VIII., p. 260: "These partial revelations of the Divine Consciousness, though, as finite, they are unable speculatively to represent the Absolute Nature of God, have yet each of them a regulative purpose to fulfil in the training of the mind of man." Mansel was the "theological interpreter" of Sir W. Hamilton, and the theory he advocates has been over and over again refuted by several writers, such as Maurice, Calderwood, Martineau, and latterly Principal Caird in his *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, chap. i. A similar theory was held by the Gnostics and rejected by Irenæus, who taught that God can be known (ii. 5). Eunomius also speaks of God as the Absolute, while the orthodox maintained that He was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

his "Bampton Lectures," that man has only a "regulative" conception of God. While Mansel defends Anthropomorphism as a necessary condition of our thoughts, and an "accommodation," or "symbol," Robertson, more truly, discovers in "this humanity in the mind of God" a true representation of the Divine reality. But when, on the same page, he speaks of this humanity as being "the Word, the Son, the Form of God," he seems to miss the point of his own broad and profound statement. For *this* humanity is common to the three Persons in the Godhead. All three have "the attributes of wisdom, justice, love, creative power, indignation"; and these mean, though in an infinitely more perfect degree, exactly what they mean when applied to man. The properties which the Son has, and the Father has not, are origination and subordination. Thus it comes to pass that the Son is to us the revelation of God's humanity in two quite distinct forms: first, in what the Trinity and man have in common; and, second, in what the Son in the Trinity and man have in common. The Son is "the image of the invisible God"; He represents God to man, in having and manifesting the attributes of wisdom, justice, love, etc. But the Son is also "the firstborn of all creation"; for He it is who in God is the Archetype of man in the peculiar possession of origination and subordination.[1] He does not come into existence in time by creation, but He is eternally in that dynamic relation to the Father which is implied in the πρὸς τὸν Θεόν of John, a generation from the Father and a movement to the Father. Yet this constitutes Him the Archetype of all persons that are created.

"The capacity of self-abnegation and self-surrender to an Infinite Object" is that "in which religion may be said to consist."[2] But in the Divine Son we see this capacity

[1] Col. i. 15.

[2] Principal Caird, in his powerful book on the *Philosophy of Religion*, ch. vi.

exemplified perfectly and from eternity, because He is Son, ever hearing the Father's voice. In Him, therefore, we recognise what is highest and divinest in man, when "he rises above his petty individuality into a region which is universal and infinite."[1]

The doctrine of the Logos, as eternal Man, may be stated in such a way that it becomes a dangerous error. But it is true and innocent (1) if it be distinguished from the theory of an eternal creation, which is pantheistic; (2) if the Divine Logos be preserved intact as existing actually within the Trinity; (3) if the eternal Man be understood only as an idea of what the Logos incarnate will be; (4) if care be taken not to destroy any element of humiliation or suffering in the new condition into which the Logos will enter through incarnation, or any element of a contingent character that may arise because of sin and the resulting gracious redemption.

The Son, therefore, is the image,[2] both as representation and as manifestation, of the unseen God, and He is the Archetype of the not yet created Man. Whatever is involved in the Son's being the image of God, He has the image in common with man; and man has God's image in common with the Logos, and, according to the Apostle's view, as God's image exists in the Logos. The image, therefore, means, not any corporeal form, but rather that personal, spiritual, and morally free existence, which is consequently immortal. For we are taught in Genesis i. 27 (26)[3] that God created man in His own image, and

[1] Ditto. Cf. Luthard, cited by Strong (*Syst. Theol.*, p. 165): "Herein is indicated an antemundane origin from God—a relation internal to the Divine Nature." Also cf. Dr. Whiton, *Gloria Patri*, p. 150: "The eternal subordination of the Son to the Father [is] clearly recognised in Scripture, though disallowed by an unbiblical dogmatism."

[2] Perhaps it ought to be explained that no reference is intended in what follows to man as an individual, nor to the supposed tripartite nature of man as being analogous to the Trinity in God.

[3] Cf. Wisd. Sol. ii. 23, *εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδιάς ἰδιότητος ἐποιήσεν* [*ὁ θεὸς*] *αὐτόν*.

yet we are told also that the exalted Son is the image of God,[1] as He was also before the worlds.[2] He, through whom God made the æons was already "the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance."[3] Why is the Son said to be the image of God? John Damascene, who may be regarded as summing up the doctrine of the Fathers—he died about the middle of the 8th century—gives a mere negative answer: "The Son being the natural image of the Father, differs in some respect from Him. For He is Son, and not Father."[4] But this is insufficient, because man also is said to be the image of God. Subordination, therefore, within the sphere of the Trinity must be included in the conception of natural image as applied to the Son, who was the Archetype of man. They differ in this, at least, that man is the image of God because he has received his life from God, and has it only in God; but the Son, who likewise has received his life from God inasmuch as He is Son, has that life, inasmuch as He is God, "in Himself."[5] This verse contains the apparent self-assertion of Jesus, together with His real self-denial. When He says that the Son has life in Himself, He is no "boaster," but honours God, who has bestowed this great gift on Him; and He affirms at the same time His own God-sent mission, because He has received the gift in order to give it to others, who will always have it not in themselves, but in the giver, and cannot therefore hand it on to others as if it were their own.

What we have come to is the identity of moral goodness in God and in man. The Son possesses this ethical nature under one aspect, and the Father under another, and that

[1] Cf. 2 Cor. iv. 4, *τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.*

[2] Cf. Col. i. 15, *ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀορατοῦ.* [3] Heb. i. 3.

[4] Cf. Damasc., *De Imaginibus*, Or. I. ix.: *εἰκὼν τοίνυν ζῶσα, φυσικὴ, καὶ ἀπαράλλακτος τοῦ ἀοράτου θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς, ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρων τὸν πατέρα, κατὰ πάντα ἔχων τὴν ποὸς αὐτὸν ταυτότητα, μόνῳ δὲ διαφέρων τῷ αἰτιατῷ.* Cf. also III. xvi.

[5] John v. 26.

by reason of the Fatherhood of the latter and the Sonship of the former. We may call this difference a governmental relation. Ethics implies government, not in the sense of forcible subjection, nor in the sense of optional submission, but in the sense of voluntary, but necessary, economy. As Waterland says, "supremacy of office, by mutual agreement and voluntary economy, belongs to the Father, while the Son out of voluntary condescension submits to act ministerially or in capacity of mediator. And the reason why the condescending part became God the Son rather than God the Father is because He is a Son, and because it best suits with the natural order of persons, which had been reversed by contrary economy."[1] Perhaps Waterland does not sufficiently emphasize the ethically *necessary* subordination as implied in the "natural order of persons." The actual command of the Father to the Son was matter of loving and free council in the Trinity. But that assumes a prior necessity arising from sonship, which of course was not of constraint, but the willing obedience of the Son. As in the case of every moral goodness, the act is at once necessary and free. The Fatherhood and the Sonship are necessary relations within the Trinity; the actual economy to which we have referred is gracious and voluntary. But Father and Son are in consequence of this economy in the relation of one who has authority to command and one who naturally ministers and obeys. There is a πολιτεία, or constitution, established between them. Here comes the objection to Dr. Martineau's striking remark, "that He who is the Son in the one creed is the Father in the other." "The Father is God in His primæval essence," he continues, "while the Son is God speaking out in phenomena and fact."[2] According to this, the Father is unknown and

[1] Waterland's *Works*, vol. iii., p. 2, Oxford, 1823.

[2] *A Way out of the Trinitarian Controversy*, cited by Dr. Whiton, who accepts Martineau's statements, *Gloria Patri*, p. 26.

unknowable, absolute and unconditioned. But, if so, He cannot be Father, which brings Him into relation, and implies His being revealed in His Son. He has revealed Him not as God simply, which would on the part of the Son be self-revelation, but as Father; and He has said that "no man knoweth the Father save the Son," but has also added that "He knoweth the Father to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." If we say that the Father is unknown until He is revealed in the Son, we are expressing one of the truths of Christianity. In this respect we are all "content to remain Agnostics"; or, as Hooker said, "Our soundest knowledge of the Most High is to know that we know Him not indeed as He is, neither can know Him." That revelation which the Son brings us of the Father is certified to us by a power, which the New Testament calls *faith*. This is a very different thing from the assertion that "the power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable, in which the difference of subject and object disappears." Christ reveals God by telling us that He is Father.

We cannot, therefore, when we speak of the Incarnation, think of it as meaning nothing more than the immanence of God in the world. It is perfectly true that the doctrine of God's immanence makes the doctrine of the Incarnation possible. Athanasius says: "There is but one form of Godhead, which is also in the Word; and one God, the Father, existing by Himself according as He is above all, and appearing in the Son according as He pervades all things (*καὶ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ δὲ φαινομένος κατὰ τὸ διὰ πάντων διήκειν*), and in the Spirit as in Him He acts in all things through the Word."[1] The Incarnation is a special form of

[1] *Or. III. c. Arianos*, § 15. Apparently Athanasius intended this to be an exposition of Ephesians iv. 6. But the words "over all, and through all, and in all" must be closely connected with "One God and Father," and cannot refer to "the one Spirit and the one Lord."

God's immanence (ἐνύπαρξις). In Robertson's Introduction to Athanasius the following remarks are pertinent: "Deny His immanence, and you have only the God of polytheism, at an infinite distance from the creature, a God that cannot come into touch with the universe except through a Logos, who is Himself a creature, and needs himself a medium between Him and God. But if the creature is the habitation of God, the immanent God can come still nearer to the creature; He can not only dwell in His creation, but can become a creature; God can become incarnate. Thus is reconciled the transcendence with the immanence of God." [1]

Here we recall Luther's great saying, "*Finitum capax infiniti.*" [2] He means that the finite is capable of receiving the infinite because of God's ethical nature. In the importance he ascribed to love as the essence of God, he was anticipated by Richard of St. Victor.[3] As Dorner[4] describes Luther's doctrine, "God is not content with the glory of being the Creator of all creatures. He seeks also to be known in what He is inwardly. His glory is His love, which seeks the lowly and the poor." This Luther calls the New Wisdom. In the old language creature signifies something which is infinitely separated from the highest divinity, so that the two are directly opposed to one another, and mutually exclusive. The old wisdom had led Europe a second time to a doketic Christ. But Athanasius and Luther went back to a still older wisdom, which would combine the transcendent with the immanent God: transcendent, that He may be imma-

[1] Translation of Athanasius, p. lxxii. I have adopted Robertson's excellent version throughout.

[2] Cf. Frank, *Die Theologie der Concordienformen*, vol. iii., p. 233, sqq. It is the δεκτικός of Iren., iv. 75.

[3] Richard combined Mysticism and Scholasticism. Cf. Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, book v., chap. ii.

[4] *History of Protestant Theology*, I., p. 199 (E. T.)

nent; Christ *for* us, that He may become Christ *within* us. Hence the error of Mr. Fiske's statement that the belief in the immanence of God must destroy the conception of His transcendence. In fact, the latter conception is equally necessary with the former, before we can have all the ethical ideas about God. There is a polytheistic immanence as well as a monotheistic. When the savage believes that hatchets have souls or when the ancient Arab idolater believed that the Deity dwelt in a boulder stone,[1] the soul and the Deity were regarded as immanent, but unmoral, just as, on the other hand, the transcendent gods of Epicurus were not moral nor immoral, but un-moral.

Even the doctrine of the immanence of God we must combine with the language that embodies God's transcendence. Christ reveals the immanent God. He addresses Him as "Our *Father*," because immanent, but He adds, "which art in *heaven*," because the Father is transcendent. In *both* aspects God is personal. In this manner we can distinguish God's existence in us through the Spirit, from His existence in Christ. If it were not so, every immanent dwelling of God would be an incarnation. Hence the words of Kant[2] are true and important: "The conception of God involves not merely a blindly operating Nature as the eternal root of things, but a *Supreme Being*, that shall be the Author of all things by free and understanding action."

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[1] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 189.
[2] Quoted by Fiske, *The Idea of God*, p. 317.