

THE ASSERTION OF

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST,

IN A SERMON,

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REVEREND P. BRANDON,

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THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.—JOHN, Chap. 8. 58.

ANY mighty and miraculous works had the *GOD Man, Christ Jesus*, wrought in the sight of his countrymen, according to the flesh, in confirmation of his being not only that Prophet which should come into the world, but also that *Emanuel, GOD with us*, who came, not only to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, but also the whole race of *Mankind*. But their minds being intoxicated with the thoughts and desires of worldly *pomp and grandeur*, who looked for nothing less than an universal Conqueror, a mighty *Temporal Prince*, who should not only free them from the galling yoke of *Italic Bondage*, but should subjugate all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth under their Power and *Dominion*. They could not, or would not, see in the meek and humble *Jesus*, any form or comeliness, that they should desire *Him*; or cause them to list themselves under his Banner, who seemed to them so unlikely, by the meanness of his appearance, "and the poverty of his followers, to execute their pre-conceived favorite *Scheme* of establishing their Name and Power over all People, and to erect amongst them an universal *Empire*."

Notwithstanding their readiness upon all accounts to assert their privileges as the stock of *Abraham*; yet it was sufficiently evident, from their obstinacy and refractoriness, that they were the seed of the *bond-woman*, and not the children of *promise*. For had they been the children of Abraham's Faith, they would, like him, have rejoiced to see *Christ's Day*; and not have attempted to stone *Him* for asserting his *Divinity*, when he said unto them, *Verily, verily, etc.* Seeing, that most heinous of all sins, and most likely to draw down the heaviest judgments of **GOD** upon any Nation guilty *thereof*, (*viz.*) that of denying the **LORD** *who bought them*, and which (with great grief be it spoken) so much prevails amongst us at this time; seeing, that on the Divinity of the Second Person, in the ever blessed and adorable *Trinity* depends all the certainty of our *eternal Salvation*; I shall take occasion from these words to prove, that the *blessed Jesus*, though thus appearing in the humble form of a servant, then was (as well as now is) over all, God *blessed forever*, and that from these following particulars :

First,—From the predictions concerning Him, which was then in the full possession of the Jews.

Secondly,—From the testimony He bore to Himself, Saying, Verily, verily, &c.

And *Thirdly,—From the miracles which he wrought, fully evincing Him to be possessed of those three essential properties, or attributes, which alone can be ascribed to GOD himself, the eternal min' (viz.) Omnipotence, 'Omniscience, and Omnipresence.*

And first, from the predictions concerning *Him*, which were then in their *full possession*. For we are told that Moses of old time had, in every city, them that preached *Him*, being read in their synagogues every *Sabbath-Day*; they surely then could not be altogether so ignorant of what was meant by that original *promise*; I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy *head*, and thou shalt bruise his *heel*. Afterwards more clearly made known by **GOD to Abraham**; saying, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be *blessed*. And which promise was afterwards confirmed to *Isaac*. Moses had declared to them, the Lord thy *God* will raise up unto thee, a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto *me*, unto *him* shall ye hearken. And declares the consequence of their disobedience to that Prophet, saying, the **LORD** God spoke unto me saying, they have well spoken, that which they have spoken, I will raise them up a Prophet from amongst their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command *Him*, and it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto *my words*, which he shall speak in *my Name*, I will require it of him. Thus the Prophet Jeremiah speaks of him; a woman shall compass a *man*. That this *Man*, this *mighty Prophet*, was to partake of the *divine* as well as human nature, they had sufficient information from the writings of the old *Prophets*. Isaiah saith, a virgin shall conceive and bare a son, and shall call his Name *Emanuel*, the meaning of which is declared to be, by an infallible interpreter, **GOD With us**, i.e. **GOD in our Nature**. And the same Prophet speaking of the certainty of the thing, as if already accomplished, saith, unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon *His* shoulders, and *His* Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty Gon, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, *of the increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no End upon the Throne of David and upon his Kingdom, to order it, to establish it with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this*. Thus speaks the Prophet Zachariah, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my *fellow*, saith the *Lord of Hosts*. The **LORD** whom ye seek, saith Malachi, shall suddenly come to *His Temple*, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold, *He* shall come saith the *Lord of Hosts*.

The declaration of the Angel to Joseph, as well as the glad tidings brought by the Angels to the Shepherds, which they published not only at Bethlehem, but in all the Regions round about, were so recent amongst them, that they could not well have slept the most treacherous *memory*. By the one it is said, fear not Joseph, to take unto thee Mary thy *Wife*. for that which is conceived in her is of the *Holy Ghost*, and she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his Name *Jesus*, for *He* shall save *His* people from their *Sins*. By the other it was declared, Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all People*, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a *Savior*, who is *Christ the Lord*. How often had they heard these remarkable passages read unto them out of the *Prophets*. I am the *Lord thy God*, the Holy one of Israel, thy *Savior*, before *me* there was no **GOD** formed, neither shall there be after *me*; *I*, even *I*, am the **LOED**, and beside *me* there is no *Savior*. I have declared and have saved, and *I* have showed when there was no strange God among them, therefore, ye are my witnesses, saith the **LORD**, that *I am GOD*. Under these circumstances, one should have imagined that when they heard the *Blessed Jesus* declare, *Verily, verily, I say, etc.* that instead of taking up stones to stone *Him*, they would one and all, have cried out; this is surely that Prophet who should come into the *world*; We have found *Him* of whom Moses in the Law, and the *Prophets* did *write*.—*Proceed* we now to the second particular, (viz.) the testimony the *Blessed Jesus* bore to *himself*. This compassionate Savior who came into this *World* to seek and to save that which was lost, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the *Truth*, and be made partakers of the eternal life that *He* came to purchase (or *them*; Perceiving that the great miracles which *He* had wrought among them were not sufficient or forcible enough to convince them of *His Divine Nature*, that they might have no cloak for their sin, no plea of ignorance to *make*,

declares *Himself* to be the way, the Truth, and the Life, that no man could come to the Father, but by *Him*. And that *He and the Father were one*.

That *He Himself* was very **GOD**, as well as very *Man*. And so absolutely necessary was it to their eternal salvation for them to believe *this*; that he declares to them, that if ye believe not that *I am*, ye shall die in your *Sins*. And tells them, that however unwilling they might now be, to acknowledge *Him* to be in the *Father*, and the *Father* in *Him*; or as their Prophets had declared of *Him*, that *He* was **GOD**, and beside *Him* there was no *Savior*; yet that a time would come, when they should be convinced of this grand, this necessary *Truth*. When saith *He*, ye have lifted up *Him*, whom ye now look upon as merely the *Son of Man*, then shall ye know that *I am*. In the two passages of this divine colloquy above quoted, our translators have in each place added the *pronoun* *He*; if ye believe not that *I am He*; and then ye shall know that *I am He*. Whether these are mistakes of willfulness or ignorance, shalt not now stay to enquire; but they are such as tend to take away the whole beauty, strength, and meaning of our *Lord's Words*; for, it is evident that in both these verses, as well as in those three remarkable ones, John, 18. 5,6, 8, as also in the words of my *Text*, that the *Blessed Jesus* was laboring to convince His hearers, that He was that **GOD** whom the prophet Isaiah, upwards of 700 years before, had pointed out in these very remarkable *words*. He will swallow up Death in Victory, and the *Lord God*, the *Lord* will wipe away all tears from off all *Faces*, and the rebuke of His People shall He take away from off all the earth, for the *Lord* hath spoken *it*. And it shall be said in that Day, *Lo! This is our Gon*, (our Alehim) we have waited for *Him*, and *He* will save *us*. This is the *Lord* we have waited for *Him*, we will be glad and rejoice in *His Salvation*. And for their more full conviction, declares in the words of my *Text*, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*.

The force and meaning of which words, will be best understood by adverting to that memorable transaction recorded by Moses in the third chapter of Exodus, where, upon the most High **GOD** honoring him with the commission to bring out their Forefathers from under Pharaoh's yoke, Moses said unto **GOD**; Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The GOD of your Fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say unto me, what is his Name? what shall I say unto to *them*? And God said unto Moses, *I am*, that *I am*. And he said, thus shalt you say unto the children of Israel, *I am*. hath sent me unto you.—Hence, surely, it must be sufficiently evident; that *He* who sent Moses to deliver their forefathers out of Egyptian Bondage; and He who came to deliver the whole World from the bondage of Sin and Satan, Death and Hell, was one and the same Person, which is thus clearly demonstrating said unto Moses *I am*; this is my name for *ever*, and this is my memorial unto all generations. *Jesus* saith unto the Jews, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*. Therefore, Jesus is God. Thirdly, let us consider the miracles He wrought in confirmation of His being the great *I am*. The instantaneously converting of the water into wine, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, was the first manifestation of the Almighty Power residing in this *Divine Person*. By whose Divine Authority also, the departed spirit of the Ruler's Daughter was called back to re-animate the clay cold *corps*.

The same omnific word, restored to the arms of the weeping widowed matron, the new raised body of her departed son, and by the same Omnipotence, the four days deteriorated Lazarus was restored unto life, to comfort and support the *Mourning Sisters*. Again, to whose voice will the jarring elements, the boisterous winds, and raging waves be subject? but to his alone, who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the *womb*. Who made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band *for it*, and brake up the decreed place, and set bars and doors; and said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. And yet we hear, this same *Jesus* upon the interesting application made to Him by His terrified Disciples, (save *Lord* or we perish) we hear (I say) this same *Jesus* say to the contending elements, peace, be still, and immediately there was a great *calm*. Again, compare the latter part of that Majestic description given of **God**, by Job, 9 Chap. and three following verses, who removes the mountains, and they know not, who overturned them in his anger. Who shakes the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Who commanded the sun and it rises not, and sealed up the stars. Who alone spreads out the *heavens*, and then concludes the grand

sermon with these remarkable words, and treaded upon the waves of the sea. Compare this, I say, with what is recorded by St. Mark, 6.48, and four following verses, and about the fourth watch of the night, He, i.e. *Jesus* cometh unto them walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them, but when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out (for they all saw Him, and were troubled) and immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid, and He went up unto them into the ship, and the winds ceased, and they were sore amazed in themselves, beyond measure, and wondered, for they considered not the recent miracle of the loaves, for their hearts were hardened, and so (my Brethren) are, and must be yours too; if there be any such here present, who, after this clear demonstration of His Eternal Power and Godhead, will deny Him the honor due unto His Name, and worship Him not with Holy worship as your *Lord*, your *Creator*, as well as *Jesus*, your *Savior* and *Redeemer*.

Farther, it is the peculiar privilege of Gon alone to forgive *Sins*. But do we not hear, or rather read, of this same *Jesus*, saying to the sick of the palsy, and likewise to Mary Magdalene, thy sins are forgiven *thee*. Is it not also the distinguishing characteristic of the eternal **GOD**, that He alone searches the *heart*, and tried the *reins*? Doth not David thus describe Him to his son Solomon, when enjoining the knowledge and service of Him? and thou Solomon my son, know thou, the Gon of thy Father, and serve Him, with a perfect *heart*, and with a willing *mind*, for the *Lord* searches all *hearts*, and understands all the imaginations of the *thoughts*. And thus we hear Solomon in his dedicatory Prayer addressing Him; Then hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose *heart* Thou *knows*, for *Thou*, even *Thou* only, knows the *hearts* of all the children of *men*. Now, is it not recorded by St. Matthew in the ninth chapter of his Gospel, that when *Jesus* said to the sick of the palsy, Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven *thee*; that certain of the Scribes said within themselves, i.e. (this imagination passed only in their *hearts*) surely this man *blasphemes*. The expression is rather stronger, as recorded by St. Mark, who saith, there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their *hearts*; why doth this man thus speak *blasphemous*? who can forgive sins but *God only*? We soon find the *Blessed Jesus*, adding to the act of Omnipotence in healing the sick of the palsy, an act of *Omniscience* also, in discovering the secret workings and evil imaginations of the *hearts* of the proud, stubborn, and rebellious *Scribes and Pharisees*. And knowing their *thoughts*, said, wherefore think ye evil in your *hearts*? St. Luke saith, but when *Jesus* perceived their *thoughts*, He answering said unto them; What reason ye in your *hearts*? But, if there is any more particularly distinguishing attribute of God is it not that of His *Omnipresence*? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the *Lord*? And again, the royal Psalmist saith, whither shall I go then from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy *Presence*? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Hell, Thou art *there*. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me; and Thy right hand shall hold *me*.

And do we not hear the *Blessed Jesus*, in that interesting conversation, that Divine Logos with the Jewish Ruler asserting His *Omnipresence*, saying, if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly *things*? And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from *Heaven*, even the Son of Man who is in *Heaven*. It is well worthy your Attention (my dear Brethren) that our *Lord* doth not speak here in the past tense, saying, 'the Son of Man who was' but in the present tense, 'who *is in Heaven*.' As if He had said, *I*, the Son of Man, who came down from *Heaven*, and am now conversing with you on Earth. *I*, by my *Omnipresence*, am now in *Heaven*. Can words be framed more clearly to express, or point out this glorious attribute in the *Blessed Jesus*; or that can more clearly demonstrate Him to be, the very, and eternal *God*, the *Lord*, the great *I am*? From what hath been said then, it appears that not only all the attributes of nun are ascribed unto *Jesus*. But that He Himself, in the days of His humiliation, in the presence of thousands of spectators, frequently performed acts of *Omnipotence*, established His *Omniscience*, and gave full proof to Nicodemus of His *Omnipresence*. Stronger testimony cannot be brought, clearer proof cannot be given, than what may be adduced from the arguments already advanced, that the *Blessed Jesus* was in the days of his *incarnation*, as well as *now is*, over all *God blessed forever*. *God* with *God*, as well as *Man* with *Man*; or, as our truly Evangelical Church expresses it, *God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God*. Could the Arian heretics prove that blasphemous assertion, that He the *Blessed Jesus* was only a mere man, we might well agree with them, that that Church, which paid Him divine honors might be deemed an *Idolatrous Church*.

But if He who executes every power, and possesses every *attribute* in the eternal *Godhead*, can be less than *Almighty*, I should be glad to know, what idea we can form of **GOD**, or how He can be set forth, so as to be apprehended by his finite creatures, otherwise than by the exertion of those sovereign acts, those in communicable attributes, His *Omnipotence*, His *Omniscience*, and His *Omnipresence*. But *all these* we have proved to be possessed by the *Blessed Jesus*. If therefore He, who possesses these attributes, is known or acknowledged to be that Being, which we distinguish by the word **GOD**; though totally inadequate to convey the idea of who, or what this glorious Being is, in, to and for His *Creatures*. And if divine honor and worship are due to that *Being*, then whatever acts of worship, Adoration and Praise are due to the *Father* as *God*, must of necessity be due to the *Son* also. But if we will not believe Him, for His (*Forks Sake*; yet let us attend to the injunction of Him, of whom we say, that He is our **GOD**, (*viz.*) the *Father*, who hath commanded us to honor the Son, even as we honor Him. But the *Father* is to be *worshiped*. And if we are to honor the *Son*, even as we honor the *Father*, then the *Son* is to be *worshiped*. Gon saith, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every truth be *established*.

Here are two ample ones, the miracles that the *Blessed Jesus* wrought in confirmation of His eternal *Power* and *Godhead*, and the command of his and our heavenly *Father*, that we should honor the *Son*, even as we honor the *Father*, which I think must be fully sufficient to prove our point, that *Jesus* is the true *God*. Yet to give more ample weight to our assertion, I shall beg leave to close my argument, and finish my Discourse, with the testimony of a third *witness*, (*viz.*) of that Disciple, whom the *Blessed Jesus*, in the Days of His humiliation, honored with the most familiar *converse*, and admitted to the nearest approach to His sacred *Person*. Indeed, if we peruse his writing with *attention*, we shall be perhaps inclined to think, that he not only leaned on, but was privileged to look into his master's breast, and to discover in some degree, the workings of His *Bowels*; those motions of love and compassion that were continually working there for the good of the fallen race of *Mankind*. Who can read that First Epistle of his with an unprejudiced mind, and not confess that *Christ* is *all in all*? that *Jesus* is the *ALPHA* and *OMEGA*, the beginning and the End, the First and the Last, beside *whom*, there is no **GOD**, and without **WHOM** there is no *Savior*. But lest the Serpent should beguile us, as he did our first Mother Eve, or that we should be drawn aside by Philosophy (vainly so called) the beloved Disciple closes his testimony to *Jesus* in this Epistle, with this remarkable forcible declaration to those to whom he then wrote, as also to all those who should hereafter believe in *Jesus* through his *Testimony*. We know, saith he, that the Son of *God* is come, and Hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His *Son Jesus Christ*. Now attend I pray you, to what he farther declares concerning this same *Jesus*. This, saith he, is the true *God* and eternal *Life*. Now is any Arian sophist enough to turn these words to any other meaning than that *Jesus Christ* is the true *God* and eternal *Life*? or can he apply them to any other Person, than to Him who said before Abraham *was, I am*? Surely then, this is a sufficient testimony that our *National Church* is a *truly Evangelical Church*, and who in her worshipping of *Jesus*, worships the *true God*. O let me then join my entreaties to the injunction of this beloved *Disciple*; saying with him, little children keep yourselves from *Idols*.—*Amen*.

Now unto Him who bath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in His own most precious *Blood*, who hath borne our sins and carried our *Sorrows*; who bath made our peace by the blood of His *Cross*; and made us Kings and Priests unto *God* and his *Father*, who formed us out of the dust of the Earth, and breathed into our nostrils the breath of lives. Who hath redeemed us out of every nation, kindred, and people unto *God*, by His own most precious *Blood shedding*. To Him, who is, and was, and is to come, *Jesus* the Almighty, the great *I am*. To Him be ascribed all honor and Glory, Creation, Salvation, Dominion, and Power, Praise and Thanksgiving, by the Church militant on Earth, and the Church triumphant in, Heaven, forever and for evermore. Amen.