



*Eternal
Sonship
of the
Lord
Jesus
Christ*

J.C. Philpot

THE
TRUE, PROPER,
AND
ETERNAL SONSHIP
OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.

BY

J. C. PHILPOT. M.A.

“And we know 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, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”-- I JOHN V. 20.

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PREFACE.

I AM asked by the Publishers to write a preface to this reprint of J. C. Philpot's noble defence of the Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is really no need, for his praise in the gospel is in all the churches; but I regard it as a high honour to have my name, in however insignificant a manner, attached to a work which God has signally owned. It appears at an opportune moment. The generation which knew Philpot, and the controversy and the necessary division of churches seemingly one, holding one faith, which the controversy discovered to be hopelessly divided on the fundamental question of Christ's Person, has passed away. Those essential divisions brought into being two denominations; and to this day they continue. And the churches which held the foundation truth of Christ's Eternal Sonship had rest. But there is reason to fear that the rest has degenerated into sleep in many cases, with regard to that which is necessary to their being. Here is a grave danger. For nothing can countervail the damage done to a church, or an individual person, when the nature and trustworthiness of the foundation becomes an indifferent matter. Yet irreparable damage is done if the Eternal Sonship of Christ is either denied, or regarded as a non-essential. And where such views of our Lord's highest glory are

held, we may expect that carelessness with regard to the building itself will follow.

For our young people, then, I regard the re-appearance amongst us of Philpot as a very great favour from God. He was moved and enabled to write his defence of Christ's true, actual, proper Sonship by the Unction of the Holy One. I hope many will find it a signal favour of God to them, that they may say from heartfelt experience, "And we know 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, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 Jno. v. 20).

Earnestly do I recommend this book to the churches of our beloved denomination. Do not allow the fact that it is controversial to deter you from obtaining and reading it very carefully. *Bear in mind it was not written against men, but for Christ, written to vindicate His highest honour, and to contend for our only foundation.* Let me remind you that His true Sonship cannot be denied without denying also that God is His true Father, that is, the integrity of the Trinity is invaded. No Son, no Father, and no Holy Ghost proceeding from Them. Read carefully and prayerfully 1 Jno. v. 7; Jno. i. 1, 14, 18; xiv. 9; xvii. 5; Heb. i. 2, 3.

J. K. POPHAM.

Brighton, March, 1926.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN I was first led to advocate the true, proper and eternal Sonship of our most blessed Lord in the pages of the "Gospel Standard," and thus, as far as ability was given me, to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," I little anticipated two consequences which have mainly sprung out of my attempt to set forth truth and to beat down error: 1. The long, angry, and widely-spread controversy to which it has given rise; 2. That I should publish my papers on the subject in their present form. On these two points, therefore, I wish to offer a few words of explanation, as my readers may be thus, perhaps, better prepared to enter upon the perusal of the following pages.

1. As regards, then, the *first* point—the controversy which has thence arisen in the churches—let us take, as far as we can, an impartial view of all the circumstances of the case, not a narrow, one-sided glance of a part, but a full and fair consideration of the whole. I know that there are some who are so for peace at any price, that they would sooner almost surrender truth itself than see the churches vexed with strife. How far such are "valiant for the truth upon earth" I must leave others of keener sight and sounder judgment than I possess to determine; but, as far as regards peace principles, and that they are to be paramount to every other consideration, I read that the Lord Himself has said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). And I am sure that if the good soldiers of Jesus Christ wield aright that indispensable part of the whole armour of God, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," it must needs cut, and that sharply too, both error and those who hold it; for "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12); and if it be all this, it may well pierce even to the dividing asunder of churches, and be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of both members and ministers. Of what use is a sword which will neither pierce nor cut? A blade that has neither point nor edge may as well be kept in the scabbard. If, then, we take but a partial, one-sided view of the question, and letting the sword fall out of our hands, rather weep over the miseries of war than fight with holy zeal for the honour and glory of God, we may grieve that this controversy has harassed churches, divided ministers, and separated chief friends. I can make full allowance for the feeling, for with all my "acerbity of temper" and "bitter spirit," so freely and, I must say, so unjustly imputed to me, I frankly confess that when I saw the effects of the contention, and how it was disturbing the peace of a church in London to which I was much united, not to mention others, I did myself feel a measure of this grief. But that feeling has passed away, and I now rather rejoice that the controversy has arisen, for I fully believe that great and lasting good will come out of it. Before, then, we give way to what may prove to be mere fleshly feeling, should we not first ask ourselves as well as others, "Has not a bold declaration of truth always produced contention and division? Has it not always caused confusion and strife? And can it ever be otherwise? Must truth never speak because error takes offence? The lovers of peace at any cost may say, "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still" (Jer. xlvii. 6). But what must be the answer? "How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea-shore? There hath He appointed it" (Jer. xlvii. 7). If the Lord, then, has given the sword a charge against error, how can it be quiet, or rest, and be still in the scabbard? Has there not been a cause for this controversy? I believe there has, and a strong one, too. This controversy has made it evident to me, and doubtless to many others besides

myself, that a vast amount of error has been secretly covered up in the churches professing the doctrines of discriminating grace. "Baldness was come upon Gaza" (Jer. xlvii. 5); "Grey hairs were here and there upon Ephraim, and he knew it not" (Hosea vii. 9); and this baldness, and these grey hairs, which before had escaped notice, have now been brought to light. I had been long persuaded in my own mind, from various indications which had come before my eyes, that there was much error in the churches professing the distinguishing doctrines of grace concealed from view; but I honestly confess, I was not prepared to find such an amount of it, that so many were tainted by it, or that it had taken such deep root in their minds. A storm is sometimes needed to clear the troubled sky, a hot furnace to separate the dross, and a sharp war to settle a lasting peace; and thus even a warm controversy may sometimes be beneficial to the church of God. In fact, the walls of our spiritual Zion have only been built as were in ancient days the walls of Jerusalem. "For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me" (Neh. iv. 18). Had all the Lord's servants been "fearful and afraid," like two-thirds of Gideon's army (Judges vii. 3), truth would have long ago been surrendered, without even a show of battle, into the hands of the Midianites. But whoever "being armed and carrying bows turn back in the day of battle" (Ps. lxxviii. 9), truth will suffer no defeat. Pure gold need fear no flame; thorough honesty need fear no detection, and heavenly truth need shrink from no examination. A doctrine which has stood more than 1,800 years, and withstood all the assaults of men and devils; a great and glorious truth which God has written as with a ray of light in the inspired Scriptures, and revealed by His Spirit and grace to thousands of believing hearts, is not likely to be overturned in these latter days by the tongue or pen of a few Baptist ministers, whatever natural ability they may possess, and however angrily they may preach or write. Neither their arguments nor their spirit will

much move those who have received the love of the truth, and to whom Jesus has revealed Himself as God's beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased. One of their leading men may call it "a figment" and "a piece of twaddle," and may pronounce it "effete and ready to vanish away"; but it will live when both he and they are in their graves, and be new and thriving when their very names are forgotten. What hosts of errors and heresies have passed away! but truth lives and flourishes in immortal youth. So will it be with this present controversy. When we shall all have passed away from this present scene; when the places where we have lived our little span of life, where we have preached, and written, and argued, and contended, shall know us no more, Jesus will still be what He ever was, the Son of the Father in truth and love, and will still have a people on earth who will believe in, and love Him as the only-begotten Son of God. But should a time ever come, which God in His infinite mercy forbid, when the churches of truth in this land shall abandon their faith in the eternal Sonship of Jesus, it needs no prophet to foretell their doom. Judgment will soon be at the door, for the salt will have lost its savour, and will be cast out to be trodden under foot of men, and the candlestick having ceased to shine will be removed out of its place.

2. And now for a few words why I send forth this little work. It is because I wish to leave on record my living and dying testimony to the true and real Sonship of Jesus, and that in a more convenient and permanent form than could be the case were it confined to the pages in which it first appeared. It is a truth which has for many years been very precious to my soul, and one which I trust I can say the Lord Himself on one occasion sealed very powerfully on my heart. From the very first moment that I received the love of the truth into my heart, and cast anchor within the veil, I believed that Jesus was the true and real Son of God; but rather more than sixteen years ago God's own testimony to His Sonship was made a special blessing to me. It pleased the Lord in November,

1844, to lay me for three weeks on a bed of sickness. During the latter portion of this time I was much favoured in my soul. My heart was made soft, and my conscience tender. I read the Word with great sweetness, had much of a spirit of prayer, and was enabled to confess my sins with a measure of real penitence and contrition of spirit. One morning, about 10 o'clock, after reading, if I remember right, some of Dr. Owen's "Meditations on the Glory of Christ," which had been much blessed to me during that illness, I had a gracious manifestation of the Lord Jesus to my soul. I saw nothing by the bodily eye, but it was as if I could see the blessed Lord by the eye of faith just over the foot of my bed; and I saw in the vision of faith three things in Him which filled me with admiration and adoration: 1, His eternal Godhead; 2, His pure and holy Manhood; and 3, His glorious Person as God-Man. What I felt at the sight I leave those to judge who have ever had a view, by faith, of the Lord of life and glory, and they will know best what holy desires and tender love flowed forth, and how I begged of Him to come and take full possession of my heart. It did not last very long, but it left a blessed influence upon my soul; and if ever I felt that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace, it was as the fruit of that view by faith of the glorious Person of Christ, and as the effect of that manifestation. And now came that which makes me so firm a believer in the true and real Sonship of Jesus; for either on the same morning, or on the next—for I cannot now distinctly recollect which it was, but it was when my soul was under the same heavenly influence—I was reading the account of the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. xvii.), and when I came to the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him," they were sealed with such power on my heart, and I had such a view of His being the true and real Son of God as I shall never forget. The last clause, "Hear ye Him," was especially sealed upon my soul, and faith and obedience sprang up in sweet response to the command. I did indeed want to "hear Him" as the Son of God, and

that as such He might ever speak to my soul. Need anyone, therefore, who knows and loves the truth, and who has felt the power of God's Word upon his heart, wonder why I hold so firmly the true and real Sonship of the blessed Lord? and if God indeed bade me on that memorable morning "hear Him," what better authority can I want than God's own testimony, "This is My beloved Son"? For, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son." "He that thus believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 9, 10). But if he has not this inward witness, and for the want of it listens to carnal reason, need we wonder if he make God a liar? Truly did the blessed Lord say in the days of His flesh, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). It has long been a settled point in my soul, "That a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John iii. 27), and therefore, if the Son of God has never been revealed with power to their heart, how can they receive Him as such? Happy are they who can say by a sweet revelation of Him to their soul, "And we know 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, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). May I ever hear Him and Him only, and may He speak not only *to* me, but *through* me, to the hearts of His dear family; and as He has enabled me thus far to defend His dearest title and worthiest Name, may He now smile upon the attempt to give it a more enduring form; and to Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Israel's Triune God, shall be all the glory.

J. C. PHILPOT.

Stamford, Dec. 21st, 1860.

CHAPTER I.

THE language of complaint put by the Lord into the mouth of one of His prophets of old was, "Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; yea, truth faileth" (Isa. lix. 14, 15). May not the same or similar language issue from the lips of His faithful servants now when they look around and see the reception that truth for the most part meets with in our day and generation? As regards the general mass of what is called "the religious world," may we not justly say, "Truth is fallen in the street"—despised and trampled under foot as a worthless thing? And as regards churches and ministers of clearer views and a sounder creed, in too many instances "truth faileth," either in purity of doctrine, power of experience, or godliness of life.

And yet, what possession can be so dear to the Church of God as the truth as it is in Jesus? To her it is committed by the Lord Himself as a most sacred and precious deposit (John xvii. 8; Gal. i. 8, 9; Eph. iii. 10; iv. 11—16; v. 25—27; Col. i. 18—24; ii. 6—10; 1 Thess. ii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Rev. iii. 22).* Her very standing, therefore, as a witness for God upon earth (Isa. xliii. 10; Acts i. 8; Heb. xii. 1), as well as all her present and future blessedness, are involved in her maintenance of it. Men may despise the truth from ignorance of its worth and value, or may hate it from the natural enmity of the carnal mind, and from its arraying itself against their sins and errors; but it is the only really valuable thing on earth, since sin defaced the image of God in man. Lest, therefore, it be lost out of the earth, the Lord has lodged it in two safe repositories—the Scriptures of truth (Dan. x. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17) and the hearts of His saints. The

* Our space does not admit of our opening up and working out the above scriptures; but they all deserve the most attentive examination and consideration, as witnessing to the above declaration.

Scriptures, it is true, are in the hands of well nigh every man; but to understand them, to believe them, to be saved and sanctified by them, is the peculiar privilege of the Church of God. Therefore her liberty, her sanctification, her position as the pure and unsullied bride of the Lord the Lamb, nay, her salvation itself, are all involved in her knowing and maintaining the truth as revealed externally in the Scriptures, and as revealed internally in the soul. Do we say this at a venture, or in harmony with the oracles of the living God? "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32). Then without knowing the truth there is no gospel liberty. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17). Then without the application of the truth to the heart there can be no sanctification. "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3). Then another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel than the truth corrupt the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ, seduce the bride from her rightful Head and Husband, and are as much the work of Satan as his beguiling Eve in Paradise (2 Cor. xi. 3, 4). "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 10—12). Then without receiving the love of the truth there is no salvation. Thus we see that without a vital, experimental knowledge of the truth, there is no liberty of spirit, no sanctification of heart, no union with Christ, and no salvation of the soul. And what is a religion worth when all these blessings are taken from it? What the salt is worth when it has lost its savour; what the chaff is worth when the grain is severed from it; what the tares are worth when the wheat is gathered into the

garner. How necessary, then, it is for churches and ministers to hold the truth with a firm, unyielding hand, and to give no place to error, no, not for an hour! Remember this, churches and ministers, deacons and members, and all ye that fear God in the assemblies of the saints, that there can be no *little* errors; we mean as regards the vital, fundamental doctrines of our most holy faith. There may be differences of opinion on minor points, as on church government, the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, the restoration of the Jews, the nature of the Millennium, the interpretation of particular passages of scripture; but on such fundamental points as the blessed Trinity, the Person of Christ, the personality and work of the Holy Ghost, no deviation can be allowed from the straight and narrow line of divine truth. Error on any one of these vital points is from Satan; and he never introduces little errors; all, all are full of deadly poison. There was no great quantity of arsenic in the Bradford lozenges, not much strychnine in Palmer's doses, but death and destruction were in both; or where not death, disease and suffering for life. Error in itself is deadly. In this sense, the tongue of error is "full of deadly poison" (Jas. iii. 8), and of all erroneous men we may say, "With their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips" (Rom. iii. 13). "Their wine," with which they intoxicate themselves and others, "is the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. xxxii. 33). The patient may vomit up the poison, but it is poison not the less. Do not, then, by reading erroneous books, hearing erroneous ministers, or associating with erroneous people, try the strength of your faith, or presume upon the soundness of your constitution. When you have tested the error by the inspired word of truth, and by the inward teaching of the blessed Spirit in your own heart, label it POISON! and "touch not, taste not, handle it not," any more than you would arsenic or prussic acid.

We are grieved to see an old error now brought forward and, we fear, spreading, which, however spe-